

ILLAHE VINEYARDS

RESERVE CHARDONNAY, WILLAMETTE VALLEY



100% Chardonnay. Aromas of honeydew melon, graham cracker, cinnamon, pineapple, and singed Meyer lemon. The grapes come mainly from Ash Creek and Nelson vineyards, with a tiny boost from the Woodworth vineyard on the top of Mt. Pisgah. It's fermented 75% in oak, 40% of which is new oak, and gets stirred once a week. After primary, it undergoes partial malolactic fermentation. Illahe's vineyard is on an 80-acre, south facing slope that experiences slightly earlier bud-break and flowering than most of the Willamette Valley, and grapes achieve maturity even in cooler vintages. Excellent drainage. Cooled in the evening by the Van Duzer winds. The majority of the vineyard lies on marine sediments atop ancient siletz rock. Shallow clay soils. Elevation from 250-440 feet. Cover crops throughout the vineyard. As part of Oregon's Deep Roots Coalition, which promotes responsible water management, mature plants are not irrigated. Rainwater is harvested to mitigate dry spells. Extensive green pruning and plant topping done by hand. To reduce reliance on fossil fuels, they have solar panels on the winery and use horses to mow and transport grapes. The gravity-flow winery features three levels, utilizing the natural slope of the site, starting from the crush pad to the fermenters and the press below. A further drop-off from the fermentation room to the press level allows them to load the press baskets by hand. The building's west and north faces are buried in the hill, which stabilizes the temperature.

ILLAHE, pronounced Ill-Uh-Hee, is a local Chinook word meaning "earth" or "place" or "soil." According to the winemakers: *"At Illahe, our goal is to make wine as naturally as possible from soil to bottle. We work by hand on small lots with age-old techniques and materials. Our focus is to grow and make quality Pinot Noir and white wines that express the vintage and their varietal characteristics. We don't use enzymes or additives. Some of our wines are made entirely by hand, with no electricity or modern mechanization. We use a gentle wooden basket press and age our Pinot Noir in French and Oregon oak."*

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Tasting Note:

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Shelf Talker:

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