

2018 Division-Villages “Méthode Carbonique” Pinot Noir

Cassin Vineyard - Yamhill Carlton AVA (45%), Methven Family Vineyards - Eola Amity Hills AVA (45%) & Johan Vineyards - Willamette Valley (10%)

Willamette Valley AVA

The Willamette Valley is typically one of the coolest and wettest major wine growing regions in the U.S, which clearly favors the delicate, but seemingly boundless potential of the Pinot Noir grape, a variety that seems to show its best on the fringes of suitable grape farming area. The 2018 vintage turned out to be a truly stellar year for making wines. After a long dry and hot stretch in July and early August, the heat broke at just the right time when veraison was occurring and the temps were mild during the day and cool at nights, with just the right amount of rain to keep things hydrated, all the way til harvest from mid-September to early October.

Methven Family Vineyards is set in eastern flanks of the northern Eola-Amity Hills AVA and has provided significant portions of the “Méthode Carbonique” Pinot since we first made it in 2012. The vines were planted in 2001 on soils formed from volcanic remnants, a clay and broken rock soil locally called Nekia, and marine sedimentary overlay against basalt bedrock. Our new site, the Cassin Vineyard, in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA at the far western edges near the coastal range is truly cool climate and was our last site to be picked. Not too far away in the coastal hills in brand new Van Duzer AVA, is our favorite Biodynamic certified Johan Vineyard. Johan is a bit cooler and wetter than the rest of the region due to the Van Duzer coastal gap corridor and its proximity to the coast.

We fell hard for the carbonic maceration fermentation technique while learning about and making wine in the Beaujolais region of France, and began experimenting with the technique with Pinot Noir during our first few vintages in the States. Carbonic Maceration involves fermenting the wines fully on the stems in a closed vessel that is initially inundated with carbon dioxide, macerating the grape skins by mostly using the CO₂ to enzymatically extract color, phenolics and flavors, versus the traditional red fermentation practices involving pulverization and recirculation. We seek a fresh style of Pinot Noir with vibrancy and fruitiness for this wine, and hence harvest our Pinot Noir grapes for this bottling earlier than our other traditional fermentations.

For the carbonic fermentations, we created a pied de cuve (early native ferment) with a small amount of grapes to build a strong yeast population from the native flora from each vineyard, and these were added to the ferments after a few days of carbon dioxide enrichment. With these lots, we fermented each site in a stainless steel closed top tank. Ultimately each of the ferments lasted about between 20-25 days on the skins. The wines were aged for 5 months in a combination of French oak barrels and stainless tanks.

Hello there strawberries soaked in chalk! In 2018, the aromatic profile of this wine is a clean, mineral-driven mix of dusty red berries and pure Pinot fruit. While we've never really considered our “Méthode Carbonique” Pinot Noir to be overly complex, the incredible structural balance in 2018, with just enough tannins and nervy acidity, makes this a wine of some seriousness and complexity. Strawberry notes continue from start to finish, as does the wine's purity. The lack of funky qualities and low VA common to carbonic ferments makes this easily our best vintage yet. Super pretty and crying out to be gulped not sipped, the wine's lower alcohol will make that easy to do—oh and check out our new fancy label!

Alc 13.2%, 350 cases produced

