



WHITE ROSE ESTATE

2009 Winemaker's Cuvee Pinot Noir

The Vintage and Vineyards

The growing season was marked by a number of unique weather patterns, both periods of record high and record low temperatures. The patterns seemed to off-set one another, resulting in a wonderfully protracted growing season. September was hot with a short period of rain near the end of the month. October was dry and cool, which allowed for greater than normal hang-time resulting in great flavors, good acidity and moderate to moderately high sugar levels. All our vineyards benefited from the lengthy season and produced ripe, balanced fruit with great structure. Concerns of over-ripeness, mildew, botrytis and other weather-related problems were very low, affording us the luxury to pick vineyard sites only when flavors were optimal: mature, concentrated and layered. Yields at harvest averaged approximately 1.5-1.75 tons per acre across all vineyard sites. Some fruit was harvested as late as October 20th.

In The Winery

Part of each lot of fruit was gently de-stemmed as it arrived at the winery. To enhance structure and complexity, 60% of the fruit was fermented whole cluster. All lots were cold soaked for 4 days on average before being inoculated for fermentation. The fermentation took on average 6 days to complete, with 7 days of additional post-maceration skin contact to enhance color, flavor and structure. After a total of 17 days of skin contact, we pressed off in our old world, half-ton, wooden basket presses, a process that reduces the yield we garner from the must, but insures soft tannins and delicate aromatics. After pressing, the wine was barreled down in French oak for 15 months of aging in the cellar. While in barrel, we rack once after malolactic fermentation and then again just before blending.

The Wine

During our blending process, we're typically focusing on individual vineyards, single appellations, or wine that would achieve the character and style of our Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. The only problem with this approach is that sometimes we have a couple barrels that really stand-out, but don't fall in any of the above criteria. We decided to remedy the situation and give our winemaker, Jesus Guillen, the ability to craft a wine from his favorite barrels in the cellar. He selected one barrel from Block 1 of White Rose Vineyard in the Dundee Hills AVA and 1 barrel of Bell Road Vineyard in the Chehalem Mountains AVA. These two barrels were selected based on excellent varietal typicity, depth, complexity and clarity. The two barrels complimented each other very well creating a sum greater than the individual parts. Without regard to vineyard or appellation, our goal was to create a distinct wine from two of the best barrels in the cellar.

Technical Data

Vineyards: White Rose Vineyard Block 1, Bell Road Vineyard
Harvest: October 10-20, 2009
Cooperage: 100% French Oak (100% neutral oak). 15 months.
Bottled: February 25, 2011
pH: 3.7
Alcohol: 13.7%
Production: 48 cases

Press

92 Points – Jay Miller (The Wine Advocate #197, erobertparker.com)