

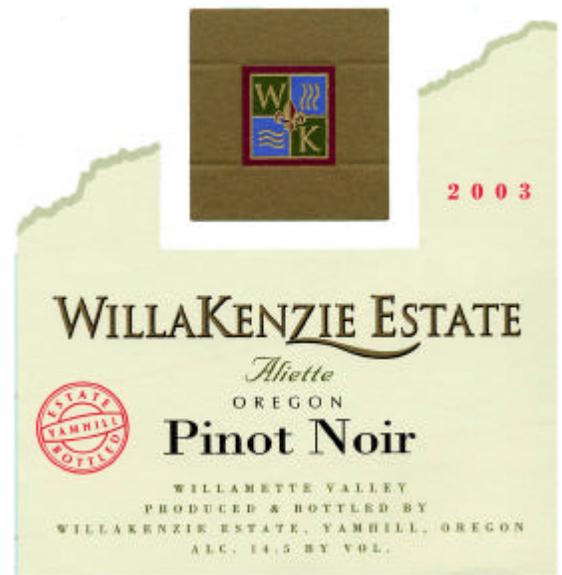
2003 Estate Grown Pinot Noir Aliette

Varietal: 100% Pinot Noir

Appellation: Willamette Valley
Yamhill-Carlton District

Production: 545 cases

Retail: \$36.00



VINTAGE

The 2003 growing season was very unusual for Oregon. It started with a mild, very wet spring, but the rains stopped in mid May, and the rest of the growing season was abnormally dry with little or no rain at all until October 7. There was a heat wave in June followed by a warm, dry summer, and then an unusually warm second half of September with temperatures reaching 95° F on September 27. Since the vines set a very good crop, we had to drop fruit to achieve our target yields on the same level as the Burgundy Grand Crus. We irrigated the vines several times during the summer and early Fall to keep the vines in top condition. The September heat spike compressed the harvest time from a typical 3 weeks to just eleven days, with all the blocks maturing within a short time window. The sugar levels were quite high, nothing below 24 Brix for us, but we managed to maintain a high level of acidity with ripe tannins. We started harvest on September 25 and finished on October 5 with grapes showing an incredible level of color and concentration. 2003 will go on record as another great vintage for Oregon.

VINEYARDS

The 2003 Aliette is a selection of our Estate grown Pinot Noir Pommard from the Aliette vineyard (named after owner Bernard Lacroute's mother) and small amounts of the Dijon clones. Aliette was the first vineyard planted at WillaKenzie Estate, in 1992. It is situated on a gentle hill which ranges in elevation from 560 to 600 feet. The ground has a deep layer of WillaKenzie soil on top of harder to penetrate sandstone. As a result, the vines have spread their roots deeply and rarely need irrigation. 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 was chosen based on taste and maturity.

Yield: 2.1 tons/acre

Brix: 24.8

TA: 6.6

pH: 3.6

WINEMAKING

In our gravity-fed winery, this 2003 Pinot Noir was handcrafted to achieve a fully extracted and complex style. During this process, a cool maceration preceded the open-top, Burgundian style fermentation for a total of 30 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 7 months. The wine spent a total of 12 months in 70% new French oak from a selection of four coopers. The wine was bottled unfiltered and unfined.

Alcohol: 14.5%

TA: 5.1

pH: 3.8

TASTING PANEL COMMENTS

The 2003 Pinot Noir Aliette has an intense, bright color in the glass, promising ample depth and complexity. The nose gives an initial impression of sweet, dark fruits, cassis and blackberry, with subtle hints of spice, white flowers and an appealing earthiness. The wine is luscious and full in the mouth with flavors of raspberry, plum and black cherries complemented by hints of toast, cedar and caramel. Well-balanced acidity and firm, but supple tannins frame this complex, generous Pinot Noir, which should age well for up to ten years. To fully appreciate Aliette's potential, we recommend that you open and preferably decant it at least two hours before serving. A wine of this scale will be a delicious companion to a variety of full-bodied foods such as lamb, vegetable ragouts, ahi tuna and venison.

For more information visit www.willakenzie.com, e-mail us at tastepinot@willakenzie.com or call 503-662-3280