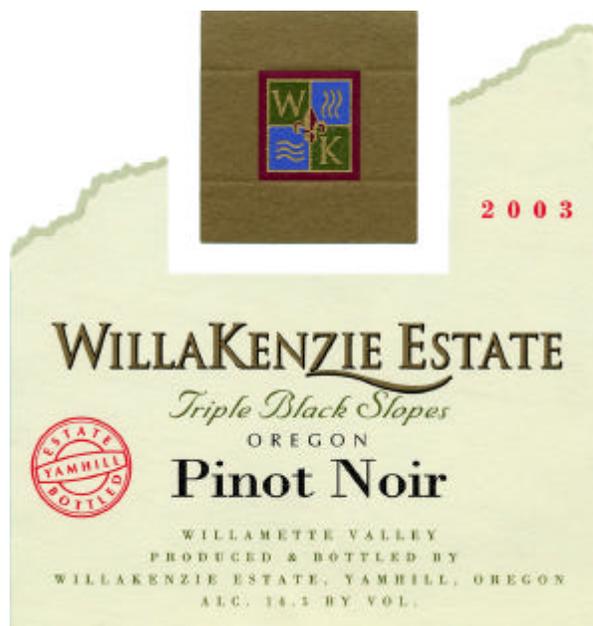


2003 Estate Grown Pinot Noir “Triple Black Slopes”

Varietal: 100% Pinot Noir
Appellation: Willamette Valley
The Yamhill-Carlton District
Production: 454 cases
Retail: \$ 55.00



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 “Triple Black Slopes” vineyard is composed of 4 blocks facing due south. Each slope is separated from the other by canyons where blackberries and quails abound. As the name indicates (it comes from the black diamond ski slopes designation), it is the steepest part of the vineyard and we farm the “slopes” with narrow track tractors and our best tractor drivers. The elevation varies from 500’ to 675’. The vineyard was planted in 1999 to Dijon clones 114 and 777. The rows are oriented north-south with an average density of 1750 plants per acre, and the vines are trained into an upright double guyot trellising system. The combination of the steep terrain, the south-facing orientation and the clonal selection contributes to the intensity of the wine.

Yield: 2.1 tons/acre

Brix: 25.0°

pH: 3.6

TA: 6.0

WINEMAKING

In our gravity-fed winery, the 2003 Triple Black Slopes 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 18 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 50% new French oak from a selection of coopers.

Alcohol: 14.5 %

pH: 3.8

TA: 4.8

TASTING PANEL COMMENTS

The 2003 Triple Black Slopes displays great clarity and depth of color in the glass. The aromas offer a powerful impression of ripe, dark fruit including plum and cherry with a hint of violets. The mouth feel is complex and luscious, with layers of blackberry and blackcurrant. Distinct, yet well-integrated tannins beautifully balance the concentrated fruit focus. The wine is full-bodied, round and smooth with a lingering finish. Intense and immensely enjoyable, it will benefit from being opened and preferably decanted a couple of hours before serving. A wine of this scale will definitely improve over the next 3 to 5 years and cellar well for a further 6 or 7. The wine will be a nice complement to dishes such as leg of lamb roasted with rosemary, venison with a currant sauce and hearty tomato-based pasta.

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