

MARTIN WOODS

‘Top 50 U.S. Wines’

- Decanter 2024 (about Syrah Rocks District)

‘Evan is a bright person who is a winemaker’s winemaker and a Sommelier’s winemaker. He uses exacting and detailed language to give color to his approach to winemaking and his passion on viticulture and terroir.’ - James the Wine Guy



Year Founded: 2009

Region: Willamette, Oregon

Founder: Evan & Sarah Martin

Known for: Terroir-driven wines that Martin says are meant to be as refreshing as they are representative of where they come from.

-Organic, Sustainable-

Martin Woods is hidden in the oak-forested foothills of Oregon's Coast Range, within the cool-climate McMinnville AVA, Willamette Valley. Martin Woods is both the home and winery for winemaker/vigneron Evan Martin, who has been driven by a passion since 2009 for discovering the most compelling terroir in Oregon. Elegant Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are the focus of the portfolio, but Riesling, Grüner, Gamay, Cabernet Franc and Syrah are proving exciting for exploration. Evan's small team farms according to sustainable, holistic principles and the growers he partners with are of the same mindset. The winemaking methods are delicate and natural, but of greatest importance is that a Martin Woods wine promotes the classic qualities of purity, balance, complexity and fine structure that can only result from great terroir combined with wholehearted dedication to art and craft. Above all, it is the hope that the wines evoke a consistent and inspiring sense-of-place, an authentic Oregon voice.

Martin Woods is known for using Oregon oak barrels to age wines. Martin points out that he is not the first winemaker to embrace Quercus Garryana. "Rick DeFerrari has been making Oregon oak barrels since the 1990s, and a handful of local wineries supported his efforts early on," Martin said. Martin builds on those earlier efforts by working to determine which grape varieties work best in Oregon oak, how the barrels should be toasted and how long the wood staves should be aged. His work points toward Chardonnay and Syrah being excellent candidates for Oregon oak aging. As for their impact on the wines, Martin described Oregon oak as being "more reductive than French oak. It doesn't breathe as much and evaporates less water. It's just a slower evolution for the wine and there's a tautness, an energy that's maintained."

2021 Chardonnay Koosah Vineyard, Eola-Amity Hills



The Eola-Amity Hills is situated to the immediate east of the Van Duzer Corridor, the "air-conditioning" pathway through the Coast Range where marine air enters from the west and cools the Willamette Valley. At the very top elevation of the area sits Koosah Vineyard—in the Coast Salish dialect the name "koosah" means "beautiful ceiling of the sky". This "magnum opus" project of grower Kevin Chambers is without question one of the most thoughtfully planted (and riskiest) vineyards in the Willamette's history. Ripening here is patiently late and Fall rains will almost always threaten the harvest... yet that risk also offers rewards. The high elevation makes for strong diurnal shifts between cold nights and warm daytime temps with extra UV intensity. This alternation gives ripe fruit expression matched to bright acidity, with aromatics that are lifted and fresh. The Parrett soil (rocky volcanic basalt with shallow topsoil) provides balanced stress to the plants, resulting in sparse canopies and loose clusters, good wind and sun exposure, and ultimately small berries with thick skins—all of which combines to give the wines structure, framing and definition. Martin Woods is one of the very few producers who have the privilege to work with these vines and we are quite thankful.

Picked Sept. 10, 12 & 15, 2021. Whole cluster pressed, oxidative juice handling without sulfur. Primary fermentation (spontaneous, no yeast added) in tank, then stirred and moved (with lees) to barrel. Aged 14 months (6 months without sulfur) on lees (no battonage) in 228L & 400L Oregon and French cooperage (average age 6-7 years). Racked clean and bottled without fining on Dec. 15, 2022.

96 Points – Decanter – *"Another stunning 2021 vintage Chardonnay from the Eola-Amity AVA, this site Koosah sits at the region's highest planted elevations. Great mineral lift introduces this wine with a beautiful depth of complexity. Aromatics of crushed chalk and lemon pith swerve towards more layered savoury notes of petrichor, smoked salt and struck flint. There is a beautiful tension across the palate, marked by a graceful balance between fleshy stone fruits and streaks of thirst-slaking minerality—a fantastic culmination of the terroir's elements."*

95 Points – Wine Enthusiast

95 Points – Jeb Dunnuck

2021 Chardonnay Yamhill Valley Vineyard, McMinnville



Yamhill Valley Vineyard is positioned within the McMinnville AVA in the foothills of the Coast Range, along the edge of the Van Duzer Corridor—the "air-conditioning" pathway through the Coast Range where cool marine air pours in from the ocean 30 miles away. The cooling winds and cool mountain air translate to Chardonnay with refreshing, intense qualities. The shallow volcanic soils and steep, south-facing slope of the Fromage and Hilltop blocks have little water-holding capacity, causing stress to the vines and resulting in sparse canopies and loose clusters of unusually small, sun-kissed, thick-skinned chardonnay berries, giving tremendous depth and texture to the wine. Our goal for Chardonnay is to achieve a tension between expressive fruit, vibrant acidity, and subtle yet complex aromas. This exceptional block of vines offers a balance of depth, breadth and focus that amazes us every year.

