

2011 ESTATE GROWN BLANC DE PINOTS



- Appellation: Willamette Valley
- Release Date: July 2012
- Suggested Retail: \$25

WILLAKENZIE ESTATE

TASTING NOTES:

Blushing white gold hue. This crisp red berry nose with aromas of apricot, golden raspberry, red currant and a touch of star anise is dramatically different from any other WillaKenzie white wine you have experienced. Complex flavors of white peach, pineapple and cranberry mix on the palate with a subtle saltiness. Its full-body feels round and lively through the entire length of the finish making your mouth water for more. Our Blanc de Pinots will age well 5-7 years. Serve slightly chilled. We recommend pairing with richer foods that complement its bright acidity such as halibut with a beurre blanc sauce or Tandoori cooked meats.

VINEYARDS:

The grapes for the Blanc de Pinots were selected from a number of Pinot Noir blocks, with a predominance of the 828 Dijon clone which ripened later than the other clones in 2011. The grapes exhibited a crisp level of acidity which is very conducive to making either white wine or sparkling. We also selected some grapes from the Pinot Meunier and the Gamay Noir blocks to further enhance the flavors and aromatics of the wine.

Yield: 2.9 tons/acre -- Brix: 22.3° -- pH: 3.1 -- TA: 9.8

WINEMAKING:

We timed our harvest based on taste and physiological maturity. Our goal is to let the vines fully express the fruit qualities that are characteristic of the varieties. In 2011 we decided to experiment by making white wine from red grapes grown on our Estate, applying the same techniques used for centuries in Champagne (minus the bubbles...).

We pressed whole clusters, with minimal skin contact to prevent coloration of the juice and after cold settling, inoculated with specific yeasts chosen to enhance the aromatics. We fermented in a stainless steel tank slowly and at low temperatures to optimize the freshness and subtlety of the fruit.

Alcohol: 13.5 % -- Residual sugar: 0.2% -- pH: 3.15 -- TA: 9.3

VINTAGE:

The spring of 2011 was wet and cool, which resulted in a very late bud-break on May 5th and a subsequent late bloom on July 4th. The fruit set was very fast due to a warm spell and completed in mid-July with an abundant number of clusters and minimum shattering of berries. We dropped a significant amount of fruit to adjust the crop to our target yields. The summer continued on to be cooler than normal (the coolest of the past 30 years) and veraison did not complete until mid-September, which is extremely late. Temperatures remained below normal for the rest of the season, so we pulled all the leaves in the fruit zone to minimize the risk of disease and maximize sun exposure. We started harvest on October 25th in Terres Basses vineyard and finished on November 22nd, the latest in our 18-year history, but we did it before Thanksgiving! Like in other cool years, our strategy has been to let the fruit hang as long as possible to ripen the tannins and to use our cold storage facility to further refine them. Our 2011 wines show great color, concentration, refined tannins and lower alcohol levels hovering around 13.5% alc. The 2011 wines have all the hallmarks of a very balanced, elegant and age-worthy vintage.

