

ROCO WINERY

2021 WITS' END CHARDONNAY



91 points
Wine Spectator

VARIETALS: 100% Chardonnay

APPELLATION: Chehalem Mountains AVA

SOILS: Sedimentary & Basalt

CLONES: Dijon 95

OAK: All neutral oak

ALCOHOL: 13.5%

PRODUCTION: 186 cases

RETAIL: \$50

ABOUT THE VINEYARD

Purchased in 1987, the Wits' End vineyard drapes down the southwestern slope of the Chehalem Mountain Range at 400' elevation. Situated among stands of native trees and two natural springs, the property is a quintessential Willamette Valley landscape, teeming with wildlife—including owls and hawks, coyotes and even cougars. Having anticipated this site as a perfect spot for vines, the Soles' began planting their vineyard in 2001 to Pinot Noir. Then, in 2013, they expanded it to a total of 20 planted acres, adding a block of Chardonnay in the process. Today, the property stands as testament to nearly 30 years of Willamette Valley vineyard know-how. The clonal selection is outstanding and cutting edge. The vineyard is densely planted on blonde marine sedimentary soil, derived from old ocean floor sandstone and shale, and farmed for low yields. The fresh water springs on the property flow yearround, providing irrigation capability from an old water right. The Pinot noir and Chardonnay from this vineyard are truly unique and expressive, producing wines that will age.

2021 VINTAGE NOTES

The Spring start to 2021 was one of the driest on record. Heaps of sunshine and warmth gave us the prospect of a nice crop of winegrapes. Just as the clusters bloomed, we received a shot of cold, wet drizzle. The result was rather poor pollination, limiting a potentially large crop. The Summer progressed normally until record heat hit us over the 25-28 July period. By plan, most of our vineyards are setup to drip irrigate if required. Watering vines a couple of days before the 25th seemed to allow the vines to “weather” the heat. Much of our chardonnay and pinot noir was harvested under sunny Fall skies. A refreshingly cold rain dropped snow down to 5500' on the 19th and 28th which benefited our later ripening Pinots. The last day of harvest was October 14th. The wines are delicious, do not lack for acidity, and due to our ability to drip irrigate vines and chill whole clusters at the winery, fruit expression is concentrated and fresh.

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

A classic cool climate chardonnay, redolent with the aromas of white nectarine, starfruit, lime zest, and a hint of saltwater taffy. On the palate, this wine unfolds with bright acidity, lip-smacking salinity, hints of mandarin, honeysuckle, and a touch of vanilla cream on the finish.

