

2023 PINOT NOIR *Elton*

VINTAGE FACTS 2023

In 2023, 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

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 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 to add lively fruit forward characteristics. Prior to fermentation, the must underwent a five day pre-fermentation cold soak which provides improved complexity, color and mouthfeel. On the fifth 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 and underwent malolactic fermentation.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Pinot Noir

Clones: 114, 115, 667, 777, Pommard

Appellation: Eola-Amity Hills

Soil Type: Jory (iron rich volcanic)

Harvest Date: September 13 – 22, 2023

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 23.8°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.87 g/L
- **pH:** 3.42

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.9%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.18 g/L
- **pH:** 3.48
- **Sulfate Level:** low

Fermentation: Small bins

Barrel Regimen: 16 months in barrel, 19% new French oak, 81% neutral

Bottling Date: February 25 – 26, 2025

TASTING NOTES

Classic ruby in the glass, this wine opens with aromas of red cherry, cranberry and subtle cedar. The palate shows concentrated flavors of red currant, red plum and pomegranate, with notes of cinnamon and baking spice. Dry and medium-bodied, the wine is balanced by fresh acidity and fine tannins.

Peak Drinkability: 2025 – 2035

FOOD PAIRINGS

Pair with grilled meats and savory dishes, such as chicken and pork paella, grilled steelhead, and a bitter greens salad with raspberry vinaigrette.

