



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

FALL 2021

New Openings and Story Ideas in Oregon's Willamette Valley Region

Fall awaits, arguably the most anticipated and important season in Willamette Valley wine country. The grapes are beginning to change color in the vineyard and winemakers and their crews are beginning to plot harvest dates. It's an exciting stretch marked by fattening grape clusters, cooler days and the promise of another outstanding vintage. The pandemic looms, of course, but the Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA) and its members continue to prioritize public safety first and foremost.

Given the ever-changing reality of pandemic life, please refer to the WVWA's COVID page for particulars on state guidelines and specific details relating to the many tasting room and winery members. Visit <https://willamettewines.com/latest-statements-covid/> for more information, and please check in with individual wineries, tasting rooms and other establishments before visiting to confirm their hours and COVID protocols.

NEW OPENINGS, EXPANSIONS AND MORE

ALLORO OPENS TASTING HOUSE

[Alloro Vineyard](#) in the Chehalem Mountains has a brand-new tasting space. The Mediterranean-inspired stone building, located a stone's throw from the main winery, will be the venue for intimate tasting experiences. The building will house reservation-only tastings featuring the label's work, ranging from Riesling and Chardonnay to a family of Pinot noirs, all made from fruit grown on the stunning 110-acre estate.

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New Openings, continued

NEW EATS

Several new restaurants recently debuted in the Willamette Valley. In Newberg, [Forage](#) is treating guests to wood-fired and Italian cuisine from its craftsman bungalow headquarters on First Street. The eatery offer lunch and dinner menus, along with happy hour specials, late night bites and plenty of local wine by the glass and bottle. In Amity, where there's been a recent downtown revival, [Fred's Bistro](#) is turning out "sandwiches with attitude," charcuterie boards and more. It's ideal grub to accompany a day of tasting in the Willamette Valley.

THE SETTING INN

Newberg has a new luxury hotel with the opening of [The Setting Inn](#), which has taken over the property formerly home to Le Puy Inn. With eight upscale rooms, the property is equipped with a barn, boutique vineyard, great room with fireplace and lawn games, all set in the heart of Willamette Valley wine country. Each room is unique, with amenities spanning from soaking tubs and balconies to breathtaking views. Guests are treated to a European-inspired breakfast featuring locally-sourced ingredients.

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Major acquisitions have occurred in the Willamette Valley. Storied producer [Ponzi Vineyards](#), one of the first to plant vines in the region, has been acquired by Bollinger. It marks the first American enterprise from the iconic Champagne house. [NW Wine Company](#) has been acquired by Casparian Partners. The move is the largest in Willamette wine history, involving some 700 acres of vineyard land set both within the Valley and elsewhere in Oregon. The news is part of a growing trend of larger firms and overseas labels expressing serious interest in the industry. Finally, pioneer winery [Sokol Blosser](#), in its 50th anniversary year, has stepped beyond the red jory soils of the Dundee Hills to acquire Kalita Vineyard, a 65-acre property in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA. It's Sokol Blosser's first vineyard procurement outside of its Dundee Hills location.



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New Openings, continued

TASTING ROOMS TAKE FLIGHT

Two new tasting rooms have moved into the Newberg Airpark. [Distaff Wine Company](#) is pouring lesser-known wines like Cinsault, Blaufränkisch and Mourvèdre from its new space in a converted airplane hangar. The all-female-run label is made up of the wife and daughters of former Owen Roe vintner David O'Reilly. Just down the road, [Longplay Wine](#) is now pouring its Chardonnays and Pinot noirs from a sleek, modern industrial building. It houses the production facility as well, positioning guests closer to the winemaking process.

NEW ENTERPRISES

[Sidereus Vineyard](#) is one of the Willamette Valley's newest wineries. The Cornelius-based operation, commanded in the cellar by winemaker Jason Bull, focuses on Tempranillo and Cabernet Sauvignon-dominant red blends along with more expected varieties like Pinot gris, Chardonnay and Pinot noir. The label is open on weekends for flights on its self-described tasting pad, set just off the rustic estate's production facility. It's part of a growing winemaking community located less than 30 miles from Portland, making it a very convenient stop for tasters. Joining Sidereus is [Open Claim Vineyard](#), set to open a new tasting room this fall. Designed by Emerick Architects, the space promises to be dazzling and provide an ideal backdrop for a one-of-a-kind wine tasting experience.

RAIN DANCE GOES VICTORIAN

[Rain Dance Vineyards](#) has taken over a Victorian-era home in Newberg and converted it into a tasting venue. The remarkable new space was originally constructed in 1916 and is located just down the road from beloved Willamette Valley hotel [The Allison Inn & Spa](#). It's a fitting move from a fifth-generation Oregon agricultural family. In addition to its family of wines, Rain Dance will offer nibbles curated by the culinary minds at nearby Jory Restaurant. The property features vineyard views, a remodeled gazebo and a carriage house, among other landmarks.



