

2015 Division-Villages “Les Petits Fers” Gamay Noir

Rebecca’s, Redford-Wetle, Bjornson, Methven Family Vineyards

Oregon AVA

The Willamette Valley is known as typically one of the coolest and wettest major wine growing regions in the U.S, what is less known is that 100 miles to the south in the northern coastal slopes south of Eugene, there is another great cool climate growing area named after the area’s primary river, the Umpqua AVA. The Gamay grape, which hails from the Beaujolais region also flourishes in the Loire Valley, but is just beginning to grow in popularity in the U.S. 2015 was much like 2014, dry and very warm! We added two Gamay in 2015, Redford-Wetle and Bjornson Vineyard, as well as returning sites, Methven Family Vineyards all in the Eola-Amity Hills. Rebecca’s Vineyard, planted in 1987, returns as well from the Umpqua AVA, which has been a quiet beacon of the Gamay grapes’ capabilities outside of the Willamette Valley.

In a warm year like 2015, we worked hard with both vineyards to contain vigor and slow down maturity to develop complex phenolic maturity without taking on too much sugar and a corresponding decrease in natural acidity. We fell hard for carbonic maceration fermentation technique while learning about and making wine in the Beaujolais region and began experimenting with the technique with Pinot Noir from Methven Family Vineyards in 2012. Carbonic Maceration involves fermenting the wines fully on the stems in a closed vessel that is initially inundated with carbon dioxide that macerates the grape skins mostly enzymatically versus the traditional method involving pulverization and recirculation. For the “Les Petits Fers” Gamay Noir, we fermented one block (Methven) fully carbonic, two lots (Redford-Wetle & Bjornson) partially carbonic and one traditionally (Rebecca’s) to create a balance between the fruity carbonic wine with more nuanced and vibrant traditional made wine. For all of the lots, we utilized a pied de cuve fermentation, which is created using a small amount of the site’s grapes to build a strong yeast population from the native flora. The build up is then added a few days after the carbon dioxide enrichment for the Methven, Redford-Wetle, and Bjornson grapes and after three days of cold soaking for the Rebecca’s grapes. Each of the ferments were relatively lengthy and lasted about 25 - 35 days on the skins, with the wines being pressed off in mid to late October for ageing in both a stainless steel tank and three neutral French oak barrels.

The 2015 result of our “Les Petits Fers” Gamay Noir is definitely a step up in complexity from our 2014, with the new sites clearly adding to makeup of the wine. This is first time we surprised ourselves, as the wine shows the Beaujolais-Villages side of Gamay with freeze dried strawberries, black pepper, the distinct carbonic flavor and rose petals on nose. The palate is mineral rich and intense in strawberries, and juicy fruit! The wine is medium bodied and very smooth (especially for the vintage), and has a deep color for Gamay. We think it’s drinking very well in it’s early youth and are excited to see how it ages!

Vineyard - Rebecca’s Vineyard - Umpqua AVA, Bjornson, Redford-Wetle, Methven - Eola-Amity
Harvest – September 10th-24th, Brix 23.2 - 24.1

Fermentation/Ageing - 25% carbonic, 50% semi-carbonic, 25% traditional. Aged in 550gal stainless steel and two neutral French oak barrels. This wine was not fined and received 43ppm total so2.

