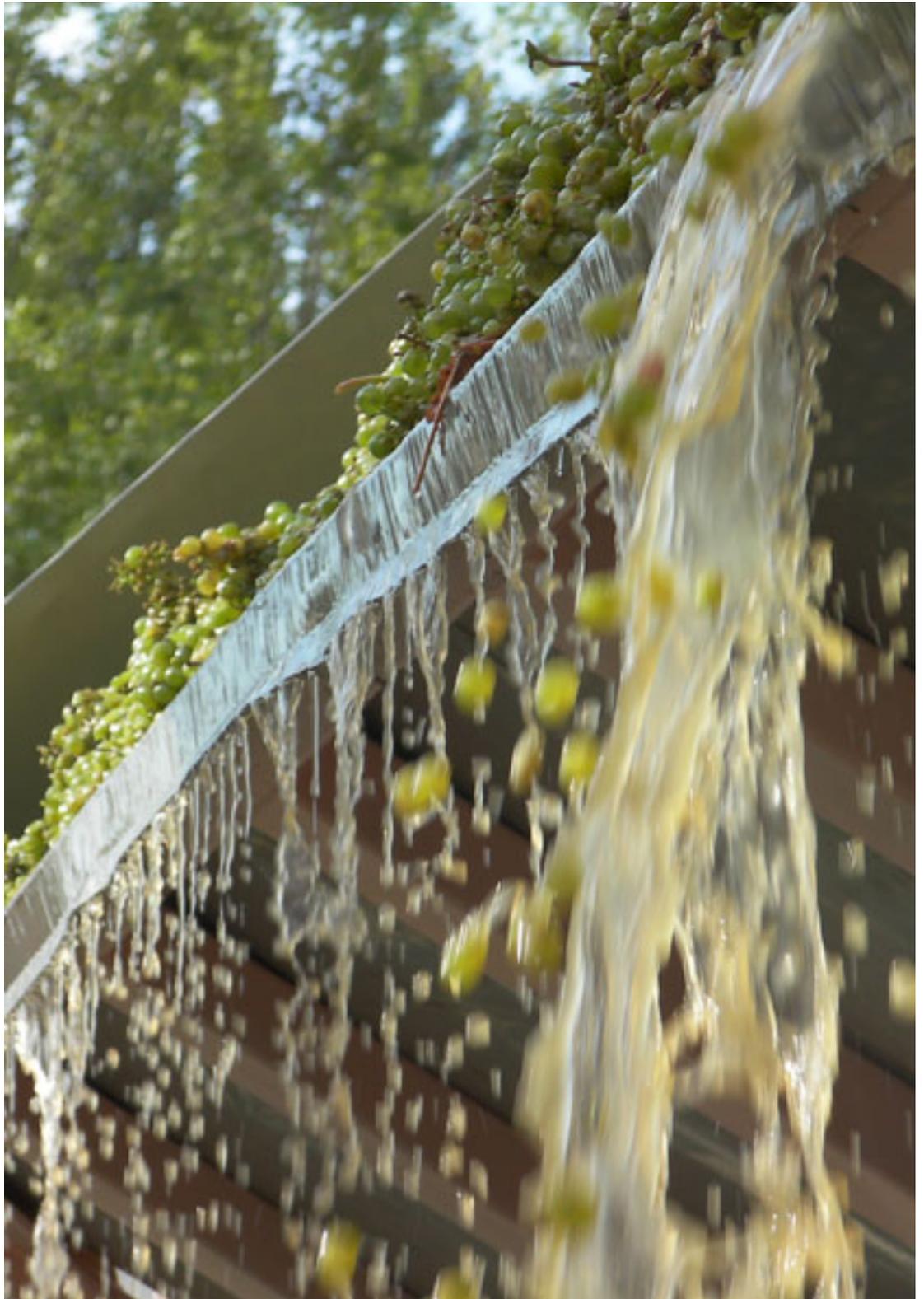


Sept. 19, 2011

Sauvignon Blanc grapes and free-run juice pour from a bin Friday, Sept. 16, at Barnard Griffin. The Richland, Wash., winery received its first grapes of the 2011 vintage from Bacchus Vineyard north of Pasco.

(Andy Perdue/
Wine Press
Northwest)



Fresh Press is a weekly publication of Wine Press Northwest magazine. In each edition, we review recently released wines from Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Idaho. Feel free to forward to your wine-loving friends and family. For more information on our tasting methods and review process, please go to the last page.

