

2022 PINOT NOIR *Signature Cuvée*

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, *Wine Press Northwest* named Elton Vineyard one of Oregon's top ten vineyards. Planted in 1983, the vineyard now includes 60 acres on the east-southeast slopes of the Eola Hills. The elevation rises from 250-500 feet, and the soil is Jory and Nekia.

WINEMAKING NOTES

Picked at peak ripeness, the fruit was gently destemmed to add lively fruit-forward characteristics. Prior to fermentation, the must underwent a 5-7 day cold soak which provides 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 malolactic fermentation.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Pinot Noir

Clones: 113, 114, 115, 667, 777, Pommard

Appellation: Willamette Valley

Soil Type: Jory (iron rich volcanic)

Harvest Date: October 5 – 21, 2022

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 23.4°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 4.68 g/L
- **pH:** 3.60

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.4%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.10 g/L
- **pH:** 3.67
- **Sulfate Level:** low

Fermentation: Small bins

Barrel Regimen: 20 months in barrel, 18% new French oak

Bottling Date: September 2024

TASTING NOTES

An illustration of the art of blending, the Signature Cuvée is selected from the finest barrels sourced from our original Estate Vineyard, Elton Vineyard and Tualatin Estate Vineyard. Bright ruby in color, the wine has pronounced fruity aromas of dried cranberry, ripe cherry, dark chocolate and sage. A palate of juniper berry, red cherry and black tea are framed by integrated tannins and balancing acidity.

Peak Drinkability: 2024 – 2032

FOOD PAIRINGS

Serve with rich foods like grilled meats, Italian sausage and peppers, grilled barbecue chicken, strong cheeses and wild mushrooms.

