



# WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### WINTER 2024

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

When winter arrives in the Willamette Valley, it signifies a welcome shift in pace. Following the long days of summer and the bustling autumn harvest season, a sense of tranquility settles in. This relaxed and restorative period is dedicated to tending to aging wines, meticulously pruning the vineyard rows, and reconnecting with fellow wine enthusiasts in the peaceful ambiance of tasting rooms.

The vineyards are shrouded in a gentle fog, and the distant hooting of owls adds to the enchanting atmosphere. Foragers embark on truffle hunts while winemakers attend to their barrels, gaining insights into the previous year's vintage. Local restaurants craft hearty dishes perfectly complemented by wines that provide comfort against the winter chill. There's a palpable sense of activity, yet an underlying serenity that proves rejuvenating.

As we welcome the new year, the Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA) is also celebrating the 40th anniversary of our American Viticultural Area (AVA). A plethora of exciting celebrations await, and we invite you to explore the story ideas below and join us in raising a glass to four decades as an extraordinary wine-growing appellation.

Please visit [www.willamettewines.com](http://www.willamettewines.com) for additional information.

**OPENINGS, EXPANSIONS AND MORE**  
**STORY IDEAS**  
**A FEW SELECTED EVENTS**

**Page 2**  
**Page 10**  
**Page 13**



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### NEW HAPPENINGS

#### **Willamette Valley AVA Turns 40**

The appellation that started this all turns 40 this year. The valley, now home to eleven nested AVAs and more than 700 wineries, has become a premiere wine destination, not just domestically but internationally. It's a significant marker for a region and industry that continues to make waves, not just in wine quality but in hospitality and the strength of the community. Event and historical information can be found [here](#). #wvcelebrates40

#### **The Evolution of [Aurora Vineyards](#)**

Aurora Colony Vineyards is changing its name to Aurora Vineyards and adding a new production facility to its repertoire. Set to open in mid-summer, the new space is being built to accommodate an increase in production. The label also brought on a new winemaker in Robert Rothwell, the label's previous assistant vintner with harvest experience in Italy and a handful of Willamette Valley labels.

#### **[Humble Spirit](#) Hires New Chef**

The McMinnville restaurant has brought on chef Sarah Schafer, previously of Portland's now-closed Irving Street Kitchen. She will look to expand and diversify the culinary program at both Humble Spirit and its sister event space, Stillwater. Schafer is part of a long line of Portland culinary talent moving to wine country to continue to help elevate the local scene.

#### **[Antica Terra](#) Offers New Tasting Options**

It's been a busy year for Antica Terra as the lauded wine label acquired a vineyard and is now working on a barrel hall tasting room, which is set to open in May. The hall will feature intimate tasting bays meant to lodge sipping areas for thoughtful wine collectors. In June, the label plans to offer a tasting in the trees option wherein visitors gather around a concrete table (poured on site using materials from the land) set in the heart of the property, surrounded by natural beauty.

#### **[Domaine Lumineux](#) Debuts New Tasting Room and Name Change**

Francis Ford Coppola's Domaine de Broglie has undergone a transformation and is now known as

| *page 2 of 14* |

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Domaine Lumineux, complete with a brand-new tasting room located in downtown Newberg. Despite the change in name, the essence remains unchanged – the dedicated staff continues to source its esteemed fruit from their 42-acre vineyard in the Dundee Hills nested AVA.

### **New Oregon Wine Board Executive Director**

The Oregon Wine Board has a new executive director. [Gina Bianco](#) has taken the helm of the trade organization and brings her Oregon industry experience to the table. Previously, Bianco was the executive director of the Rogue Valley Vintners. She assumes a position held for 12 years by Tom Danowski.

### **Corollary Wines Set to Open New Tasting Room in 2024**

In 2024, Corollary Wines, celebrated for its highly acclaimed sparkling wines, is gearing up to unveil a brand-new tasting room. Located in the picturesque Eola-Amity Hills nested AVA, this upcoming space offers panoramic views of the estate vines, once a timber property. Characterized by a striking design, the 100% Oregon Sparkling wine producer's tasting room will showcase vibrant red metal panels and offer a blend of indoor and outdoor spaces, ensuring a welcoming environment for all visitors.

