

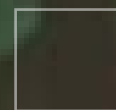
WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINERIES ASSOCIATION

WE ARE PINOT NOIR



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WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE | THE HISTORY

After months on the Oregon Trail, early pioneers finally reached a broad green valley of deep forests and wide open meadows. This fertile valley had a mild climate, plenty of water, and soil that promised healthy crops. Today the Willamette Valley is the largest and most recognized winegrowing region in Oregon.

While wine grapes have been grown in Oregon since the mid 1800s, they were not present in any organized fashion in the Willamette Valley until 1965. That was the year David Lett and his wife Diana of The Eyrie Vineyards planted their 3,000 Pinot noir vines (plus a few odd Pinot gris) on a carefully chosen, south-facing slope in the Dundee Hills. A Utah native, Lett was on his way to dental school in San Francisco in 1963 when he encountered Napa Valley. After what he describes as an epiphany, he forsook dental school to study viticulture at University of California at Davis. Two years later he was on his way to Oregon.

It is a safe bet that without Pinot noir there would be no Oregon wine industry as we know it today. Pinot noir was the first post-Prohibition vitis vinifera variety planted in the north Willamette Valley, and the reason Lett came to Oregon. He planted his vines in the Dundee Hills after a rigorous study of western Oregon's geography and climate. "I was convinced that these grapes belonged in this climate," said Lett. The Letts produced their first wines in 1970.

Though it would be several years of hardship before Lett was proven right, others felt called to this new wine region. In 1968, native Californian and engineer Dick Erath moved with his wife and two young sons to Oregon. His first plantings were on the Chehalem Ridge. He established Erath Vineyards in the Dundee Hills and made his first commercial wines in 1972.

Close on his heels was Myron Redford of Amity Vineyards, who came to the area from Seattle and began making wine in 1976 near Amity. David and Ginny Adelsheim planted their vineyard on Chehalem Ridge in the early 1970s and made their first wines, from grapes purchased from Washington growers, in 1977. Their first crush with Willamette Valley grapes was in 1978. Dick and Nancy Ponzi founded Ponzi Vineyards in 1970 and produced their first vintage of Pinot noir in 1974. Their first commercial plantings of Pinot gris (some of the first in the U.S.) were planted in 1978, with the first vintage produced in 1981.

With the 1977 vintage, Elk Cove Vineyards and Sokol Blosser Winery joined the mini-rush to make wines as other small vineyards and wineries established themselves in the north end of the valley and near Salem to the south. Like other pioneers, these new wineries relied heavily on Washington grapes in their early days, making Sauvignon blanc, Merlot and Riesling until their vineyards were mature.

EVESHAM WOOD | LE PUIITS SEC VINEYARD
PHOTO: LOGAN HILLERNS



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE | THE HISTORY

And while these early winemakers produced wines from Washington grapes, they planted mostly Pinot noir, some Riesling and Chardonnay. For the early settlers here the prize was, and always has been, Pinot noir.

It was not an easy beginning. Oregon wine quality was erratic in the early days. At their best, most wines did not meet the expectations of consumers more accustomed to the bigger, richer style standards set by the new wave of premium California wineries. The opening of Nick's Italian Café in McMinnville in February of 1977 helped enhance the image of local wines. Nick's met with favorable reviews and lured Portlanders to the country to sample its delicious Italian food. Owner Nick Peirano embraced the new wineries, and his was the first restaurant in the area to feature their wines. Local winemakers found in Nick's not only an ambassador, but also a place to gather and share their news, information, plans and dreams. Nick's is now a James Beard award-winning restaurant.

