

Avalon Wine Club News January 2003

The Best of the 2002 Northwest Wine Industry

By Christina Kelly
Avalon Editor/Writer

Wow, 2002 was a scrumptious year for wine in the Northwest!

Oregon Pinot Noir is getting better and better, and Syrah is the hot ticket in Washington these days, along with great Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot.

For consumers, the chance to taste Washington and Oregon wines in 2002 came via the Taste Washington, the International Pinot Noir Celebration, Auction Washington Wines and the Thanksgiving weekend in Oregon. If you missed those events last year, organizers promise they will be bigger and better this year.

As we organize ourselves for 2003, I thought I would look back one last time and pick some of the year's highlights and best wines.

Best Wines Tasted in 2002:

1. Domaine Drouhin 2000 WV Pinot Noir (OR)
2. Spring Valley's Uriah (WA)
3. Andrew Will's Champoux Vineyard Red 2000 WA)
4. Archery Summit's Red Hills (OR)
5. Shea Vineyards 2000 Homer Pinot Noir (OR)
6. Chehalem 2000 Rion Reserve and Ridgecrest(OR)
7. Cadence Tapteil 2000 (WA)
8. DeLille Cellars D2 2000 (WA)
9. Lynn Penner-Ash 2000 Pinot Noir (OR)
10. Columbia Crest Walter Clore Private Reserve 1999 (WA)
11. Seven Hills 2000 Merlot (WA)

Some of these wines are still available at Avalon, but in small quantities. I also barrel tasted some of the same vineyards' wine available for this year, and none of it disappointed, and in most cases, improved.

Best Winery Right Out of the Starting Gate:

Spring Valley's Uriah (WA)
Maysara Estate (OR)

Best Value Rated Syrah:

Hogue's Syrah (WA)
Viento's Syrah (OR)
Chatter Creek (WA)

Overall Best Washington Syrah:

McCrea Cellars
Cayuse Vineyards

Best Washington Merlot:

L'ecole
Seven Hills

Best Washington Bordeaux-style Blend:

Cadence
Hedges Red Hills
DeLille Cellars

Best Washington Riesling:

Eroica (Chateau Ste. Michelle)

Most Under-rated Washington Chardonnay:

Harlequin's 2000 Chardonnay

Biggest 20-Year Overnight Success:

Kiona Vineyards

Best Overall Oregon Pinot Noir:

Domaine Drouhin
Raptor Ridge Murto Vineyard
Chehalem

Best Value Rated Oregon Pinot Noir:

A to Z Pinot Noir

Best Oregon Riesling:

Elk Cove 2000 Estate Riesling

Best Oregon Varietal Other Than Pinot:

Abacela Winery (Tempranillo)
Cristom (Viognier)

Best Oregon Pinot Gris:

Rex Hill 2001 Reserve Pinot Gris
Westry 2000 Pinot Gris
King Estate 2001 Reserve Pinot Gris

Best News Event for Oregon Wine Consumers:

Gary Andrus (Pine Ridge, Archery Summit) coming back to Oregon to produce more Pinot Noir

Best Tasting Event in the Northwest:

Taste Washington (coming April 6)
International Pinot Noir Celebration (summer 2003)

These categories are subjective, however, and plenty of folks not mentioned are producing some of the best wine in the country. A list is just a list. We live in one of the best wine-producing regions in the United States, and the best way to learn develop your own list, is to visit the wineries.

So, lift your glasses to 2003. It promises to be a very good year for the Northwest!

Wine Club Selections

January 2003

Big Reds Club

Cayuse Syrah

Isenhower Red
Paintbrush

Reserve PN Club

Argyle Reserve 00

Sineann
Reid & Reynolds 01

Pinot Gris Club

Chateau Bianca 01

Kings Ridge 00

New Discoveries Club

Eola Marachel Foch 01

Airlie Marachel Foch 01

Ankeny Marachel foch 00

Best Values Club

Powers Lemberger 01

Powers Chardonnay 99

Dessert Club

Edelweiss

Tualatin Semi Sparkling
Muscat 01

Reserve Pinot Noir Club

1. Argyle Pinot Noir Reserve 2000 \$29.99/\$26.99

Wine Advocate (Parker) rating 2000 vintage 90 points:

"Of the three Pinots I tasted from Argyle, my favorite was the least expensive. Lovely red fruit aromas rise from the glass of the ruby colored 2000 Pinot Noir reserve. This sweet, lush, tangy wine offers loads of cherries, raspberries, and spice flavors in its medium bodied well delineated personality. Its finish is flavorful, structured, and long. Drink it over the next 7 years." - Pierre Rovani

Wine Spectator Top 100 Wines of the World List!