### **New Stoller Vintner**

There's been a change of winemaking guard at Stoller Family Estate. Longtime winemaker Melissa Burr transitioned to Founding Winemaker on January 1, paving the way for Ben Howe to become Vice President of Winemaking. Howe has been with Stoller Wine Group since 2015 and will look to help carry the family brands — Stoller Family Estate, [Chehalem Winery](#), Chemistry — into the future with continued expansion and innovation.

### **Evening Land and The Dundee Wine Library Change Locations**

Evening Land Vineyard has closed its Dundee location, conducting tastings from now on solely at its remarkable Seven Springs Vineyard estate in the Eola-Amity Hills. The move returns the focus to the label's lauded site, where guests can stroll through the historic plot and settle into the rustic vineyard house. The Dundee Wine Library has done the same, focused now on its main outpost in downtown McMinnville. The family-owned brand also produces its own wine and pours from a bookish setting on 3rd Street.



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### **Union Wine Company Celebrates 10 year “Canniversary”**

Union Wine Company, a trailblazing winery that ignited the canned wine revolution, is now marking a milestone as it enters its tenth year since pioneering canned wines—a revolutionary move within the industry. Under their renowned Underwood label, they were among the very first to embrace aluminum packaging in the valley (and in the world). This noteworthy achievement is being celebrated throughout the year, and the producer fittingly dubs this milestone as their “Canniversary.”

### **Remy Making More Moves**

Beloved Valley winemaker Remy Drabkin just doesn’t stop. Since starting her eponymous label, she’s become the Mayor of McMinnville and founded the nation’s first [Queer Wine Festival](#). Now, Drabkin is in the custody of a grant to study at the prestigious Harvard University. She’ll be joined by fellow Mayors from across the nation.

### **Balsall Creek Vineyards to Open Tasting Room**

Balsall Creek Vineyards is poised to become one of the latest additions to the Valley’s thriving wine landscape with the imminent opening of its tasting room this spring. This family-owned winery, situated in the Chehalem Mountains nested AVA, draws inspiration from its 35-acre vineyard, cultivating an array of grape varieties, including Aligoté, Gamay noir, Sauvignon blanc, and more. Their wine journey began with their inaugural vintage in 2012.

### **West Hills Vineyards Opens a New Event Space Called “The Chapel”**

West Hills Vineyards, located in Polk County, is gearing up to unveil its new event space known as “The Chapel” this coming June. This spacious venue has the capacity to accommodate up to 200 guests, making it an ideal choice for grand occasions such as weddings. The Chapel comes complete with a well-equipped catering kitchen, private rooms, and a charming touch – an antique bell adorning its tower.



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### **The Willamette Valley Crosses the Cascade Mountains**

A pair of labels are entering the flourishing downtown Bend, Ore. market. [Willamette Valley Vineyards](#) (WVV) and [Laurel Ridge Winery](#) are off to central Oregon to pour their wines in brand-new tasting spaces. It's not a huge surprise for WVV, which has tasting rooms throughout the valley and beyond. The Bend spot also serves as a restaurant, with fireplaces and a private dining area. Laurel Ridge's satellite location is set in the Century Center, in the company of breweries and restaurants.

### **[Lingua Franca Wines](#) To Open New Tasting Room**

In the spring of 2024, Salem's renowned Lingua Franca Winery will unveil its inaugural, thoughtfully designed tasting room. Boasting breathtaking 360-degree vistas of the estate, this building will serve as a destination for wine enthusiasts and offer an elevated experience with chef-curated food pairings. Guests can indulge in comparative tasting flights, featuring the winery's signature Pinot noir and Chardonnay varieties.

### **[CHO Wines](#) Working on New Space**

Oregon's first Korean-American winemakers, Lois and Dave Cho, are opening a new tasting room and production facility. CHO Vineyards will welcome guests to its new tasting room in March 2024. The 77-acre property in Hillsboro is under construction and will be where its award-winning wine blends and Pinot noirs will be made.

