

ELK COVE VINEYARDS

2023 Pinot Gris



VINTAGE 2023 required experience and patience that was rewarded with essential hang-time and ripening.

The growing season started cool, then May sunshine brought an average bloom in mid-June followed by a glorious summer. We enjoyed many classic 80-degree Willamette Valley days, with nighttime highs staying down in the 50s even in August, typically the warmest month here in Oregon. The only exception to these consistent diurnal swings was a single big heat spike in mid-August. We anticipated picking in early September. However, some fortuitous rain events allowed us to push back harvest and we were thankful for the additional hang time.

Harvest came early, but not too early. We brought in beautiful fruit and we were pleased to still be picking Pinot noir into early October. When you have fast accumulation of fruit sugars, cool weather can be a welcome respite with even small amounts of rain helping the grapevines regulate and slow ripening. One of the reasons why Oregon Pinot Noir is so prized is for its freshness of fruit, and you can only get that vibrancy when it's under 50 degrees during picking.

2023 brought amazing fruit quality, but our production was down, especially on cool-climate white wines like Pinot Gris. Being an estate grown winery, we must follow Mother Nature's lead as we cannot buy fruit to increase production. Smaller yields do mean a smaller crop and less wine, but we embrace vintage variation. Another great benefit of being estate grown is that it's our decision exactly when to pick. Rather than rushing to bring fruit into the cellar, in 2023 were able to play the odds and wait out the rain on blocks that needed additional hang time to get the flavor development we needed.

VINEYARD: Our Pinot Gris is hand-harvested from our hillside vineyards in the northern Willamete Valley. Pinot Gris has long been a focus at Elk Cove - our Winery Estate Vineyard boasts some of the oldest Pinot Gris vines in Oregon, dating back to 1985. Three of our other estate vineyard sites are also planted with Pinot Gris, including 50 acres on steep sloped Mount Richmond Vineyard in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA. Planted in a high-density format, all our Pinot Gris undergoes shoot and crop thinning for low yields to maximize quality and concentration.

WINEMAKING: The Willamette Valley has the perfect climate for this delicate cool weather white wine. We have enough sunlight and warmth for ripening, but our cool evenings help retain varietal character and prevent over-ripening. We whole-cluster press our pinot gris grapes, then ferment the juice at very cool temperatures in small stainless steel tanks. This gentle treatment protects the aromatic qualities and enhances the natural richness of the Pinot Gris grapes, creating our most popular white wine.

TASTING NOTES: Aromatics of poached pear and honeysuckle blend with hints of thyme to introduce this refreshing wine. The super juicy palate of ripe pear and apricot lingers into a zesty finish of peach skin and lemon.

REVIEWS:

92 Points - *Decanter (June 2024)*

"A Pinot Gris that shows a serious side with nice texture and fullness, it harkens to a time when serious Pinot Gris was de rigueur in the Willamette Valley. Ripe Bartlett pears, bruised apples, and a whisper of cardamom mark the aromatics, which follow with complex nutty notes. Far from simplistic, the fruit on this palate is ripe, nuanced, and layered. Apricot flesh mingles with honeyed peaches, ginger, and lemon pastry cream. Complexity at a great value." — *Clive Pursehouse*

92 Points & Editors' Choice - *Wine Enthusiast (Nov. 2024)*

VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY:

Vine Age: 8-50

Harvest Sugars: 23

Vatting: Whole-cluster pressed and cold fermented in small stainless steel tanks.

Alc: 13.5% v/v

Cases Produced: 16,100