Wine Spectator rating 91 points: "Bright and juicy, with pretty black cherry and currant flavors on a supple frame, finishing with an edge of exotic spices. Nicely done all around. Drink now through 2008. 1,879 cases made. (HS)"

TASTING NOTES

Flavors are very sweet all the way through. Look for raspberry crème, plum, and Campari-like fruit & spice. The tannins are ample, youthful and rounded by the sweet fruit found on the middle palate. The mineral structure and long lingering fruit and spice are indicators encouraging the age-ability of this wine. 14% alc. 2902 cases produced

Reviews:

TOP 100 WINES OF 2002 - Wine Spectator
2000 - Wine Spectator - 91
1999 - Wine Spectator - 91
1998 - Wine Spectator - 90
1998 - Wine Enthusiast - 91
1997 - Wine Enthusiast - 86
1995 - Wine Spectator - 89
1994 - The Wine Advocate - 87
1993 - Wine Spectator - 89

2. Sineann Reid & Reynolds Pinot Noir 2001 \$39.99

David's best, 100% Pommard clone, deep plummy richness, the Pinot Noir clone that put Oregon on the map. From Kevin Chamber's vineyard, silk on the nose, hints of coffee and violets, tremendously appealing yet will benefit from cellaring 2-7 years. A real winner from the "Big Pinot" school of winemaking.

Sineann Winery is owned by Peter Rosback and David O'Reilly. We are so fortunate to be able to offer very limited amounts of wine from this new winery. Every varietal we have tried from Sineann is excellent. A theme running through the wines is their **over-the-top, exuberant, rich scents and flavors**. Beautiful labels, careful hand crafting and attention to detail are trademarks of the winemakers. This is a winery to watch! Peter Rossback is the winemaker, David O'Reilly is his partner in wine. David is also co-owner of **Owen Roe Winery**.

Wine Spectator's Harvey Steiman had this to say about David's wines:

"Few winemakers in the Pacific Northwest get such intensity and heady richness into their wines as does David O'Reilly. He consults with a number of Oregon's avant-garde wineries, and he makes his own Pacific Northwest wines under three different labels: O'Reilly (for négociant wines), Sineann (a partnership with Peter Rossbeck) and Owen Roe, for tiny lots of intense wine."

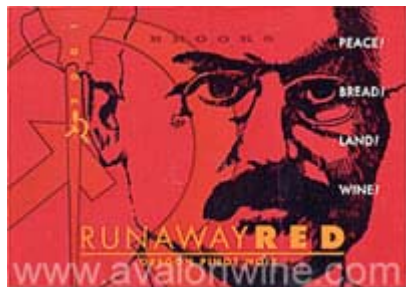
3. Brooks Winery "Runaway Red" 2001 \$15.00

I always like a good story, and there's a great one behind Jimi Brooks' new "Runaway Red" Pinot noir 2001...

He was apparently working behind Willakenzie Estate (his former employer) moving barrels of wine around, on that section of road that is real steep behind the winery--- it was after dark, and cold, and he was tired, and as he drove the tractor up to the barrel, to pick it up with the fork, he heard a metallic "snap!" and then, nothing happened, so he continued.

Anyway, halfway around, the barrel fell off the tractor and rolled down the hill, through the fence, broke off the fence posts, through the vines, and landed in the creek! Miraculously, the bung stayed in! So here were Jimi and Laurent, Willakenzie's winemaker, and other people, wrestling this 65 gallon barrel out of the creek in the cold and rain, rolling it back up the hill (steep hill) in the dark (very steep hill). This barrel had a mind of its own!

Thus the name "Runaway Red"- Pinot noir from the selfsame barrel, with a special label to memorialize the occasion. And guess what- it's dang good- a little wierd, but dang tasty. Nice rich flavor, good fruit, nice aromatics. A good "house" pinot noir for your house with a cool label and a great story behind it!