Though they started out modestly, the earliest wineries continue to be family-owned businesses as well as leaders in the industry today. However, the industry has grown tremendously and continues to change. A subtle shift in winery demographics first occurred in 1977 when Bill and Susan Sokol Blosser built their winery near Dundee. Until then, wineries

were notorious for being housed in barns, sheds, and former turkey packing plants. Rather than starting out as something else, Sokol Blosser was designed and built as a winery. Soon after, Fred and Mary Benoit relocated from Lane County and built Chateau Benoit (now Anne Amie) near Lafayette. The second wave came into the game with somewhat better funding. REX HILL, Veritas Vineyard (now Chehalem) and Yamhill Valley Vineyards were among those with deeper pockets than their predecessors.

Late in 1979, a series of events transpired to bring international acclaim to Oregon's fledgling wine industry. At the 1979 Olympics of Wine held in Paris, a Yamhill County Pinot noir from The Eyrie Vineyards placed third in a blind tasting of some of the world's finest Pinots. Burgundian wine producer Robert Drouhin could not believe the results, and in early 1980 staged his own tasting in Beaune. Here, The Eyrie's 1975 South Block Reserve Pinot Noir placed second against a Drouhin 1959 Chambolle-Musigny. It was not to be believed! Vineyards continued to be planted in the valley, and in 1983 a sensational vintage again propelled Oregon's Pinot noir wines into the international spotlight. The 1983s were tasted in New York City in 1985 against some of the world's best Burgundies. Again, the tasting was blind with a panel of wine judges. Oregon wines dominated the tasting. The quality of Willamette Valley Pinot noir was more than mere coincidence.

STOLLER FAMILY ESTATE
PHOTO: MIKE HAVERKATE



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE | THE HISTORY

The New York tasting spurred another growth spurt in wine country; however, this one had international implications. Véronique Drouhin, Robert's daughter, spent the 1986 harvest in Oregon, working at several wineries. Meanwhile, several new, small wineries opened their doors. In 1987 Robert Drouhin purchased vineyard land in the Dundee Hills. His first wines were made by Véronique in 1987.

Interest from Australia came from Brian Croser of the famed Petaluma Winery. Croser, with encouragement from former Texan Rollin Soles, became convinced that the northern Willamette Valley was one of the best locations to produce sparkling wines. Croser established Argyle Winery in Dundee in 1987 with Soles as his winemaker. Argyle since then has produced some of the best sparkling wines in the United States.

Closer to home, Maryland-based wine critic Robert Parker, with his brother-in-law Michael Etzzel, purchased property on Chehalem Ridge in 1987 and began developing a small vineyard. The winery, known as Beaux Frères, produced its first wines in 1991.

Since the early 1990s, the Willamette Valley has attracted many more wineries, everything from small family-run operations producing less than 500 cases to large and well-financed facilities producing more than 100,000 cases. And the growth of the Oregon wine industry continues steadily, with new vineyards and wineries being added every year. In the Willamette Valley, wineries number more than 530 with nearly 20,000 acres planted to vineyards. In 2015, the region celebrated 50 years since the first Pinot noir plantings in 1965. With the growth of outstanding restaurants, charming inns and a first-class wine country resort, the Willamette Valley has become a destination for tourists seeking the perfect Pinot noir.

DOMAINE DROUHIN OREGON
PHOTO: SERGE CHAPUIS



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE | THE PLACE

The Willamette Valley, Oregon's leading wine region, has over two-thirds of the state's wineries and vineyards and is home to more than 560 wineries. It is recognized as one of the premier Pinot noir-producing areas in the world. Other cool-climate varieties such as Pinot gris, Pinot blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling and Gewürztraminer are equally at home in the valley.

Nestled between Oregon's Cascade Mountains and the Coast Range, the Willamette Valley's terrain is varied and huge: more than 100 miles long and spanning 60 miles at its widest point. The climate boasts a long and gentle growing season—warm summer days with cool evenings, mild winters and long, often rainy springs—the perfect conditions for growing the cool-climate grape varieties for which Oregon is best known. In fact, the Willamette Valley climate and its soils make it the promised land for Pinot noir in America. So it's no surprise that more than 80% of Oregon's Pinot noir is produced in the Willamette Valley.

