



WILLAMETTE  
VALLEY WINE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**SPRING 2023**

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

Spring is a much-welcomed season in Oregon's Willamette Valley. It's an invigorating time both in the vineyard and the tasting room, with vines budding to life and bars eagerly showcasing the year's newest releases. The days are longer, the weather is milder, and the many hillsides of the valley are painted in every shade of green, speckled with flowers.

After a restorative winter, wineries are energized and excited to share their newly-bottled creations. With more local produce coming into the picture, there's a flurry of pairing events, winemakers' dinners, and memorable dining experiences at valley tasting rooms and restaurants. There's a buzz in the air that visitors can't help but feel when they arrive.

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

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### NEW HAPPENINGS

#### **Potcake Cellars Opens**

Dundee has a new name on its long list of tasting rooms and wine bars. Potcake Cellars recently launched their tasting room there, taking over a space just off the highway. The label focuses on Dundee Hills Pinot noir, Chardonnay, and Sparkling, crafted by veteran winemaker Isabelle Dutartre. What is a Potcake, you might ask? A Potcake is a mixed-breed dog found on islands in The Caribbean. Owners Roy and Sondra Armstrong have rescued hundreds of Potcake dogs.

#### **Introducing Sequitur**

The Sequitur name may be new to the Oregon wine scene, but its founder needs no introduction. It's the work of Mike Etzel, who founded the acclaimed Willamette Valley label [Beaux Frères](#) before handing off the keys to his son, Mikey. Etzel's last project is built around the frame of an old dairy that formerly inhabited the property. Newly open, Sequitur is set in the Ribbon Ridge AVA, a short hike from Beaux Frères. In fact, the two estates will be connected by a walkable trail open to visitors by the end of the year.

#### **Bledsoe | McDaniels' New Tasting Room: A Tale of Two Valleys**

Bledsoe | McDaniels Winery is a unique collaboration between proprietors NFL-star Drew Bledsoe and Josh McDaniels. The winery focuses on sustainably and organically farmed, small-production wines, emphasizing Willamette Valley Pinot noir and Walla Walla Valley Syrah. The newly opened Willamette Valley tasting room will host private tastings by reservation only. This is the first Willamette Valley estate vineyard for Bledsoe Wine Estates, which includes the Bledsoe | McDaniels, Doubleback, and Bledsoe Family Winery labels.

#### **Pike Road Appoints New Vintner**

McMinnville's Pike Road Wines has a new winemaker: Heather Perkins. The Australian native studied winemaking at Adelaide University before heading to the States. She has a fondness for Burgundian varietals and was promoted to the lead job in February after 15 years working for the Campbell family,



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who also own fellow valley outfit Elk Cove Vineyards. Pike Road produces some 38,000 cases of wine annually, sourcing from 20 sites in the Valley.

### **Alloro Bolsters its Culinary Program**

In a pronounced effort to expand its culinary program, Alloro Vineyards has brought on its first-ever executive chef. The winery recently appointed Chris Smith to the role, specializing in foods that work in harmony with the label's lineup of estate wines. Smith brings plenty of wine country experience to his newest post, having worked as executive chef at The Allison Inn in the Willamette Valley and the Barking Frog at Willows Lodge in Woodinville prior to this.

### **The Ground**

The old power station in McMinnville is changing hands, switching from being a winery the last several years to a new project called The Ground. The venue will be home to an entire host of facets, all built around agriculture and hospitality. Combining local farms, the culinary arts, special events, and wellness, The Ground is set to be a truly unique destination spotlighting local food and celebrating both humane farming methods and this special corner of the globe.

### **Our Legacy Harvested Internship**

Internship applications are being accepted now through May 1st by Our Legacy Harvested. The non-profit started in 2020 and is committed to supporting the BIPOC wine community in Oregon through education. Six internship positions are up for grabs, which immerse a BIPOC individual inserted in viticulture and enology into the Willamette Valley scene. Interns engage in all kinds of hands-on activities in the cellar and the vineyard, paving the way for a career in the field.

