

2015 Division-Villages "l'Avoiron" Rosé of Gamay Noir

Willard Vineyard

Columbia Valley

The Yakima Valley is no stranger to warmth and fortunately for us, our Gamay Noir vines at Willard Farms lay at highest elevation portions of the region to help insulate the vines from some most intense heat, as well as having a due east / northeast exposition avoiding the most intense sun of the day. We love this particular site because it's so unique to find mineral intense Gamay in a region better known for Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah than the famous Beaujolais varietal. The vineyard is farmed by the Jim Willard, the second generation of a well known Yakima farming family with deep understanding of the soils and region. The vines are planted on soils formed from volcanic miocene uplift against basalt bedrock with the primary top soil being made up of quartz and lime-silica, overlaid with the mixed sedimentary runoff of Missoula floods that is typical of the area.

We believe the best wines will be made by picking before overly ripe characteristics dominate the wine and balance and finesse suffer. Therefore, especially with rosé, which we seek more white wine-like vibrancy than red wine-like richness or intensity, we pick this site relatively early with more acid driven grapes and more red fruit. To achieve this profile, we harvested very early in 2015 on September 10th due to the very hot and dry summer. We were thrilled that with the fruit quality that was very healthy and was perfectly ripe for making crisp and mineral driven rosé.

By popular demand, we made a decision to considerably increase the production of our 2015 wine, which was very exciting, but a lot of work! In order to pick up some color, we destemmed about 50% of the grapes and mixed them with the whole cluster bunches in the press, which worked perfectly for our desired color. For the fermentation, we created a pied de cuve (early native ferment) with a small amount of the site's grapes to build a strong yeast population from the native flora, which was added after settling into one stainless 1250 gal temperature controlled tank and one oak barrel. The stainless tank began fermenting very quickly and we kept it on the cooling jacketed at 15 C, lasting until mid December.

The result of our newly named "l'Avoiron" Rosé of Gamay Noir, named after a village volcano where we first made Gamay rosé on the slopes of the Haut-Loire, is a crisp, vibrant and mineral intense rosé wine that is more akin to white wine fruit components than a red varietal. We are reminded of the light Corsican rosés with aromatics that range from cantaloupe melons to peach and a touch of Cara Cara orange. The palate is bright and mineral rich with a kind of deliciously contrast salty and starburst candy that is really tasty. The wine is light bodied and very vibrant (especially for the vintage), and has a beautiful light salmon color.

Vineyard - Willard Farms, Columbia Valley, WA

Harvest - September 10th, Brix 21.8

Fermentation/Ageing - 100% direct pressed prior to pied de cuve fermentation. Aged in stainless steel. This wine was not fined and received less than 25ppm so2.

Alc 12.3%, pH 3.23, 525 cases produced

