

2022 PINOT NOIR *Bernau Block*

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 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

The stylistic vision is pure Pinot Noir fruit with a soft, 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 providing 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 where it underwent complete malolactic fermentation.

HISTORY OF BERNAU BLOCK PINOT NOIR

Sourced exclusively from 15 acres of Pinot Noir from the first plantings at the Estate Vineyard, Founder Jim Bernau planted these vines using a Christmas tree planter pulled behind his 33 horsepower tractor. He grafted the French clones 667 and 777 on a portion of the vines when they became available.

TECHNICAL DATA

Grape Type: Pinot Noir

Clones: 667, 777

Appellation: Willamette Valley

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

Harvest Date: October 18 – 20, 2022

Harvest Statistics

· **Brix:** 24.2°

· **Titrateable Acidity:** 6.098 g/L

· **pH:** 3.39

Finished Wine Statistics

· **Alcohol:** 13.8%

· **Titrateable Acidity:** 5.552 g/L

· **pH:** 3.65

· **Sulfate Level:** low

Fermentation: Small bins and stainless steel tanks

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

Bottling Date: September 2024

TASTING NOTES

The wine opens with a savory bouquet of potpourri, rosemary and juniper that contrasts with sweeter aromas of raspberry and blackberry. Cranberry, baking spice, dried cherries and sage notes develop on the palate. Fresh tannins lift the flavors with acidity and a rich, weighted body.

Peak Drinkability: 2024 – 2032

FOOD PAIRINGS

The Bernau Block is not just for casual sipping—this wine can stand up to rich dishes. Enjoy it with grilled Oregon lamb chops, smoked salmon, crab cakes, mushroom-stuffed pork tenderloin and dishes featuring native Oregon truffles.