Spotlight: Barking Frog Winery

128 W. Main St., Carlton, OR 97111
503-702-5029 • <http://www.barkingfrogwinery.com>

Ron Helbig is a bit of an anomaly in Oregon wine country, part of a small but growing trend of winemakers who reach into Washington for warm-climate grapes in addition to the Willamette Valley's famous Pinot Noir.

Helbig is owner and winemaker for Barking Frog in tiny Carlton, Ore., a winery he launched in 2005. The retired Clackamas Community College drafting and manufacturing instructor began making wine as a hobby in the early 1990s and decided to turn it into a profession when he began to win awards for his efforts in amateur competitions.

Those accolades have not stopped since going pro, as his 2006 Blakeslee Pinot Noir was No. 3 in our 2008 peer-group judging of 160 Northwest Pinot Noirs, his 2006 Sangiovese earned our top "Outstanding" rating one issue later and his 2006 Crawford Vineyard Syrah was awarded a rare Platinum medal in our 2008 year-end best-of-the-best competition.

Helbig hasn't slowed down one bit, as he recently submitted 11 wines to us for our blind tasting, earning four "Outstandings," four "Excellents" and three "Recommendeds."

When Helbig decided to make wine professionally, he turned to one of the best in the business, interning with Laurent Montalieu, who gained fame at WillaKenzie before launching his own Soléna Estates brand and Northwest Wine Co. custom-crush business. He spent two years with Montalieu, working in all areas of the winery.

For Barking Frog's first five years, Helbig made his wine at August Cellars in Newberg. Now at 1,200 cases, he outgrew that space and moved his operation to Carlton Cellars last year in time for crush. He also opened a tasting room on Main Street in Carlton, a brief walk from the winemaking facility.

"This location in Carlton has been great for us," he said.

While Helbig makes Pinot Noir from Oregon grapes, the majority of his fruit comes from Washington, particularly the Horse Heaven Hills. He is particularly fond of Elerding Vineyard, which is about 10 miles north of the Columbia River (there is another Elerding Vineyard in the Yakima Valley).

"I love the way that vineyard is cared for," Helbig said. "The vineyard manager at Elerding is just phenomenal."



Because his winery is more than 200 miles away from his vineyard sources, Helbig can't regularly check the fruit, so he must trust and rely on the grower to keep an eye on the grapes and let him know when he should harvest.

"Working with fruit a state away can be a challenge," he said.

And being a state away also presents challenges with his label. Helbig ran into a bit of trouble with the federal government a few years ago when he used "Yakima Valley" on his wines. It turns out the agency that regulates wine will allow an AVA to appear on the label only if the wine is produced in the same state as the AVA. So instead of putting "Horse Heaven Hills" or "Yakima Valley" (depending on the fruit source), Helbig instead simply labels it "Washington," along with the vineyard designation.

Helbig came up with the catchy name for his winery because he wanted something with a "frog" theme — go into his tasting room sometime and ask him about his brush with the law over frogs — and his research led him to the barking frog, a species whose croak sounds like a dog's bark. As legend goes, the barking frog is a symbol of prosperity in Native American lore, an audible symbol that the environment is in harmony. He follows that logic in his own production and figures 95 percent of every wine bottle he sells is recyclable.

Since his inaugural vintage, Helbig has used a glass closure called Vino-Seal (known as Vino-Lok in Europe). It's a product of Alcoa and is used by a handful of Northwest wineries, including Folin Cellars,

Spotlight: Barking Frog Winery

Ferraro Cellar and Sineann in Oregon, as well as such Washington wineries as Northwest Totem Cellars and Syncline Wines.

"I began doing research on closures for two years before I went to work for Laurent," Helbig said. "I read a white paper on a new glass closure, so I took it to Laurent. Coincidentally, he'd already seen it and had set up a consultation with the company."

The following year, Montaleau began using the closure with his Soléna brand, so it was natural for Helbig to use it when he launched Barking Frog. He loves the closure but said the only downsides are the product is made in Germany and needs to be imported and the bottle selection that goes with it is limited.

But his customers adore the glass "corks," he said.

"It has that technological 'wow' factor," Helbig said. "It's incredible. We have a bowl of them in the tasting room, and customers come in and want to buy them."

He said he often needs to explain that the glass closure comes with every bottle and it means the bottle doesn't need to be stored horizontally. He also is amused when waitstaff at a restaurant tries to open a bottle with a corkscrew, even when he tells them how it works.

In Europe, about 800 wineries are using the glass closures, which means most of them have automated systems. However, with so few U.S. wineries embracing the new closure, there is little equipment, so it is limited to wineries with small productions.

