



## 2019 Reserve Pinot Noir 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 seven sub-appellations: Dundee Hills, Eola-Amity Hills, McMinnville, Ribbon Ridge, Yamhill-Carlton, Chehalem Mountains and the recently approved Van Duzer Corridor.

**Wine history:** Modern winemaking in the Willamette Valley dates back more than 50 years with the genius of three UC Davis refugees who believed that Oregon was an ideal place to grow cool-climate varieties. Between 1965 and 1968, David Lett, Charles Coury, and Dick Erath separately forged their way to the north Willamette Valley despite negative rumblings from their UC Davis cohorts who told them it was impossible to grow wine grapes in Oregon. They were the first to plant Pinot Noir in the Willamette Valley. They also planted small amounts of related varieties, including Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, and Riesling. These wine pioneers whole-heartedly believed that Oregon would one day become an important wine-growing region. Other believers were not far behind. Within the next decade, David and Ginny Adelsheim, Ronald and Marjorie Vuylsteke, Richard and Nancy Ponzi, Joe and Pat Campbell, Susan and Bill Sokol Blosser and Myron Redford all planted vineyards in the Willamette Valley. These families worked in a collaborative spirit, sharing advice, humor and encouragement, as they began writing history by producing superior wines in Oregon. Though, it wasn't until David Lett entered his Oregon Pinot Noir in the 1979 Gault-Millau French Wine Olympiades and won top Pinot noir honors against France's best labels that the world started to take notice of Oregon as a serious winemaking region. The Willamette Valley became an official AVA in 1983. Today, it is recognized as one of the premier wine producing areas in the world. It is most widely known for its award-winning Pinot Noir, but consistently earns top honors for other such cool-climate varieties as Pinot Gris, Dijon clone Chardonnay and Pinot Blanc.

**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 are 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.

**Wine Making and Notes:** This bottling allows us to accomplish two things that are very important to us as a winery. The first thing is that it allows us to be incredibly detailed about the barrels we select for our vineyard designated wines, so they stay true to the expressions of the site on a year in and year out basis. The Willamette Valley Pinot Noir bottling "Reserve" is almost entirely made up of barrels that simply were not included in a more prestigious bottling, which allows us to choose from larger sections of our diverse vineyards. Secondly, it allows us to

create a blended wine that has a degree of consistency to it each vintage that is of incredibly high-quality and retails for under \$30.

In short, this wine is a smoking deal! The 2017 Willamette Valley Reserve was rated as the #39 wine by The Wine Spectator and 93pts because of its unusual combination of quality, price, and availability.

This bottling comes from terrific sources. The 2019 has a make-up of unique pedigree for a wine at its pricing. Slightly over 33% comes from our Estate Vineyard from which we bottled 4 individual single vineyard/block bottlings in 2019. Other sources of significance are Freedom Hill Vineyard which is one of the most famous (and deservedly so) sites in the state, Corrine (formerly Olenik) Vineyard which we have bottled single vineyard Pinots from since 2009, Wind Ridge Vineyard which is an older Ribbon Ridge AVA site, Anderson Family Vineyard which is new to us but is a 30 year-old organically farmed site in the Dundee Hills (we are making a vineyard designated Pinot from it in 2019 as well) and a vineyard so famous that the winery that owns it, won't let us put the name of the vineyard on the vineyard designated bottling we make, let alone tell you it is one of the mainstays in our least expensive wine! You get the picture. This isn't throw away stuff mixed together and then hope for the best. This is an intentional wine filled with basically declassified single vineyard quality wine in it.

This wine carries the breadth of the winery in other ways as well. From completely destemmed grapes to 100% whole cluster fermentations, all winemaking stylistic decisions are represented within this bottling. The two most important AVAs in the Willamette Valley to us (and likely the two most prestigious and sought after) are Ribbon Ridge (where we are located) and the Dundee Hills. 75% of this wine comes from those two AVAs. To show those AVAs in their pure fruit form about 75% of the volume of this wine comes from neutral barrels while less than 3% of the blend are from new barrels.

This winery has always been dedicated to the concept of the highest-level quality without necessarily attaching a corresponding price point. Patty and I always wanted to have a winery that made wines that we liked to drink, but more importantly a winery that had wines we would, were we the customer, feel good about paying for. This Reserve Pinot Noir is as an important bottling to us and this winery as the lowest production, super-fancy, and exclusive wine that we make. Lots of people see, buy, and drink this wine and that is something that we love.

**Production:** 4,145 cases bottled.