Picked Sept. 22 and October 4, 2021 at 20.4 - 21.4 brix, 3.05-3.12 pH. Whole cluster pressed, oxidative juice handling without sulfur. Primary fermentation in tank, then moved (with lees) to barrel. Aged 9 months on lees (no stirring) in 228L & 400L Oregon and French cooperage (average age 8-10 years). Racked clean and bottled without fining on July 28, 2022.

96 Points – Robert Parker – *"Intense aromas of grilled peaches, honeycomb, ginger and mushroom. The medium-bodied palate is youthfully tangy and tense with a coiled core of fruit and saline character that gives it a shimmery feel."*

94 Points – Decanter – *"A broad, opulent Chardonnay from the lower elevation Yamhill Valley Vineyard. There is ample brilliance in the aromatics; hints of chamomile and cardamom go towards ripe pear flesh. The palate shows fleshy ripe stone fruits, peach, and apricot notes that are ripe and showy. There is a brilliant texture to it all, and a stony minerality balances the opulence."*

2024 Rosé, Willamette Valley



Inspired by the Cabernet Franc Rosés of Domaine Guiberteau, we were thrilled to have the opportunity to work with some of the sparse Willamette Valley-grown Cabernet Franc vines for the first time in 2024. Limited pre-fermentation skin maceration for a kiss of color. Fermentation in stainless tank with no malolactic fermentation and good retention of naturally-dissolved CO₂. On lees 4 months, then delicately filtered and bottled without fining. The cool marine air blowing into the neighborhood at Eola-Springs Vineyard ensured a later harvest date with patient development of flavors, retention of fresh acidity and promotion of spicy/floral aromatics. This rosé is both delightful and serious. Chill it and crush it, day or night. Or cellar it for 5+ years with development of increasingly pronounced perfume and nuanced texture.

2022 Pinot Noir Hyland Vineyard, McMinnville



Hyland vineyard is one of the Willamette Valley's historic vineyards, planted in the early 1970s with clonal selections of Riesling, Gewurztraminer and Pinot noir that originated in Alsace. These vines are now referred to as "Coury" selections—named for Charles Coury who sourced the cuttings. These blocks of Dijon 115 and Coury Pinot noir were both planted self-rooted in 1989 in iron-rich volcanic soil. The vines have thus far (after more than 30 years) resisted phylloxera and instead show signs of health and longevity. The vineyard is farmed organically and without irrigation. Hyland is situated on the shoulder of the van duzer gap, the "air-conditioning" pathway through the Coast Range where marine air enters from the west and cools the Willamette Valley. Persistent wind spills over this neighborhood, moderating temperatures and allowing for patient ripening and retention of fresh acidity. I find there is always a distinct textural elegance and freshness to this wine, coupled with lifted aromatics, that delights me year after year.

Picked Oct. 18 & 21, 2022. 10% whole clusters layered in small open top fermenters. 24 days total on skins. Once daily punchdowns starting on day 10. Peak fermentation temps 80-82F. Aged without sulfur for 6 months. Aged 18 months total on lees (no stirring) in 228L barrels, average age 4-5 years (only 8% new oak). Racked carefully and bottled without fining on May 8, 2024.

93 Points - Vinous - *"The 2022 Pinot Noir Hyland Vineyard is decidedly savory with a blend of dusty sage, flowery undergrowth, cedar shavings and woodland berries. This is juicy and round with cooling acidity and ripe red and blue fruits, taking on an air of sweet lavender toward the close. The 2022 finishes long and staining, also remarkably balanced, with a pleasantly bitter tinge and a subtle layer of fine-grained tannins that hang around on the close."*

2022 Pinot Noir Koosah Vineyard, Eola-Amity Hills



Vineyard Info: see Chardonnay Koosah Vineyard

Picked October 20th, 2022. 10% whole clusters layered in small open top fermenters. 25 days total on skins. Once daily punchdowns starting on day 10. Peak fermentation temp 80F. Aged without sulfur for 6 months. Aged without sulfur for 6 months total on lees (no stirring) in 228L French oak barrels (10% new).

