

2020 Division-Villages

“Méthode Carbonique” Pinot Noir

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. 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. By 2012, we were ready to show off this approach and launched the “Méthode Carbonique” Pinot Noir.

This wine features some of the Willamette Valley’s best known appellations, including the Eola-Amity Hills, Yamhill-Carlton and Chehalem Mountains AVAs. These sites are anchored in clay rich volcanic soils, like Nekia and Yamhill Jory, as well as some marine sedimentary soils too, all overlaid against fragmented basalt. We have fallen for these sites because they produce elegant wines with a distinct red fruit characteristics.

The 2020 vintage created some unique challenges for the entire West Coast, most notably the wildfires that plagued parts of Oregon and California. 2020 was definitely a challenge for our entire Willamette Valley community, and we were no different, The smoke that was in the Willamette Valley had an effect on some of our Pinot Noir vineyards and we notice roasted and herbal notes in some of the lots. We were able to mitigate some of the effects by waiting to pick and keeping macerations short. Our yields were off as well in 2020 and we are down about 20% in production for the vintage.

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. Skin times were kept shorter than normal to reduce the extraction of smoke related compounds and the wines fermented a bit warmer to extract more fruit. Aging was completed mostly in stainless tank and some Oak barrels for 5 months before bottling.

For the 2020 wine, the aromatic profile of this wine is a mix of bright red fruits, roasted meats and spring herbs, like rosemary and thyme. The “Méthode Carbonique” Pinot Noir is a lot of fun in the bottle, not overly complex, but perfectly suited for hangouts in the backyard on nice summer days. The strawberry, flinty and earthy quaffer is crying out to be gulped not sipped, the wine’s lower alcohol will make that easy to do!

Alc 12.8%, 260 cases produced

