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GROCHAU CELLARS

2017 Bjornson Vineyard Gamay Noir

Winery Name: Grochau Cellars

Owner/Winemaker: John Grochau

Year Founded: 2002

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

About: John Grochau was first introduced to wine and the winemaking landscape in his early 20's, while racing bicycles for a French team in the Loire Valley. For several years, he raced through some of France's most revered winemaking regions including Champagne, Burgundy and the across the Loire Valley. When he returned to his hometown of Portland, Oregon, he went to work in the restaurant business and quickly discovered an even greater appreciation for wine. That passion led him to Brick House Vineyards, where he worked alongside winemaker Doug Tunnel for four years. With Grochau's restaurant experience, there was a natural progression as a winemaker to craft food-friendly wines that enhance a meal. Grochau strives to make wines that are **balanced, textured** and **expressive of place**. Inspired by the diversity of the Willamette Valley's soils and microclimates, Grochau sources fruit from seven organic and sustainably-farmed vineyards. Grapes are hand-harvested and wines undergo a slow, natural fermentation. Working with grape varieties with a legacy in the Willamette Valley – namely Pinot Noir and Pinot Blanc – Grochau also seeks to showcase the potential of emerging varieties like Melon de Bourgogne and Gamay.

Vineyards: Bjornson Vineyard, located in the Eola-Amity Hills, sits on a rock-strewn section of Nekia soil which is layered over fractured basalt. The elevation is around 550 feet, the vineyard catches all the sun and wind with its southwest aspect. The grapes were picked on October 14, 2017. Once the grapes arrived at the winery we processed and sorted the grapes, choosing to do two different fermentations: one with 30% whole clusters, and one with 50% whole clusters. We use whole clusters in our fermentations each year for texture, aromas and flavors that we want. In 2017 the pH of the grapes was very low, so we increased the amount of whole cluster grapes so that we could raise the pH of the wine with the potassium imparted by the grape stems.

Winemaking: Since it was a pretty cool in our cellar by the middle of October, it took around 7 days for the fermentation to start; we did not add any yeast. Once fermentation started, we did a mix of pigeage—thick skins and whole clusters make it next to impossible to punch down early on in fermentation—pumpovers and punch downs. We did these actions once a day in the beginning, then twice a day during the peak of fermentation, then back to once a day. All told, the wine spent 20 days on the skins, and once fermentation was complete we drained the fermenter and settled the wine for 24-30 hours before going to barrel. The wine was aged on its lees and in neutral French oak barrels for 15 months before going to bottle.

