

ELK COVE VINEYARDS

2020 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir Estate



Vintage 2020 was a difficult vintage with nicely concentrated wines. The COVID-19 outbreak brought labor and safety challenges that we overcame in step with increased seasonal demands in the vineyard and cellar. Luckily our vines are 6 feet apart and well suited for social-distancing, but creative solutions saved the day – we even recruited our sales team for our harvest crew.

Cool, wet conditions in spring led to a 25% lighter than average fruit set with small clusters and berries, ideal conditions for flavor intensity. Summer brought steady heat and cool nights, increasing our expectations for a fantastic vintage across the board here in the Willamette Valley. Then, in August and September, Oregon experienced one of its worst wildfire seasons in history, bringing with it worries of smoke-affected fruit. Ripening slowed until the winds shifted eastward and the skies cleared in mid-September.

The silver lining for Elk Cove is that our vines are located in the northwest corner of the Willamette Valley, where smoke effects were minimal. We will not release any wines that exhibit smoke taint, and have aggressively tested for it. We sent a great many samples to the laboratory in 2020. We're confident that we made some fantastic wines from intensely concentrated fruit.

VINEYARD: Our Willamette Valley Pinot Noir is made with 100% estate grown fruit from all six of our vineyard sites: The Winery Estate, Mount Richmond, Five Mountain, Clay Court, Goodrich and Windhill. These sites are comprised of both Pommard and Dijon plant material, with multiple clones represented.

Because we draw from vineyards representing all three of the major Willamette Valley soil types, we are able to pick and choose for different flavor components to make the best possible blend each year for our Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. Some people call this making wine “spice rack” style, we usually just call it delicious. Our goal is the perfect version of what we believe a Willamette Valley Pinot should be: a wine with freshness of fruit, well-integrated alcohol, and great concentration of flavor.

WINEMAKING: To make our Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, fruit from each vineyard block is fermented separately in small, temperature controlled steel tanks, hand punched down twice daily, and barreled in french oak barrels. After 10 months of aging in French oak, the wine we choose for our Willamette Valley Pinot Noir is carefully blended to produce the most approachable, well-balanced Pinot Noir we make.

TASTING NOTES: With generous cherry fruit, dry leaves and five spice on the nose, this wine is bright and earthy, its flavors of raspberry and black currant layered with dusty, almost gritty tannins and notes of rhubarb and black pepper.

VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY:

Vine Age: 7-44 years

Harvest Sugars: 22.5 brix

Vatting: Fermentation in small open top steel fermentors. 10 months in French oak.

pH: 3.5

TA: 5.8

Alc: 13.5% v/v

Bottled August 2021

Cases Produced: 13,115

REVIEWS:

Best Bargain Oregon Pinot Noir - Vinepair

93 Points: - The Drunken Cyclist

91 Points: - Wine Review Online

“The 2020 vintage yielded a smaller than normal crop, and it was also a vintage that was threatened by smoke from wildfires. A melange of the winery’s 6 estate vineyards, this Estate Pinot apparently escaped all damage and in fact exudes nothing but charm and elegance. The wine is immediately appealing with its lovely aromas of cherry, raspberry and cloves. On the palate it is smooth, delicate and velvety, and the flavors emphasize youthful cherry fruit and lead to an intriguing earthy, oaky background. The finish is savory and juicy”. – Norm Roby

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