### **[Namaste Vineyards](#) Renovates Tasting Room and Offers Prized Chocolate Truffles**

Namaste Vineyards, a longstanding establishment since 2001, boasts the distinction of housing the oldest vines in the VanDuzer Corridor nested AVA, all planted between 1980 and 1983. Recently, they undertook an impressive transformation, renovating an historic hay barn dating back to 1920 into a brand-new tasting room. Spread across 200 acres, Namaste Vineyards cultivates Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Riesling, and two distinct Pinot noir clones. With the inauguration of the new tasting room, they have expanded their food offerings to include an enticing array of small plates, charcuterie boards, and homemade artisanal chocolate truffles crafted using their coveted Reserve Cuvee Pinot noir.



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### **Left Coast Estate Opens Library**

Over Thanksgiving weekend, Left Coast Estate, located in the Van Duzer Corridor nested AVA, unveiled its latest addition – the new library. This exclusive venue is dedicated to providing in-depth educational tastings, available by reservation only. It serves as a sophisticated enhancement to an already exceptional property, which features a hiking trail, wood-fired pizza offerings, vineyard tours, and an extensive selection of wine flights.

### **Winter's Hill Winery Debuts Eco-Packs**

Winter's Hill, a renowned producer in the nested Dundee Hills AVA, has recently introduced eco-pack wine pouches as part of its packaging strategy. This shift signifies the winery's commitment to environmental sustainability and offers an alternative to the conventional cork and glass packaging for select wine club releases. These innovative pouches hold the equivalent of two bottles of wine and are equipped with a convenient spigot, ensuring the preservation of the wine for up to four weeks after opening.

### **Lachini Vineyards to Open Mediterranean-Inspired Tasting Room**

Set to open in early 2024, the new tasting space from Lachini will be a spectacular venue complete with an onsite chef, an open kitchen, indoor and outdoor tasting areas and impressive stonework, looking like it was plucked from the Mediterranean countryside. Located in the northern Willamette Valley, it's a mere 30-minute drive from Portland.

### **Maysara Vineyard Family Featured in SOMM TV Film to Stream on TV**

The latest addition to SOMM TV's film collection features none other than Moe Momtazi, the proprietor of Maysara Vineyard in the Willamette Valley. Titled "[Cup of Salvation](#)," this documentary chronicles the inspiring journey of an Armenian father and daughter as they strive to resurrect ancient grape varieties in their homeland of Armenia. This film is part of SOMM TV's impressive lineup, shedding light on the Iranian-American-owned Maysara Vineyard and their dedicated family. Currently, "Cup of Salvation" is being showcased in select theaters across the country, with plans to stream on TV this upcoming spring.



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### **Johan Deals in Savignin**

Ever-experimental and biodynamically produced Johan Vineyards is now working with Savignin. The unique grape, born in the Jura region of France, reminds folks of Chardonnay with extra minerality. It's another innovative move from a label that's shown the potential of varieties like Kerner and Zweigelt in the Willamette Valley.

### **Quailhurst Vineyard Estate Appoints New Winemaker**

Anthony King has assumed the role of winemaker at Quailhurst Vineyard Estate in Sherwood. Originally from Texas, King, who also serves as the General Manager at [Carlton Winemakers Studio](#), is bringing his expertise to the Chehalem Mountains AVA region. With a diverse background that includes experiences in Napa Valley and at Lemelson Vineyards, King is well-prepared for his new position. Quailhurst Vineyard Estate is renowned for its production of Chardonnay, Pinot noir, and sparkling wines, all sourced from their expansive 35-acre estate.

### **Autonomous Tractor Goes Live**

The Willamette Valley's [Nicolas-Jay](#) is now farming with a fully autonomous electric tractor. A big stride into the future of farming, the approach uses a sovereign tractor that can run with or without a driver. The label started using the technology late last year and is pleased thus far, especially because zero tailpipe carbon emissions are involved. Expect to see more of these lithium battery-charged vehicles in the Valley soon.