This is a small consideration for Helbig.

"My customers don't have to worry about the failure rate of cork products," he said. "I've been so disappointed over the years with cork."

And based on the quality of his wine, Helbig has a lot to protect.

Spotlight: Barking Frog Winery

Excellent. Barking Frog Winery 2007 Blakelsee Pinot Noir, Chehalem Mountains, \$34. Owner/winemaker Rob Helbig began making wine for himself some 20 years ago. As a result of winning plenty of medals in amateur competitions, he decided to go pro. Today, he is making small lots of high-quality wines, and the grapes for this wine come from Blakeslee Vineyard near the Willamette Valley town of Sherwood. Its aromas remind us of a diverse cherry orchard, with notes of Bings, Rainiers and Vans, along with raspberries, vanilla and spice. The flavors open with a whisper of lavender, followed by a nice mix of cherries and cinnamon. The balance of fruit, oak and tannins is harmonious. (150 cases, 13.4% alc.)

Outstanding! Barking Frog Winery 2008 Chapman Road Cuvée Pinot Noir, Chehalem Mountains, \$34. Ron Helbig is a big of an enigma: He's best known for using Washington grapes to make great wines in the heart of Oregon's Yamhill County. Here, though, he sticks close to home and crafts a stunning Pinot Noir from the nearby Chehalem Mountains. This wine from what is sure to go down as a classic Oregon vintage opens with engaging aromas of black truffles, black cherries and raspberries wound around a core of chocolate, spice and oak. A tip and a sip bring rich flavors of plush red fruit, well-integrated tannins and a finish that reminded us a bit of a malted milk. (150 cases, 13.5% alc.)

Excellent. Barking Frog Winery 2007 Crawford Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Washington, \$34. Charlie and Connie Crawford run one of the most venerable vineyards in the Yakima Valley, and this wine helps prove that it isn't difficult to properly ripen Cab around the town of Prosser, especially in warmer

years. This delicious wine from a small Oregon producer opens with aromas of cola, black fruit, milk chocolate and eucalyptus, followed by bold flavors of black currants, black cherries and boysenberries, all backed with supple tannins that lead to a finish of Baker's chocolate. (100 cases, 14.5% alc.)

Excellent. Barking Frog Winery 2008 Sangiovese, Washington, \$24. Owner/winemaker Ron Helbig runs this boutique operation in tiny Carlton, the new wine capital of Oregon. He crafts the wines in rented space at Carlton Cellars and has a stylish tasting room on Main Street. This wine shouts "Sangiovese" from the first whiff, which reveals aromas of red currant jam, Rainier cherries, lingonberries and strawberries, as well as a whisper of chocolate and new leather. On the palate, it shows off flavors of red currants, raspberries, cherries and chocolate. It's a great wine to pair with lasagna, pizza or canelone. (100 cases, 13.9% alc.)

Recommended. Barking Frog Winery 2007 Crawford Vineyard Syrah, Washington, \$38. Ron Helbig named his Willamette Valley winery after a frog whose croak sounds like a dog because it is a symbol of prosperity to Native Americans. The grapes for this wine come from the Yakima Valley and open with classic aromas of bacon fat, cherries and cigar box, followed by flavors of blackberries, cloves, white pepper, herbal tea and a bit of toast. It's a big wine, so pair it with a rich Italian dish or a grilled steak. (150 cases, 17% alc.)

Recommended. Barking Frog Winery 2008 Reserve Syrah, Washington, \$34. Just three barrels made the cut for this Carlton, Ore., winery's reserve-level Syrah. On the palate, it unveils aromas of

Spotlight: Barking Frog Winery

blackberries, plums, leather, earth and dark chocolate, while on the palate, it offers flavors of dark fruit, tobacco leaf and bold tannins. We would pair this big wine with barbecued ribs, flank steak, grilled sausages or filet mignon. (75 cases, 15% alc.)

Outstanding! Barking Frog Winery 2008 Dulcis Syrah, Washington, \$28. This rare red dessert wine was made in an ice wine style, with the grapes frozen post-harvest. The resulting wine is delectable and superb. Imagine walking past the pastry section of a bakery and you'll get a sense of its aromas, which include notes of figs, dried apricots, fruit teas, oranges, blackberries and white raisins. On the palate, the nectarlike flavors include notes of boysenberry jam, green olives and raisins. It's 16% residual sugar and comes in a half-bottle. (100 cases, 12% alc.)

