

Illahe

Illahe's estate vineyard is a relatively warm site in the Mount Pisgah area of the Willamette Valley. Founded by Lowell and Pauline Ford in 2001 with an original planting of 22 acres of Pinot Noir, and they were later joined by their son in 2004, Brad Ford, who is now head winemaker. Currently there are 50 acres of Pinot Noir and another 10 acres of Pinot Gris, Grüner Veltliner, Tempranillo, and Viognier. Illahe's vineyard is LIVE-certified, Salmon Safe and Illahe participates in Oregon's Deep Roots Coalition that promotes responsible water management.



The vineyards are maintained with ground cover, green pruning, rainwater collection, dry-farming, and a combination of plant topping and leaf pulling. Whatever isn't performed by hand is powered by Doc and Bea, the two Percheron horses that pull the mechanical mower. They carry fruit to the crush pad at harvest and even haul cases of wine for a cuvée that is made and moved completely without electrical power. The same sustainable ethos continues on in the cellar, the winemaking is minimal intervention. The fruit and wine are gravity fed down three levels through the winemaking process from destemming and press to the tanks, amphorae, and mostly-neutral barrels used for aging.

The top of the estate vineyard is at 450 ft. above sea level at a 20% grade facing south and comes to a 4% grade at the bottom. The lowest portion is marine sediment, but the overall soil characteristic is Willakenzie-type sedimentary clay—specifically Bellpine, Wellsdale, and Dupee with patches of volcanic Jory. Generally, the estate vineyard experiences a slightly earlier budbreak and flowerings than other Willamette vineyards. With its moderate elevation and southerly exposure, the grapes achieve phenolic ripeness in cooler vintages and benefit from the cooling Van Duzer winds in warmer ones.

“Percheron Block”



Pinot Noir



Varietal/Blend: Pinot Noir

Farming Practices: LIVE Certified, Salmon Safe, Deep Roots Coalition / cover crops, dry farming of mature plants, mower powered by horses

Vineyard: estate

Elevation / Exposure: 350–450ft / S

Soil: sedimentary clay

Harvest Technique: by hand

Yeast: ambient

Fermentation: whole-cluster, spontaneous fermentation / 24-day maceration / wood basket press

Maturation: 16 months in French oak barrel (50% new)

Sulfur: 28ppm Free SO₂

Alcohol: 14%

Acidity: 3.40 pH // 6.3 g/L

Fined: no

Filtered: no

Country: United States

Region: Oregon

Subregion: Willamette Valley

Production #s: 406 cs

“This pinot is 100% estate grown and hand-picked. It is from a single block at the very top of our hill that we consider to be the best block of pinot noir in our vineyard. We named this block after our Percheron draft horses. Complex nose of ripe pomegranate and cranberries with aromas of cigar box, cloves and fresh marzipan. Elegant and structured on the palate, with prominent but well-integrated tannins that create great depth and texture. Flavors of cocoa-dusted almonds, spices and a touch of earth.”

– Winemaker's notes

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