96 Points – '22 Decanter - *“One of the most spice-driven among the Martin Woods releases, with green aromatic notes of mint, rose hip oil and sassafras. This wine has an alpine-like freshness. features bold aromatics yet impressive freshness on the palate, with notes of mint, pine, and green spices on the finish. It is a medium-bodied wine with soft, grippy tannins.”*

2021/2022 Pinot Noir Jessie James Vineyard, Eola-Amity Hills



The Eola-Amity Hills is situated to the immediate east of the Van Duzer Corridor, the "air-conditioning" pathway through the Coast Range where marine air enters from the west and cools the Willamette Valley. the high-density (2,400 vines/acre), four acre planting of vines at Jessie James is east-facing at high elevation—ripening here is patient and harvest is usually the first week of October. Furthermore, the vineyard is in a rain shadow, allowing the grapes to reach peak maturity with less risk of botrytis rot. The Nekia soil (shallow, rocky volcanic basalt) provides appropriate stress to the plants, resulting in sparse canopies and loose clusters with small berries and thick skins. The wines display exceptional depth and complexity of structure and fruit, with freshness and compact intensity. We lease the vineyard from Jessica and James Lee, from whom the vineyard takes its name, and we farm according to organic principles.

Picked Oct. 19, 2022. 10% whole bunches (middle layer) in 1.5 ton open top fermenters. 25 days total on skins. Once daily punchdowns starting on day 10. Peak fermentation temps low 80s F. Aged without sulfur for 6 months through ML. 18 months total on lees in 228L French oak (10% new). bottled without fining on May 6 + 8, 2024.

98 Points - Jeb Dunnuck

97 Points – Decanter – *“This is one of the lightest Pinots in the portfolio, with a chalky texture and minerality. It's giving a ton of energy. The palate shows refinement and freshness, with mouthfuls of spiced blood orange, smoky clove, and a white peppered spice to the finish.”*

2021 Gamay Tualatin Estate Vineyard, Tualatin Hills



Tualatin Estate is situated in the far northwestern corner of the Willamette Valley, with the coast range mountains to the immediate west creating a strong diurnal shift from warm days to cool nights, preserving mouthwatering acidity. The fine-textured, well-drained Laurelwood soil provides balanced stress to the vines, reducing vine vigor and crop yield. This produces concentrated red fruit, floral aromatics and ripe skin and stem maturity, giving fine structure and rich color.

The Willamette Valley is truly a home-away-from-home for Gamay, which is beautifully matched to the cool climate terroir.

Picked October 8, 2021. 40% whole clusters sandwiched in small open top 1.5 ton fermenters. 3 weeks on skins. Spontaneous fermentation, no yeast introduced. Once daily punchdowns started on day 12. Peak temps, 78-83F. Aged for 9 months (6 months without sulfur) on lees in old neutral cooperage. Bottled without fining on July 28, 2022.

92 Points – Decanter – “Shows as linear and focused with tons of mineral and floral character flashing in the aromatics. The palate is lean and racy with electric notes of purple, red and blue fruits and a kiss of white pepper to finish.”

91 Points – Wine Enthusiast

2022 Syrah, The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater



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Tightly demarcated by virtue of a single soil series (Freewater Series) and a single land form (alluvial fan), the Rocks District exists entirely within Oregon, just outside of the town of Milton-Freewater. The soils are composed of cobblestone-size gravels (of volcanic origin) deposited by the Walla Walla River as it exits the nearby Blue Mountains. The extremely well-drained soils encourage vine roots to grow very deep in search of water, allowing interaction with an abundance of mineral-derived nutrients. The cobblestones also absorb solar energy and radiate that heat to both the root and fruit zones, leading to earlier phenological ripening and wines with refined structure. The inland continental climate and northern latitude (46 degrees N) translate to strong diurnal shifts of day/night temperatures, giving the Syrah a wonderful balance of fruit and freshness. We believe this to be one of the few locales in the world where the delightfully sensual floral/savory attributes of Syrah can be captured with distinction, making for complexly-perfumed and textured wines that remind us of the very best from the Northern Rhone.

50% whole clusters sandwiched in small open top 1.5 ton fermenters. 35-40 days total on skins. Once daily punchdowns started at Day 14. Peak temps, 80F-85F. Aged 12 months on lees (7 months without sulfur) in 228L and 400L barrels, 6% new oak, then an additional 6 months in tank. Racked carefully and bottled without fining nor filtration.

98 Points - Decanter - “One of the most exciting domestic Syrahs, this wine beautifully showcases a well-crafted expression of the ‘classic’ funk of The Rocks. The deep umami notes come from the concentration of flavors in the berries due to the vines’ low yields. Notable aromas of green olives and peppers, violets, and meats complement those flavors.”

96 Points - International Wine Report - “Deep ruby-purple core with a medium purple rim, showcasing its bold and structured personality. With high stem inclusion during fermentation, this Syrah boasts incredible structure and an earthy depth that adds layers of complexity. Aromas of green olive, violet flowers, and boysenberries meld seamlessly with hints of black pepper, delivering a captivating nose that invites you in. The finish is long, with a lingering richness that makes this a Syrah you’ll want to return to, glass after glass. Though approachable now, patience will be rewarded—this wine will only get better.”