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New Openings, continued

DIVERSIFYING THE SCENE

The nation has its long-overdue first appointed Black female winery president in Tiquette Bramlett. The industry veteran recently took over Newberg's [Vidon Vineyard](#), the LIVE-certified winery that specializes in Chardonnay and Pinot noir as well as micro-batches of Syrah and Tempranillo. Bramlett has worked in the Willamette Valley scene since 2015; previously she was an esteemed vocalist before shifting gears and studying to be a sommelier. She worked at Anne Amie Vineyards and Abbey Creek prior to landing the role at Vidon.

WILLAMETTE VALLEY VINEYARDS EXPANDS

[Willamette Valley Vineyards](#) is planning a substantial expansion. The Salem-based winery, the nation's first business to self-underwrite a stock offering under SEC regulations, will be opening sister locations in four other cities. All winery restaurants, the first is slated to open this winter in Lake Oswego. Others in Vancouver, Happy Valley and Bend will follow. The development comes after a successful pilot restaurant in California called Willamette Wineworks. Willamette Valley Vineyards got its start back in 1983, launched by founder and current CEO Jim Bernau.

VINEYARD LODGING

[Bryn Mawr Vineyards](#) now offers a two-bedroom in-vineyard lodging option called Ideabox for those interested in staying on their bucolic 26-acre estate. The accommodations are inspired by the tiny house movement and feature incredible views of one of the Valley's most influential physical landmarks—the Van Duzer Corridor. Guests enjoy complimentary tastings and discounts normally reserved for club members while there.



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STORY IDEAS

EU PROTECTION FOR THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

The Willamette Valley has become just the second American wine region to be recognized by the European Union. Ten years of hard work on behalf of Oregon producers has earned the state's largest winegrowing valley [Protected Geographical Indication status \(PGI\)](#), safeguarding the Willamette Valley name from misuse in trade sectors in Europe and beyond. It's a vital form of recognition that honors the true origin of wine and makes certain that what consumers are buying is grown and produced according to what the label says. Longtime local industry leader Harry Peterson-Nedry of RR Wines spearheaded the efforts for PGI approval, a nod to both the quality and uniqueness of our appellation.

SOLERA STYLE

Southern Willamette Valley producer [Antiquum Farm](#) has just released a batch of solera-style wines (the gradual and meticulous blending of multiple vintages in barrel that results in complex expressions). The offerings are made of estate Pinot gris and are inspired by Old World sherry producers. It's a practice that rarely enters the wine realm, especially in the New World, and it can result in fascinating flavors and textures.

OF THE LAND

Built into a hillside and partially covered with a green roof, [Abbott Claim](#) is home to the only wine wastewater filtration system powered entirely by worms—a unique form of water recycling which responds to growing drought conditions along the West Coast. The winery itself is an architectural marvel, constructed with rich pinewood and concrete, intentionally designed to fit within the surrounding landscape, not atop it. The choreographed visitor experience at Abbott Claim reflects that of many top-rated restaurants and gives ample space for guests to understand the complex work being done on-site, from the vineyard to the cellar.



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Story Ideas, continued

TECH IN THE VINEYARD

Climate change is changing how wine is grown and the Valley is leading the way in terms of adapting to the new normal. Producers like [Nicolas-Jay](#) are working with high-tech equipment including an autonomous electric tractor, the first of its kind in the region. Other producers are using intelligent water sensors to adhere to drier conditions while others are using drones and infrared cameras to gain a better understanding of estate vineyard rows. At [Willamette Valley Vineyards](#), UV-battling robots are being employed to take on mildew, a constant threat in Oregon viticulture.

HARVEST WATCHING

Some wineries are set up ideally for viewing the action that unfolds during crush. At [Nicolas-Jay's](#) new site in the Dundee Hills, visitors can take it all in from the property's natural amphitheater, a fitting design trait given co-owner Jay Boberg's background (a record executive who worked with such artists as artists R.E.M. and Sublime). Take in the smell of wine going to barrel from [Elizabeth Chambers' tasting room](#), set in McMinnville's original power station structure. Or, observe harvest from high up from a well-positioned deck like the one at [Domaine Drouhin Oregon](#). Harvest reports, harvest imagery, winemaker playlists, and harvest recipes can be found at the WVWA's harvest [site](#).

