

DIVERSE REDS TASTING NOTES

2019 Andrew Rich "Eola" Pinot Noir \$45

This is the sixth (and last!) vintage of Eola; you may recall that it is part of Andrew's soil series, blends that showcase the influence of the Willamette Valley's two main soil types on the character of Pinot noir. But in the case of Eola, he feels that the cooling Pacific breezes that infiltrate the appellation through a gap in the coast range are at least as influential as the soil in which the vines are planted. Sites for this year's blend are Eola Springs, Sojeau, and La Chenaie—all within a stone's throw of each other. A cool autumn helped create a wine of classic proportions reminiscent of Willamette Valley Pinots of old. Aromatics are floral and spicy, while the palate leans toward crunchy red fruit juicy acidity, creating a suave and seamless pinot to drink now or cellar for another five years or more. While this wine would complement all the usual suspects—grilled fish, fowl, pork, and mushroom dishes—it could make an unforgettable pairing with a Moroccan vegetable tagine redolent of all those warm baking spices.

2021 Ratio Retina Pinot Noir \$40

The vineyard sources for Retina shift a little from year to year. The 2021 blends organic fruit from Temperance Hill Vineyard in Eola-Amity Hills with a minor contribution (20%) and from the own-rooted and biodynamically farmed Meredith Mitchell Vineyard in the McMinnville AVA. Made with over 50% whole cluster fermentation, the 2021 Retina bursts from the glass with strawberry, cherry, iron, lavender, subtle black pepper, and woody spice. The palate is bright and fresh with quenching red fruit and mineral notes that leave resonant floral spice on the long, structured finish. The complex spice and youthful tannin of this wine seem a perfect pairing with a rich triple-cream cheese or something more complex and funky like Epoisses de Bourgogne.

2022 Founders Syrah \$50

The 2022 Founders Syrah comes from a small block at Elephant Mountain Vineyard just outside of Yakima. At 1,400 feet elevation, Elephant Mountain typically has longer hang times due to cooler nights during the growing season and less frost risk as it cools down in the fall. Honestly, we love this Syrah. Made with 25% whole cluster, this wine is coiled and packed with all the good stuff that makes Syrah one of the greatest varietals in the world. A little reticent now on the nose, time in glass reveals black and blue fruits, violets, sandalwood, vanilla and emergent black pepper, charcuterie, tapenade, tobacco and stony mineral notes that suggest complexity with time in the bottle. With a zesty acidity giving a surprisingly fresh palate and red fruits punctuating the nose, this wine reminds us more of a restrained Northern Rhone blend than of riper examples of Syrah from other regions. Pair with Justine Schofield's slow cooked lamb shank pie on a wintry weekend, or for more of a quick and easy Tuesday night meal serve with a simple lamb chop accompanied by a baby spinach salad.

2022 Aubaine Anahata Vineyard Estate Pinot Noir \$50

Beautiful deep garnet in color with a youthful purplish edge, the first nose opens with mixed aromas of blueberries, dark cherries, black raspberries, and gentle floral notes of lavender, violets, and peonies. These lovely aromas evolve towards baking spice, clove and cardamom, and wet gravel mineral notes. Smooth and refined on the palate with a fine texture, sustained with dark cherry, baking spices, and black currant core, the wine travels nicely on the palate and tightens through the mid-palate towards the finish where the stony mineral notes, cloves, and blue fruit flavors remain lingering nicely on the long and tight finish. This wine feels like a classic example of the iron fist core, mixed red and dark fruits, and the rosemary and lavender aromas so intertwined with the Eola-Amity Hills AVA, and the Anahata vineyard in particular, all with balanced attributes with the Eola-Amity Hills AVA, and the Anahata vineyard in particular, all with balanced attributes that are enjoyable now, yet will blossom and open up in elegance as it ages.

2022 Asilda Sangiovese \$55

Every year is an experiment, especially when you are stepping well outside your own backyard. The 2022 Asilda Sangiovese is a worthy, yet radically different wine than the 2021 version. The 2022 wine blends Sangiovese from Chandler Reach Vineyard just outside of the Red Mountain AVA with 23% Cabernet Sauvignon from the famous Weinbau Vineyard in the Wahluke Slope AVA just to the north. The aromatic nose shows cherry, red berries, mint, flowers, blood orange and hints of vanilla and cassis. On the palate, the Cabernet offers bright brawn structure and cassis, while the Sangiovese offers restraint to the blend with pretty strawberry, raspberry and blood orange notes. Pair with Tuscan cheese and charcuterie or bring it to a meal with grilled meats and veggies.

2018 Wahle Holmes Hill Vineyard Pinot Noir \$36

Aromatically I note mixed cherry, cassis and tea notes. Later hints of baking spice, sage brush, and dried flowers. On the palate we find bright cherry, bramble bush, and pomegranate. It is smooth and silky with bright acidity and rich dark chocolate tannins. Very age worthy. Pair with eggplant stewed in a dark tomato based sauce or skirt steak tacos.

