



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE

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WHAT'S NEW IN THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY

SPRING 2022

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

Spring is an incredibly promising time in Willamette Valley wine country. The stretch is defined by warmer temperatures, longer days and a budding vintage turning vineyards across the region bright green. After two years of pandemic life, the season has never been more welcome.

There's new life to wine country this time of year, an energy powered by a restful winter and the outdoor activities that lie ahead. Visitors have much to delight in, from brand-new releases in tasting rooms to flowering vineyard rows, orchards and hillsides. Temperatures generally inspire a move from sipping indoors to streetside at a bistro table or atop a deck overlooking the Coast Range or the Cascades.

Of course, COVID is still here and our wineries are doing everything they can to ensure public safety. Please refer to willamettewines.com for the latest on hours of operation, protocol, events and more.

NEW OPENINGS, EXPANSIONS AND MORE

[ROCO GOES ITALIAN](#)

Sparkling wine and Pinot noir specialist [ROCO](#) has handed over majority ownership to Santa Margherita, the Italian brand known worldwide for its Pinot grigio. The move is the European brand's first beyond Italian borders and another chapter in the continuing trend of companies overseas investing in Willamette Valley wine. ROCO founder and winemaker Rollin Soles, previously of Argyle fame, will remain in his role.



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New Openings, continued

RÉSONANCE ADDS VINEYARD

Koosah Vineyard in the Eola-Amity Hills is under new control. [Résonance Winery](#) has acquired the 82-acre site from Kevin and Carla Chambers. Some 44 acres of the site are under vine, planted to Chardonnay and Pinot noir with the oldest vines planted in 2016. The move outfits Louis Jadot's Oregon venture with a promising new site, set on a steep and rocky incline that's the highest in the nested appellation at its peak elevation of 1,100 feet. While young, the vineyard is highly regarded not only for its location but the fact that the Chambers family established it with sustainable farming methods.

THE RETURN OF MACK THEATER

Downtown McMinnville will soon welcome back an iconic fixture. The folks behind McMinnville's luxury Atticus Hotel and locals Charlie Hays and Bob Komin have acquired the [Mack Theater](#), a historic structure set right on Third Street. The sale also includes Hotel Yamhill and the adjoining Macy Building. It's a fitting passing of the torch, as the Atticus team—made up of Erin Stephenson, Brian Shea and Ben Perle—has a history of celebrating and reviving the history of the charming wine country town. The trio is behind Third Street Flats in downtown McMinnville and designed the Atticus Hotel very much with the town and its historic flair in mind. In taking over the Mack Theater, which it will reopen as an entertainment venue, the group will again breathe some new life into McMinnville's storied past. An opening date still is to be determined.

A NEW WINERY FOR ANACRÉON

Willamette Valley newcomer [Anacréon](#) is setting up the first stage of its winery this Memorial Day weekend. The label will open the doors to a stunning site in rural Newberg near pioneering Oregon winery Adelsheim Vineyard. The tasting room will be completed in 2023. Anacréon released its first wines last year, a mix of Chardonnay, Pinot noir and rosé. The label is rooted in the Chehalem Mountains, with a winery that overlooks the Belle Colline vineyard, originally planted in 2012. Special consumer events will begin Memorial Day weekend.



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New Openings, continued

FULLERTON HIRES ACCLAIMED CHEF

Northwest Portland producer [Fullerton](#) hired a lauded chef over the winter in a move to complement its Willamette Valley wines with some culinary muscle. Rob Grisham was named chef at Fullerton and brings tremendous talent to the urban tasting room. Grisham previously worked at Thomas Keller's three-Michelin-starred The French Laundry, widely regarded as one of the premier restaurants in the American dining scene. Fullerton will now offer dishes to accompany its wines, from approachable bites in the bar to multi-course meals during special events like winemaker's dinners.

WILLAMETTE VALLEY VINEYARDS AND WHISKEY

One of the Willamette Valley's most recognizable wine names has entered the spirits realm. [Willamette Valley Vineyards](#), a dynamic and publicly owned brand originally launched in the 1980s, partnered with Portland's Rose City Distillery to make a small run of rye whiskey. The first installment sold out quickly and included just 12 bottles. Something of a collector's item, the inaugural whiskey was created as an homage to W.A. Howe's General Merchandise Store, an old haunt set in Carlton that was lost to a fire in 1995. More releases are to follow from this intriguing hybrid project from two separate but sibling members of the Willamette Valley drinks industry.

