



PATRICIA GREEN CELLARS

2019 Willamette Valley Sauvignon Blanc Willamette Valley AVA

Location: The Willamette Valley is 150 miles long and up to 60 miles wide making it Oregon's largest AVA. It runs from the Columbia River in Portland south through Salem to the Calapooya Mountains outside Eugene. Named for the river that flows through it, the Willamette Valley has the largest concentration of wineries and vineyards in Oregon and includes six sub-AVA's: Dundee Hills, Eola-Amity Hills, McMinnville, Ribbon Ridge, Yamhill-Carlton and Chehalem Mountains.

Climate: The Willamette Valley is relatively mild throughout the year, with cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers. While moisture is abundant, most of the rainfall occurs in the winter, not during growing season. This temperate climate, combined with coastal marine influences, make the gentle growing conditions within the valley ideal for cool climate grapes, including Pinot noir. The valley enjoys more daylight hours during the growing season than in any other area of the state. During this longer growing season, the Willamette Valley enjoys warm days and cool nights, a diurnal temperature swing that allows the wine grapes to develop their flavor and complexity while retaining their natural acidity.

Soils: The Willamette Valley is an old volcanic and sedimentary seabed that has been overlaid with gravel, silt, rock and boulders brought by the Missoula Floods from Montana and Washington between 10,000 and 15,000 years ago. The most common of the volcanic type is red Jory soil, which is found above 300 feet elevation (as it had escaped the Missoula Floods deposits) and is between four and six feet deep and provides excellent drainage for superior quality wine grapes. Anything below 300 feet elevation is primarily sedimentary-based soil.

Topography: The Willamette Valley is protected by the Coast Range to the west, the Cascades to the east and a series of hill chains to the north. Its namesake, the Willamette River, runs through its heart. The largest concentration of vineyards located to the west of this river, on the leeward slopes of the Coast Range, or among the valleys created by the river's tributaries. While most of the region's vineyards reside a few hundred feet above sea level, parts of the Willamette Valley do reach much higher. The Chehalem Mountains are the highest mountains in the valley with their tallest point, Bald Peak, rising 1,633 feet above sea level.

Winemaking and Notes: Sauvignon Blanc is only very lightly planted in Oregon with less than 100 acres currently existing in the state and less than 50 in the Willamette Valley AVA. Despite its modest acreage this white varietal is very well suited for the geology and climate as other successful more well know white varietals. Historically speaking, Sauvignon Blanc was given a shot prior to Pinot Gris taking over but a combination of poor growing and winemaking practices combined with poor sales of any Sauvignon Blanc (ever wonder why Mondavi calls it Fume Blanc?) led to a slow death spiral of the plantings in the state. Over the years we have combined our Estate fruit with a handful of other sites in the Willamette Valley to produce one of the largest production bottling of Sauvignon Blanc made in Oregon.

This bottling is made up of grapes planted in 2001 and 2002 from our Estate Vineyard, fruit from Oster Vineyard which is an older vineyard planted in the mid-1990s on the eastern side of the Willamette Valley past the town of Mt. Angel and from a section of Durant Vineyard in the Dundee Hills (this was previously a block of Pinot Gris that was planted in 1993). The fruit was fermented and aged in stainless steel tanks. To round out the wine one twice-filled puncheon (double barrel) from the old, 1990-planted section of the Estate Vineyard was added.

Three different yeast strains were used to help create different aromatic characteristics across the vineyards and thus greater complexity in the finished wine. Primary fermentations were finished in November, 2019 (the wines only went through a partial secondary fermentation and, thus, were sterile filtered) and the wines from the three sites were combined for fining (with clay), cold stabilization, filtration and bottling on April 13th.

This is classic Sauvignon Blanc provided you do not think this variety should smell like cut grass and cat pee. This has high-toned and heavily fruited aromatics along with the tinge of straw and minerals which is what ripe Sauvignon Blanc should have as its varietal typicity. The strength of the aromatics resounds in the glass as the wine is deeply fruited with tropical notes at the entry giving way to apples with extremely crisp acidity on the finish. The wine is bright and fresh while maintaining texture and richness without being heavy or taking away from its “summertime drinking” sort of nature. This will pair easily with a very wide range of food ranging from summer salads to denser white fish, sushi rolls and nigiri to spicier Asian influenced dishes, risottos with summer vegetables to chicken and pork done on the grill (and while grilling).

Oregon is rightly known for what its Pinot Noir does each vintage. While the 2019 vintage is going to be a very nice vintage for the state’s best known grape, it is quite possible that this is the first vintage in the history of Oregon that will be known for the quality of its white wines. Seemingly across the board of white varieties the quality, intensity and purity is extremely high. Wines are bright, fresh, nuanced, balanced and delicious. This is a great vintage to explore the clear side of the Oregon wine industry! Total production on this wine was 731 cases.