



WILLAMETTE
VALLEY WINE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Forty Years of the Willamette Valley AVA: Celebrating a Milestone in Oregon's Wine Legacy

- The Willamette Valley Wineries Association will celebrate the anniversary with tastings and other events for consumers throughout 2024 -

Willamette Valley, Oregon - November 27, 2023 - The Willamette Valley American Viticultural Area (AVA), Oregon's first AVA, will celebrate a significant milestone on December 1, 2023: the 40th anniversary since the federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) approved the region as an official AVA. The anniversary will be marked by wine-focused events throughout 2024.

The sprawling 100-mile-plus stretch of vineyards – extending around Eugene to the south, past Portland to the north, and reaching the banks of the Columbia River to the east – is proudly commemorating four decades of excellence in winemaking. With many of its wineries consistently acknowledged in industry-leading publications' Top 100 lists, and boasting over 700 wineries, the Willamette Valley AVA has undeniably risen as a global powerhouse within the wine industry.

“AVA regulations, as established by the TTB, define a grape-growing region with unique characteristics,” explains Morgen McLaughlin, executive director of the [Willamette Valley Wineries Association](#) (WVWA). “These AVAs play a pivotal role in ensuring that consumers receive accurate information about a wine's origin. ‘Willamette Valley’ is more than just a name; it signifies a specific place where the grapes were grown. That's why WVWA is committed to the preservation and protection of the ‘Willamette Valley’ name, as well as the names of wine regions worldwide.”

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To honor this historic milestone, the WVWA will be unveiling a series of engaging consumer events scheduled throughout 2024. Among the highlights is a nostalgic wine-tasting weekend in the Willamette Valley, re-creating the ambiance of four-plus decades ago, set to take place on March 2-3, 2024. This weekend and others will aim to pay homage to the Willamette Valley's rich heritage, showcase its exceptional wines, and deepen the connection between wine enthusiasts and the vibrant winemaking community.

Reflecting on the anniversary, David Adelsheim, co-founder of Adelsheim Vineyard and the original petitioner of the Willamette Valley AVA, says, "On this 40th anniversary of the final rule establishing the Willamette Valley AVA, I want to emphasize the significance of this milestone.

Today, the Willamette Valley has a stunning array of vineyards and wineries – from long-established to cult status to startups. The growth of our businesses has led to economic development, has attracted world-class restaurants and hotels to our towns, and has brought visitors from around the world to be engulfed by our picturesque landscapes. This place welcomes and rewards the intrepid and the adventurous, embodying a spirit of exploration and innovation. While the changes in our vast region over the last 40 years have been momentous, the one thing that hasn't changed here is we are still a close community, and we take care of each other."

Renowned for its distinctive terroir, the Willamette Valley AVA covers a vast expanse of 3.5 million acres, now encompassing 11 nested AVAs. Notably acclaimed for its production of some of the world's most exceptional Pinot noir, the region's distinctive soils and cool climate have also proven conducive to the cultivation of Pinot gris, Chardonnay, and Riesling, solidifying its position as a diverse and distinguished wine-producing powerhouse.

For more information about the Willamette Valley AVA's 40th-anniversary celebrations and upcoming events, please visit the official website of the Willamette Valley Wineries Association, [here](#). To see the original TTB recognition, please visit [here](#). View historical photos [here](#). Courtesy of Oregon Wine History Archive.

About Willamette Valley Wineries Association

The Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA) is a nonprofit industry association dedicated to achieving recognition for Oregon's acclaimed Willamette Valley as a premier Pinot noir-producing region. Currently, the WVWA has more than 400 members representing wineries, vineyards, industry and hospitality businesses throughout the Willamette Valley region. To learn more about the Willamette Valley Wineries Association, visit willamettewines.com.

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