### **Greywing Cellars Takes Flight**

Alas, Oregon has its first Native American winemaker in Brandy Grey. Her label, Greywing Cellars, makes Pinot noir and Sparkling Rosé across two Willamette Valley appellations. Grey is Cherokee and Navajo and is using the label to help support fellow indigenous peoples. Part of the brand's proceeds benefit Native American organizations. Grey holds an enology degree from Chemeketa, while her partner, Ari, is the Co-owner and Vineyard Manager.





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### **Willamette Valley Vineyards Opens Camping Space**

Willamette Valley Vineyards introduces “[Into the Woods](#),” an exclusive haven designed for wine-loving recreational vehicle enthusiasts. Nestled amid the scenic vineyards of Willamette Valley Vineyards, “Into the Woods” offers a unique opportunity to fully experience Oregon’s wine country. Guests can relish the tranquility of the surroundings and indulge in the vineyard’s offerings, all while enjoying the convenience of modern amenities, including a well-appointed bathhouse. For those seeking a closer connection with nature, tent camping options are also available.

### **[AVP Wine Collective](#) Launches**

An incubator of sorts, the AVP Wine Collective has launched in southeast Portland. The brainchild of former Cellar 503 founder Carrie Wynkoop, the 60,000-square-foot space is devoted to small producers and outfitting them with the equipment and real estate they need to make their wines. The sizable project includes a storage space and production area that will process some 600 tons of fruit by 2028, according to projections.

### **[Archery Summit](#) Opens Stunning Tasting Room**

Pioneering Pinot noir producer Archery Summit cut the tape to its new tasting room last fall, just after harvest. The new 1,800-square-foot space celebrates the surroundings, with floor-to-ceiling windows of the surrounding Dundee Hills, a fireplace and an outdoor terrace. The label still welcomes guests through its captivating underground cave system. The new space allows visitors to absorb the winery’s unique setting in the jory-soil hills.

### **Naked Grazing**

[Bethel Heights](#), [Bryn Mawr](#), and [Björnson](#) wineries are embracing regenerative farming practices by employing a flock of sheep that will rotate among their vineyards for the next month. These sheep will graze at each estate, starting from Bryn Mawr and moving to Bethel Heights at the end of the month, then from Bethel Heights to Björnson a few weeks later. This sustainable initiative is made possible through a partnership with Naked Grazing, a company that leases sheep to vineyards. This approach offers several advantages, including a significant reduction in fuel consumption and minimal soil





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compaction when compared to traditional tractor use. The sheep graze beneath the vines, eliminating the need for tilling, and their droppings serve as valuable natural fertilizer for the soil. Notably, other wineries like Montinore Estate and Dominio IV Vineyards are also collaborating with Jared Lloyd, the visionary behind Naked Grazing.

### **Sokol Blosser Winery Adds Nutritional Info to Labels**

Sokol Blosser Winery, one of Willamette Valley's first wineries, has introduced nutrition and ingredient labeling on its wines, starting with its 2023 Estate Rosé of Pinot noir. This change is in response to the growing demand for transparency from consumers, especially younger ones, who want to know what's in their wine (and the EU's upcoming mandate). The wine is now available for wholesale purchase and will be on store shelves nationwide by mid-February. Sokol Blosser plans to gradually incorporate nutrition information and ingredients on labels for their entire wine portfolio, with the next release scheduled for spring.

### **Raptor Ridge Hires New Winemaker**

Raptor Ridge Winery, a family-owned winery marking its 30th growing season in the Willamette Valley, is excited to introduce its new winemaker, Ben DiCristina. Ben brings a wealth of experience gained in both Oregon and California, serving as both a viticulturalist and enologist with brands such as Sine Qua Non, Evening Land, Argyle, and Keeler Estate. His commitment extends to valuing family-owned enterprises that prioritize the well-being of both their community and the environment. In his own words, he admires those "who are doing their best to be good to both the people and the places around them."

