



WILLAKENZIE ESTATE

Winemaking

Winemaking at WillaKenzie Estate is guided by an uncompromising commitment to quality. We combine the best traditional French methods with American innovation to craft wines that are complex, refined, and unique — wines that express the distinctive terroirs of WillaKenzie Estate and our Jory Hills Vineyard. Our wines are also a reflection of Oregon's cool climate, with elegance, ageability and balance as their hallmarks.

With every wine, we focus on bringing forth intense flavors, robust structure, round and supple tannins. All of our wines are produced in limited quantities with sustainability in mind, bringing you an honest reflection of our estate.

FRENCH TRADITION

Reds

Stylistically, we aim to make red wines that are complex, fragrant, and full-bodied, but with soft and silky tannins. Under the direction of Winemaker Thibaud Mandet, educated at the University of Bordeaux, our Pinot Noirs spend their first few days after harvest cooling in “Big Chill”, our cold-storage facility. They then undergo a cold-soak maceration and fermentation in a stainless-steel or oak tank with a traditional punch-down regime and pump-overs as required. This is almost always followed by a post-fermentation maceration. The wines are then aged in small French oak barrels in our underground cellar for at least one year. They typically spend another year in the bottle before release.

Whites

The goal for our white wines is to produce fresh wines that fully express the characteristics of their fruit. For this reason, all of our white wines (with the exception of our Late Harvest Pinot Gris), are made entirely in stainless steel, with no malolactic fermentation and no barrel aging. The grapes are first picked ripe, then loaded as whole clusters into a bladder press where they are gently squeezed. The juice is fed by gravity into closed-top stainless-steel fermenters where it undergoes primary fermentation. The wine is bottled a few months after fermentation is complete.

AMERICAN INNOVATION

Burgundian by birth, engineer by training, and vintner by passion, Bernard Lacroute has relied on all three traits to further refine winemaking at WillaKenzie, where innovation and technology have always played an important part in the vineyard and winery. Below and at left are some of the innovations we use to create our world-class wines:



Winemaking Cont.

–Gravity-Flow: Our multi-level, gravity-flow winery allows for gentle handling of our grapes as well as aging in our naturally cool underground cellar in true Burgundian fashion.

–'Big Foot': Designed in 1995 by Bernard Lacroute, this punch-down robot gently and consistently punches down the cap during grape fermentation.

–'Big Chill': In 2007, a cold-storage facility, also designed by Bernard, was custom built to dramatically cool our grapes before processing, thus improving the aromatics and structure of our wines. This sophisticated system can also be programmed to manage the moisture content of our grapes in wet years.

–Cork-Free Closures: Starting with the 2001 vintage, we have bottled an increasing percentage of our red and white wines, including estate Pinot Noirs, with screwcaps, which prevents the taint associated with even the best grade of natural cork.

–Solar Array: In 2010, we finished installing a large solar array that produces almost half of our energy needs.

–French Oak Tanks: To micro-manage temperatures during fermentation, we custom designed French oak fermentation tanks and we will compare the results with our other stainless steel fermenters.

–Reclamation of CO₂: CO₂ is produced naturally during the fermentation of grapes and is an excellent agent to protect finished or unfinished wines during their various phases of fermentation, especially during the post-fermentation phase. We have designed a very simple system that captures the CO₂ from fermenting tanks, especially the closed-top tanks of white wine, and pipes it to wine tanks during the post-fermentation phase. The wines are protected, and the CO₂ is reused effectively.

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