

# ROCO WINERY

## 2020 GRAVEL CHARDONNAY

### 2020 GRAVEL ROAD CHARDONNAY

Gravel Road Chardonnay is a blend of our three favorite Chardonnay vineyards in the Willamette Valley: Gran Moraine, Marsh Estate, and Knudsen Vineyards. The first two vineyards grow in low to mid elevation, in sandstone-shale derived soils that provide a lovely creamy texture. While Knudsen Vineyards is located at a high elevation in volcanic derived soil that adds a racy minerality to this unique Chardonnay.

### 2020 VINTAGE NOTES

Spring was classic Willamette Valley - cold and wet, which limited the grape's ability to get pollinated. We saw a much smaller than normal crop set, but these can be extraordinary vintages.

The ripening period was deliciously temperate and promised exciting results! Ripe, bold flavored grapes with perfect acidity we thought were destined to become one of the best vintages of the 2000's! BUT, this is the Willamette Valley where Mother Nature always gets the last laugh. We normally get a short period of east winds off the dry, warm Eastern Oregon/Washington regions, bringing super dry winds pouring out the Columbia River Gorge into the Willamette Valley. These usually only last a day or so (longest I remember was 2014).

Disaster strikes! Fires in the Northern Cascades of Oregon flared up, then fires in Chehalem Mountains, north of Gaston, and even coastal fires near Lincoln City led to an inescapable blanket of smoke for the entirety of the Willamette Valley. Smoke led to smoke taint in the skins of our wine grapes.

After 30+ years of Willamette winemaking, this was the most stressful vintage of my career. ROCO pivoted to reduce its red wine production and made its first white pinot noir (eliminates skin extraction). The smoke molecules adhere to the skin of wine grapes. Red wines rely on grape skins for flavor and color. Thus, red wines are the most affected by smoke issues.

Our whites and sparkling wines are a wonder to behold and will serve as a reminder of what could have been for the vintage's Pinot noir.

### WINEMAKING PROCESS

ROCO Chardonnay is handpicked and then chilled overnight to 38° F in a large cold room. The chilled, whole cluster bunches are pressed, and the juice is sent to tank. After settling in the tank, the juice is racked to French oak barrels where it completes fermentation. After the primary fermentation, the young wine goes through malolactic fermentation to soften acidity and add further complexity. The finished wine ages on its' original yeast lees until bottling in July.

### TASTING NOTES

Aromas of Cosmic Crisp apple and pear wrapped in a flaky pastry with a hint of lemon verbena. On the palate, this wine pops with Asian pear, lemon zest, and mineral core. Delicate pastry persists on the mid-palate before culminating in a long, zesty finish. Oysters, anyone?



**VARIETAL:** 100% Chardonnay  
**APPELLATION:** Willamette Valley AVA  
**SOIL:** Sedimentary & Basalt soils  
**CLONES:** Dijon 95  
**OAK:** 8% New French Oak  
**ALCOHOL:** 13.5%  
**PRODUCTION:** 496 cases  
**RETAIL:** \$30



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