Very Cool
label for
Runaway Red!

Big Reds Club

1. Cayuse Syrah '00 Cailloux Walla Walla \$75.99

or

Cayuse Syrah '00 En Cerise Walla Walla \$75.99

Sorry we could not get enough of one to offer it to everyone, but they are both excellent wines. These are some of the most highly sought after wines in the entire NW.

January Wine Club members also receive

2. Isenhower Red Paintbrush 2000

- 29% **Vanessa's Vineyard**, Walla Walla Valley
- 24% **Sundance Vineyard**, Columbia Valley
- 11% **Waliser Vineyard**, Walla Walla Valley
- 6% **Forgotten Hills Vineyard**, Walla Walla Valley
- 70% Merlot
- **15% Cabernet Sauvignon**
 - **Stellar Vineyard**, Walla Walla Valley
- **15% Syrah**
 - 10% **Sundance Vineyard**, Columbia Valley
 - 5% **Vincent Rea Vineyard**, Yakima Valley

First impressions of the nose reveal the terroir of Walla Walla Merlot, red plums and cola nut. Other red fruits and French oak are apparent in the nose. Soft, open, fleshy mouth feel. Round in the mouth. Finish is very smooth and long. Soft tannins but still prevalent on the finish. The Red Paintbrush is in harmony between the acids, tannins, and alcohol. This wine positively reflects its primarily Merlot contribution as an extremely enjoyable, soft and rich Washington wine with unique characteristics.

Red Paintbrush is a beautiful wildflower that grows in the Walla Walla Mountains of Eastern Oregon. Red Paintbrush is also a metaphor for blending. Beginning with an empty canvas we "paint" the canvas with various red wine lots to achieve the best possible wine possible. The painting began after the first racking with various trials until just before the second racking in April 2001. Then Denise and Brett analyzed the three final works of art and present to you our final selection.



Isenhower's New wine building

Bob Woehler has this to say about Cayuse:

The cobblestone ground of the ancient Walla Walla River bed is where French vigneron Christophe Baron cultivates his vineyards and finds inspiration for his Rhône and Bordeaux-style wines. *Vigneron* means winemaker in French, and it is no coincidence that Christophe was born into a winemaking family from the Champagne region of France. His family can trace its winemaking genealogy back to the 16th century. Baron worked previously at Waterbrook Winery in Washington and in Australia and New Zealand. He is 30 years old.

Cayuse Vineyards's tasting room is almost literally shoehorned into a tiny building on Walla Walla's downtown Main Street. After all, the space once held a shoe shine shop. Cayuse is the dream of Christophe Baron, a Frenchman from the Champagne region who is trying to make his way in the United States by selling mostly red wines.

The new winery is narrow but high-ceiled, which gives an illusion of space. Tastefully decorated in yellow and white, its walls are hung with several large maps of France's wine regions.

The winery also shares a common brick wall with Merchant's Cafe next door. The tasting room is open from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The first thing a visitor sees when entering is a tasting bar and next to it an old wooden chest filled with huge 26-ounce wine glasses.

"Great wine deserves a great glass, and it's important to put on a show," says the effervescent Baron, who is generally called Christophe.

Christophe learned about wine while growing up in his family's centuries-old Champagne house, Baron Albert. He studied growing grapes and making wines in Champagne and also in Burgundy before coming to the United States, working first at Adelsheim Vineyards in Oregon, then at Waterbrook Winery in the Walla Walla Valley.

After working for Waterbrook, Christophe became a winemaker in such far-flung regions of the world as Australia and Romania.

He decided in 1996 to return to the Walla Walla Valley and started his Cobblestone Vineyard. He found vineyard land available in an old Walla Walla River bed covered with cobblestones similar to vineyard sites of Chateaufort du Pape, the famous region of the Rhone Valley.

The area around the old riverbed was inhabited in the early 1800s by Indians the French Canadian fur traders named "Cailloux" - people of the stone. The title was later Americanized to Cayuse and was chosen by Christophe for his winery's name.

He opened his winery late last year with two Rhone Valley varieties of syrah and soon will add a viognier. His wines have been an immediate hit, showing old-world charm and new-world vigor.

