



USA, OREGON: 2013 - 2014

Neal Martin

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2014 DOMAINE DROUHIN CHARDONNAY EDITION LIMITÉE, 91 POINTS

Drink 2017 - 2029

The 2014 Chardonnay Edition Limitée has an elegant bouquet with subtle white flower scents infiltrating the citrus fruit, apricot blossom and a touch of hazelnut emerging with time in the glass. The palate is fresh and vibrant on the entry, quite rounded in the mouth and smooth with veins of spice and orange peel. I would have just liked a little more nervosité to come through on the finish, otherwise this is a top-notch Chardonnay to enjoy over the next decade. I just missed meeting Véronique Drouhin when I visited Oregon. I heard that her family had been recipients of a reward for their services to Oregon wine, a reward much deserved because their investment and commitment at such an early stage was pivotal in terms of changing peoples' views. Oregon had to be taken seriously if one of the most established Burgundy houses was buying vineyard land here; a prescient move long before others followed (Comte Liger-Belair, Dominique Lafon, Louis Jadot and now Jean-Nicolas Méo). I met with managing-director David Millman who took me through their 2014s that are now augmented by recent acquisition of the Roserock Vineyard in Eola-Amity, lending a bit of contrast to their Dundee Hill holdings. David kindly furnished me with information about Roserock. "Roserock is a companion piece to Domaine Drouhin. Related, but different. For the Drouhins, it's a welcome challenge, in a part of the Valley that they have long known and admired. For example, what does the vineyard want to produce? How does one find the elegance here that one finds in the Dundee Hill? Etc. And, for what it's worth, it's not just about the wine, but it's also clearly an affirmation of their belief in Oregon after nearly 30 years here. There's a lot of meaning in that." I also asked David about his views upon 2014. "The quality of the wine isn't the question. They are just beautiful. It was a big vintage with lovely wine," David enthused. "One could drink through the wines happily on release, but I think, as with perhaps 2004 and 1994, both of which have similarities to 2014, there's a lot going on that will become more apparent with time." Domaine Drouhin has long been a producer whose whites are as worthy of investigation as their reds, and their 2013 Edition Limitée is a very well-crafted wine equal to many of its counterparts over in the Côte d'Or. Their Pinot Noirs are approachable and yet repay cellaring, and a wine like the 2014 Louise will evolve into something quite lovely...if allowed. I also have my eye upon the Roserock Pinot Noir in Eola-Amity, which adds another bow to their arrow. I appreciated the character of this Pinot Noir - showing personality and a wine that I suspect will reward three to four years in the cellar.

2014 DOMAINE DROUHIN PINOT NOIR LAURÈNE. 92 POINTS

Drink 2018 - 2033

The 2014 Pinot Noir Laurène has a complex bouquet with oyster shell and seaweed scents permeating through the red berry fruit, the oak nicely integrated. The palate is medium-bodied with supple ripe red berry fruit, a fine line of acidity and mineralité. I like the composure here as it gently fans out and coats the mouth with insistent grip, more blue fruit lingering on the aftertaste. This 2014 offers a higher degree of purity and complexity than the 2013 Pinot Noir Laurène and it should give 15 or more years of pleasure.

2014 DOMAINE DROUHIN PINOT NOIR LOUISE, 93 POINTS

Drink 2020 - 2035

The 2014 Pinot Noir Louise felt a little more backward on the nose compared to the Laurène, the fruit darker with bilberry and dark plum aromas, although there is fine precision here, impressive detail. The palate is medium-bodied with blackberry and dark plum fruit. There is very good backbone here that forms the foundation of a reserved Pinot Noir that will require 2-3 years in bottle once released in 2017, yet the focus and nascent energy here leaves me feeling optimistic for a bright future. This will ultimately evolve into a sophisticated 2014, but unlike the previous vintage, I strongly suspect that patience will be required.

2012 DOMAINE DROUHIN PINOT NOIR EDITION LIMITÉE, 91+ POINTS

Drink 2018 - 2032

The 2014 Pinot Noir Edition Limitée has a dark and quite broody bouquet that takes time to open and it does and offer redcurrant and raspberry fruit, a touch of brown spice surfacing with time. The palate is medium-bodied sweet ripe cranberries dallying with fresh strawberries plus a hint of cola. There is lovely balance in situ and it offers a caressing finish. I would like to see a little more cohesion as it ages in bottle, but if it does, then it will merit a higher evaluation.

2014 DOMAINE DROUHIN ROSEROCK PINOT NOIR, 91 POINTS

Drink 2018 - 2030

The 2014 Roserock Pinot Noir offers blackberry and briary scents on the nose with a touch of earthiness - well defined and quite vivacious in the glass. The palate is medium-bodied with dusky blackberry and blueberry fruit. It exerts a gentle grip in the mouth and delivers white pepper sprinkled over the finish that is nicely detailed. This should drink well over the next 8-10 years and at this price, I would be loading up.

2014 DOMAINE DROUHIN ZÉPHIRINE PINOT NOIR, 92 POINTS

Drink 2018 - 2035

The 2014 Zéphirine Pinot Noir, which is a barrel selection made at the winery, has a gorgeous bouquet, a mixture of red and black fruit, subtle floral notes and cold stone notes. The palate is medium-bodied with fine tannin, pure dark plum, boysenberry and cranberry fruit vying for attention. There is good backbone here but there is still plenty of elegance on the spicy finish that lingers in the mouth. This has great potential and I am intrigued to see how it ages.