

# 2023 CHARDONNAY *Founders' Reserve*

## 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, 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.

## WINEMAKING NOTES

The wine's stylistic vision is classic Oregon Chardonnay. Focus is 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 occurred in neutral French oak barrels and stainless steel tanks and was fermented at approximately 55°F for 3-4 weeks. All of the wine went through malolactic fermentation. Aging was surlee until racking before filtration and bottling.

## HISTORY OF FOUNDERS' RESERVE

Willamette Valley Vineyards was established in 1983 by a group of wine enthusiasts committed to building a world-class winery focused on producing high-quality Oregon wines while being good stewards of the land. This special Founders' Reserve Chardonnay is a tribute to these individuals. The tradition continues today—we invite you to join us as Owners in the Oregon wine industry, enjoying the rewards of creating this dream together.

## TECHNICAL DATA

**Grape Type:** Chardonnay

**Clones:** Dijon 76 & 96, Draper

**Appellation:** Willamette Valley

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

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

### Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 22.5°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 7.80 g/L
- **pH:** 3.34

### Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.0%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.68 g/L
- **pH:** 3.56
- **Sulfate Level:** low

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

**Bottling Date:** September 2024

## TASTING NOTES

Pale straw with brilliant clarity, this Chardonnay offers sweet aromas of honeysuckle, passionfruit, French cream and lightly spiced dried ginger. A light body and balanced acidity give way to ripe flavors of golden apple, white peach and lemon meringue. The lingering finish highlights the wine's excellent complexity.

**Peak Drinkability:** 2024 – 2030

## FOOD PAIRINGS

This wine pairs well with a variety of desserts, including lemon bars and crème brûlée, and savory dishes like chicken marbella and wood-fired flatbread topped with pear and prosciutto.

