

ELK COVE VINEYARDS

2023 La Bohème



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: We planted La Bohème Vineyard in 1985 by selecting the very best vines from our original Estate Pommard plantings. Pat and Joe Campbell named the vineyard after the family who sold them the property – and their favorite Puccini opera. This picturesque vineyard overlooks the winery and the coast range mountains and rises to 800 feet, making it one of the highest elevation vineyard sites in the Willamette Valley. La Bohème was planted using cuttings from vines selected for small cluster size and intense flavors, hallmarks of the world's finest Pinot Noirs. We prune and cluster-thin La Bohème heavily to limit yields and to maximize ripening and flavor concentration.

WINEMAKING: All of Elk Cove's delicate Pinot Noir fruit undergoes the same gentle handling through our gravity flow system. This allows us to achieve the elegance, texture and luscious quality that are the hallmarks of exquisite Pinot Noir.

Fruit from the La Bohème vineyard is fermented in small, temperature controlled steel tanks, hand punched down twice daily then aged for ten months in French oak. Our winemaking team then selects the very best barrels to represent the silky, lush flavor profile that exemplifies La Bohème Pinot Noir.

VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY:

Vine Age: 37 years

Harvest Sugars: 24.5 brix

Vatting: Fermentation in small open top steel fermentors. 10 months in 28% new French oak.

pH: 3.47

Alc: 14.2% v/v

Cases Produced: 557

PAST REVIEWS:

94+ Points - *Robert Parker Wine Advocate (November 2025)*

"The 2023 Pinot Noir La Bohème comes from 37-year-old vines planted in marine sedimentary soils. Matured in 28% new French oak, it has alluring scents of raspberry, pomegranate, mushroom powder, tea leaves, lavender and forest floor. The full-bodied palate features highly concentrated, detailed flavors. It's framed by muscular tannins and bright acidity and has a long, layered finish. It will benefit from time in the cellar. 557 cases were made." – *Erin Brooks*