### **High Honors from Time**

Time Magazine has named the Willamette Valley one of the greatest 50 places on the planet to explore. The high acclaim puts Oregon's most famous wine-growing valley in the company of top destinations like Kyoto, Japan, Brisbane, Australia, and Torres del Paine National Park in Chile. The Willamette Valley was selected for its tremendous wine scene and the culinary landscape, not to mention the bright future of both related industries.

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### **New [Sokol Blosser](#) Leadership**

There's a new power structure at Sokol Blosser, one of the Willamette Valley's original wineries. In March, the label named Alex Sokol Blosser as president and Robin Howell as lead winemaker. The changing of the guard sees Alison Sokol Blosser leave her role as CEO and co-president to spend more time with her family. Howell is no stranger to the outfit, having joined in 2012 as an enologist.

### **[Archery Summit](#) Breaks New Ground**

Dundee Hills winery Archery Summit has broken ground on a new tasting room expansion set to open this fall. The new space will offer intimate tasting experiences in a setting that fully embraces panoramic views. The current tasting room and cave system will remain open for tastings as the label awaits its new 1,800-square-foot addition.

### **New Salem area Winery and Tasting Room Focuses on Quality Wine and Oregon History**

[West Hills Vineyards and Winery](#) is more than just another winery; it's a piece of history. Once home to the 18th Governor of Oregon and visited by the King of Nepal, the new owners wanted to protect the Oregon heritage and breathe new life into the soil to bring the property back to its former splendor. The 1886 farmhouse still stands next to their tasting room today, which not only offers world-class wines made by vintner Drew Voight, but they also provide a locally sourced lunch and dinner chef menu in their tasting room.

### **Scavenger Hunt to Find A New Tasting Room**

[Willamette Valley Vineyards](#) brings the Willamette Valley winery experience to Bend, Oregon. Their Bend Tasting Room & Restaurant will offer world-class, sustainably made wines and Pacific Northwest-inspired food pairings. The Bend location will feature its signature barrel booth seating, unique fireplaces, and a private dining room. But can you find the future site of the Bend tasting room? You'll have to follow Willamette Valley Vineyards on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for clues, then enter your guess below to win prizes, including gift certificates and complimentary tastings at the Bend Tasting Room & Restaurant. The contest closes on April 30, 2023.



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### **Illaha Tasting Room**

[Illaha Vineyards](#) will open its new Tasting Room on April 29, 2023. The property is home to estate vines and the production facility and will soon house a tasting area overlooking some of the most scenic stretches of the mid-Willamette Valley. It's one of the most bucolic properties in the region, with a fleet of working horses on site and evergreens, Christmas tree farms, and fellow new AVA Mount Pisgah, Polk County vineyards in the distance.

## STORY IDEAS

### **Gouais Blanc**

Some of the most unique wines produced in the Willamette Valley are the most fun to say. From Lagrein to Gewürztraminer, there are countless lesser-known gems being made here. Thanks to the intrepid team at [Bjornson Vineyard](#), Gouais Blanc is part of that growing list. The Eola-Amity Hills label is the only known producer of the varietal in the U.S. and just received special permission to sell the wine from the federal government earlier this year. The white grape is quite rare these days, an ancient varietal with roots in northern France and Germany.

### **Perfecting the Pet-Nat**

First, there was Pinot, then Chardonnay, then sparkling. Now, producers like [Silas Wines](#) are perfecting the Pet-Nat, a mildly-effervescent wine with a lower alcohol content. Silas, based in Amity, celebrates the city of Portland through its label, with releases named after neighborhoods like Ladd's Addition. Their Pet-Nats are among the most interesting of the lot, light, fruity, and ideal for spring dishes and impromptu picnics. The newest Pet-Nat release? It will be a fun one—made with Sauvignon blanc, Pinot gris and a slash of Gamay noir for a rosy bubbly. Out later Spring 2023.