HOLIDAY WINE PAIRING

The post-harvest calm is the best time to get a genuinely intimate tasting in the Willamette Valley. Vintners and their staff are fresh off of another vintage, eager to share stories and offer insights as to what the wines might be like. Better still, they can set you up with the best options to pair with your holiday meals on the horizon. Chatting up your favorite bottle shop owner is one thing, but chatting with a member of the winemaking team is quite another as they have a deep familiarity with their wines and a unique perspective on how to enjoy them. That can translate into some truly memorable meals, with wines that perfectly enhance what's on your holiday plate.



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Story Ideas, continued

ELEVATED LUNCH

Carlton's [Abbey Road Farm](#) is hosting six-course lunches on Fridays and Saturdays through the summer and into fall. Dubbed Verdant, the elevated lunch will revolve around farm-fresh ingredients from the farm's sprawling gardens and dishes from resident chef Will Preisch. The former Holdfast chef is known for his deft culinary hand and attention to seasonality. Wines will accompany the dishes at this intimate series set on Abbey Road's 82-acre farm, vineyard and bed and breakfast.

KID-FRIENDLY EXPERIENCES

The wines may be reserved for the adults but the entire experience doesn't have to be. A number of Willamette Valley wineries and tasting rooms are opening their doors to the all-ages crowd, enticing kids with everything from refreshing lemonade to games like cornhole. Check out [Day Wines](#), run by young mom Brienne Day, where little ones can order snacks like popcorn and play on the outdoor patio. [Brooks](#) offers drinks like root beer and farm animals for viewing while [Et Fille](#) has children's toys, sparkling water and chalk for outside drawing.

SELECT EVENTS

VINEYARD TUNES

September 10, 2021

Gaston producer [Patton Valley Vineyard](#) plays host to a number of live acts this summer and fall. The final installment of the musical series features The Meter Readers, a six-piece act specializing in bayou-inspired sounds. The funky soul band will perform outside adjacent to the vineyard and guests will be treated to not only tunes, but pours of estate wines and accompanying bites.

KNUDSEN 50TH ANNIVERSARY & HARVEST CELEBRATION

September 18, 2021

One of the Pacific Northwest's oldest producers rings in the half-century mark, just in time for



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Select Events, continued

harvest. [Knudsen Vineyards](#), part of the historic Dundee Hills original guard, welcomes guests with a celebratory progressive tour and tasting event. Catered small plates, live music, vineyard tours and stories from Knudsen family members round out this festive nod to 50 years in the Willamette Valley wine game.

WINE COUNTRY THANKSGIVING AND THE GIVING SEASON

November 26-28, 2021

The Willamette Valley's marquee celebration, Wine Country Thanksgiving sees wineries throughout the Valley open their doors for special tastings, pairings, online deals, holiday gift shopping and more. The three-day weekend also commemorates the end of yet another harvest, with all of the year's wines put to tank and barrel and peace and quiet returning to the many vineyards that dot the landscape. Many tasting rooms participate in various programs and causes tied to the prevailing spirit of giving, donating goods and food to those in need within the local community. [Details here.](#)

HISPANIC ROOTS

From across Latin America—Argentina, Peru, Venezuela and Mexico—the six representatives of the second annual Celebrating Hispanic Roots event forged their own paths to arrive in Oregon's lush Willamette Valley, producing and selling their own wines. This fall, these Hispanic winery owners and winemakers will unite to celebrate their common Hispanic roots, the unique journeys that brought them to Oregon, the vineyards they manage, the premier wines they produce and their ambitions to give back to the Spanish-speaking community in Oregon.

Celebrating Hispanic Roots is a month-long event coinciding with Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15–October 15, this year benefitting local nonprofit [Adelante Mujeres](#), which provides holistic education and empowerment opportunities to low-income Latina women and their families to ensure full participation and active leadership in the community. An in-person wine tasting event will be held at Beacon Hill Winery & Vineyard from noon to 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, October 3rd. Two scheduled tasting times are available: noon to 2 p.m. and 2:30–4:30 p.m., and the event will feature authentic



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Select Events, continued

culinary bites. Each of the six participating wineries will offer special wine selections to commemorate the event, with 10% of wine sales throughout the month and 10% of ticket sales directly supporting Adelante Mujeres. Tickets are now available for \$50 each at <https://celebratinghispanicroots.eventbrite.com>.

About the Willamette Valley Wineries Association

The WVWA is a nonprofit industry association dedicated to achieving recognition for Oregon's acclaimed Willamette Valley as a premium Pinot noir-producing region. The WVWA has more than 230 members representing wineries, tasting rooms and vineyards throughout the Willamette Valley. The organization also hosts Willamette: The Pinot Noir Auction, an annual, trade-only wine auction. Visit www.willamettewines.com for more info.

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