### **Chosen Family Wines Opens New Tasting Room**

Channing Frye, the proprietor behind Chosen Family Wines, is set to unveil The Road House Tasting Room later this month. This private retreat will provide an exclusive setting for tastings alongside the picturesque Wilsonville River. Guests can select from three distinct tasting flights, thoughtfully curated by the Chosen Family Team, with the option to pre-order charcuterie boards for a complete experience.



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### STORY IDEAS

#### **Gamay in the Valley**

The variety made famous by Beaujolais in France has a new home in the Willamette Valley. Producers like [Brick House](#), [Love & Squalor](#), [Walnut Ridge](#), [Division Wine Company](#) and [WillaKenzie](#) are showing the potential of this medium-bodied, bright, and zippy wonder. With a vibrant color and dazzling red fruit flavors, it's a wine with serious appeal and a food-friendliness that's off the charts.

#### **First Gen Winemakers Carry the Torch**

In the Willamette Valley, a fresh wave of young winemakers are taking the reins, injecting fresh energy into the industry by exploring new wine styles and showcasing lesser-known grape varieties. Emerging producers like [Arabilis](#), [CHO](#), [Hazelfern](#), [Corollary](#) and [Hundred Suns](#), among others, are at the forefront of this generational shift, paving the way for innovative developments in viticulture and enology. This dynamic group is redefining the wine landscape with offerings that include robust winter Rosés, experimentation with grapes like Trousseau noir, the creation of Pet-Nat Chardonnays, and captivating apple-grape co-ferments. Their adventurous spirit and creative approaches are infusing renewed excitement into the venerable Willamette Valley wine region.

#### **Get Lost Along the [Truffle Trail](#)**

Truffles have long made a home in the damp Willamette Valley and now there's a trail to celebrate the delectable fungi. Taste Newberg debuted the trail late last year, a route that serves as an homage to the culinary delicacy. The truffle trail points visitors to areas and experiences where they can enjoy the four native species of the prized item, which resides in forested areas all over the region. The trail celebrates the many foraging outings, culinary events and tastings that utilize local truffles, in peak season during the winter months in and around the Truffle Festival, which occurs on select days in February and March 2024.



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### **Mother's Day Sparkling Wine**

Raise a toast to mom on her special day with a glass of sparkling wine from one of Willamette Valley's esteemed producers. The Valley now boasts an array of options for bubbly, ranging from [Domaine Willamette](#) and [Gran Moraine](#) to boutique wineries like [Winderlea](#), and [Styring](#). This is an opportune moment to savor these sparkling delights, especially in the company of your beloved mother. Many Willamette Valley tasting rooms are rolling out special pours and hosting brunch-themed events to make Mother's Day even more memorable. Event calendar [here](#).

### **Sports Pros Playing Wine Game**

Pro athletes have ventured into the Willamette Valley's wine scene, adding a unique dimension to its culture. [CJ McCollum's Heritage 91 label](#), along with the collaborative efforts of Channing Frye and Kevin Love in founding [Chosen Family Wines](#), have garnered attention. These athletes are part of a growing presence in the region's winemaking, with WNBA star Elena Delle Donne introducing her [Deldon Pinot noir](#). In addition, former quarterback Drew Bledsoe has made a name for himself with [Bledsoe Family Wines](#), while [Sweet Cheeks Winery](#) has partnered with pro quarterback Marcus Mariota's Motiv8 Foundation. This intersection of sports and wine within the valley is nothing short of fascinating.

### **Valentine's Day in Wine Country**

About the only thing more romantic than sipping wine in wine country is extending the stay with an overnight stay at one of the Willamette Valley's many charming hotels and inns. Visitors can revel in the spirit of Valentine's Day with special pairings at select wineries and make a proper night of it, staying anywhere from the luxe [Allison Inn and Spa](#) or a homey outpost like [Chehalem Ridge Bed and Breakfast](#). There are even vineyard-set places to lay your head, like [AtTheJoy](#) or [Youngberg Hill Inn](#).



