

2021 PINOT NOIR *Founders' Reserve*

VINTAGE FACTS 2021

A relatively cold winter was followed by a short, dry spring in 2021. An early bloom and rain set a below average yield for the 2021 vintage. The summer was warm with an unprecedented record-breaking heatwave from June 26th - 28th reaching temperatures up to 117 degrees in certain areas. At the same time, cooler air from the ocean caused overnight temperatures to drop to 52-61 degrees. The hot daytime temperatures delayed the vine ripening until cooler weather set in. The berries on the vine were pre-veraison during the heatwave and were able to handle the extra heat. Rain in June and intermittently into the beginning of harvest saved the vines from heat stress. The ground stayed wet, so the vines didn't suffer drought stress, remaining healthy throughout the season.

Harvest started and ended slightly earlier than usual. Picking began around the first week of September and finished in mid-October. Cooler temperatures came at the perfect moment to give the fruit longer hang time on the vine to allow for more flavor, aroma, color and tannin development. The cooler nights also helped retain the natural acidities in the grapes to keep the resulting wines fresh and in balance with the sugar levels. Slightly below-average yields and no disease pressure this season made this a high-quality vintage.

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, 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: October 5 – 9, 2021

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 23.7°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.40 – 7.63 g/L
- **pH:** 3.35

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.55%
 - **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.37 g/L
 - **pH:** 3.48
 - **Sulfate Level:** low
- Fermentation:** Small bins
- Bottling Date:** September 26 – 27, 2022

TASTING NOTES

Ruby in color, the wine features a bright nose of black and red cherries, savory dried herbs and violets. A fruit-forward palate offering flavors of cranberry and raspberry are accentuated by baking spices over a medium-bodied frame with integrated tannins and balanced acidity.

Peak Drinkability: 2022 – 2027

FOOD PAIRINGS

Enjoy with classic pairings like salmon, grilled lamb, roasted pork, mushroom risotto and aged cheeses.