Because of these prime growing conditions, the pastoral, rolling hills and valleys of the Willamette Valley are striped with vineyards and dotted with wineries. The number of wineries in the region is growing, yet the valley remains small in its personal, handcrafted approach. The majority of wineries are family-owned establishments dedicated to a hands-on, artisanal winemaking style. These small producers, along with larger, established wineries, together contribute to the world-class reputation of the region's wine.

Even with all the notoriety and the growing number of wineries, the Willamette Valley continues to be a place where wine enthusiasts and neophytes alike can personally meet winemakers and taste directly from the barrel. It's a place where winemakers and owners have worked together since the early pioneers arrived in the '60s and '70s, sharing everything from secrets to equipment. This unique combination of pioneering spirit and camaraderie has created a tight-knit community along with top-quality wines.

The Willamette Valley is also a place where wineries are dedicated to sustainable winegrowing and winemaking practices based on their respect for the land and desire to see future generations continue the winemaking tradition. Approximately 48% of Oregon's vineyards are certified sustainable by independent third-party certification programs.

Willamette Valley wineries are a popular tourist destination, with the area boasting a luxury destination resort, several high-end inns and many delightful bed & breakfasts. The valley also offers a long list of fine dining restaurants. An additional advantage for the wine tourist is the proximity of the wineries to Portland, Salem and Eugene, Oregon's three largest cities.

GRAN MORAINÉ VINEYARD
PHOTO: CAROLYN WELLS KRAMER



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE | AVAs & SOILS



No grape variety is as reflective of climatic and site differences as Pinot noir. That is why it demands a cool climate to thrive and why small distance differences in the valley often yield wines of distinctively different character. General attributes that make the Willamette Valley suitable for cool-climate grape growing include the protection afforded by the Cascade Mountains to the east, Coast Range mountains to the west and a series of lower hill chains to

the extreme north of the valley. Almost all grape growing is done on lower hillsides, avoiding deeply fertile alluvial soils and cooler hilltop mesoclimates.

It is on these hillsides that Pinot noir uniqueness is found and where apparent families of wines urge distinctive American Viticultural Area identification. In 2002, a collaborative action of vineyards and wineries delineated and submitted to the TTB petitions to divide much of the northern part of the large Willamette Valley AVA into six more specific AVAs: Chehalem Mountains, Dundee Hills, Eola-Amity Hills, McMinnville, Ribbon Ridge and Yamhill-Carlton. In 2019, the Van Duzer Corridor AVA was added.

THE WILLAMETTE VALLEY | *Established 1983*

Concentrated grapegrowing in Oregon began here, with initial plantings in 1966 and ongoing vineyard growth in the intervening forty years adding over 10,000 acres, largely because of the benign but challenging cool climate and the protection of mountains on eastern and western boundaries—and also largely because of one grape variety, Pinot noir. A large AVA of 3,438,000 acres (5372 square miles), running from Portland in the north to Eugene in the south, it includes rich alluvial soils on the valley floor that are great for agriculture but inappropriate for high quality grapegrowing, and a selection of volcanic, loess and sedimentary soils on hillsides of varying mesoclimates.

To acknowledge the uniqueness of certain smaller growing hillsides inside the valley, AVA designation was requested in 2002 for six areas in the northern valley, which contain sixty percent of the currently planted acreage of the Willamette Valley. A seventh was added in 2019. All these smaller AVAs have minimum elevations around 200 feet; some also have a maximum of 1000 feet.



