

2023 CHARDONNAY *Bernau Block*

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. 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.

The 2023 harvest reflected the typical vineyard cycle of lower yield following 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. Although it was a challenging vintage with lower yields, winemakers are excited about how this unique vintage will display.

THE VINEYARD

Estate, Bernau Block: Planted in 1983 by Founder Jim Bernau on a south-facing volcanic flow, the vineyard has 15 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.

WINEMAKING NOTES

This wine focuses on the unique Dijon clones, which are particularly suited to our cool climate. The goal is creaminess and richness, with balanced oak, acidity and fruit-forward characteristics. The grapes were picked at peak ripeness and lightly whole cluster pressed to avoid phenols. The juice was cold-settled and racked to barrels, where it was inoculated with a selected yeast strain. Fermentation lasted approximately 4-5 weeks at 60-65 degrees F. The barrel lees were stirred twice monthly through malolactic fermentation, which finished in April. Aging was sur lee until July, when racking took place.

HISTORY OF BERNAU BLOCK CHARDONNAY

The Bernau Block Chardonnay is made with Dijon clones planted more than 20 years ago by Founder Jim Bernau, who traveled with the Oregon Governor's Delegation to Burgundy in the 1980s to seek out French clones to improve our state's Chardonnay quality. The vines were brought back and quarantined at Oregon State University before being propagated for use in Oregon vineyards.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Chardonnay

Clones: 76, 96

Appellation: Willamette Valley

Soil Type: Nekia (shallow iron rich volcanic)

Harvest Date: October 13, 2023

Harvest Statistics

- **Brix:** 22.0°
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.61 g/L
- **pH:** 3.29

Finished Wine Statistics

- **Alcohol:** 13.1%
- **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.90 g/L
- **pH:** 3.40
- **Sulfate Level:** low

Fermentation: French oak barrels

Barrel Regimen: 10 months in barrel, 20% new French oak

Bottling Date: August 2024

Cases Produced: 670

TASTING NOTES

Golden straw in color, with delicate aromas of honeysuckle, candied ginger, yellow kiwi, Meyer lemon and pineapple on the nose. Notes of graham cracker and butterscotch warm the palate, balanced by fresh flavors of golden apple and white peach. Enjoy the wine's flavorful, lingering finish.

Peak Drinkability: 2024 – 2030

FOOD PAIRINGS

Perfect with main dishes featuring chicken, egg-based dishes like Quiche Lorraine and warm baked brie with bread.

