

This month we come back home to offer two wines from our neck of the woods, the Willamette Valley. About 50 years ago, with Old World wine history as a guide and little to no history stateside, a bunch of hippy rebels headed north from California. They were armed only with knowledge and an intense desire to grow and make quality Pinot Noir. Taking their cue from our French friends in Burgundy and not from our cocky neighbors to the south (Burgundy is a place first, not merely a type of wine—thank you very much, Mr. Gallo) the search for the perfect Pinot Noir climate and soil ended here, in the Willamette Valley. Well, it's been awhile since David Lett first planted Pinot Noir in the Valley in 1965, and we since have learned a lot. We are not Burgundy, and we sure as hell are not a smaller version of California. In fact, our history, soils, and climate make our wines quite unique. Take our history and the Missoula Floods, for example, that came barreling through Eastern Washington and Oregon about 15,000 years ago, uprooting parts of Montana and Washington and depositing rocks, huge boulders, glacial lake deposits, marine sediment, loess and basalt that now make up the soil floor of the Willamette Valley. In a nutshell, that created the unique Oregon terroir. Yes, I submit, our Pinot Noir is sometimes Burgundian in style—with more restraint and subtlety than hot-climate fruit bombs from warmer regions due south. But it's never mistaken for a wine from Burgundy. Believe us, we have tried it in blind tastings!

The Willamette Valley has learned well to not just use Burgundy (or France) as a guide when planting grapes. Sure, we make decent Chardonnay and Pinot Gris, even stellar versions once in a while, but is either of these grapes the true white varietal of Oregon? The grape that feels right at home, that fits in both climatically and geographically to produce above-average wines? We feel the jury is out on that one. It seems like other white varieties might just have the potential to kick ass. Take this month's Grüner Veltliner, for example. This varietal, the darling of Austria, has yet to find a pied-à-terre outside its native land. New World pioneers are dabbling (Australia, New York, even Napa), but it has not yet really taken root in any one region. Oregon viticulturist Lowell Ford planted just half an acre of Grüner in their Willamette Valley Illahe vineyard back in 1995. Illahe, pronounced Il-uh-hee, is a local word from Chinook meaning "earth," "peace," or "soil." Ford's version is light and delicate, and with apple and melon it's crisp and refreshing, straying just slightly from its peppery counterpart in Austria. This wine has done well for Illahe, a standout that was selected to be the first-course pairing at a presidential dinner back in 2011.

Our second wine is the long-established transplant Pinot Noir. Back in 2000, Steve and Karen Lutz bought just 15 acres of nutrient-poor, ancient sedimentary soils in the Yamhill-Carlton District—known to produce Pinot Noir from small berries leaving concentrated black fruit flavors and rich textures as a result. As Steve Lutz says, "There are many gray areas in wine, but if there is one truth, it is that great wines come from poor soils." This particular site produces an underlying mocha character, which is the aromatic signature of the terroir of Lenné. Aptly named LeNez (the nose), this wine exudes beautiful Oregon aromatics that distinguish our Pinot from Burgundy's. Its aroma is uniquely Oregon. So this month as you taste these two wines, keep an open mind, and don't look for Burgundy (or Austria) in a bottle, but Oregon.

Don't Forget, if you like what you are drinking you can usually order more. We even give case discounts when we can. Most of our wines are very limited production, but we will do our best to track down some additional bottles for our faithful club members...

Questions, Concerns, Suggestions, Extend your Subscription?? Please, speak your mind!!

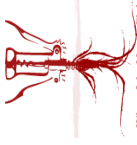
Purevinewines.com, (877) 404-1121

Until next month,

Joe, Tom, & Andria

(over for recipe of the month)

“fighting for the soul of wine..”



This Month's Biodynamic® / Organic Selections

Le Nez

Pinot Noir

100% Pinot Noir

**Region: Willamette
Valley, OR**

Vintage: 2009

Made entirely from estate-grown fruit, this wine represents all five Pinot Noir clones planted at Lenné. The nose is ripe with Bing cherry, rose petal, and an underlying mocha aroma that's unique to the Lenné terroir. On the palate the wine is velvety, with a distinct midpalate tannin grip, a quality from firm acidity. This medium-bodied red is terroir driven and pairs perfectly with a recipe we just tried from the *-San Francisco Chronicle*, chicken thighs with leeks. Fabulous!

Illahé

Estate Grüner Veltliner

100% Grüner Veltliner

**Region: Willamette
Valley, OR**

Vintage: 2011

Traditionally grown in Austria, this semi-obscure white grape is fabled to have come from a Hungarian fighter pilot who defected to the West and brought Grüner to America. The nose has a nutty, green apple sense, while the palate exudes fresh melon. As our selection says on the bottle, "hand picked, basket pressed, small lot, hand sorted, horse drawn, hand labeled." Get the idea? This family-run winery, which has cultivated vines since 1983, is fully dedicated to sustainable agriculture and very small production: There were only 300 cases of this wine made.

Hey, why did my wine come in a used box?

In conjunction with Portland Wine Storage and our commitment to the environment we re-use wine shippers as many times as possible making them 100% recycled on our end.