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE | AVAs & SOILS

CHEHALEM MOUNTAINS AVA | *Established 2006*

The Chehalem Mountains AVA is a single uplifted landmass southwest of Portland in the northern Willamette Valley, extending 20 miles in length and 5 miles in breadth, stretching from southeast to northwest. It includes several discrete spurs, mountains and ridges, such as Ribbon Ridge and Parrett Mountain. The highest point within the Willamette Valley is the Chehalem Mountains' Bald Peak (at 1,633 feet) which affects weather for the AVA and for adjoining grape growing hillsides. It is the geography and climate that differentiate this AVA from others. All three important hillside soil types are represented: basaltic, ocean sedimentary and loess (blown lake bed sediment), the predominant soil on the northern face of the Chehalem Mountains. Within the almost 70,000 acres of this AVA are over 1,600 acres of grapes, grown in over 100 vineyards, and 31 wineries.

DUNDEE HILLS AVA | *Established 2005*

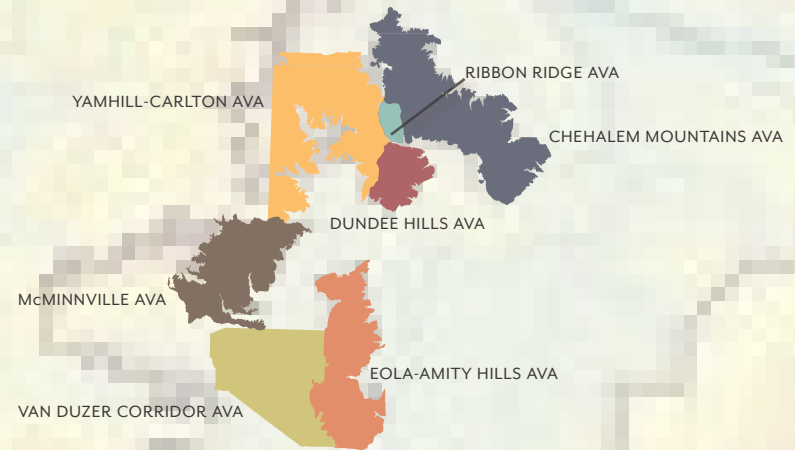
The first grapes in the Willamette Valley were planted in the Dundee Hills. It remains the most densely planted locale in the valley and state. Within the 12,500 acres of this almost exclusively basaltic landmass that runs north-south and overlooks the Willamette River to the south and the Chehalem Valley to the north, more than 1,700 acres of grapes are planted in approximately 50 vineyards. It is approximately 30 miles to the southwest of Portland and 40 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, with protection from the ocean climate provided by the higher Coast Range of mountains.

EOLA-AMITY HILLS AVA | *Established 2005*

Adjacent to the Willamette River, these hills are composed of the Eola Hills, straddling the 45th parallel on the southern end and the Amity Hills on the northern spur, constituting almost 40,000 acres on which more than 1,300 acres of grapes are planted. Two of the predominant influences on the characteristics of wines from the Eola Hills are shallow soils and the Van Duzer Corridor. The soils of the Eola Hills contain predominantly volcanic basalt from ancient lava flows, combined with marine sedimentary rocks and/or alluvial deposits, making a generally much shallower and rockier set of well-drained soils which produce small grapes with great concentration. The Van Duzer Corridor provides a break in the Coast Range that allows cool ocean winds to flow, dropping temperatures dramatically (especially during late summer afternoons), which helps to keep acids firm.

McMINNVILLE AVA | *Established 2006*

The McMinnville AVA of nearly 40,500 acres sits due west of Yamhill County's seat, the city of McMinnville. It extends approximately 20 miles south-southwest toward the mouth of the Van Duzer Corridor, Oregon's lowest Coast Range pass to the Pacific Ocean. Encompassing sedimentary loams and silts, with alluvial overlays and a base of uplifting basalt. The soils are uniquely shallow for winegrowing. The land above 200 feet and below 1,000 feet in elevation on the east and southeast slopes of these foothills of the coast range mountains, the soils are primarily uplifted marine sedimentary loams and silts, with alluvial overlays and a base of



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINE | AVAs & SOILS

(McMinnville AVA continued) *uplifting basalt. The soils are uniquely shallow for winegrowing. The planted slopes sit in the protecting weather shadow of the Coast Range mountains, and rainfall is lower than on sites to the east. The primarily east- and south-facing sites take advantage of the drying winds from the Van Duzer corridor. Approximately 600 acres are currently planted here.*

