

2018 Division Chenin Blanc “Inondé”

100% Willard Farm – Columbia Valley (WA)

Columbia Valley AVA

The 2018 growing season turned out to be one of the best yet in Columbia Valley. After some very hot stretches in July and early August, things cooled off quickly and by September, the days were in the 70s and evenings in the high 30s. The huge diurnal swing allowed for acid preservation and a long hang time to develop phenolic flavors without a large pickup in sugars - a real treat vintage for acid hounds like us!

We source our Chenin Blanc from Willard Farms, an old vine Chenin site in the Yakima Valley. These high-elevation, own-rooted Chenin vines are over 40 years old, all of which helps insulate the vines from year to year climate variations. The soil is formed of volcanic Miocene uplift against basalt bedrock with the primary topsoil being made up of quartz and lime silica, overlaid with the mixed glacial sedimentary runoff of Missoula floods for a dynamic and unique terroir. We adore this particular site: there isn't much old vine Chenin Blanc left and the site is farmed by an excellent, albeit quirky, farmer named Jim Willard who has a deep understanding of the soils and region.

Taking a page from the books of some of our favorite domaines of the Loire Valley, we make multiple picking passes (typically two in the year) to pick both vibrant and lively earlier acid driven grapes, and the more fruit concentrated and complex flavored later picked grapes. During the past three growing seasons, we have worked extensively with the shoot positioning and yield and canopy management to improve Chenin's notorious variability in ripeness. The cumulative results have been clearly beneficial with our most even and healthy harvest yet in 2018.

We create a pied de cuve (early native ferment) with a small amount of grapes from the vineyard to build a strong yeast population from the native flora. Indondé is dominated by the first pick, pressed into stainless steel and one barrique. The second pick juice was split between the heart of the press, which went directly into a stainless barrel and the rest being split into mostly neutral and one year old French oak barrels. The ferments took off quickly this year and completed quite quickly going completely dry.

With a slightly neutral nose, save for some preserved lemon zing, this is a wine defined by power and grace on the palate. Classic lanolin and candied orange blossom florality play with a subtle salty caramel roundness balance the acidity to make this a wine that drinks as well now as it will in five to ten years.

Alc 13.7% pH 3.44 105 cases produced