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### **The Cycles of the Vine**

Vines go dormant in the winter but that doesn't mean vineyard crews aren't busy prepping for the next growing season. This time of year, vineyard stewards prune the rows, settling up the best canes for bearing fruit in vintage 2024. Visitors can watch the action unfold as they sip some estate wine or hang out in front of a tasting room fire. Great destinations for observing the winter viticultural duties include [Domaine Drouhin](#) in Dayton, [Illahe](#) in Dallas, and [Iris Vineyards](#) in Springfield.

### **Winter is Dessert Wine Season**

The winter months call for filling meals complete with a good dessert. That dessert can come in the form of an excellent dessert wine or a pairing involving a sweeter option and a classic dish like poached pears. The Willamette Valley is home to some superb dessert wine producers, from [Anne Amie](#) and its release aged ten-years in the Solera style to the Port-style wines of [Coelho](#) and [Wetzel Estate](#).

### **Going Lightweight and Reusable**

Winemakers in Oregon are always ahead of the curve when it comes to sustainability, and glass production, shipping, and recycling have a huge carbon footprint. Wineries like [J.L. Kiff](#), who have been using lighter-weight glass and screw caps for many years, are embracing the new trend in sustainable packaging: refillable bottles. [Revino](#) is a new company creating refillable glass bottles in the Willamette Valley, creating a new, more Earth-friendly bottle ecosystem for beverage producers and consumers in the PNW. Early signers-on include [Et Fille Wines](#) and [Fairsing Vineyard](#), both in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA, as well as [Remy Wines](#) in Dayton. 2023 wines will start being bottled in these reusable bottles this month.

### **Willamette Valley Wineries Pro-Polyculture**

Sustainability remains top of mind for wineries, vineyards, and consumers alike in the Willamette Valley, but strides being made by producers in polyculture are often overlooked. Most vineyards are monocultures, where the cultivation of a single crop in a given area is prioritized. Those pursuing polyculture, whether for regenerative, organic, or biodynamic farming programs or not, introduce other plant varieties in and around vineyards to increase soil health via greater biodiversity. At [Alloro](#)



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[Vineyard](#) in the Laurelwood District AVA, 35 acres of estate grapes mingle with 2-3 acres of fruit, olive, and chestnut trees, 40 acres of timber woods and natural areas, and 12 acres of hay and pastureland for animals. Of Alloro's 110 total acres, just under a third are used for grapes, allowing diverse flora and fauna to thrive concurrently, each uniquely contributing to the estate's soil biology. The diversity in the ground can be felt in the complexity of the resulting wines and other agricultural products, most of which are used by the winery's Executive Chef for Alloro's culinary program.

### A FEW SELECTED EVENTS

#### **Truffle Festival**

February 10-March 9, 2024

The premiere truffle festival in the U.S. returns to the Willamette Valley this winter. A host of events take place on select days in February in March, including a truffle dog competition, educational lectures, decadent dinners and more.

#### **Bubbles Fest**

February 17-18, 2024

For two days, Anne Amie is celebrating all things sparkling wine. The gathering features bubbles from 28 producers paired up with local seafood and special bites. Local cheeses and sweets will be on hand as well as music from DJ Jimbo.

#### **Oregon Chardonnay Celebration**

February 24, 2024

Oregon's most illustrious Chardonnay celebration boasts the participation of 50 esteemed producers, offering attendees the opportunity to indulge in extensive tastings and enlightening seminars. Adding to the experience, The Allison Inn's executive chef, Jack Strong, alongside guest chefs from Portland and the Willamette Valley, will craft delectable bites meticulously paired with the exquisite wines. This remarkable event takes place at the Allison Inn and Spa, promising an unforgettable epicurean experience.



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## **40th Anniversary Throwback Weekend**

March 1-3, 2024

Join the Willamette Valley Wineries Association for a valley-wide celebration commemorating the 40th Anniversary of the Willamette Valley AVA, with a special focus on all things from the iconic year 1983. Participating wineries may transport you back in time with tasting fees reminiscent of that year, or perhaps serenade you with an '80s-themed playlist, and who knows, maybe even throw in an '80s-themed prom for added nostalgia. Events will be listed in February [here](#).

## **About Willamette Valley Wineries Association**

The Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA) is a non-profit 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](http://willamettewines.com)

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