### **YVV Turns 40**

The oldest vineyard in the McMinnville AVA celebrates the four-decade mark this year. Known for its estate wines from the resident 150-acre vineyard, [Yamhill Valley Vineyards](#) makes excellent Riesling



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and Pinot blanc, in addition to usual suspects like Pinot noir and Pinot gris. Winemaker Ariel Eberle puts her heart and soul into each release, utilizing her many years in the industry and grapes harvested from perfectly-mature estate vines. The lauded label launched in 1983 and has committed to its mission of estate wines ever since.

### **All in the Details**

They say wine is art and that may be most obvious at [Saffron Fields](#). The sprawling Yamhill estate is full of incredible landscaping, towering art installations, and a pond filled with koi imported straight from Japan. It makes for some incredible context, a backdrop that only enhances the wines produced here. Guests can take part in guided tours through the garden and art collection, treating their senses to some inspired surroundings.

### **A Taste of the Mediterranean**

While we should all travel to the Mediterranean at some point, visitors to the Willamette Valley can do a bit of that, at least in terms of wine. Producers like [Chris James](#), [Stag Hollow](#), [Abbey Road Farm](#), and [Remy](#) are working with tremendous Italian and Spanish varieties. Those who trek to their tasting rooms will find things like Tempranillo, Dolcetto, Godello, and Mencia. Others, like [Ponzi Vineyards](#), make spring-ready whites from Italian white grapes like Arneis. Together, these producers show the versatility of the valley and offer something a little different, not to mention wines that go great with expected pairings like tapas, pasta, or pizza.

### **AAPI Industry Figures**

May is AAPI Heritage Month, a time to celebrate the Asian-American and Pacific Islander communities. A growing number of these community members have entered the Willamette Valley wine circuit, earning prominent roles and diversifying the scene for the better. [CHO Wines](#) is the brainchild of Dave Cho, the first Korean-American winemaker in the region. Smaller labels like [Shiba Wichern](#) and [Niew Vineyards](#) are also turning out great wines in the valley, run by Asian winemakers Akiko Shiba and Tai-Ran Niew, respectively.



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### **Three Luxury Bunkhouse Experiences, ALL in the Willamette Valley**

Luxury bunkhouses within hotels are a growing trend in the world of hospitality. Inspired by the need to accommodate group getaways, like girls' weekends and bridal showers, bunkhouses are becoming all the rage. Within the Willamette Valley, three luxury bunkhouses are poised to accommodate late nights of laughter and fun. The [Atticus Hotel](#), [The Independence Hotel](#), and [The Dundee](#) all offer mindfully assembled bunk rooms that pay homage to local artists and services while carefully considering the needs of the group traveler.

## A FEW SELECTED EVENTS

### **Yamhill-Carlton AVA Spring Tasting**

April 22, 2023

More than 40 wineries from the Yamhill-Carlton nest, AVA of the Willamette Valley, will gather to showcase the area's wines. [Abbey Road Farm](#) plays host, and the day will see wines poured alongside bites from area restaurants.

### **Malbec in the City**

April 30, 2023

The Willamette Valley is home to dozens upon dozens of varieties, not just Pinot noir and Chardonnay. Malbec in the City is the first event set to celebrate regional producers who have embraced the French-born red. Malbec has become famous in places like Argentina, and many Willamette Valley producers are trying their hand at the wine. Malbec in the City takes place on April 30th in Portland and is the first event to recognize the varietal's bright future in Oregon.

### **Oregon Wine Month**

May 2023

Throughout the month of May, the Willamette Valley and the entire wine industry of Oregon tip their collective hat to the industry at large. There are special tastings, promotions, and events happening all over the place, from urban tasting rooms in Portland to vineyards in Dayton and Rickreall.

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### **Big Red Fest**

May 6, 2023

Honoring the heavier reds of the valley, Big Red Fest takes place at Anne Amie Vineyards in Carlton. The afternoon features 15 labels, all working around varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, and more. There will also be live music and food from Trellis Wine Bar & Kitchen.

