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GROCHAU CELLARS

## 2017 Commuter Cuvée

**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 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.

**Harvest:** For the last 3 years bud break started early, but in 2017 we saw a return to the "old normal," at least for the first 4 months of the year. After a cool early spring, bud break began in the middle of April. The summer months

started off cool, but once we hit late June, the heat came and stayed. Just as harvest approached, a rainstorm came in and slowed the vineyards' rush to ripeness, giving the grapes time on the vine for flavor and tannin development and the winery more time to take care in our picking decisions.

**Winemaking:** The grapes had a short three to five-day cold soak as the warmth of the days started off fermentations fairly quickly. Most fermentations lasted around 12 days and were pressed off after 16 days on the skins. The resulting wine was aged in French oak (none new, 5% twice used, the rest neutral) staying on its lees for nine and a half months before going into tank for bottling. We always pick on the early side of ripeness to highlight the bright and fresh red fruits that we love in Willamette Valley Pinot Noir, but with the cool finish to the 2017 vintage, we were able to get some of the darker fruit flavors while still capturing the freshness and keeping the alcohol at a respectable 13.3%. Due to the great balance of the grapes, we used less whole clusters than we do in warmer years, with 6% of the stems being used in the fermenters.

**Bottled:** June 19-22, 2018, 6,700 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!