



2018 Commuter Cuvée

Winery: GC Wines

Owner/Winemaker: John Grochau

Associate Winemaker: Aurelien Labrosse

Year Founded: 2002

Winery Location: Eola-Amity Hills above Amity, Oregon
(Willamette Valley)

About: John Grochau was first introduced to wine and the winemaking landscape in his early 20s, while racing bicycles for a French team in the Loire Valley. After ten years in restaurants and four years working in wineries, he started GC Wines in 2002. The goal has always been to make wines that are balanced, textured and expressive of place. Inspired by the diversity of the Willamette Valley's soils and microclimates, we source grapes from more than twenty vineyards from all around the Willamette Valley. While Pinot Noir is our focus, we are always pushing in new directions and exploring new varieties that include Gamay Noir, Melon de Bourgogne and Trousseau. We constantly experiment with new fermentation and aging techniques to create unique expressions of a variety or to bring some subtle nuance to a larger cuvée.

Harvest 2018: The growing season started with a cool spring and bud break in mid-April, but once we hit the last week of April the weather changed significantly. The last week of April we hit 80 degrees in the Willamette Valley, normal highs for this time of year are around 65-70 degrees. This warmth sustained through August without any significant rain. We were setting up for an early and warm harvest—something not very exciting for Oregon winemakers—until rain started to fall on September 11.

Winemakers are weary about rain this close to harvest, but if there was ever a year where it was needed, this was it. After

months of hot weather and no measurable rain, we received 1.25 inches over four days. The plants were “freshened up” and given new life to finish the ripening of the fruit.

After the rain came three weeks of sun, with highs between 74 – 84 degrees. The combination of the rain and mild temperatures let us hang the fruit longer for flavor development, while keeping fresh acidity and moderate sugars. Due to a warm and dry summer, the size of the grapes were small, giving us higher concentration along with more tannic structure.

Winemaking: The grapes had a short, four to six-day cold soak before heading to fermenters. The warmth started off fermentations fairly quickly, with most lasting around 12 days. To add more savory aromas and flavors into the wine, 12% of the ferments were whole cluster. Wines were pressed off after 16 days on skins and the resulting wine was aged in mostly French oak (3% new, 5% twice used barrels, 64% neutral) and 28% Stainless Steel, where it would stay on its lees for nine and a half months before going into tank for bottling.

The hot and dry summer of 2018 delivered darker, red and black fruits to our Pinot Noir. Our traditionally early picks helped us to capture the iconic Willamette Valley freshness that we love and kept the alcohol at a respectable 13.7%.

Bottled: June 23-28, 2018, 7,900 cases

Winemaker note: This wine is all about the bright fresh purity of Willamette Valley Pinot Noir. The Commuter Cuvée is our first release Pinot Noir each year and is a blend from multiple Willamette Valley vineyards that capture the essence of each vintage. It's a wine for every occasion from a family dinner to relaxing in front of the TV. Take it to the beach, the mountains, the office party or along on a bike ride (not encouraging, just saying). This is your anytime go-to bottle. Drink up!

