

FALL BULLETIN 2024

The Eyrie Vineyards





The 2024 Vintage

With fermentations still continuing, vintage 2024 is far from over. So far we have completed 50 straight days of labor and a good part of those days were 12 to 16 hours long.

Fermentations this year have been stately in their pacing. We will still be putting wines in barrel well into November.

The long fermentation times are terrific for quality, but they require finesse to manage. We ferment our reds in open top tanks of various sizes. The open top allows the ferments to breathe and keep the yeast healthy, but it also flirts with the biggest enemy of winemaking - oxygen. Too little air and the fermenters pick up off-smells called "reduction." Too much and you nourish acetobacter, not yeast, and the wine picks up vinegary notes.

The way to encourage yeast, and discourage acetobacter, is to regularly churn the ferments within their tanks. However if we overwork the ferments too much we risk extracting too much tannin from the seeds and skins. This hardens the wines and dries them out, obscuring the fruit and upsetting the balance. These long ferments require a delicate touch.

So what defines vintage 2024? As an estate winery, we work with our own vines, with the same team of people year after year, using the same tools. So climate becomes the defining factor for how our wines change from year to year.

January 2024 charged the soils with massive amounts of water - We received 50% more rain than normal for the

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month. This was lucky for us, as the rest of the year has been rather dry. However the magical clay component of Jory soil is capable of soaking up and storing significant amounts of water, so the vines were able to obtain the water they needed throughout the growing season. The only other blip of precipitation occurred during early June, setting the vines up for bloom with a fresh drink of water.

Bloom happened under ideal conditions, with mild weather holding throughout the long two-week bloom period.

Early July turned up the heat, giving us two days over 100 and many days over 85. Night time temperatures remained high for us, in the high 50s and low 60s. In past decades western Oregonians were able to count on the coastal influence to drop our nighttime temps into the low 50s and high 40s, so this trend was troubling.

Normal patterns and cool nights returned in August. The only other significant period of heat occurred in early September, but was quickly broken by a couple of days of rain that were truly a blessing, calming the wildfires in the mountains and giving the vines a timely drink as we waited for the clusters to fully color up. Picking commenced in earnest on September 23.

Oddly, in spite of the overall warmth and dryness of the summer, ripening took a very leisurely pace. Pinot noir ripened significantly behind the whites, and we had the unusual luxury of having to stop the pick for a week to let

them catch up.

As we start the process of moving the wines to barrel, I am now finally getting a sense of what the 2024 wines will be. The whites are full of energy and zest; reds have beautiful balance and look very promising. The fruit is definitely the focus although the wines are structured from the long fermentation.

Along with excellent quality, 2024 is a banner year for us for several other reasons. This is our fifty-fifth harvest since our first pick in 1970. Even more worthy of celebration, 2024 marks Javier Garcia's fortieth year with Eyrie. When time allows, I have been drawing a special 2024 harvest t-shirt celebrating Javier, with a red-tailed hawk delivering a cluster of grapes. I think it has turned out well. I posted the draft to Instagram and got a lot of requests for shirts, so let us know if you want one! We'd be happy to include you in the harvest family.

So yes - we've been busy. It will be a few years before you get to taste the 2024s but you are in luck - the 22s are absolutely amazing. It brings us great pleasure to share these wines with you, and we hope you enjoy every sip.

Cheers,

Jason Lett

Jason Lett
Grower, maker, and steward