### **Oregon AAPI Food & Wine Fest**

May 20, 2023

Stoller Family Estate is the backdrop for the first annual AAPI Food & Wine Fest. Here, Willamette Valley wines will be poured in tandem with bites from AAPI-owned Portland restaurants, like Tiki, HeyDay, Magna Kusina, and more. Participating wineries include [Et Fille](#), [CHO Wines](#), [Evening Land](#), [Hundred Suns](#), and [Shiba Wichern](#).

### **Pink Rosé Festival**

May 21, 2023

On May 21st, The Tualatin Valley is celebrating all things rosé. The gathering of top area wineries will feature rosé from over 20 wineries paired up with wood-fired pizza, street tacos, music, and more. The Pink! Rosé Festival is the perfect way to spend the day discovering your new favorite Tualatin Valley rosé.

### **Indie Wine Mixer**

May 27-28, 2023

The Bindery in McMinnville is where 20 small and independent wineries will gather to spotlight their work. Participating producers make fewer than 3,000 cases yearly, with most making just 500 cases. That means rare finds to intrepid wine enthusiasts looking for something interesting and off the beaten path. This year's mixer features the likes of Redolent Wine Company, Jackalope Cellars, Suzor Wines, and Gonzales Wine Company, along with nibbles from a local food cart.





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### **Memorial Weekend in Wine Country**

May 27-29, 2023

The Willamette Valley's unofficial kickoff to summer takes place over the long holiday weekend. Scores of producers open their tasting rooms to welcome the longest days of the year, pouring special releases, offering various forms of entertainment, and pairing up their work with food from local purveyors. Try a new Rosé wine, play lawn games, taste on a deck, or sip your favorite Pinot noir as you watch the valley bloom to life.

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

June 18, 2023

Willamette Valley wineries definitely don't forget to celebrate Dad on Father's Day. Father's Day at [Monksgate Vineyard](#) will be devoted to all things meat as master butcher Zeph Shepard of Proletariat Butchery leads an event. He's on hand to teach attendees how to make their own sausage. Afterward, guests can try the meats and pair them with estate wines. At [Lange Winery](#), you can treat Dad to an exclusive Lange experience while relaxing on their expansive terrace and patio overlooking their estate vineyards featuring spectacular views of Mount Hood and the Cascade range.

### **Solstice in the Fields**

June 24-25, 2023

A tiny food festival is about to unfold at *okta* in McMinnville, one with big culinary personalities. The two-day event features an intimate tasting dinner composed by five chefs, all touting at least two Michelin stars. There's also a casual gathering on Sunday to unfold at the restaurant's one-acre farm, a short drive from the restaurant.

### **Women in Wine Oregon Annual Conference**

July 18, 2023

Women in Wine Oregon celebrates women in Oregon's wine industry. Since its inception, the organization has been dedicated to advancing women in the Oregon wine industry. Last year, 200 women gathered for a day of team building, inspirational speeches and thought about the future of the industry. The 2023 location is Stoller Vineyards, and the list of conference speakers will soon be announced.

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### **Queer Wine Fest**

June 25, 2023

The second-annual Queer Wine Fest champions queer-owned, queer-made and queer-grown wines from different wineries across the Pacific Northwest. The event was the first of its kind and curated by the Willamette Valley's first lady of wine and McMinnville mayor, Remy Drabkin. The beloved industry member is perhaps best known for her eponymous label, focused on Italian-style wines.

### **IPNC**

July 28-30, 2023

The International Pinot Noir Celebration (IPNC) is back, toasting to 36 years. The annual event is a love letter to Pinot noir, showcasing winemakers from all over the planet and set within the grounds of Linfield University in McMinnville. One of the globe's preeminent gatherings devoted to Pinot noir will feature its usual lineup of events, including the awe-inspiring Salmon Bake and the Passport to Pinot, featuring more than 70 producers of the famed Burgundian grape.