RIBBON RIDGE AVA | Established 2005

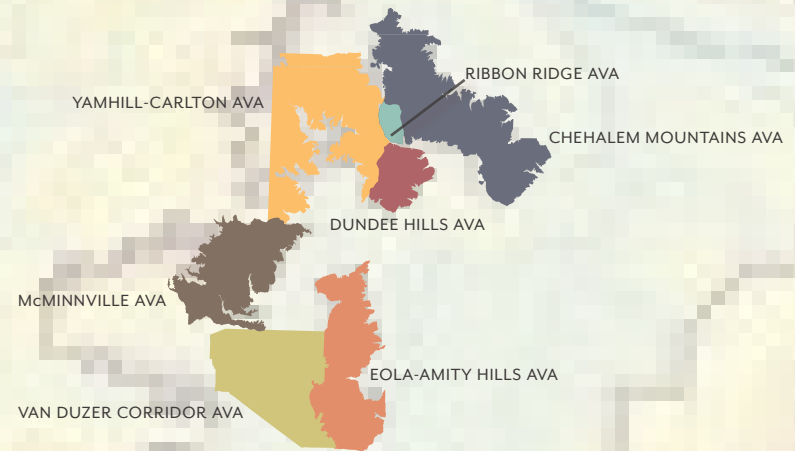
Ribbon Ridge is a very regular spur of ocean sediment uplift off the northwest end of the Chehalem Mountains, containing a relatively uniform 5 1/4 square miles (3,350 acres) of land. Approximately 500 acres are currently planted on the ridge, within 20 vineyards. The AVA is distinguished by uniform, unique ocean sedimentary soils and a geography that is protected climatically by the larger landmasses surrounding it. Paucity of aquifers forces most vineyards to be dry farmed. Ribbon Ridge is contained within the larger Chehalem Mountains AVA.

YAMHILL-CARLTON | Established 2005

North of McMinnville, the foothills of the Coast Range create an AVA of nearly 60,000 acres, centered around the hamlets of Carlton and Yamhill. Low ridges surround the two communities in a horseshoe shape, with the North Yamhill River coursing through nurseries, grain fields, orchards and more than 1,200 acres of vineyard. This pastoral northwest corner of Oregon's Willamette Valley provides a unique set of growing conditions. The Coast Range to the west soars to nearly 3,500 feet (1,200m) establishing a rain shadow over the entire district. Additional protection is afforded by the Chehalem Mountains to the north and the Dundee Hills to the east. Importantly, the coarse-grained, ancient marine sediments native to the area are some of the oldest soils in the valley. These soils drain quickly, establishing a natural deficit-irrigation effect.

VAN DUZER CORRIDOR | Established 2019

The Van Duzer Corridor is an anomaly in the Coast Range through which oceanic winds funnel into the Valley, creating a cooling effect that occurs as early as 2:00 in the afternoon. This breeze dries out the vine canopy and decreases fungus pressure, making the area highly attractive for grape growing and supporting sustainable practices by drastically reducing the need for fungus spray. As a phenomenon of wind protection, the grape skins thicken, leading to an abundance of anthocyanins (color) and tannin. The buffering effect is highly noticeable and varies from one vintage to another. When nearby regions of the Willamette Valley face overly warm conditions, this area is usually slightly cooler. The opposite is also true; when the nearby regions of the Willamette Valley face below-average temperatures during the growing season, this area receives generous mild air from the ocean, tempering the cold. These combined effects allow for near-perfect growing conditions with highly consistent quality. Within the 35.9 square mile triangle that composes the Van Duzer Corridor, nearly 1,000 acres are occupied by 18 commercial vineyards and 6 bonded wineries.



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AUTUMN VINEYARD
PHOTO: RON KAPLAN

