

# 2023 DIJON CLONE *Chardonnay*

## 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 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.

**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 of this wine is classic Oregon. Focus is placed on elegance, richness and creaminess in mouthfeel, with a balance of oak, fruit and bright acidity. A great wine to pair with food or enjoy by itself. The grapes were picked at peak ripeness and lightly whole cluster pressed to avoid harsh phenolics. The juice was cold settled for 24 hours and racked off of heavy lees before inoculation. Fermentation took place in neutral French oak barrels as well as in stainless steel tanks and was fermented at approximately 55°F for 3-4 weeks. A portion of the barrels were then inoculated for malolactic fermentation and stirred once monthly until malolactic fermentation was completed in April. Aging was surlee until racking prior to filtration and bottling.

## TECHNICAL DATA

**Grape Type:** Chardonnay

**Clones:** 76, 96

**Appellation:** Willamette Valley

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

**Harvest Date:** Sept. 16 – Oct. 5, 2023

### Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 21.6°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.62 g/L
- **pH:** 3.30

### Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 12.9%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.26 g/L
- **pH:** 3.41
- **Sulfate Level:** low

**Fermentation:** French oak barrels and stainless steel tanks

**Barrel Regimen:** 10 months in barrel, 58% neutral French oak, 42% stainless steel tanks

**Bottling Date:** September 20 – 24, 2024

## TASTING NOTES

Straw in color with a sweet, mellow bouquet of kiwi, pear, citrus zest and minerality. Candied ginger, green apple, vanilla bean and lemon peel emerge on the palate. Dry, with a balance of warmth and fresh acidity.

**Peak Drinkability:** 2024 – 2029

## FOOD PAIRINGS

Enjoy with rich seafood dishes like tempura shrimp, butter-roasted halibut, fresh salads with vinaigrettes and hard cheeses.

