



2019 ORR Chardonnay
BLEND: 100% Chardonnay
CLONES: estate suitcase clone, Dijon clones 76, 96
VINEYARD: White Salmon
AVA: Columbia Gorge
PLANTED: 1992, ownrooted
AGING: 12 months in old French oak barrels, then 5 months in stainless steel drums
CHEMISTRY: RS dry, full malo
BOTTLING: unfinned and unfiltered
ALCOHOL: 12.5%
WINERY RETAIL: \$30
CASE PRODUCTION: 88 cases

The Columbia Gorge is the best climate in Washington for the style of chardonnay I like – mineral driven and fresh with that tension between bright, clean and acidic and round, rich and savory.

A couple years ago I tasted a delicious chardonnay from The Walls winery and wanted to learn more about where those grapes came from. Turns out that vineyard, called “White Salmon” on Underwood Mountain, just down the hill from Celilo, had fruit available to sell in 2018. Planted by the owner Peter Brehm in 1992 with a mix of different own-rooted Chardonnay clones, as well as Riesling, Sauv Blanc, Pinot Noir and some other red grapes, it’s really a beautiful site, surrounded by forest and, when it’s clear, a stunning view of Mt. Hood. I bought his fruit again in 2019.

I helped hand pick this fruit early in the morning and then we whole cluster pressed the grapes when we got back to the winery later that afternoon. We settled the juice in tank overnight and then filled five old French oak barrels for native fermentation.

After a couple months of batonnage, I stopped stirring the lees and let the wine clear by gravity. After a year in barrel, we moved the wine into stainless steel drums which is a technique I had read about but never done before the 2018 vintage of this wine. This is how it is said that Dominique Lafon makes his white Burgundy, apparently Roulot follows this protocol as well, shifting the wine from the oxidative environment of the barrels into an anoxic reductive world of stainless steel for a couple months for the wine to “drop the baby fat”, “chisel the cheekbones” and tighten it up a bit.

I felt strongly that the mouthfeel I’d been building for 16 nervewracking months would be destroyed by filtration and I was ok with the clarity of the wine as it is. So we went to bottle without fining or filtering in February of 2021.