

2018 Division-Villages

“Méthode Carbonique” Pinot Noir

Cassin Vineyard - Yamhill Carlton AVA (60%) & Methven Family Vineyards - Eola Amity Hills AVA (40%)

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 2019 vintage turned out to be a true throwback to the classic European vintages of yester-year. After a relatively cool and humid summer by Oregon standards, some nice dry weather came in time for veraison and temps were mild to cool during the day and cool to cold at nights, which extended the growing season well into October, and even for us cool climate lovers, pressed against the boundaries of optimal picking.

This is our third year with the Cassin Vineyard, located in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA at the far western edges near the coastal range—a location that is truly cool climate and was our last site to be picked again. We are really falling for this site that produces elegant wines with a distinct red berry characteristic. Not too far away is Methven Family Vineyards, set in eastern flanks of the northern Eola-Amity Hills AVA, a vineyard that has provided significant portions of the “Méthode Carbonique” Pinot since we first vintage of the bottling 2012. The Methven 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. We are very excited to announce the transition this past year of both of these vineyards to organic principle farming, including the cessation of systemic herbicides.

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 one concrete tank and several old French oak barrels.

In 2019, the aromatic profile of this wine is a mineral-driven mix of dusty earth, red berries and pure Pinot fruit. While we've never really considered our “Méthode Carbonique” Pinot Noir to be overly complex, the 2019 continues the trend from the 2018 bottling with just enough structure to add depth and intrigue. Strawberry and flinty earthy notes continue from start to finish, as does the wine's purity. Super pretty and crying out to be gulped not sipped, the wine's lower alcohol will make that easy to do!

Alc 13.6%, 290 cases produced