Excellent. Barking Frog Winery 2008 Syrah, Washington, \$28. This is one of four Syrahs crafted by Ron Helbig at his small Carlton, Ore., winery. It is a robust wine with aromas of plums, red vines and blackberries, followed by bold, rich flavors of blackberries, black tea, black licorice and dark chocolate, highlighted by a long, lingering finish. Enjoy with carne asada, lamb chops or beef stew. (200 cases, 15.2% alc.)

Outstanding! Barking Frog Winery 2008 Elerding Vineyard Sangiovese, Washington, \$28. A lot of top Washington winemakers rely on grapes from this vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills, and it's easy to see why in Ron Helbig brings it from Alderdale, Wash., to his winery in Carlton, Ore. It opens with aromas of red currants, cranberries and milk chocolate, followed

by flavors dominated by red currants. It reveals a rich mouth feel, smooth tannins and balanced, juicy flavors. While it might well get better with a bit more time in the cellar, we can't imagine wanting to wait. (100 cases, 13.9% alc.)

Outstanding! Barking Frog Winery 2009 Elerding Vineyard Barbera, Washington, \$34. Laurent Montalieu was one of the first winemakers in the United States to use glass corks from Alcoa called Vino-Seal. As Barking Frog owner Ron Helbig was getting into the wine biz, he interned with Montalieu and later worked in his lab. Helbig now tops nearly all his wines with the Vino-Seal, and his winemaking prowess reveals he learned much from Montalieu. This rare Northwest Barbera opens with aromas of ripe Bing cherries, dark plums, loganberries and something that reminded us of the wafer part of an Oreo cookie. It's a deliciously inviting wine on the palate, revealing flavors of black cherries, plums, tar and tobacco. It's beautifully balanced, thanks to bright acidity, moderate tannins and expressive fruit. (220 cases, 16.5% alc.)

Recommended. Barking Frog Winery 2009 Tempranillo, Washington, \$28. This young Spanish-style red from an Oregon winery using Washington grapes is a big, bold, rambunctious wine. It is plenty complex on the nose, with aromas of boysenberry jam, vanilla, cola, toast and chocolate. On the palate, it reveals flavors of black olives, white pepper and big, jammy fruit, all backed with assertive tannins. (125 cases, 15.9% alc.)



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New releases we've tasted

Merlot

Best Buy! Excellent. Flying Fish 2009 Merlot, Columbia Valley, \$14.

This brand was created by Click Wine Group of Seattle, which has since been sold to Winebow of New Jersey. The wines are made by Wahluke Wine Co. in the Eastern Washington town of Mattawa, and it's a delicious wine at a great price. It opens with aromas of blueberry syrup, raspberries, leather and minerality, followed by bright flavors of crabapples, blueberries and black tea, all backed up with smooth tannins. (9,240 cases, 13.9% alc.)

Malbec

Outstanding! Lookout Point Winery 2008 Malbec, Columbia Valley, \$18. How about this for an inaugural wine? George Petzinger crafts just one wine at his winery in Selah, Wash., and that laser focus pays off. He uses Malbec from Two Coyote Vineyard and added a bit of Merlot and Cab for balance. The resulting wine — at a great price — opens with aromas of raspberries, lingonberries and ripe plums, followed by flavors of black currants, black cherries, black raspberries and dark chocolate. It's a big, rich, juicy wine with nicely integrated oak and ample black pepper on the finish. (170 cases, 13.8% alc.)

Petit Verdot

Recommended. Burning Desire 2009 Petit Verdot, Yakima Valley, \$45. Leave it to the folks at Hard Row to Hoe in Chelan, Wash., to create new line with another reference to the planet's oldest

profession. The bottle comes with a drawing of a brass bed in flames, and they've stacked this to make it juicy, sweet and spicy before it turns into a little tart at the end. Its perfume brings thoughts of cherry juice, strawberry candy, raspberry, spice cake and brownies baked with red wine. There's more strawberry candy and black currant flavors swirling inside a medium structure with flannel-like tannins. (285 cases, 14.2% alc.)

Tempranillo

Recommended. Alexandria Nicole Cellars 2008 Destiny Ridge Vineyards Tempranillo, Horse Heaven Hills, \$45. In Spain, Tempranillo is a wild, roguish and untamed red grape, and it has translated beautifully to the Pacific Northwest, where many winemakers are embracing it. Jarrod Boyle nurtures the grapes in his estate Destiny Ridge Vineyards, then crafts the wines for tasting rooms in Prosser and Woodinville. This bold red opens with aromas of green olives, black cherries and cigar box, followed by flavors of black olives, ripe cherries and black licorice. The rich fruit nearly keeps up with the assertive tannins, though this can be easily resolved with a steak on the rare side. (97 cases, 14.4% alc.)

