

# 2019 PINOT NOIR *Elton*

## VINTAGE FACTS 2019

A relatively mild, early winter in 2018 was followed by a cold and wet second half of winter in 2019 and then a wet but warm spring. The growing season saw a few mild frosts during late April, but started off warmer than average, moderating through mid-vintage with fewer-than-average heat spikes. The vintage will be remembered for the early rains in September and rapid cool down into October which challenged harvesting decisions. Degree-day totals for 2019 ended up similar to 2012 and 2018, marked by the lowest heat accumulation experienced in September and October since 2007. Phenological timing and interval lengths were similar to observations in 2018 averaging April 16th for bud break, June 8th for bloom, August 14th for véraison and September 27th for harvest. The cool vintage came largely from substantially lower maximum temperatures while minimum temperatures were near-average to slightly above-average.

*Courtesy of Gregory V. Jones, Linfield College Evenstad Center for Wine Education.*

## THE VINEYARD

**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. The elevation rises from 250-500 feet, and the soil is Jory and Nekia.

## 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 five day pre-fermentation cold soak which provides improved complexity, color and mouthfeel. On the fifth 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 and underwent malolactic fermentation.

## HISTORY OF OREGON PINOT NOIR

In the early 1960s, Richard Sommer came to Oregon with the vision of opening the first post-Prohibition winery. He hired an accomplished local attorney to help him with this heady task, which included obtaining licensure for an entirely new industry. That attorney was the father of Jim Bernau, the Founder of Willamette Valley Vineyards. Pioneering winemaker Richard Sommer would find the land for his vineyard in the Umpqua Valley outside of Roseburg and named it Hillcrest Vineyards. Observing that process up close had a profound impact on the young Jim Bernau. Before he built Willamette Valley Vineyards, Jim worked for years as a wine industry lobbyist, helping lay the foundation for the introduction of this new industry in his home state. In 1983, Jim set his lifelong dream in motion with the planting of his first vines at the Willamette Valley Vineyards Estate.

## TECHNICAL DATA

**Grape Type:** Pinot Noir

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

**Appellation:** Eola-Amity Hills

**Soil Type:** Jory (iron rich volcanic), Nekia (shallow iron rich volcanic)

**Harvest Date:** Oct. 4 – 7, 2019

### Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 24.4°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 7.25 g/L
- **pH:** 3.25

### Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.5%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.58 g/L
- **pH:** 3.40
- **Sulfate Level:** low

**Fermentation:** Small bins

**Barrel Regimen:** 16 months in barrel, 36% new French oak

**Bottling Date:** February 24, 2021

**Cases Produced:** 986

## TASTING NOTES

Deep ruby red color, aromatics of blue and red fruits such as strawberries, blueberries and Santa Rosa plums. Red earth and clay minerality that gives the wine a tremendous spice and focus as the flavors drive along. The warmth provided in each sip is reminiscent of the first days of fall.

**Peak Drinkability:** 2021 – 2029

## FOOD PAIRINGS

Honey baked ham with grilled plums and figs, pad thai with bacon and an assortment of seasonal vegetables.

