

2022 CHARDONNAY *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 focus of this wine is the combination of all of our clones in our three Estate Vineyards, the majority being Dijon clones, which are particularly suited to our cool climate. Creaminess and richness, with balanced oak, acidity and forward fruit is the goal. The grapes were picked at peak ripeness, and lightly whole cluster pressed to avoid harsh phenols. The juice was cold settled and racked to barrels where it was inoculated with selected yeast strains. Fermentation lasted approximately five weeks at 55-60° F. The barrel lees were stirred once monthly through malolactic fermentation. Sur Lee aging continued until July. The wine was then racked via Bulldog Pup, a nitrogen-pushing system used for gentle transfer.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Chardonnay

Clones: 76, 96, 352

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: Sept. 25 – Oct. 8, 2021

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 22.2°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.25 g/L
- **pH:** 3.24

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.5%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.540 g/L
- **pH:** 3.33
- **Sulfate Level:** low
- Fermentation:** French oak barrels
- Barrel Regimen:** 10 months in barrel, 20% new French oak
- Bottling Date:** July 26, 2023

TASTING NOTES

Pale gold in color, the nose reveals notes of pear, golden apple, orange marmalade, pie crust, caramel and ginger for an inviting and complex bouquet. Flavors mirror aromas with the addition of Meyer lemon and nectar. The palate is round and crisp, with medium weight, ample richness and a lingering finish.

Peak Drinkability: 2023 – 2028

FOOD PAIRINGS

Enjoy with rich seafood dishes including scampi, crab ravioli and halibut with lemon butter, fall soups including spiced butternut squash, roast yukon potatoes and medium cheeses.