Zinfandel/Primitivo

Outstanding! Angel Vine 2009 Primitivo, Columbia Valley, \$20. Ed Fus crafts his small lots in Carlton, Ore., but he reaches into Washington state in order to feed one of his passions — working with

Wine ratings

All wines reviewed here are tasted blind after being submitted by producers. They are rated Outstanding, Excellent and Recommended by a tasting panel.

Outstanding: These wines have superior characteristics and should be highly sought after.

Excellent: Top-notch wines with particularly high qualities.

Recommended: Delicious, well-made wines with true varietal characteristics.

Best Buy: A wine that is \$15 or less.

Priced are suggested retail and should be used as guidelines. Prices are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise noted.

For more details about our judging system, see the last page of this document.

Celebrate our 30th year of Walla Walla's premiere wine event. The Wine Auction features wine tasting from wineries across our region and the opportunity to bid on exclusive wine packages and experiences in both the silent and live auctions.

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New releases we've tasted

Italian varieties. And his bottlings continue to rank among the best in the Northwest. Distinctive aromas of cherry fruit leather, golden raisin and Tootsie Roll include red currant, strawberry, raspberry and tomato vine. The fluid starts to drain into the mouth with opulence of strawberry jam, Craisins, blackberries and chocolate milk. Nicely managed tannins allow it to finish with robust notes of cherry pie, cherry tomato and tobacco. Enjoy with barbecued ribs. (100 cases, 15.7% alc.)

Excellent. Angel Vine 2009 StoneTree Vineyard Zinfandel, Columbia Valley, \$19. Tedd Wildman's site on Washington's Wahluke Slope continues to grow its reputation for this Italian variety. The nose conjures up thoughts of a runny slice of cherry pie, raspberry, chocolate-covered orange peel and ginger. On the palate, it shows as a rather elegant example of Zin, bringing juiciness and providing balance. There's a continuation of raspberry, backed by red currants and Milk Dud chocolate tannins. In the finish are notes of black licorice, black olive, tar and citrus. (100 cases, 15.5% alc.)

Red blends

Recommended. Alexandria Nicole Cellars 2009 Destiny Ridge Vineyards Quarry Butte, Horse Heaven Hills, \$20. Our reigning Washington Winery of the Year named this delicious red blend after its vineyard, which once was supposed to become a rock quarry. Thank goodness owner/winemaker Jarrod Boyle had the vision to rescue it from that fate and put the soil on a path to its true destiny. This red blend opens with aromas of sweet herbs, floral notes, oak and both red and black licorice. On the palate, it's a rich, bold, strong wine with flavors of black tea, ripe dark fruit, Baker's chocolate and plenty of juiciness to balance the ample tannins. (1,422 cases, 14.6% alc.)

Recommended. Angel Vine 2008 The Hellion, Columbia Valley, \$22. The name is a bit misleading, even though the Primitivo-based blend includes a sizable dose of Petite Sirah (28%). Dark blackberry, red cherry, saddle leather, cigar box, dill and sea air aromas transition to flavors of sweet cherries, loganberry and Belgian chocolate. Sweet tannins and a touch of tar in the finish make this a fun — not intimidating — wine. (210 cases, 15% alc.)

Excellent. Fidelitas Wines 2007 Optu Red, Columbia Valley, \$40. Charlie Hoppes blends Cabernet Sauvignon (55%), Merlot (30%), Malbec (9%) and Petit Verdot into an opulent offering filled with notes of black currant, chocolate-covered cherries, black pepper and tar. The structure is light to medium bodied, and the finish hints at blackberry fruit rollups and saddle leather. Decant and savor during the course

of a multi-course dinner that features lean meats and wild game. (568 cases, 14.9% alc.)

Recommended. Kettle Valley Winery 2008 Naramata Bench Cabernet-Merlot, Okanagan Valley, \$26 CDN. A trio of vineyards — King, Murray and Trovao — come together to produce aromas of poached plums, raspberry jam, cherry, allspice and tar. On the juicy palate, there's an abundance of dark cherry, blueberry, red currant and chocolate flavors. Hints of white pepper and cranberry provide focus to the finish. (517 cases, 14.2% alc.)

