



Buty Winery Winemaking

Nina, Chris and the Buty team believe that making wine is part of a larger process, with many interconnections and contributions. They also believe that great vineyards and great wines have a soul. In keeping with these beliefs, Buty is guided by a philosophy that reflects the idea of growth from body to mind to soul to spirit—with each level building on the last to create a more complex and cohesive whole. Though this age-old philosophical idea, also known as the “great nest of being,” wasn’t conceived with wine in mind, for Nina it offers a way to acknowledge and honor all the steps that take a wine from the earth to the glass. On a practical level, it also informs every choice Buty makes in the creation of its wines, from the selection of vineyards, the methods used to farm them and the timing of harvest to Buty’s dedication to natural winemaking practices.

As part of acknowledging the essence of each wine, and all the developmental stages they go through, every Buty wine has a distinctive personality. Rediviva of the Stones is a Syrah-driven blend crafted much like a great Pinot Noir to showcase enticing aromatics. Columbia Rediviva shows the power, ageability and extract of Phinny Hill Vineyard, while also highlighting the site’s distinctive perfume character. The Champoux Vineyard bottling showcases the historic aspect of the Cabernet Sauvignon grown at this site, in a focused, modern West Coast style, with significant new oak, while the Semillon/Sauvignon Blanc/Muscadelle blend uses no new oak at all to create an aromatic white that is rich and bright. The Merlot-Cabernet Franc blend is Italian-like in structure, with great acidity, supple tannins and powerful aromas. Finally, as Buty’s only unblended wine, Conner Lee Chardonnay displays the creamy weight and texture of a fine grand cru Chardonnay, where the decision to use no new oak enhances the wine’s fruit purity and flowery aromatics.

For Chris, natural winemaking does not mean being hands-off. Though he applies gentle winemaking techniques such as minimal handling, and often uses little-or-no-new oak, every choice made about fermentation, extraction, cooperage, blending, racking and aging is intended to help achieve a stylistic vision. In the winery, he individually ferments and ages 20 or more lots each vintage to make the winery’s six core wines, and during blending he and Nina will evaluate as many as 30 different trial blends for each bottling. Even so, every decision is made with an eye toward maintaining the authentic quality and character of the wines so that they are rooted in the soil of the sites they come from. To maintain this authenticity, whenever possible, Chris and Nina emphasize blends where all the varietals come from the same vineyard, and they never use dehydrators, concentrators, water additions, spinning cones, or other such “enhancement tools.”

Finally, because each new vintage is part of a continuum of growth building on years, and sometimes decades, of experience with the vineyards, the team is constantly striving—both creatively and technically—to refine Buty’s wines. This approach has established Buty’s portfolio of world-class blends as enduring benchmarks for Washington State winemaking.