Christophe has four vineyard sites. Cayuse consists of 3 acres; Cobblestone, 10 acres; Coccinelle, meaning "ladybug," 4 acres; and the fourth, El Chamberlin, will be planted later this year.

He plans to produce more vineyard-designated syrah and a Bordeaux blend.

New Discoveries Club

Marechal Foch Month with New Discoveries Club!

Named after the World War I French General, Marechal Foch, the grape was developed in Alsace, France by hybridizer Eugene Kuhlmann. This French hybrid grape yields juice that smells and tastes just like sweet cherries such as Bing. Foch also has a higher sugar content and better balance of acid than traditional juicing grapes like Concord.

A cross between an American *Vitis riparia* and *rupestris* combination with a kind of Riesling, the Foch vine is very winter hardy and ripens early. The resultant wine is quite darkly purple and fruity. It often has a plummy character, and carries oak very nicely. Sometimes, the wine has been loosely compared to Pinot noir (though I personally don't see it).

1. Eola Hills Marechal Foch 01

Soft and smooth, and richly aromatic, reminiscent of a ripe blackberry bramble on a hot summers day.

Food and Wine Pairing: This wine seems well suited to accompany those dishes that also compliment fine Italian Chianti. Not often do I recommend chilling a red wine. However, if you were to drop the temperature a few degrees below room temperature, I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

2. Airlie Marechal Foch 99

Ann was blown away by this wine- just gushingly rich yet complex, everything in balance, a real steal at the price! The best MF we've had in a long time. Wonderful "house wine" for your house.

Willamette Valley's other red grape, this French/American grape produced a medium bodied red table wine rich in plum and black currant flavors. Great with Italian foods. **Local customers have been telling us about the great wines at Airlie, a small winery just north of our town of Corvallis, so we took a new look at what was formerly a winery making simple, grocery store wines.**

Wow, has the wine changed for the better!

Reminds me of the way Elk Cove remade itself over the last few years, from grocery store to top rated Pinot Noir in Wine Spectator. Focusing on the production of vintage dated Oregon premium wines, they are making wines of steadily increasing quality. This is a winery on the way up, one to watch!

3. Ankeny Marechal Foch 00

The nose is of toasty oak, the flavor is rich, fruity and dry, medium heavy with hints of buttery toast, smooth bing cherry and hints of bittersweet chocolate. Very smooth and approachable, this is a wonderful value.

Pinot Gris Club

1. Chateau Bianca '01 Pinot Gris

This wine is energetic and pretty with lots of apple, melon and tropical fruit components. Pair with sharp cheese, salmon, shell fish, pork, or chicken.

2. Kings Ridge '00 Pinot Gris

Creamy vanilla with overtones of ripe apple. In the mouth, this crisp and refreshing wine is highlighted by flavors of ripe green apple and rich vanilla spice.

Top Ten Wines for 2002 Avalon Staff Picks

Ann's Favorite NW Wines in 2002:

(Store Manager)

1. Walla Walla Vintner's Merlot '00
2. Patricia Green '01 Chardonnay
3. Waterbrook Melange '01
4. Briggs Hill '98 Pinot Noir
5. Sineann Hillside '01 Merlot
6. Eugene Wine Cellars '00 Viognier
7. Academy '00 Cabernet Sauvignon
8. Snoqualmie Syrah '00
9. Andrew Rich LH Gewurztraminer '01
10. **Isenhower Red Paintbrush**
11. L'Ecole Chenin Blanc
12. Patricia Green Balcombe Pinot Noir

Ann's Favorites Under \$15

1. **Snoqualmie cab/merlot**
2. **Snoqualmie syrah**
3. **Waterbrook Melange**
4. **Columbia Crest Cabernet Sauvignon**
5. **Academy Pinot Noir '00**
6. **Kings Ridge Pinot Noir '01**
7. **L'ecole Chenin Blanc Walla Viola**
8. **Springhill Rsv Pinot Noir**
9. **Powers Syrah**
10. **Winter's Hill Pinot Gris**

Jean's Favorite Wines of 2002

(Store owner)

1. **Shea Wine Cellars "Homer" Pinot Noir 2001**
(made by Patricia Green Cellars)
2. **Beaux Freres Pinot Noir 2000**
3. **Patricia Green Balcombe PN, "Oregon" PN, Chardonnay**
4. **L'Ecole #41 Apogee**
5. **Spring Valley Uriah**
6. **Owen Roe Dubrul Cabernet Sauvignon**
7. **Sineann Old Vine Zinfandel**
8. **Seven Hills Merlot**
9. **Walla Walla Vintners Merlot**
10. **St Innocent Pinot Gris Vendange Tardive**

Best Values Club

1. Powers Lemberger '01

Tasting Notes: Rich ruby-purple color with a powerful nose of wild berries and currant. Lush flavors of blackberry, raspberry, and cassis harmonize with hints of toasty oak and spices. The lingering fruit delivers both length and depth to the stylish finish.

