

Tasting Notes

The 2006 Pinot Noir has sweet, delicate aromas of raspberry, licorice and violets, with a juicy entry and silky mouthfeel. The sweet and tart flavors of ripe, red cherry and cranberry are accented by hints of vanilla, earth and spice. Lingering notes of cinnamon and clove spice round out the finish. 2006 was a warm year and experience in the cellar created a wine with flavors in balance with acids and alcohol. Drink now-2012.

Technical Data

Grape Type: Pinot Noir

Pinot Noir Clones: Dijon 113, 114, 115, 667, 777, Pommard, Wadenswil

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

Appellation: Willamette Valley

Harvest Date: September 27 - October 23, 2006

Harvest Statistics

Brix: 23.8° - 26.1°

Titrateable acidity: 5.4 - 7.8 g/L

pH: 3.3 - 3.7

Finished Wine Statistics

Alcohol: 14.5%

Residual sugar: less than 0.1%

Total acid: 5.9 g/L

pH: 3.61

Resveratrol: 3.5 Micromolar

Filtration: Crossflow

Yeast Strain: Proprietary/BM-45

Fermentation: Stainless Steel

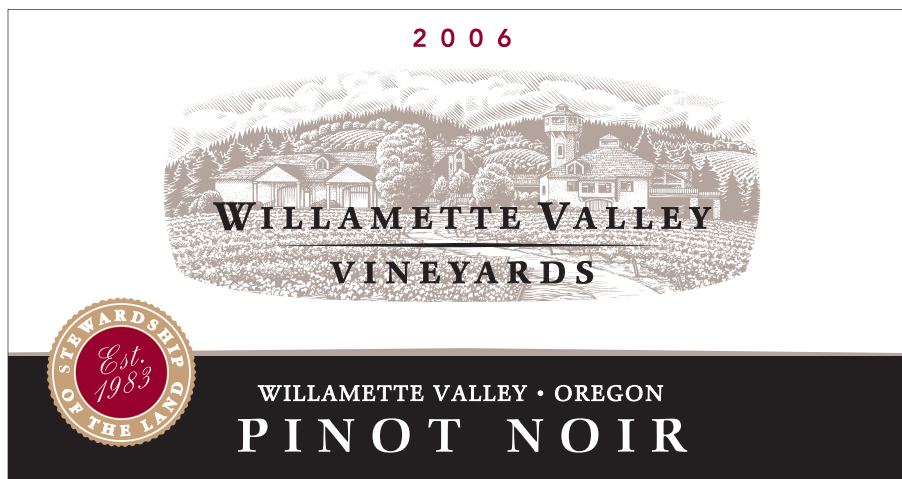
Barrel Regimen: 10 Months in French Oak

New Oak: 20% Allier Forest

Bottling Date: September 2007

Cases Bottled: 25,127

Release Date: November 2007



Vintage Facts 2006

The vintage year 2006 was defined by a good fruit set in early summer and dry, warm weather extending from late summer through harvest. Founder, Jim Bernau, who has been growing winegrapes for 24 years, believes '06 will be among Oregon's best.

The start of spring was typically wet, but evolved into a long, dry spring. In May, bloom occurred in warm, dry weather setting up conditions for a larger than average crop. The 2006 summer was warmer on average with heat spikes in August which increased our concern over premature sugar development. Temperatures each summer are generally increasing with more frequent heat spikes. The summer temperatures this year were similar to 2002 and 2003. In August we dropped (green harvested) up to 50% of the Pinot Noir clusters, allowing the remaining, most mature fruit to develop intense flavors.

We began harvesting in late September, two weeks ahead of schedule for most varieties. The warm, dry fall days increased flavor development and concentration. The temperatures also resulted in the sugars and resulting alcohols to be higher than usual, calling upon the skills of the winemaking staff to work with the wine to find the balance of ripeness, flavor and texture.

An unusual characteristic of this year's harvest was the increased yield of Pinot Noir which is usually best harvested at 2-2.5 tons per acre. The 25% higher fruit set was a blessing as flavor development caught up with enhanced sugars through extended "hang time" on the vine.

