

2016 Skin Contact Muscat Ottonel
“Marie”
Oak Grove Vineyard
Eola-Amity Hills Appellation

Location: Eola-Amity Hills is about a 35-minute drive south of Portland, and stretches from Amity in the north to Salem in the south. It's comprised of 37,900 acres.

Climate: The region enjoys a temperate climate of warm summers and mild winters, and 40 inches of annual rain, most of which falls outside of the growing season. The climate in this region is greatly influenced by its position due east of the Van Duzer Corridor, which creates a break in the Coast Range that allows cool Pacific Ocean air to flow through. This drops temperatures in the region dramatically, especially during late summer afternoons, helping to keep grape acids firm.

Soils: The soils mainly contain volcanic basalt from ancient lava flows as well as marine sedimentary rocks and alluvial deposits at the lower elevations. This combination results in a relatively shallow, rocky set of well-drained soils that produce fruit with great concentration.

Topography: Eola Hills, and its northern extension, Amity Hills, is part of a North Willamette Valley hill chain that developed out of intense volcanic activity and the collision of the Pacific and North American plates. The main ridge of the Eola Hills runs north-south and has numerous lateral ridges on both sides that run east-west. The majority of the region's vineyard sites exist at elevations between 250 to 700 feet.

Site Characteristics: Oak Grove Vineyard was originally planted in 1982 and is owned by Eola Hills Winery. The vineyard is located north and east of the town of Rickreall just off of highways 99W and 22. Way back in the day it was not unusual for wineries to plant a large number of grape varieties as there was no guarantee that Pinot Noir was going to become the dominant varietal and the impetus behind the majority of the Oregon wine industry. So this is undoubtedly one of the very few plantings this particular variety of Muscat in the state. Our relationship began with Oak Grove in 2007 when we began acquiring Sauvignon Blanc. In 2011 and 2012 we received the balance the Muscat Ottonel they did not use. In 2013 and 2014 we did not receive any of these grapes. In 2015 and again in 2016 we got the entire block of this old vine Muscat.

Wine Making and Notes: The 2016 Skin Contact “Marie” Muscat Ottonel is a pet project and a wine based on personal curiosity about the nature of white wines made centuries ago. Assuming that modern presses are far more capable and successful at squeezing un-fermented whole clusters and that part of the goal in winemaking is to maximize one's take from the grapes harvested we presumed that some sort of on-the-skin fermentation went on to make it easier to press the grapes and to get more juice/wine out of the harvested fruit. While this may not seem much of a basis for the production of a wine we were far more interested in what the resulting wine might be rather than simply the process of “skin contact whites” which seem to be quite in fashion. Muscat Ottonel seemed like a particularly good choice for this given its low alcohol, soft aromatics and easy nature on the palate.

This was done 100% whole cluster in a 1.75 ton fermenter. The ferment was pigeaged 1x/day from the day it arrived until pressing. Unlike Pinot Noir there was no pre-alcohol maceration. The fermentation was warmed up to allow native yeasts to activate. Over the course of 12 days the fermentation went from 17.5 brix to dry. The wine was pressed and allowed to settle for 72 hours. It was then racked to a 250

gallon concrete tank where it underwent elevage for nearly a year going through a full (albeit small) malolactic fermentation. Prior to bottling it was lightly filtered to clarify the wine.

The wine is floral in a way that explores a completely different aspect of flowers than the regular “normal” bottling of Dry Muscat Ottonel that we do. The direction of the wine leans toward orange blossoms. It’s elevage in concrete allows for an expression of minerality within the context of that orange-centric flower and fruit. This is utterly different in style and wine expression than any other wine we make or have ever made. Surprisingly, it also displays a fair amount of tannic structure which buffets the acidity and creates length and unusual complexity for such a humble grape. Yes, this wine is basically a total dorkfest in a bottle.

The wine sat in bottle for over a year, unlabeled and unnamed. After Patty passed away at the end of 2017 we decided to use her middle name, Marie, as the name of this unusual, fun, intriguing and creative wine.