

2009 PINOT NOIR ALIETTE



WILLAKENZIE ESTATE

- Varietal: 100% Pinot Noir
- Appellation: Yamhill-Carlton
- Release Date: February 2012
- Suggested Retail: \$48

TASTING NOTES:

Soft cherry-garnet in color, with aromas of pink peppercorn and rose petals. On the palate, the fruit shows kirsch, cranberry, pie cherries and dried flowers with undercurrents of cinnamon. Medium to full bodied, soft velvety tannins carry into a long and elegant finish. This well-rounded wine will age gracefully for 8 to 10 years, and should be cellared for 1 to 2 years. If opening sooner, decant at least one hour before serving. We recommend pairing the 2009 Alette with something slightly salty like Greek dolmas, or a hard aged cheese, such as Parmigiano-Reggiano.

VINEYARDS:

The 2009 Alette is a selection of our Estate grown Pinot Noir Pommard from the Alette vineyard (named after owner Bernard Lacroute's mother). Alette, situated on a gentle hill between 560 and 600 feet high, was the first vineyard planted at Willakenzie Estate, in 1992. 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. Approximately half the fruit was thinned at 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: 2.5 tons/acre -- Brix: 24.5° -- pH: 3.5
-- TA: 6.3

WINEMAKING:

In our gravity-fed winery, this 2009 Pinot Noir was handcrafted to achieve a fully extracted and complex style. A cool maceration preceded the open-top, Burgundian style fermentation for a total of 28 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 6 months. The wine spent a total of 15 months in 50% new French oak from a selection of four coopers. The wine was bottled unfiltered and unfined.

Alcohol : 14.2% -- pH: 3.7 -- TA: 5.4

VINTAGE:

The 2009 vintage started with a slightly delayed budbreak in the third week of April. After swift canopy growth from mid-May to June, full bloom ensued by June 18th, resulting in a healthy fruit set. By July, summer heat spells hastened fruit development and seed hardening. By executing a strategic leaf pulling program, we were able to delay exposing the fruit, despite the potential for sunburn damage, which was minimal compared to other sites in the valley where pulling was heavy and early. The growing season provided ample vegetative growth with a focus on maintaining a contained canopy, guiding the plant from green growth to fruit growth. Our clusters were abundant in number and plump with the start of veraison, from August 5th, onward. With appropriate hedging and fruit thinning, we managed to keep our target yields. The fruit matured progressively with very little fruit rot and increasingly lower yield, as dehydration set in. Harvest began on September 21st with Terres Basses and ended on October 12th. The overall quality of the fruit was exceptional with full, heavy clusters, good color, and an ideal balance of sugars and acids.

