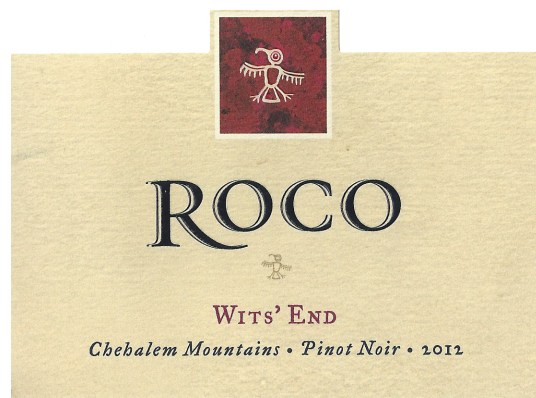


2012 ROCO Wits' End Vineyard Pinot Noir



92 points
Wine Spectator

Polished, sleek and almost plush, with refreshing balance to the apricot-accented black cherry and cinnamon flavors, lingering easily against velvety tannins. Drink now through 2020. 2/15

92 points
Stephen Tanzer's Int'l Wine Cellar

Brilliant ruby-red. Sexy, spice-tinged red and dark berry aromas pick up subtle smoke and floral pastille qualities with air. Fleshy and broad on entry, then tighter in the mid-palate, offering intense black raspberry and bitter cherry flavors and a jolt of allspice. Silky tannins build on the finish, which lingers with excellent focus and length and insistent berry fruit character. 7/14

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Winemaker's 2012 Vintage Notes

The 2012 vintage could be tagged as a "Mother Nature made these wines" sort of vintage for the most part. Bloom and fruit set traveled from normal to well below normal. Cold weather and some negative effects from hail drove yields generally down. But, that can be a GOOD thing as smaller clusters and good dry weather leads to ripe fruit for wine. When a grower cannot over crop their vineyards, all wineries can win with high quality.

The key challenge to the successful farmer this year was the fact that the period of July through October was the driest since record keeping began in the late 1800's. Potential desiccation was further exacerbated by very dry, east winds coming out of Eastern Oregon/Washington's high desert. This wind period was the longest I can remember in my 27 years of Oregon winemaking. Vines already starved for moisture will not fair well under these late fall conditions.

Belief in the weather forecast and seeking balanced fruit, caused us to give our vines a nice drink of water just before the east wind event. This allowed the vines to continue to photosynthesize and for the berries to stay plump and fruity.

If I had to compare this vintage to past ones, I'd probably pick a 50/50 blend of 2000 and 2008. We got excellent ripeness while retaining fresh natural acidity and mineral mouthfeel. Across the board, all ROCO wines white and red turned out extraordinary quality!

We were allowed to pick fruit under lovely fall sunshine at a leisurely pace, and with perfectly dialed-in maturity. Happy Days!

While Mother Nature delivered rich, wonderful wines, ROCO customers should not procrastinate purchasing the 2012 wines, as quantities are quite low.

-Rollin Soles

Wits' End Vineyard

The Soles' small Wits' End vineyard is situated on the southwest slope of the Chehalem Mountain Range.

The site is superbly located at an elevation of 400 feet and is protected from the winds by the costal range to the west and the Dundee hills to the south.

The vineyard is planted to a high plant density (2,200 vines per acre) on devigorated rootstocks with what Rollin considers three very distinctive Dijon Pinot noir clones.

The site is predominantly marine sedimentary soil and farmed for low yields. It is irrigated by a fresh water spring that flows year-round through the property.

The Chehalem Mountains are a single uplifted landmass with spurs, mountains and ridges.

Winemaking

ROCO Pinot noir is hand picked and then chilled overnight to 38°F in our large cold room. The chilled bunches are gently de-stalked and the whole berries fall into small 1.6 ton open fermenters. The berries soak for about five days before beginning ferment with our proprietary, house-cultured indigenous wine yeast. Soaking allows gentle extraction of color and flavor from the berry skin and not the bitter-tasting seeds.

The fermentations are hand punched twice a day to mix skins and fermenting juices. Ferments are allowed to reach about 28°C. A post-fermentation soak occurs until the wine is just right for removing from the skins and seeds. At that time the ferment is gently pressed in our large tank press.

The young wine is sent to barrel for Malo-lactic fermentation to soften the acidity and to add further complexity. After MLE, the wines are racked once to a mix of new one, two and three-year-old tight-grained, French oak barrels.

The wines are aged in barrel for 18 or more months before bottling.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Alcohol:	14%
Varietal:	100% Pinot noir
Appellation:	Chehalem Mountains
Vineyard:	Wits' End
Harvested:	October 8, 2012
Clone:	Dijon
Production:	215 Cases
Retail:	\$60

This vineyard is sustainably farmed, LIVE Certified and Salmon Safe.