

# 2022 PINOT NOIR *Estate*

## 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 a great fruit set and ultimately very large clusters. As a result, fruit thinning was very important. The lack of growth that we had during the cool April delayed ripening and 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 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.*

## THE VINEYARDS

**Estate Vineyard:** Planted in 1983 by Founder Jim Bernau on a south facing volcanic flow, the vineyard has 67 acres of vines at 500 to 750 feet in elevation. The first Dijon clones were planted in 1993. The Nekia and Jory soils are well drained to a depth of one and a half to six feet.

**Tualatin Estate Vineyard:** Established in 1973, the vineyard is covered with Laurelwood soil that formed over thousands of years on layers of wind-blown glacial silt called loess. High concentrations of rusted iron balls called pisolites riddle the top layer and are caused by the weathering of minerals in the soil.

**Elton:** In 2006, *Wine & Spirits* listed it as one of the five key vineyards in the new Eola-Amity Hills American Viticultural Area. In 2007, Elton Vineyard was named one of Oregon's top ten vineyards by *Wine Press Northwest*. Planted in 1983, the vineyard now includes 60 acres on east-southeast slopes of the Eola Hills.

## 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 intraberry 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.

## TECHNICAL DATA

**Grape Type:** Pinot Noir

**Clones:** 114, 115, 667, 777 and Pommard

**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 3 – 18, 2022

**Harvest Statistics**

- **Brix:** 22.6° – 23.8°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.79 – 8.13 g/L
- **pH:** 3.28

**Finished Wine Statistics**

- **Alcohol:** 13.5%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.809 g/L
- **pH:** 3.56
- **Sulfate Level:** low

**Fermentation:** Small bins

**Barrel Regimen:** 10 months in barrel, 10% new French oak, 90% neutral

**Bottling Date:** July 2023

## TASTING NOTES

The Estate Pinot Noir expresses the terroir of our estate vineyards: the original planting by Founder, Jim Bernau at the winery in the Salem Hills, Tualatin Estate planted by Oregon wine pioneer Bill Fuller in the foothills of the Coastal Range and Elton planted by Dick and Betty O'Brien on the east face of the Eola-Amity Hills.

The wine exemplifies the classic "Willamette Valley style" with aromas of black cherry, rich spices of clove and anise, and savory herbs and earth. Medium-bodied, round and juicy, the palate offers flavors that mirror aromas with the addition of raspberry puree and clove and concludes with bright acidity and integrated tannins.

**Peak Drinkability:** 2023 – 2032

## FOOD PAIRINGS

This wine will pair beautifully with traditional Pinot Noir dishes including Oregon lamb, duck breast with fruit compote, herb-crusted pork tenderloin, cedar plank grilled salmon, recipes with mushrooms or earthy truffles and aged cheeses.