Chardonnay

Best Buy! Recommended. Claar Cellars 2010 White Bluffs Unoaked Chardonnay, Columbia Valley, \$13. There's no false advertising here as the bone-dry approach, lingering acidity and wealth of orchard fruit combine in pleasing fashion. Its nose hints at Asian pear, Gala apple and Red Heaven peaches with just a splash of vanilla, and there's more of the same on the palate. While you'll find some subtle creaminess on the midpalate, the finish is akin to a bite of Granny Smith apple and a chew of the peel. (480 cases, 13.3% alc.)

Best Buy! Recommended. Ridge Crest 2010 Unoaked Chardonnay, Columbia Valley, \$10. Here's the second label for Claar Cellars, and while this also is unoaked, there's more of a tropical fruit theme outside and in. Aromatics feature Circus Peanuts and Bit O'Honey candy, banana oil, apple and lemon zest, with a thread of minerality in the background. Bananas and Granny Smith apple flavors lead the palate, followed by white peaches and a late burst of citrus pith. (443 cases, 13.5% alc.)

Riesling

Best Buy! Recommended. Flying Fish 2010 Riesling, Columbia Valley, \$13. This collaboration between the Click Wine Group and the Wahluke Wine Co., produced an off-dry, patio-friendly Riesling. While the nose is rather delicate with honeysuckle, sweet peach, jicama, starfruit and diesel notes, the drink is brimming with fruit cocktail flavors of pears, peach and orange. Next come hints of jasmine, petrol and cotton candy, and beyond the residual sugar (2.3%) is a late bite of lime. (2,376 cases, 12% alc.)

Viognier

Best Buy! Recommended Martinez & Martinez 2010 Alder Ridge Vineyard Viognier, Horse Heaven Hills, \$14. Sergio and Kristy Martinez planted their own small vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills back in 1981, but this bottling is from nearby Alder Ridge, which he also tends. The wine's charming, fruit-forward aromas are reminiscent of fruit cocktail, backed by cherry blossom, orange, white peach and lemon zest. There's delicious

New releases we've tasted

roundness on the entry with sweet oranges, backed by flavors of starfruit, yellow grapefruit and tangerine, giving it lingering acidity. Their wines are available at the Winemaker's Loft in Prosser. (125 cases, 13.5% alc.)

Excellent. Open Road Wine Co. 2010 Viognier, Wahluke Slope, \$22. George Papanikolaou and his wife Sara from Bothell, Wash., impressed us earlier this year with a couple of their 2009 whites off the Wahluke Slope. They skillfully put 50% of this lot through barrel fermentation, which brought some nuttiness to the aromas. We loved the blast of fresh orange juice and orange peel in the nose, along with notes of dried peach, papaya, mango and honeysuckle. Inside, it delivers delicious and round flavors of fresh-cut pineapple, mango and lemon chiffon. It packs great acidity for a Northwest Viognier and comes together with a finishing squirt of navel orange sweetness. (60 cases, 12.7% alc.)

White blends

Outstanding! Alexandria Nicole Cellars 2010 Destiny Ridge Vineyards Estate Shepherds Mark, Horse Heaven Hills, \$20. For a third straight year, Jarrod Boyle's blend of white Rhone varieties earns our top rating. This time, it is Roussanne (62%), Viognier (22%) with Marsanne, and one gets the sense of ripe peach, nectarine, apple, vanilla, banana, orange, rose petal and blueberry bubble gum. The fully engaged palate brings voluptuous and delicious tropical flavors of papaya, pineapple and orange. And yet, the hallmark of this wine is the tremendous length, produced by remarkable acidity akin to sweetened lime and lemon zest. (488 cases, 13.6% alc.)

Fortified

Excellent. Kramer Vineyards 2008 Pinot Noir Port, Yamhill-Carlton, \$30. The second generation has entered the picture at this longtime winery in Oregon's Yamhill-Carlton AVA, as Kimberly Kramer works with parents Trudy and Keith as winemaker. This fortified red dessert wine reveals aromas of cherries, oranges and confection, followed by flavors of sweet Bing cherries and cream-filled chocolates. The addition of brandy arrested fermentation, leaving this wine at 6% residual sugar. It's a superb wine for pairing with Rogue Creamery's Crater Lake Blue. (110 cases, 19% alc.)

Northwest wine regions

Multi-state appellations

Columbia Valley: This multi-state appellation is 11 million acres in size and takes up a third of Washington. Established in 1984.

Columbia Gorge: This multi-state appellation begins around the town of Lyle and heads west to Husum on the Washington side of the Columbia River. It was established in 2004.

Walla Walla Valley: This multi-state appellation is in the southeast corner of Washington and around Milton-Freewater, Ore. Established in 1984.

