

2012 Adelsheim Auxerrois



THE PLACE

We planted Auxerrois soon after its release from Oregon State University back in the mid-eighties. Neither this original vineyard, nor a second planting, ever gave us reason to treat the wine as anything more than a blending tool. The 1.65 acres we planted in 2002 on a north slope at our Ribbon Springs Vineyard proved so exciting that we since added another 2/5 acre. There are two keys to growing Auxerrois so that it can become exciting wine. The first is planting on a cool site. The second is avoiding vineyard drought stress. Our vineyard management at Ribbon Springs incorporates both, and the white wines from Ribbon Springs seem to gain in complexity each year.

THE WINE

This wine has aromas of tarragon and fennel bulb, plus green pear, mineral, and citrus blossom. In the mouth, these flavors reoccur and you'll find a lively, refreshing texture. With its balance of acid, alcohol and fruitiness, the wine has body and length on the palate, yet remains fresh. Auxerrois is wonderful on its own as an apéritif, or with many courses at the beginning of a meal. It would pair well with crab salad or cured salmon with tarragon dressing.



ADELSHEIM

16800 NE Calkins Lane, Newberg, OR 97132
Tel: (503) 538-3652 www.adelsheim.com

Wine Background:

When two clones of Auxerrois (oak-sair-wah) were brought into Oregon from Alsace in 1977, we knew next to nothing about the variety. Still, after tasting some test wines made at Oregon State University, our interest was piqued. DNA testing has shown that Auxerrois, like Chardonnay, Aligoté, Gamay and 10 other varieties, is a cross between Pinot noir and an ignoble variety called Gouais blanc. Auxerrois is also the name of the area surrounding the town of Auxerre near Chablis, but the variety has disappeared from that area and all other parts of Burgundy. There are probably less than 5700 acres of it planted in the world. Its early ripening has allowed it to flourish in Luxembourg (even achieving Premier Cru status), but in Alsace, the variety is now mostly used with Pinot blanc in the production of Crémants d'Alsace. In the U.S., we know of only two other producers.

Growing Season:

The 2012 growing season got off to a slightly slower than average start, with bud break occurring on April 23rd, about a week later than normal for the Willamette Valley. Weather during bloom (the third week of June) was close to ideal, with minimal rainfall towards the end of flowering. Reduced berry set led to smaller clusters and lower yields than the prior vintage. A warmer and drier than average growing season resulted in extremely low disease pressure and provided ample sunshine for the grapes to develop beautifully complex flavor profiles. Veraison occurred around the end of August and the Willamette Valley experienced excellent ripening conditions until harvest. Picking of the Auxerrois occurred on October 2nd. The remarkable growing season of 2012 resulted in clean fruit with intense colors and concentrated flavors.

Winemaking:

The whole clusters were gently pressed in our membrane press to yield juice as free of bitter tannins as possible. The juice was subsequently settled in tank prior to racking and yeast inoculation. Then 11% of the wine underwent a slow, cool fermentation in neutral barrels (89% in stainless steel tanks) to retain fruit purity and aromatic freshness. Malolactic fermentation was prevented in order to preserve the wine's varietal character. After the cool fermentation, the wine was sur lies aged in tank for added richness and complexity.



Vineyard

Appellation: Ribbon Ridge
Production: 738 six-bottle cases

Wine

Alcohol: 13.5%
pH: 3.15