

ELK COVE VINEYARDS

2023 Mount Richmond Chardonnay



VITICULTURE & ENOLOGY:

Vine Age: 10-18 years

Harvest Sugars: 23 brix

Vatting: Fermentation and aging in oak puncheons and concrete eggs for 12 months.

pH: 3.32

TA: 5.3

Alc: 13.5%

Cases Produced: 515

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: Mount Richmond Vineyard sits on Willakenzie soils in the heart of the Yamhill Carlton AVA. The site was purchased in 1996 as a partnership between winemaker Adam Campbell, his wife Carrie, and Elk Cove founders Pat and Joe Campbell.

The motivation for planting Mount Richmond was to emulate the wine quality from sites such as our esteemed Roosevelt vineyard. The vineyard now holds the honor as the largest vineyard holding of Elk Cove, totaling over 200 planted acres.

Mount Richmond sits at 300-500 feet elevation, lower than the vineyards planted at the winery, which allows for earlier ripening. Planted in a high-density format (2100 vines/acre), similar to Roosevelt, Mount Richmond sits on rolling hills just outside the town of Yamhill to the east of the Coast Range Mountains. In addition to Pinot Noir, starting in 2015 we planted three Dijon clones of Chardonnay on its lower south-facing slopes.

WINEMAKING: Our Chardonnay is hand-picked then gently whole-cluster pressed to avoid bitterness. The juice is fermented in large puncheons, a mix of neutral and new oak barrels and concrete eggs. We age this wine for a full 12 months with some stirring on the lees after malolactic fermentation. This is our classic take on Chardonnay, one of the original varietals we planted in 1974 and grew for over 20 years before grafting our vines over to Pinot Gris. We came back to Chardonnay in 2014 with the purchase of our Goodrich Vineyard, adding our own plantings of Dijon Chardonnay clones 548, 809 and 76 at Mount Richmond in subsequent years.

REVIEWS:

91 Points - *James Suckling (April 2026)*

"Generous and flavorful with baked lemons, sappy white flowers, salted caramel and fresh pastry. Medium-bodied and round, showing hints of white and yellow peaches. Drink now."
- Courtney Humiston