Snake River Valley: This is in southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon. It covers 8,263 square miles and was established in 2007.

Washington

Yakima Valley: The Northwest's oldest appellation (established in 1983) stretches past Wapato in the west to Benton City in the east and includes Red Mountain, Rattlesnake Hills and Snipes Mountain.

Red Mountain: Washington's smallest appellation is a ridge in the eastern Yakima Valley. It is 4,040 acres in size. Established in 2001.

Horse Heaven Hills: This large appellation — 570,000 acres — is south of the Yakima Valley and stretches to the Oregon border. It was established in 2005.

Wahluke Slope: Approved in early 2006, this huge landform north of the Yakima Valley is an 81,000-acre gravel bar created by the Ice Age Floods. It is one of the warmest regions in the entire Pacific Northwest. Established in 2006.

Rattlesnake Hills: This appellation is in the western Yakima Valley north of the towns of Zillah, Granger and Outlook. The appellation is 68,500 acres in size with about 1,300 acres of vineyards. It was established in 2006.

Puget Sound: This sprawling appellation is in Western Washington. It stretches from the Olympia area to the Canadian border north of Bellingham. It also sweeps through the San Juan Islands and to Port Angeles. Established in 1995.

Snipes Mountain: This is one of Washington's oldest wine-growing regions. At 4,145 acres in size, it is the state's second-smallest AVA. Grapes have been grown on Snipes Mountain and at the adjacent Harrison Hill (also part of the AVA) since 1914. This AVA is within the Yakima Valley appellation and was approved in 2009.

Lake Chelan: This area in north-central Washington is almost entirely within the Columbia Valley. It is a young area, with the oldest vines dating to 1998. About 250 acres are planted here. It was approved in 2009.

Oregon

Willamette Valley: Oregon's largest appellation stretches roughly from Portland to Eugene. Established in 1984.

Ribbon Ridge: This is the Northwest's smallest appellation at 3,350 acres. It is best known for its Pinot Noir and is within the Chehalem Mountains AVA. It was established in 2005.

Yamhill-Carlton: This is a horseshoe-shaped appellation that surrounds the towns of Yamhill and Carlton. It was established in 2005. The "District" was dropped in 2011.

Chehalem Mountains: This is the largest within the Willamette Valley. This 62,100-acre appellation is northeast of the Dundee Hills. It was established in 2006.

Dundee Hills: Many of Oregon's pioneer wineries are in the Dundee Hills within Oregon's Yamhill County. The appellation is 6,490 acres in size. It was established in 2005.

Eola-Amity Hills: This important region stretches from the town of Amity in the north to the capital city of Salem in the southeast. It is 37,900 acres in size. It was established in 2006.

McMinnville: The hills south and west of the Yamhill County city of McMinnville are more than 40,000 acres in size. It was established in 2005.

Umpqua Valley: This Southern Oregon appellation surrounds the city of Roseburg north of the Rogue Valley. It can produce Pinot Noir as well as warm-climate grapes. It was established in 1984.

Rogue Valley: The Northwest's southern-most appellation surrounds the cities of Medford and Ashland, just north of the California border. It is known for its warm growing conditions. Established in 2001.

Applegate Valley: This small valley within the Rogue Valley is known for a multitude of microclimates that can result in wines of distinction and complexity. Established in 2004.

Southern Oregon: This AVA encompasses the Umpqua, Rogue and Applegate valleys and Red Hill Douglas County. It was established in 2005.

Red Hill Douglas County: This tiny appellation — just 5,500 acres — is within the Umpqua Valley. Fewer than 200 acres of wine grapes, primarily Pinot Noir, are grown here. Established in 2005.

British Columbia

Okanagan Valley: In the province's interior, this 100-mile valley stretches from the border in Osoyoos to Salmon Arm in the north. Most wineries are near Oliver, Penticton and Kelowna. It was established in 1990.

Similkameen Valley: This warm valley is west of the southern Okanagan Valley. It was established in 1990.

Vancouver Island: This marine-influenced appellation is in the southwest part of the province. Established in 1990.

Fraser Valley: This farming area is in the Lower Mainland, south of Vancouver. Established in 1990.

Gulf Islands: This appellation includes approximately 100 islands spread out between Vancouver Island and the southern mainland. Established in 2005.

About us

Wine Press Northwest is a quarterly consumer magazine that focuses on the wine regions of Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Idaho.

