

NICOLAS-JAY ESTATE 2021 L'ENSEMBLE PINOT NOIR, WILLAMETTE VALLEY

The Wine

The Nicolas-Jay Estate L'Ensemble is a carefully crafted assemblage of individually fermented blocks from some of the finest vineyards in the Willamette Valley. Production levels are subject to vintage quality, where only the most texturally rich barrels are elevated into this sensational blend. It took multiple years of vineyard and winery trials to identify and isolate the subtle variations of each site we farm. Then we adjust our farming approach each vintage to liberate a boldness and individualized charisma from the plants that may have otherwise been absent. Shepherding of the wines through a natural process in the winery escalates a heightened level of 'aliveness' out of the wines, and therefore a display of terroir purity and vibrant expression.



The Nicolas-Jay Estate Dundee Hills, Oregon

Harvest

The beautiful 2021 vintage began with a warm dry winter followed by a wet and cool late Spring. Despite rain during bloom, yields were high and the vines soaked up the nourishing moisture early in the season. June also brought a heat dome with temperatures breaking 115 degrees in the Willamette Valley. Luckily this unprecedented heat came at a time before the grapes were susceptible to damage and the growing season continued warm but without issue. A cooler August was a sigh of relief as we neared harvest. Grape ripening slowed down and the very healthy and abundant fruit began showing signs of ripeness in early September. We began picking on September 4th with 2 separate chardonnay vineyards and finished on September 27th with our latest and highest elevation chardonnay site – Spirit Hill. Our latest Pinot Noir site, Temperance Hill came off the vine on September 26th. Harvest was beautiful and dry with only one small rain event toward the end, ideal for a successful vintage. The fruit was pristine and yields were abundant, leading to moderate alcohol levels and bright acidity. 2021 certainly felt like a gift after the devastation of the wildfires in 2020. Our first real vintage made here at the Nicolas-Jay estate, the wines are showing purity of fruit, beautiful texture and tension and are sure to continue to evolve for years in bottle.

Winemaker Tasting Notes

A bright, magenta color with pinkish red edges shows intensity, youthfulness and concentration. Aroma sequences immediately leap from the glass with freshness and vigor. There are red berries, freshly cut straw, rhubarb and elegantly perfumed red flowers. A blood orange zest intermixes with Herbes de Provence, cranberries and tight-grained French barrique. The structure of the wine is medium + at first, but as the wine unfolds in the mid-palate it begins to tighten and constrict. Acid levels are earnest in this wine, but there is a broad density that seems to take a combative stance to its brightness as the finish expands into chalky minerality, tangerine spice and an underlayment of crushed river rock. It's silky, pretty and elegant, but with a grit and willpower that suggests an exquisite vintage made by an experienced and sensitive winemaking approach. An argument can be made that this is the most impressive bottling that Jean-Nicolas Méo has achieved yet.



Harvested: Sept 8-26

Harvest Brix: 22.5

Alcohol: 13.0%

TA: 5.5g/L, **pH:** 3.59

Winemaking: Spontaneous native yeast

Fining / Filtration: None

Cooperage: 35% new French oak, 16 mo.

Date Bottled: April 27, 2023

Production: 82 barrels

Vineyard

Bishop Creek

Terry

Nysa

Knights Gambit

La Colina

Hopewell

Temperance Hill

Momtazi

Hyland

Cherry Grove

AVA

Yamhill-Carlton

Yamhill-Carlton

Dundee Hills

Dundee Hills

Dundee Hills

Eola-Amity

Eola-Amity

McMinnville

McMinnville

Tualatin Hills

Vine Age

35 years

18 years

31 years

30 years

22 years

15 years

40 years

22 years

46 years

18 years

Contribution

"Power, granite, blue fruits"

"Blackberry liqueur, earth"

"Elegance, red fruits, spice"

"Raspberry, bright acidity, linear"

"Pomegranate, clove, black tea"

"Blue fruit, floral, wet stone"

"White pepper, stone, hibiscus"

"Wild blackberry, sweet citrus"

"Ethereal, floral, red fruits"

"Rhubarb spice, herbs, dried plum"

Farming

Organic

LIVE

Organic

Organic

LIVE

Organic

Bio-Dynamic

Bio-dynamic

LIVE

96 Points

The 2021 L'Ensemble Pinot Noir from Nicolas-Jay is Aged for 16 months in 35% new French oak barrels and sports a medium translucent ruby-garnet core with a light neon pink rim in the glass. A stunning example of a well-crafted Pinot Noir from Oregon, it explodes with notes of crushed red raspberries, Bing cherries, toasted cinnamon stick, Blood orange zest, and dried violet flowers with just a smidgeon of earthy notes that keep things interesting. Tannins are a bit higher than most 2021s I've tasted from the valley, but this is a good thing, as it will allow this wine to age for 10-15 years with proper cellaring. Perfect levels of acidity, spice, and fruit complete this decadent and phenomenal wine. 1200 cases were crafted. Highly recommended.

93 Points

Aromatically forward, the L'Ensemble is a blend of sites Nicolas Jay works with across the Willamette Valley. This wine captures so well what makes people excited about Oregon's Pinot Noir. Fresh fruit, savoury minerality and umami character. Aromas of strawberry fruit roll-up, savoury clove notes, dusty gravel road and a touch of forest floor. The palate is bright and high-toned with impeccable persistence and density.

Wine Enthusiast
WINE REPORT

Decanter