



WILLAKENZIE ESTATE

History

WillaKenzie Estate is the longtime dream of co-founder Bernard Lacroute. After a successful career in high tech, he decided to return to his Burgundian roots and grow Pinot Noir.

Finding an Ideal Site

The Lacroutes searched for a suitable site for several years and finally purchased a cattle ranch in January 1991 just outside Yamhill, Oregon. The rolling hills of the Yamhill-Carlton AVA are ideal for growing world-class Pinot Noir. They named the property WillaKenzie Estate after the ancient Willakenzie sedimentary soil on which the vineyards are planted (See Dirt Matters).

The First Vines

As the Lacroutes laid the foundation for what would become a small, family-owned winery, they knew their goal would always be to make wines reflecting the place on which the vines are grown. In 1992, they planted their first vineyards on south-facing slopes replacing pasture, blackberries, and poison oak. Additional plantings in Yamhill continued through 2001. Today, 105 acres of vines (about a quarter of the estate) are planted around untouched stands of Douglas fir, oak, and maple trees. Two-thirds of the vineyards are Pinot Noir, primarily Dijon clones as well as some of the Pinot Noir clones originally planted in Oregon. Remaining vineyards are planted to Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Meunier, Gamay Noir, and Chardonnay.

The Jory Hills Vineyard

In 2000, the Lacroutes purchased 95 acres of land in the Dundee Hills, again naming the vineyard after its soil type: Jory (of volcanic origin). To date 25 acres have been planted at the Jory Hills vineyard, using various clones of Pinot Noir.

Building the Winery

Construction of the Lacroutes' state-of-the-art, multi-level, gravity-flow winery was completed in 1995, just in time to make the wines from their first harvest. Since then, they have continued to make improvements, building an innovative facility in 2007 to dramatically cool their grapes before processing as well as a large solar array and new tasting room in 2010. Today, production remains at around 20,000 cases, and there are no plans to increase production further. Instead, emphasis remains on quality, not quantity.

After nearly two decades, WillaKenzie Estate has remained true to its founding principles. We are dedicated to sustainable viticulture and organic farming practices with the goal of making wines that reflect the distinctive character of our land and the diversity of our extensive clonal plantings.

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