

2023 PINOT NOIR *Bernau Estate*

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, which was 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.

THE VINEYARD

Bernau Estate Vineyard: Named in honor of Founder Jim Bernau, Bernau Estate Vineyard is located in the Dundee Hills. The original 15 acres of Pinot Noir were planted in 1994, and in 2019, we planted 9 acres of Pinot Meunier, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The vineyard has a very gentle southwest facing slope and mostly Woodburn soils, which are dark brown in color, deep and well drained. The vines are farmed using biodynamic techniques.

WINEMAKING NOTES

The stylistic vision 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 was gently destemmed for intraberry fermentation, which adds lively fruit-forward characteristics. Prior to fermentation, the must underwent a five-day, pre-fermentation cold soak providing improved complexity, color and mouthfeel. On the fifth day, the must was inoculated with selected yeast strains. 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 complete malolactic fermentation.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Pinot Noir

Clones: 114, 115, 667, 777

Appellation: Dundee Hills

Soil Type: Jory (iron rich volcanic), Woodburn (Silt loam)

Harvest Date: September 21, 2023

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 25.2
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.50 g/L
- **pH:** 3.67

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 14.6%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.07 g/L
- **pH:** 3.71
- **Sulfate Level:** low

Fermentation: Small bins

Barrel Regimen: 16 months in barrel, 39% new French oak, 61% neutral

Bottling Date: March 27, 2025

Cases Produced: 909

TASTING NOTES

Deep ruby in the glass, with warm aromas of juniper, cedar and dried cranberry. Red fruit flavors are balanced by dried herbs and baking spices from time in French oak, unfolding into a complex palate of black cherry, tobacco and red currant. Fresh acidity carries the wine to a lingering finish.

Peak Drinkability: 2025 – 2035

FOOD PAIRINGS

Perfect with Pacific Northwest favorites such as wild mushroom risotto, roast duck, cedar-planked salmon, or a flatbread topped with roasted root vegetables, Oregon goat cheese and fig jam.