ARGYLE MAKES WINE FOR DIVERSITY

[Argyle Winery](#) recently dropped its second installment of the [Ojo Brilloso collection](#), a wine series made up of rare Pinot noirs. The series sheds light on the talents of Argyle's Latinx vineyard leaders, so often overlooked where wine is discussed and praised. The wines showcase fruit from acclaimed sites like Knudsen Vineyard, and highlight the viticulturists' unique ties to the sites they look after. This year's lineup includes Argyle vineyard supervisors Francisco Ponce, Jose Sanchez and Hector Cabrera. Part of the series involves significant donations to regional nonprofits like [AHIVOY](#), [The Roots Fund](#) and [¡Salud!](#).



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New Openings, continued

DUNDEE WINE LIBRARY EXPANDS

The [Dundee Wine Library](#), a bed and breakfast and small estate winery set in Newberg, now has a Dundee tasting room. It's a wine-centric location, part of a larger building situated right off of the highway that includes fellow labels [Tertulia Cellars](#) and [Evening Land Vineyards](#). The newest venue will showcase not only Dundee Wine Library wines but other releases from throughout the Willamette Valley. The Dundee Wine Library wines are crafted by French-born Thibaud Mandet.

GROCHAU IN NORTH PORTLAND

[Grochau Cellars](#) will soon pour its work from the hip and bustling North Williams Street location in Portland. The intimate venue located in The Canyons, a pedestrian-friendly alley space, will spotlight Grochau's wines as well as those from other producers from near and far, along with a few beer options. It's yet another addition to a vibrant Portland wine circuit made up of bars and production spaces in many of the major neighborhoods. Grochau Cellars is known for its eclectic lineup of wines, from Gamay noir and Melon to Tempranillo and Albariño.

YOUNGBERG HILL EXPANDS

One of the Valley's most breathtaking settings is making room for more visitors. [Youngberg Hill](#) is expanding its tasting room deck, doubling the size of the ideally-situated venue. The new addition will allow for outdoor tasting beneath a pergola atop the remarkable estate. Set just a ten-minute drive from downtown McMinnville, Youngberg Hill offers some of the most memorable views of the Willamette Valley, along with a host of wines including sparkling, Chardonnay and Pinot noir.

REMY BUILDING A WINERY

Dundee Hills producer [Remy Wines](#) is hard at work on a new winery building on its estate. The structure will be a first in the Valley, made of net-zero carbon concrete. It's another environmentally conscious and progressive move from founder Remy Drabkin, a beloved Willamette Valley winemaker. The new spot will include an indoor equity bathroom open to vineyard workers all hours, along with upcycled materials from the old barn on the property.



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STORY IDEAS

MOTHER'S DAY TASTINGS

May 8th is Mother's Day and wineries, tasting rooms and hotels are celebrating the big day. Those looking to toast mom can do so at places like [Branch Point Distillery](#) in Dayton. The spirits specialist will be offering a hands-on cocktail class that day with mothers in mind. If mom prefers wine, there are plenty of great options to gift, like Pinot noir from [Atticus](#), Pinot gris from [Carpenter Creek](#) or Chardonnay from [Chris James Cellars](#).

SPRING IN PORTLAND

The spring season takes over the entirety of the Valley, from the Lower Long Tom wine appellation near Eugene to the beaming city of Portland. In the Valley's biggest metropolis, visitors can take it all in, from colorful strolls to one-of-a-kind wine experiences. The cherry blossoms along Waterfront Park will be in full bloom, painting the foreground of the city skyline pink. Meanwhile, urban outfits like [Boedecker](#), [Fullerton](#) and [Helioterra](#) welcome folks with dazzling wines right in the heart of town.

OUR LEGACY HARVESTED

Launched by Tiquette Bramlett in 2020, [Our Legacy Harvested](#) was created to diversify the Willamette Valley Wine scene. Bramlett is the president of [Vidon Vineyard](#), the first Black woman to attain such a role at an American winery. Her organization includes affiliated wineries that bring interns on a four-month immersive experience around harvest. This year, six BIPOC interns will be selected and will receive lodging and transportation to their temporary Willamette Valley home, along with coaching, mentorship and networking opportunities within the regional wine industry.