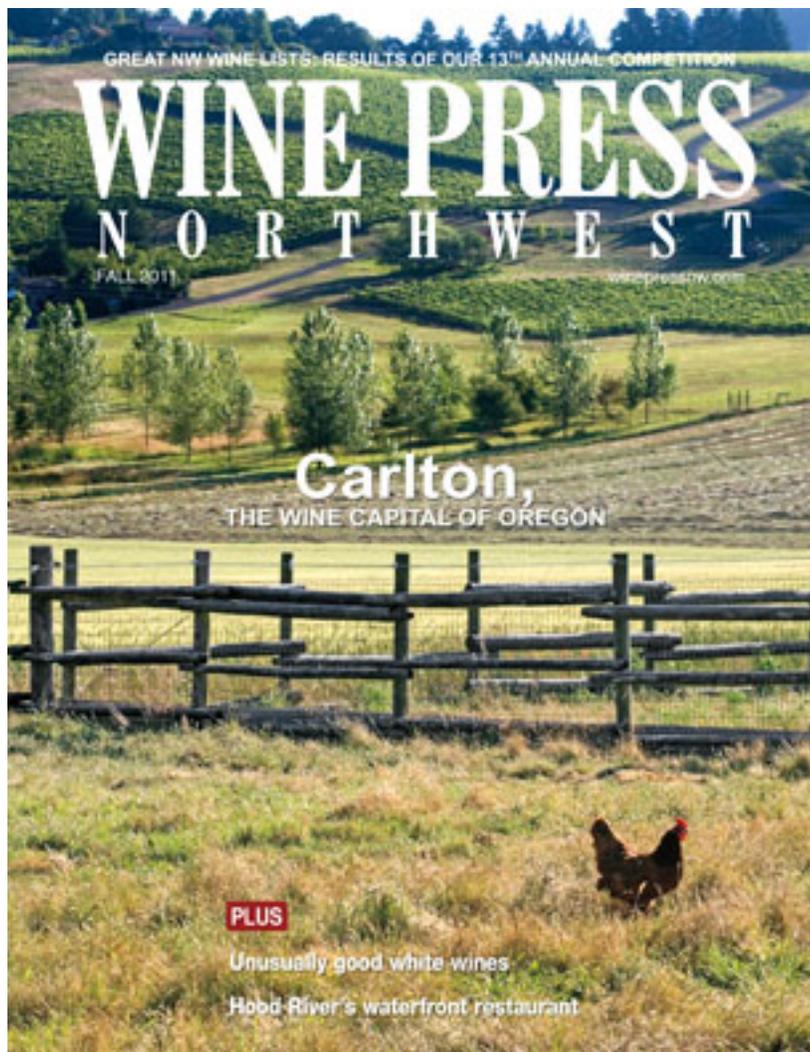
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Editor-in-chief: Andy Perdue
editor@winepressnw.com

Managing editor: Eric Degerman
edegerman@winepressnw.com

Advertising inquiries: Parker Hodge
phodge@tricityherald.com

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Tasting methods

Recent Releases are evaluated under strict conditions to ensure objectivity. Northwest wineries submit wines to Wine Press Northwest for evaluation by Wine Press Northwest's tasting panel. After wines are received, they are stored for at least two weeks and a third party serves them "blind," meaning the tasting panelists do not know the producer. In addition, the panelists are served glasses of wine and are not able to view the bottles or their shapes prior to tasting. Wines are stored in temperature-controlled conditions, allowing them to be served at perfect cellar temperatures.

Price is not a consideration in these evaluations, nor is a winery's advertising activity with Wine Press Northwest, as the magazine's editorial/wine evaluation activities and advertising/marketing efforts are kept strictly separate.

The panel has a combination of technical and consumer palates. If at least three of the four panelists consider a wine technically sound and commercially acceptable, it is included here as "Recommended." The panel may also vote the wine as "Excellent" or "Outstanding," our top rating. Wines considered

unacceptable by the panel are rejected and not included. Reviews are grouped by variety or style and listed alphabetically by winery. Prices listed are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

To ensure we maintain an international perspective, our tasting panelists judge thousands of wines annually at various competitions, including: Los Angeles International Wine and Spirits Competition, Riverside International Wine Competition, Dallas Morning News Wine Competition, Indy International Wine Competition, Virginia Governor's Cup, Sonoma County Harvest Fair, Grand Harvest Awards, San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, Pacific Rim International Wine Competition, Long Beach Grand Cru, Washington State Wine Competition, Seattle Wine Awards, Northwest Wine Summit, British Columbia Wine Awards, New York Wine and Grape Foundation Competition, Tri-Cities Wine Festival, Capital Food & Wine Fest and Idaho Wine Competition.