



WILLAKENZIE ESTATE

Dirt Matters

New World Topography

Oregon's northern Willamette Valley is a pioneer in the cultivation of cool-climate grape varieties, producing wines that are world-renowned. The soil, the climate, and the topography are ideal for growing Pinot Noir, and have earned the respect of the winegrowers who live and farm here.

Importance of Place

We coined the moniker 'Dirt Matters', a phrase that recalls the time-honored French tradition of terroir, in which wines reflect a sense of the place from which they came. For us, this concept is so important we named both our Yamhill estate and our Dundee Hills vineyard after their soil types (Willakenzie Estate and Jory Hills Vineyard respectively).

Soil Types

Willakenzie soils are in turn named after two of Oregon's major rivers: the Willamette and the McKenzie. One of the oldest soil types in the Willamette Valley, Willakenzie is a marine sedimentary soil left by ancient, uplifted seabeds. It consists of moderately deep, well-drained silty clay loam over siltstone and sandstone. Characteristics of wines grown on Willakenzie soils include a predominance of black fruit (blackberry, black currant, and black cherry). By contrast, Jory Hills Vineyard is planted on a volcanic soil type with basalt as the underlying substrate. Our Jory Hills wines have a predominance of red fruit (raspberry, red cherry, and red currant).

Vineyard Characteristics

Just as the soils in the Willamette Valley display variation, so too do the separate vineyards on our estate. We are fortunate our land is so diverse that single-vineyard bottlings are possible, each reflecting the individual terroir specific to its vineyard site. Below are explanations of some of these differences.

The Single-Vineyard Sites

Aliette: Situated on a single, gently sloping southeast-facing hill that ranges in elevation from 570 to 610 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. Bernard named this vineyard after his mother, Aliette.

Emery: Named for Bernard's grandfather Emery, the vineyard is situated on a south-facing bench ranging in elevation from 580 to 720 feet. This site's layer of topsoil is deeper than in the rest of the estate, resulting in more vigorous vines.

The Jory Hills Vineyard: Located in the Dundee Hills, this is the only site planted outside the bounds of our Yamhill estate. Like its siblings, its name pays tribute to its soil type—Jory (see above). Here the vines are planted in an east-west orientation and display more red fruit characteristics.



Dirt Matters Cont.

Kiana: This vineyard is named after Ronni and Bernard's granddaughter Kiana, which is Hawaiian for goddess. It is situated on a moderately sloped hill at 480 to 570 feet on a well-drained site with a south row orientation.

Pierre Léon: Pierre Léon was named after Bernard's father to reflect the more masculine side of the wine. Pierre Léon and Aliette were the two vineyard designated wines that were made from the time the winery opened. The first vintage for both was 1995, and Aliette was named after Bernard's mother to reflect its more feminine and delicate characteristics. Today Pierre Leon is made from grapes coming from several vineyard sites on the Estate. The primary clones used for Pierre Léon are Dijon 113 and 115, but also some Dijon 114, 777 and some Wädensvil. Pierre Léon continues to be a more masculine style of wine, with a firm structure and silky tannins.

Terres Basses: Meaning the "low lands," this block is the lowest of the estate at 320 to 390 feet. Its soil structure is different from the rest of the estate, with a higher clay content making it a challenge to farm in winter, when muddy, and in summer, when a small amount of irrigation is needed. The unique soil composition of this parcel is a key contributor to the wine specificity.

Triple Black Slopes: Our steepest site composed of 4 blocks facing due south, with some sections exhibiting as much as a 45-degree slope. The name came from the black-diamond ski slopes which Bernard Lacroute loves to ski. Each slope is separated from the other by canyons filled with blackberries and quail, and the elevation varies from 350 to 670 feet. Its challenging terrain requires farming with narrow-track tractors by our best tractor drivers. The shallowness of the topsoil layer, steep angle of the slopes, south-facing orientation, and clonal selection contributes to wines of great intensity, but with lush fruit and supple tannins.

To find more information on WillaKenzie Estate, please visit the Trade Toolkit section of our website at: www.willakenzie.com/trade/toolkit