

# 1999 Pinot Noir Alette

Varietal: 100% Pinot Noir

Appellation: Willamette Valley

Production: 995 cases



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## VINTAGE

The 1999 vintage is emerging as one of the best for Oregon and a superb one for WillaKenzie. The season started with a rainy spring and late bloom of the vines, and by July we were two weeks behind last year, but unlike 1998 at least we had grapes! The vine set was good, and from the beginning we could expect a normal-sized crop. The Willamette Valley saw very little summer rain, except for a 1/3" rainfall in August. Overall the summer was sunny, but a lot cooler than usual, causing a lot of anxiety among the grape-growers as we approached September. Fortunately we were blessed with very sunny days and cool nights from early September to late October. The result was a very uniform crop with medium to small clusters, clean fruit without a trace of rot or mildew, and great flavors, acidity and sugars. 1999 was the first year that WillaKenzie farmed all the vineyards without using any herbicide or systemic fungicides, a practice to which we are committed in the future. All the grapes were harvested between 23 and 24 Brix under perfect conditions.

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## VINEYARDS

The 1999 Alette is a selection of our Estate grown Pinot Noir Pommard clone and small amounts of the Dijon clones 113 and 114. WillaKenzie Estate has a total of 66 acres of Pinot Noir. The vines are densely planted at 1200 to 1800 vines/acre, running north to south, allowing for maximum sun exposure. All the vineyards are planted on WillaKenzie soil, a type known for its excellent drainage. The plants are grafted onto phylloxera-resistant rootstock and trained into an upright, double guyot trellising system. Approximately half the fruit was dropped (thinned at the time of veraison) to assure low yields and maximize flavor and intensity. The blocks of Pinot Noir were closely monitored as the harvest date approached and the picking date chosen based on taste and maturity. The grapes were picked by hand late in the season from October 5<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup> almost a month later than 1998, under perfect conditions! Release date: August 2001.

*Yield: 2.45 tons/acre      Brix: 24.2      TA: 6.0      pH: 3.59*

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## FERMENTATION AND AGING

We made the 1999 Alette in our gravity-fed winery with the goal of achieving a fully extracted and complex style. During this process, 30% whole clusters were used to enhance the spiciness of the wine. A cool maceration preceded the open-top, Burgundian style fermentation for a total of 21 days of skin contact and daily punchdowns by 'Bigfoot', our pneumatic punchdown device. The wine was then gravity fed directly to barrels where it underwent 100% Malolactic fermentation during the next six months. The wine spent a total of 12 months in 100% new French oak barrels from a selection of four coopers. This wine is unfiltered and unfinned.

*Alcohol % 13.9      pH: 3.74      TA: 4.9*

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## TASTING PANEL COMMENTS

The 1999 Alette is a smooth, elegant wine, with a dark and intense ruby color. The wine combines aromas of toast, mushrooms, red currant, and raspberries. Multi-layered, the mouth starts on a soft note and builds to many layers of flavors. The finish displays big, generous and smooth tannins with the kind of length that bodes well for today's enjoyment and long term cellaring. We suggest matching this classic Oregon Pinot Noir with grilled fish, particularly Northwest salmon, poultry, veal, truffles and roasted vegetables.