

2023 PINOT NOIR *Whole Cluster*

VINTAGE FACTS 2023

2023 in the Willamette Valley began with a very cold, dry winter followed by a short, wet spring. The cooler weather led to a late bud break around April 27th through May 1st, two to three weeks behind average. It quickly warmed up and accelerated the time between bud break and bloom. Similar to the 2011 vintage, bud break was short, with flowering happening in a single week. A hailstorm during the flowering period led to lower yields for the 2023 vintage. Lower yielding vintages tend to produce wines that are very concentrated in color, tannins and body.

The summer was ideal with temperatures staying around 80 degrees. A heatwave from August 13th - 16th reached temperatures over 100 degrees in certain areas and quickly broke. The berries on the vine were at the tail end of veraison during the heatwave and were able to handle most of the heat stress. It caused an increase in sugar levels in September, just in time for harvest.

With a record yield from our estate vineyards in 2022, the 2023 harvest reflected the typical vineyard cycle of a lower yield after a high yield. Picking began around the first week of September and finished in late October. Temperatures stayed ideal until the last week of September when rain arrived. Growers either worked through the rain to finish their harvest or paused until it passed the following week. Intermittent rain followed throughout the rest of the harvest. Willamette Valley Vineyards brought in 90 percent of its grapes by this period. Although it was a challenging vintage with lower yields, winemakers are excited about how this unique vintage will display.

WINEMAKING NOTES

The stylistic vision of this wine is to capture pure Pinot Noir fruit with beautiful depth and structure through whole cluster fermentation and carbonic maceration. Our winemaking philosophy demands attention to detail from vineyard to bottle. The vineyards for this wine are chosen to complement the unique style of wine. The whole grape clusters (including the stems) are gently conveyed into stainless steel tanks that have been filled with CO₂ gas. Yeast is then added and the lid closed tightly to exclude excess oxygen. Pressing takes place when aromatic and taste characters are ideal and tannins are still gentle. After pressing, fermentation finishes over a 7–10 day period in stainless steel tanks.

HISTORY OF WHOLE CLUSTER PINOT NOIR

Whole cluster refers to making wine with entire bunches of grapes including the stems, a style that was common until the invention of destemming machines. Years ago, Founder and CEO Jim Bernau began experimenting with Pinot Noir by gently dropping hand-picked whole clusters in a chilled stainless steel fermenter, pushing all the oxygen out with CO₂ and sealing the vessel tight. What happened next was magical – the berries started to swell and turn pink. When they burst, they released the most aromatic, fermenting Pinot Noir. This wine is balanced, refreshing and versatile for countless food pairings.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Pinot Noir

Clones: 114, 115, 667, 777, 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: Sep. 13 – Oct. 3, 2023

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 23.8°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.204 g/L
- **pH:** 3.64

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.3%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.34 g/L
- **pH:** 3.70
- **Residual Sugar:** 4.0 g/L
- **Sulfate Level:** low

Resveratrol: 15.3 Micromoles/L

Fermentation: Whole Cluster
Fermentation in stainless steel tanks

Bottling Date: May 2024

TASTING NOTES

Ruby red in the glass with aromas of dried dark cherries, cinnamon and cranberry. The palate is dry with fresh acidity, a light body and integrated tannins. Cherry, leather and tobacco add rich fruit notes, creating a juicy and layered flavor to the Pinot Noir. Drink now as a young wine or age in the bottle.

Peak Drinkability: 2024 – 2028

FOOD PAIRINGS

Our most versatile Pinot Noir for food pairings, this wine lends itself well to sweet and tangy barbecue, pizza with red sauce, teriyaki short ribs, gourmet burgers and cedar-planked salmon. Try serving slightly chilled on a warm summer evening.

