

ELK COVE VINEYARDS

2023 Five Mountain



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 we 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: Elk Cove Vineyards purchased Five Mountain Vineyard in 2005 after leasing the site for several years. Previously it was exclusively used in our Willamette Valley blend, but after taking full control of the vineyard we have found certain lots worthy of Single Vineyard status.

This historic vineyard was planted in 1978 by the Ponzi family. The original 4.2 acres of old vines are comprised of Pommard clone and the entire vineyard is set on a steep southeast slope in the Chehalem Mountains AVA. The site has a view of five volcanoes in the Cascade Range most widely seen from the Willamette Valley. This vineyard was an important element in the early Ponzi Reserve Pinots and has also been a Single Vineyard selection from a number of premier Oregon wineries over the years.

Five Mountain is now sustainably farmed by Elk Cove Vineyards and comprises a total of 30 acres including the original old vine Pommard Pinot Noir, younger Dijon Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Muscat, Gewurztraminer and Riesling.

WINEMAKING: Fruit from Five Mountain is fermented in small, temperature controlled steel tanks, hand punched down twice daily, and barreled in French oak barrels. After 10 months of aging, only the barrels that are most representative of the Five Mountain profile are carefully blended to create a rich, earthy Oregon Pinot Noir.

TASTING NOTES: Fruity and savory wafts of raspberry, quince paste, and kombu introduce this intriguing, juicy wine. Fine tannins lend structure to its wild blueberry, cherry pie, and thyme, leading to a sappy finish of pine-resin and white pepper.

VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY:

Vine Age: 45, 27 years

Harvest Sugars: 24.5 brix

Vatting: Fermentation in small open top steel fermentors. 10 months in 20% new French oak.

pH: 3.72

Alc: 14.5% v/v

Cases Produced: 729

REVIEWS:

95 Points - *Robert Parker Wine Advocate (November 2025)*

"The 2023 Pinot Noir Five Mountain comes from 27- and 45-year-old vines planted in Laurelwood soils. Matured for 10 months in 20% new French oak, the nose is bursting with wild berries, blood orange, aniseed, damp earth, mushrooms and floral perfume. The full-bodied palate is concentrated and complex with detailed, spicy flavors. It's structured by silky tannins and refreshing acidity and has a long, layered finish." - *Erin Brooks*

94 Points - *Wine Spectator (March 2026)*

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