

2022 PINOT NOIR *Founders' Reserve*

VINTAGE FACTS 2022

Following a relatively warm winter, the spring of 2022 will be remembered for frost impacts and prolonged cool and wet conditions into mid-June. In Oregon, the winter was the eighth warmest on record. The vines were slow to recover but experienced nearly ideal conditions during bloom, leading to a much larger than anticipated fruit set. The rest of the summer provided ample warmth, with certain areas experiencing a record-breaking stretch of eight days over 95 degrees in late July, but very little heat stress.

The 2022 growing season in the Pacific Northwest from April through October was a whiplash from a cool and wet spring to one of the driest and warmest ripening periods on record. When bloom finally arrived, it did so during a moderate heat spike but under mostly clear skies, resulting in an excellent fruit set and ultimately huge clusters. As a result, fruit thinning was very important. Our lack of growth during the cool April delayed ripening and contributed to a late harvest period.

Harvest occurred in glorious conditions. A run of days with temperatures above 80 degrees in early October was welcome. Thankfully, the clear weather held and allowed the grapes to improve in flavor and quality. Willamette Valley Vineyards' harvest concluded on October 31st. The Pinot Noir yields were especially fruitful with great potential. It was the largest harvest to date for Willamette Valley Vineyards with over 2,000 tons harvested off our estate vineyards.

Courtesy of Gregory V. Jones, CEO, Abacela Vineyards and Winery

WINEMAKING NOTES

The stylistic vision is pure Pinot Noir fruit with a juicy mouthfeel, balanced oak and soft, sweet, ripe tannins. The methodology includes attention to detail from vineyard to bottle. Picked at peak ripeness, the fruit was gently destemmed, with approximately 90% of the berries remaining intact for intra-berry fermentation, which adds lively fruit-forward characteristics. Prior to fermentation, the must underwent a seven-day, pre-fermentation cold soak which provides complexity, color and mouthfeel. On the seventh day, the must was inoculated with commercial yeast. After 8-12 days of fermentation in small fermenters, punched down by hand, the must was pressed out and allowed to settle in the tank overnight. The new wine was barreled with light, fluffy lees where it underwent malolactic fermentation.

HISTORY OF FOUNDERS' RESERVE PINOT NOIR

Willamette Valley Vineyards was established in 1983 when Oregon native Jim Bernau planted Pinot Noir in an overgrown pioneer plum orchard in the Salem Hills, watering his vines by hand using 17 lengths of 75' garden hose. He was supported by a dedicated group of wine enthusiasts committed to producing the highest quality Pinot Noirs while being good stewards of the land. As a tribute to these individuals, we have created this special blend of Pinot Noir sourced exclusively from the Willamette Valley.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Pinot Noir

Clones: 114, 115, 667, 4407, Pommard and Wädenswil

Appellation: Willamette Valley

Soil Type: Jory (iron rich volcanic), Nekia (shallow iron rich volcanic), Laurelwood (windblown, glacial loess) including Pisolites and Missoula Flood sediment

Harvest Date: October 12 – 19, 2022

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 22.9°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 7.53 g/L
- **pH:** 3.41

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.2%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.52 g/L
- **pH:** 3.70
- **Sulfate Level:** low

Fermentation: Small bins

Bottling Date: June 2023

TASTING NOTES

Dramatic dark ruby hues play in the glass. Black cherry, licorice and red currant provide myriad fruit aromas alongside sweet French oak notes of star anise and baking spice. A sweet and lightly spiced palate includes candied cranberries, cola, dried plums, cracked pepper and white pepper flavors. The present tannins and French oak barrel regimen allow this wine to age up to eight vintages, offering an opportunity to cellar the wine and rediscover it years later.

Peak Drinkability: 2023 – 2032

FOOD PAIRINGS

Enjoy with classic pairings like salmon, pork blanquette or pork tenderloin, mushroom risotto and aged cheeses.

