

NICOLAS JAY

JEAN-NICOLAS MÉO COFOUNDER AND WINEMAKER

AS THE OWNER AND WINEMAKER OF THE CÔTE D'OR'S FAMED DOMAINE MÉO-CAMUZET, JEAN-NICOLAS MÉO'S PATH TO OREGON'S WILLAMETTE VALLEY FIRST WENT THROUGH THE GREAT GRANDS CRUS OF BURGUNDY, WHERE HE SPENT NEARLY 30 YEARS MAKING WINES FROM LEGENDARY VINEYARDS LIKE RICHEBOURG, CLOS DE VOUGEOT, CORTON CLOS ROGNET AND ÉCHEZEUX. IN 2012, INSPIRED BY A THREE-DECADE INTEREST IN THE QUALITY AND POTENTIAL OF OREGON'S PINOT NOIRS, JEAN-NICOLAS PARTNERED WITH HIS LONGTIME FRIEND, JAY BOBERG, TO FOUND NICOLAS-JAY IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY. AT NICOLAS-JAY, JEAN-NICOLAS APPLIES INSIGHTS GAINED FROM HIS EXPERIENCE MAKING PINOT NOIRS FROM SOME OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST WINEGROWING SITES TO CRAFT EXCITING AND ELEGANT PINOT NOIRS THAT AUTHENTICALLY SHOW THE TERROIR OF THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY, AND SOME OF ITS VERY FINEST VINEYARDS.

JEAN-NICOLAS BEGAN HIS CAREER IN WINE IN 1989, WHEN HE LEFT PARIS AND MOVED TO BURGUNDY TO GUIDE HIS FAMILY'S DOMAINE. AS MANY OF THE *MÉTAYEURS* (SHARECROPPERS) WHO LEASED HIS FAMILY'S COVETED VINEYARD LAND BEGAN TO RETIRE, JEAN-NICOLAS MADE THE DECISION TO SLOWLY START RECLAIMING THE LAND FOR MÉO-CAMUZET'S OWN BOTTLINGS. THIS WAS A BOLD NEW DIRECTION FOR A DOMAINE THAT HAD LONG BEEN OVERSEEN FROM PARIS. FINDING THAT HE ENJOYED THE RHYTHMS OF COUNTRY LIFE, AND THE CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A WINERY, JEAN-NICOLAS BEGAN A PERIOD OF INTENSE MODERNIZATION. TO HELP DURING THIS PERIOD OF TRANSITION, JEAN-NICOLAS WAS MENTORED BY THE GREAT HENRI JAYER, WHO HAD BEEN MAKING WINES FROM SOME OF MÉO-CAMUZET'S FINEST PARCELS FOR DECADES. FROM HENRI, JEAN-NICOLAS GAINED A DEEP AND LASTING LOVE OF WINE, AND AN APPRECIATION FOR THE MORE SENSUAL SIDE OF PINOT NOIR. AT THE SAME TIME, HE BEGAN DEFINING HIS OWN SIGNATURE STYLE, WITH AN EMPHASIS ON DEPTH, REFINEMENT AND IMPECCABLE BALANCE—A STYLE THAT HAS CATAPULTED MÉO-CAMUZET TO FAME, AND EARNED JEAN-NICOLAS RESPECT AS ONE OF THE FINEST PINOT NOIR WINEMAKERS IN THE WORLD.

THOUGH JEAN-NICOLAS HAS DEEP ROOTS IN BURGUNDY, HE HAS LONG NURTURED AN APPRECIATION FOR PINOT NOIRS FROM OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD—MOST NOTABLY FOR THE WINES OF OREGON, WHICH HE FIRST DISCOVERED WHILE ATTENDING THE INTERNATIONAL PINOT NOIR CELEBRATION IN WILLAMETTE VALLEY IN 1991. THERE, JEAN-NICOLAS MET MANY OF THE REGION'S EARLY PIONEERS, AND HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE THE REMARKABLE POTENTIAL OF ITS WINES. "I LOVED THE VALLEY'S BURGUNDY-LIKE CHARM AND MENTALITY, WITH ITS DEDICATED FARMERS, AND SMALL, FAMILY-RUN WINERIES COMMITTED TO MAKING WINES OF GREAT CHARACTER," SAYS JEAN-NICOLAS.

FOR JEAN-NICOLAS, THE OPPORTUNITY TO TAKE A LIFETIME OF EXPERIENCE IN BURGUNDY AND APPLY IT TO A NEW REGION, A NEW CLIMATE, NEW SOILS AND NEW VINEYARDS IS BOTH EXCITING AND INSPIRING. "I HAVE GREAT RESPECT FOR WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN ACHIEVED IN OREGON. IT IS A REMARKABLE PLACE WITH A VIBRANT WINE COMMUNITY THAT WE ARE THRILLED TO BE A PART OF," SAYS JEAN-NICOLAS. IN KEEPING WITH HIS BELIEF IN BEING HANDS-ON, JEAN-NICOLAS SPENDS NEARLY TWO MONTHS IN OREGON EACH SEASON, TRAVELLING REGULARLY TO THE REGION THROUGHOUT SPRING, SUMMER AND HARVEST TO OVERSEE THE VITICULTURE AND WINEMAKING ALONGSIDE TRACY AND JAY. "WE SEE NICOLAS-JAY AS A COLLABORATION," ADDS JEAN-NICOLAS.

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“A COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE THREE OF US, BETWEEN BURGUNDIAN AND OREGONIAN IDEAS, AND BETWEEN NICOLAS-JAY AND OUR GROWERS. TOGETHER, WE WANT TO CREATE WINES THAT ARE DISTINCTIVE AND EXCITING. WE ALSO SEE THIS AS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD SOMETHING TOGETHER THAT WE HOPE WILL GO ON FOR GENERATIONS, AND HAVE THE SAME KIND OF SIGNIFICANCE 100 YEARS FROM NOW AS MÉO-CAMUZET.”