



Reviewed by Erin Larkin.

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### **2020 Grasshopper Rock Earnsleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **94**

Drink Date **2023 - 2040**

The 2020 season was cool across the region (except in pockets where it wasn't), and so this 2020 Earnsleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir is detailed, precise and already laden with coffee grounds, hints of roasted meat crust, clove, dark chocolate/raw cocoa and a hint of licorice. In the mouth, the wine is infused with a load of chalky tannin that defines the fruit at this stage. Given the way these wines age for 20 years with ease, this will only improve over time, reaching its apogee in the early 2030s. It's just a lovely, lovely wine. 13.4% alcohol, sealed under screw cap. From the vintage note here, there was "an unusual atmospheric phenomenon known as Sudden Stratospheric Warming impacted in December and flowering was one of our coldest on record. January to April were good. Excellent conditions for ripening." Average bunch weights were down to 85 grams, the smallest since 2007 (42 grams) and 2010 (76 grams).

### **2019 Grasshopper Rock Earnsleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **93**

Drink Date **2023 - 2039**

The 2019 Earnsleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir is balanced and supple, with a clearly defined scaffold of very fine tannin. The wine is tannic (at least, the experience hinges on the structure), but it errs more toward grippy and ductile than it does obtrusive and blocky. There's a cavalcade of red fruits within the fine frame: cherry, cranberry, redcurrant, tobacco, white pepper, a hint of peat and lichen. A wonderful wine. Based on the aging trajectory of these wines, I would hold mine, as opposed to drinking it, for at least a few more years, but it is up to you. It's drinking beautifully today. 14% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2018 Grasshopper Rock Earnsleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **93+**

Drink Date **2023 - 2038**

The 2018 Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir is sweet on the nose, with cherry kirsch, Tina wafer, white pepper, green olive tapenade, scraped vanilla pod and poached strawberry. Perhaps there's even a smattering of sumac, but it is faint. In the mouth, the wine is superb, elegant and fresh but full of fruit and fine tannins. It lingers and wisps in the mouth, showing the warmth of the season through the finish in the form of ripe/dehydrated red fruit (goji berries and the like). Excellent. It's expressive now, but it will age with ease. Up to you. 14% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2016 Grasshopper Rock Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **91+**

Drink Date **2026 - 2036**

The 2016 Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir leads with savory baking spices on the nose, with roast meat, dried herbs, cranberry and goji berry. It's an interesting wine and a bit of an outlier as compared to some of the other vintages on the table. However, given the aging arc of these wines, I would suggest patience is required, and this is one that I would rest for a couple of years more. 13.3% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2015 Grasshopper Rock Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **94**

Drink Date **2023 - 2035**

The 2015 Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir is supple and fresh, with Pink Lady apples, Christmas cherry, summer strawberries, pink peppercorn and hints of caper brine. This is a lacy, spicy wine with textural nuance and fresh acidity. Despite what looked to be an up-and-down growing season (cool start, slow growth, excellent flowering, hot January, frost on the last day of harvest, 105-gram average bunch weight), this is a wholly composed and elegant wine at the very start of its evolutionary journey. 14% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2014 Grasshopper Rock Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **94+**

Drink Date **2023 - 2034**

The 2014 Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir is poised and composed, both aromatically and in the mouth. The wine shows an abundance of red fruits, but these are folded into layers of fine, silty tannins and savory baking spices. This is a beautiful wine, restrained, svelte, quiet and seamless. It's nine years old and just starting to hit its stride. Drink or hold, there's plenty of time left to go. 13.4% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2011 Grasshopper Rock Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **93**

Drink Date **2023 - 2031**

The 2011 Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir hails from a warm season, and the average bunch weight was 150 grams (double the magnificent 2010 season, for interest's sake). The nose here is restrained and quiet. In the mouth, the wine is fresh but slightly fierce, with rounded fruit and fine, savory tannins. There's a lovely spool of texture through the finish. It's holding very well indeed, but certainly it's a less giving iteration of the wine. 13.6% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2010 Grasshopper Rock Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **95+**

Drink Date **2023 - 2035**

The 2010 Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir is balanced and fresh in the glass. At 13 years old in 2023, the wine is teetering on that wonderful precipice of young and mature. It has lashings of primary red fruits, but it also introduces an intriguing display of tertiary spice and complexity (peat, lichen, black peppercorns, kirsch, mahogany, dried petals, etc.). It's a beautiful wine, totally pleasurable and looking so eminently fabulous today. The average bunch weight in 2010 was 76 grams. 13.9% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2008 Grasshopper Rock Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **92+**

Drink Date **2023 - 2035**

The 2008 Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir is a much riper expression than the 2006 and 2007 Pinots I tasted so far, and it hails from a warmer season. On the nose, it is fleshy and sweet, and layered with raspberry compote, redcurrants, dried rosemary, rose petals, scraped vanilla pod and pastry. In the mouth, the wine is fleshy and very fresh, with lashings of fruit and exotic spice, baking spices and shortcrust pastry through the finish. Numerous gold medals adorn the front label. It's holding together so well at 15 years old; it hasn't reached middle age yet. 14.2% alcohol, sealed under screwcap.

### **2007 Grasshopper Rock Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating **92**

Drink Date **2023 - 2027**

The 2007 Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir leads with a far richer nose than the 2006 tasted alongside it—it has coffee grounds and cocoa, pepper-rolled pastrami, pepper berries, pomegranate molasses and rooibos tea. In the mouth, the wine has decomposing autumn leaves, lichen, a hint of peat, kirsch, pink peppercorns and black olive tapenade. This is maturing on a completely different trajectory to the 2006 and still looking good, though it's reaching its peak. Coming back to this 30 minutes later, the wine is distinctly like rooibos tea. 13.5% alcohol, sealed under screw cap.

### **2006 Grasshopper Rock Earnscleugh Vineyard Pinot Noir**

Rating 93

Drink Date 2023 - 2033

The first vintage, from three-year-old vines, the 2006 Earnsclough Vineyard Pinot Noir is classically styled on the nose, with autumn leaves, field mushrooms, a hint of bone broth, cracked black peppercorns and dried flowers. In the mouth, the wine, now 17 years old, is spicy and fine. It is absolutely holding together through the finish and appears to still have quite a future in front of it. It's a super wine. 13.3% alcohol, sealed under screw cap. An interesting note on drinking windows. This wine, while mature, has got plenty of energy left to proceed into the future. I have given it a further 10 years, and that might be either conservative or ambitious, I don't know. But if the wine is stored well, as this has been, then the benefit of the screw-cap closure is the preservation of fresh fruit. So, we benefit from that.

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