BLIND TASTINGS AT LENNÉ

Wine enthusiasts can experience something usually reserved for industry pros with the blind tasting program at [Lenné](#). The Yamhill winery has hosted such tasting for a decade, inspired by winegrower Steve Lutz's prior days working at Mondavi. This year's schedule of blind tastings offers some interesting themes, like Burgundy, Chardonnays from around the world, and Yamhill-Carlton Pinot noir vs



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Story Ideas, continued

Dundee Hills Pinot noir. The tastings involve brown-bagging the bottles, allowing tasters to evaluate the wines without any preconceptions or bias. Winemakers and sommeliers engage in the practice often and now consumers can get in on the fun.

ICONIC WINE COUNTRY

The Willamette Valley is home to some picturesque and iconic structures, from historic barns to timeless buildings. Turns out, you can taste great wine in a lot of these remarkable edifices too. There's the grain elevator backdrop of [Flâneur Wines](#) in Carlton, the 1923 Carlton train station turned tasting room at [Ken Wright Cellars](#), and [The Eyrie Vineyards](#), the pioneering brand whose winery and tasting space are housed in a former turkey processing plant.

THE PERFECT PICNIC

With specialty shops dotting the Willamette Valley, it's never been easier to craft the ideal picnic. And with spring weather on its way and many wineries offering outdoor seating, the al fresco invitation is all the more inviting. Intrepid picnickers can stock up on provisions at places like [Red Hills Market](#) in Dundee, [Pizza Capo](#) in McMinnville or [Good Company Cheese](#) in Newberg. Many area wineries offer snacks on-site as well and some allow food to be brought in, but as a courtesy, please inquire beforehand to confirm.

EVENTS

OREGON WINE MASTERCLASS

March 4, 2022

Become a wine expert at this immersive educational experience at the Black Walnut Inn. The highly-personalized affair is curated by Bree Stock, a Master of Wine who specializes in the Willamette Valley and Pacific Northwest wine region. The event is part of a series that takes place the first Friday of every month.



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Events, continued

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE GALLERY VIEWING AND WINE FLIGHT

March 26, 2022

Pioneering Oregon wine label [REX HILL](#) hosts artists every year as part of its residency program. This event is devoted to last year's artistic tenant, Hadley Hatcher. Attendees get to peruse her abstract work, enjoy some wine and even take part in a collaborative and interactive art installment. Hatcher's work was inspired by her wine country surroundings while a resident at REX HILL last year.

OREGON VS CALIFORNIA TASTING

April 16, 2022

Taking place at [Et Fille Wines](#) in Newberg, this event is, as advertised, a comparative tasting between two standout wine states. The blind tasting highlights the similarities between the two regions as well as the subtle distinctions. Attendees can test their wine IQ and see if they can determine which wines are from where. Meanwhile, you'll be treated to more proof of Pinot noir's highly expressive nature.

EASTER BOTTLE HUNT

April 17, 2022

[Youngberg Hill's annual Easter Bottle Hunt](#) and [Left Coast Estate's Easter Hunt](#) reward visitors with prizes and spring fun. Empty bottles are stashed throughout the properties, numbered to a corresponding goodie awarded to those who find it. After the main event, guests are encouraged to hang out, unwind, and enjoy some remarkable estate wines and views. These are two separate events taking place on the same day.

MEET THE MAKERS MARKET

April 30, 2022

Back for the second year in a row, [Meet the Makers Market](#) features local artisans and wine by prominent Willamette Valley host [Ponzi Vineyards](#). Guests can stroll the grounds perusing all kinds of crafts and the craftspeople behind them, all in the warm company of Ponzi staff and award-winning wines.



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Events, continued

OREGON WINE MONTH

May 2022

Folks celebrate Willamette Valley wine all year round, but especially during Oregon Wine Month, when the entire state and beyond join in celebrating our beloved industry for the month of May, offering special activities and promotions for the enjoyment of Oregon wine.

MAY IN WINE COUNTRY

May 2022

One of the longest-standing traditions in the Willamette Valley wine circle, May in Wine Country pours a glass for the summer ahead. Scores of regional wineries and tasting rooms welcome visitors for special wine flights, thoughtful pairings, live music and other special events all month. At its heart is the three-day Memorial Weekend in Wine Country, serving as a preface for the busy and carefree months to follow and an ideal time to drop into your favorite spot or try out a winery that's otherwise rarely open to the public.

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, Oregon Pinot Camp, Pinot in the City, May in Wine Country, The Giving Season and the Cellar Season. Visit www.willamettewines.com for more info.

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