

ArborBrook Vineyards

Vintage History ~ 14 Years of Variation!

One of the beautiful things about Oregon Pinot noir is that there are never two that are the same and they typically have great flavor range and nuance. Certainly, the terroir of each vineyard and even blocks within vineyards can account for some of this. The weather conditions each year are another factor that creates new challenges and can help explain some of the differences. Below is some background about each of our fourteen growing years in an effort to explain the factors that have driven some of the variations from year to year.

Pour a glass of Pinot and enjoy reading through the history.

2004

Our first production year with three year old Dijon clone 777 vines, this was a warm year marked by the third warmest August in the last fourteen years. The combination of young vines and a warm August produced an early harvest that brought us a fruit-forward Pinot noir that developed into a dark-fruited, nuanced wine as it has aged.

2005

A cooler year that did not have the warm August temperatures that we saw in 2004, the even and slow ripening of the 2005 vintage produced some of the most beautiful and soft tannins in our 14 year history of producing wine. The year really illustrates the beauty that is brought out in Pinot noir when it is allowed to ripen slowly without extreme temperature moves.

2006

This growing year brought us early warmth in the year and the third warmest July in the last fourteen years. Early ripening brought about more intense concentration and then August temperatures leveled out to give us a nice ripening finish to the year. Early warmth pushed sugars harder, resulting in higher alcohols and less acidity, so expect a shorter aging life than some other growing years.

2007

A cooler growing year, marked by one of the coolest August's in recent years, the conditions produced less fruit-forward Pinots that require patience. Now, ten years later, these Pinots are beautiful, elegant and more reminiscent of a French Burgundy. Good things some time take time to develop in the bottle and this is clearly one of those years.

2008

A year that the wine writers love, 2008 featured moderate temperatures and slow ripening, a bit like we saw in 2005, albeit a little cooler than that vintage year. Out of the shoot with some nice elegance, the 2008 vintage quickly became tight and needed bottle aging time to make a comeback. As beautiful Pinots often do, this wine has now evolved nicely and has beautiful balance between fruit and elegance.

2009

Another early, warm year, similar to the 2006 vintage, it displays the intensity that the 2006 year showed, yet a cooler August allowed for nice development of tannins and mouth feel that makes the year appealing. Again, however, with warmer growing year temperatures and higher alcohol, these wines will not age as long as others and are made to drink a bit younger than cooler vintages.

2010

Climate variation kicked in during 2010 and we experienced much cooler July and August temperatures but we were blessed by a long Indian summer that brought about slow ripening and beautiful tannin

development. The vintage year is a bit less fruit-forward than the warmer years but very elegant and a wine that will age nicely for more years to come.

2011

This is the year that summer never really arrived, with both July and August turning in very low average temperatures. With great concern about being able to get fruit ripe, we had lower yields, somewhat brought about by a lighter fruit set and careful management of crop loads to try and give us enough ripening time to work with. Certainly another year that requires patience for these elegant and feminine wines to develop, they are just now starting to show their beauty and finesse. These wines are built to age and may be enjoyed for several years to come.

2012

This year started with what appeared to be an instant replay of 2011 with similar July temperatures and then the oven was turned on in August, giving us a one week period where we were above 100 degrees each day. Our warmest temperature that week hit 113 degrees! The extreme heat pushed the vines and sugar development hard and then we began to see some late season dehydration. Changing the typical balance between juice and skin, the 2012's have noticeably more tannins that will take some time to soften. If you like intense and fruit forward Pinots, this may be a favorite year for you.

2013

This vintage started out looking like a continuation of the August conditions that we saw in 2012. July was warm as was August and then mother nature decided to cool us down in mid-September as we were approaching harvest with a massive rain storm caused by a spent typhoon coming in from the Pacific Ocean. Over a ten day period, we saw about 8 inches of rain and winemakers made a variety of pick decisions to deal with the sudden weather change. At ArborBrook, we hedged our bet and picked some fruit before the rain, some after, and blended the two together. The result is a beautiful and elegant year that could pass for a cool climate year with soft fruit, elegance and nuance; we just got there in an unconventional way!

2014

Let the heat begin early and constant through this growing year, resulting in one of our earliest harvests ever....until 2015 rolled around. Typical of warmer years, the 2014 vintage is fruit-forward and very appealing, certainly a wine that can be consumed young. That being said though, 2012 taught us some important lessons in how to manage warm years. By in large, the 2014 vintage wines were harvested at lower brix levels to counter the dehydration and higher sugars that we saw in 2012. Again, showing well young with a lot of fruit, we are now seeing the nuance of the vintage coming forward and making these some very specials wines. Expect that evolution to continue over the next several years.

2015

Another early and warm spring moved us quickly into the growing season, producing a very early harvest and more fruit-forward and nicely concentrated Pinot noir. My guess is that these wines will follow a similar path as the 2014's, being more dominated by fruit young and displaying more nuance after they have spent some time in the bottle. These wines can be enjoyed young but do not drink them all too soon, I think you'll be rewarded by waiting too.

2016

With virtually no winter in 2015 and into the first months of 2016, spring and bud break came very early, giving us the earliest harvest ever in 2016. Again, warm but more consistent temperatures without as many heat spikes as in 2015, has produced fruit-forward and elegant Pinots that people will enjoy young but will also show well with advancing character as they are allowed to develop in the bottle. Just like the 2015's, do not drink them all when they are young, as you will be rewarded with nice nuance and elegance as they bottle age.

2017

Although too soon to say a lot about our newest vintage, I will tell you that the year brought us the largest yields from our vineyard in its history. Two factors contributed to this, we had a real winter and spring and soil moisture levels were charged up! With lots of moisture in the ground, a breakout of heat in May caused the plants to take off and we had a perfect and rapid fruit set. Although we got a late spring start on the growing year, a very warm August caused us to make up for lost time and we finished the year with very flavorful fruit that will produce another great Oregon Pinot noir year!

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