Winemaking Notes

The stylistic vision of this wine is pure Pinot Noir fruit with a soft 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 is gently destemmed with approximately 70% of the grape berries remaining intact for intra-berry fermentation (which adds fruitiness). Prior to fermentation, the must undergoes a five day cold soak extraction to improve fruitiness and mouthfeel. After 3-5 days the must is inoculated with yeast and allowed to warm up to peak fermentation temperature of 88 degrees F. Fermentation takes place for approximately 10-14 days in small lot ¾ ton, 1½ ton and 10 ton vessels. Twice daily, we gently mix the cap back into the juice for greater flavor and color extraction. This is done by hand punch down in the smaller fermenters. In the 10 ton fermenters, the cap is mixed back into the fermenting juice through a process call pneumatage where blasts of air are introduced at the bottom of the fermenter causing the skins to be drawn back down the inside wall of the fermenter. A light pressing takes place at under 1% sweetness before the juice is allowed to settle in stainless over night. The following day the new wine is barreled with light fluffy lees where it finishes primary fermentation and undergoes malolactic fermentation.

Food and Serving Suggestions

A great complement to wild salmon. Also try with roasted duck, grilled lamb, mushrooms, and medium cheeses.

Wording for Wine List

This is a classic Oregon beauty with juicy, sweet and tart red fruit flavors, earth, spice and a warm, lingering finish.

Put A Cork In It

May 29, 2007

With the summer humidity rolling in early and trapping pollutants over the city, sometimes it takes a glass of crisp, cold chablis to cut through the funk. Less cumbersome than a gas mask, a daily glass of wine can also decrease the risk of heart attack in women, according to a University of Buffalo study in the May 2007 Addiction (men find similar benefits consuming one to two drinks per day). Wishing to prolong my life without dumping pesticides into the soil, I look for local organic wines and also LIVE (Oregon's Low Input Viticulture and Enology) and Salmon-Safe labels, which promote low-pesticide use and practices that preserve watersheds, (see "Valentine's Vintages"). Yet while bottles may be recycled, corks often pose a problem, especially given that unrecyclable plastic corks (and even screw caps) are increasingly common, replacing renewably harvested Portuguese cork.

Now there's a new twist to the old stopper--the Rainforest Alliance is offering Forest Stewardship Council certification for cork. And Willamette Valley Vineyards, which already has LIVE- and Salmon-Safe certification, will be the first vineyard to bottle with the certified corks. "Rainforest Alliance was looking for someone to complete the chain of custody and we liked the idea of being able to tell the story about FSC, both for their sustainable forestry and fair worker practices," says Shelby Zadow, spokesperson for the vineyard.

The corks begin life as the bark of cork oak trees in FSC-certified forests in the Alentejo region of Portugal. These forests harbor endangered species and represent some of the last wild forest land left on the continent. Not only that, "Cork trees live from 150 to 200 years, during which time they sequester carbon, prevent desertification and provide work for families," says Zadow. Once harvested (without harm to the tree), the bark is sent to the first certified cork manufacturer in the world, Amorim & Irmaos S.A., before reaching Willamette Valley Vineyards.

Starting with their 2006 Pinot Noir, all of Willamette Valley Vineyard's estate wines will use FSC-certified stoppers (look for the FSC and Rainforest Alliance logos). While the Pinot Noir



won't be available until this fall, Willamette Valley Vineyard estate wines are in their third year of conversion to organic practices. Their Chardonnay vintage selection from 2003 and 2004 are both certified LIVE and Salmon Safe, with nice citrus tones and minerality. Furthermore, the vineyard runs all tractors on biofuel (employees get 50 gallons free a month as well), pays ten cents on returned bottles and relies on recycled packaging for wine shipping.

To find Willamette Valley Wines, see Whole Foods and Safeway stores or order directly from www.wvv.com. For a list of other Salmon-Safe and LIVE wines, see salmonsafe.org. You'll also find more organic options as well as retailers in our Wine Product Report. And as you raise your glass in a toast this steamy summer, cool yourself with the thought that this too is one more step towards keeping the dog days in August where they belong.