Winemaker's Notes: Like all of the fruit from Mercer Ranch, the 1999 Lemberger was bursting with flavor at harvest. A somewhat early ripener, Lemberger needs time to develop mature flavors and intensity. It is always a balancing act to harvest with great flavor but not overripe. Fermentation was carried out with D254 yeast to accentuate the flavor extraction, enhance mouthfeel, and balance the ripeness of the fruit against the structured character of Mercer Lemberger. Aging took place in French and American oak barrels (25% new) for 18 months prior to bottling in April of 2001. The wine is 100% Lemberger, and 100% Mercer Ranch fruit. 400 cases made.

2. Powers Chardonnay 99

Tasting Notes: Initial aromas of caramelized pear, figs, and tropical fruit combine with a nice, buttery oak and vanilla character to give a complex, fruity nose further enhanced by the multifaceted richness of surlie aging and malolactic fermentation. A rich, round mouth feel contains flavors of pear, mango, and fig with hints of butter, vanilla, and toasty oak in the finish.

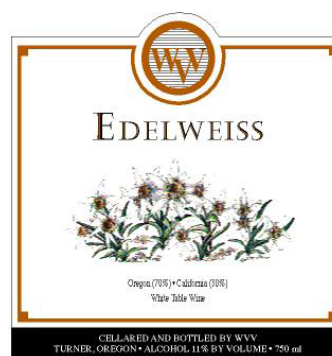
Winemaker's Notes: The grapes for this wine are all from our estate vineyard. This particular lot of Chardonnay is from a warmer part of the site, which provides slightly riper fruit flavors. 100 % of the wine was barrel fermented in French oak barrels, then aged for 11 months in these same barrels before bottling in late August of 2000. This results in a balance of desirable characteristics and a complex spiciness. Yeast CY3079 was used to provide the maximum varietal fruit extraction in this barrel-fermented wine. 75 % of the blend completed malolactic fermentation, giving the wine a rich mouth feel and complex finish.

Dessert Club

1. Edelweiss

Winemaker's Notes "This unique blend has vibrant aromas of citrus, peaches and typical floral muscat aromas. The flavors are explosive and refreshing with sweetness, well-balanced with acidity and lively CO2 effervescence. The finish is mouth watering . . . inviting another sip." ~ Joe Dobbles, Winemaker

Further Details What can be said about Edelweiss that its faithful followers haven't already been saying for years? This wine is the essential sunshine wine, low in alcohol, rich with semi-sweet flavor and just a hint of sparkle. Great with chicken, ham, pork and of course, an array of fruits and cheeses. Serve chilled.



2. Tualatin Semi Sparkling Muscat '01

Parker says: 89 POINTS! "The 2000 Semi-Sparkling Muscat is a clone of an Italian Moscato d'Asti. Its boisterous orange blossom and raspberry aromas lead to a fresh, zesty, medium-bodied personality. This velvety-textured wine has tangy orange, red berry, and floral flavors in its character. Like the Italian Moscatos, it has low alcohol (6.5%) and an off-dry sweetness. It should be drunk over the next 6-8 months as an aperitif, or as I like to drink this style of wine, while watching the first football games of the season on warm Sundays. This is an excellent value that should be consumed over the next six months."

WPNW Review (Spring 2001): This spritzly white wine starts with lovely floral aromas and tangerine and citrus flavors. It has an intriguing orange spice character. Won gold at the Northwest Enological Society judging.

avalonwine.com
Pacific Northwest Wine and Gourmet

541-752-7418

avalonwine.com
Pacific Northwest Wine and Gourmet

541-752-7418

avalonwine.com
Pacific Northwest Wine and Gourmet

541-752-7418