



AvalonWine.com

Reserve Pinot Noir Club™
New Wineries
Cottonwood Cellars, Siltstone Winery

Tiny production this year, its first, Cottonwood Winery is Aaron Lieberman, assistant winemaker at Owen Roe. You'd only expect David O'Reilly (Owen Roe winemaker and co-owner) to have the best, and he appears to have found it in Aaron. The wines are just super.

Asked about the dense, black, complex, Pinot noirs he is just releasing, Aaron says:

"I want to marry new world pinot noir with Burgundy. Ideally the wines I make will be approachable as soon as I put them in the bottle, but will cellar gracefully as well. Burgundians are not so worried about fruitiness in their Pinot Noir. They are concerned that the wine has an excellent balance and great vinous quality which improves with age. New world consumers and by necessity winemakers are obsessed with fruit flavors. Taken to an extreme wine making techniques that enhance fruitiness can compromise varietal character and the ability to cellar the wine."

Tell us about the oak you use, and why the tannins in this wine are so fine grained and well integrated, yet very much a part of the whole of this big wine...

Aaron: "As for the oak; new wood on the Marina Piper Pinot noir 02 was somewhere between 20 and 25%, mostly François Freres d'Oregon. The Brigette Katherine was closer to 33% new oak, with one new barrel from Tonnellerie Cadus (Burgundy) and the other from François Freres (St. Romain, Côte d'Or)."

"For Pinot Noir I like to use only three-year air dried wood and medium to medium minus toast. The rough staves are cut and then stacked outside, exposed to the weather for three years. This treatment leeches out most of the harshest oak tannins leaving behind what you perceive as "fine grained" tannins."

"Staying away from heavy toasting limits the amount of sweet vanilla and caramel notes that, in my opinion, are not appropriate for Pinot Noir. But this is not the complete story of tannins."

"As far as controlling tannins are concerned, cold soaking is a vital factor. Cold soaking accomplishes two major objectives. First, the total time the juice is in contact with the skins is extended. This allows for more extraction of skin tannins (smoother than seed tannins) and anthocyanins (color). Whole berries are important here to limit juice contact with seeds."

"Second, it lowers the initial temperature of the fermentation. Peak fermentation temperature is very important to the style of the wine. Temperatures under 90°F limit the release of harsh tannins from the seeds."

How did you get the scent of wild strawberries, violets, and rose in the nose? This is such a black, full bodied wine, but the scent is so delicate.....?

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NW Big Reds Club™
Syrah Focus: K Vinters "The Boy", "The Beautiful
Latitude 46 "Power And Glory"

This month the Big Reds Club features three of the best Syrahs from Walla Walla in Washington State. From cult fav K Vinters, we offer two lush, bogglingly rich wines, both sold out at the winery two days after release. From Latitude 46, we offer a unique blend of Syrah and Grenache, with multiple layers of flavor that are hard to create in the wine-making process.

When you visit wineries in Walla Walla, everybody's talking syrah, like it's a grape invented in Washington State.

Syrah's popularity in the Northwest is a hot trend in red wine production, and while the origin of the grape has many stories, syrah produced in the Walla Walla Valley is gaining attention and fanatics. In fact, some winemakers believe the area will be better known for syrah than merlot 10 to 15 years down the road.

Just over a decade ago, the wine to order in trendy bars was either a Washington merlot or chardonnay. It was easy to pronounce, easy on the palate and often times, easy to forget.

But syrah is popping up on all kinds of menus, and Northwest wine drinkers are buying.

Walla Walla is not the only producer of syrah in the Northwest, but given the cluster of new wineries opening in that region, you can visit more wineries producing it in one location than anywhere in the state.

People expecting Northwest syrah to taste like Australian Shiraz, Hermitage from the Northern Rhone Valley in France or from Napa or Sonoma in California will find a totally different wine with some similar characteristics. The grape origin may be the same, but weather, soil, wine barrels, growing practices and winemaking styles produce an entirely different wine. Even the feel of the wine in the mouth is different—from light and thin to a heavy coating on the teeth and tongue that can feel like floating sawdust, and everything else in between.

With syrah, winemaking style will make a huge difference in the taste and smell of the wine. A barnyard like smell in the wine is not consider bad unless it is predominate in the glass. The color is generally a beautiful, dark, deep red, although some we tasted were almost ink colored.

Overall, the best Syrahs are elegant and well balanced, with good fruit and acidity. The common characteristics include black fruit, a red meat characteristic that sometimes tastes a little gamy or like bacon fat and a smoky, spicy, black or white pepper nuance. On occasion you may find something unexpected, like eucalyptus, dill pickles or mint chocolate in the mouth. Most Syrahs wines include a little bit of another grape, such as Grenache (red) or Viognier (white).

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May 2004
541-752-7418

**Reserve
Pinot Noir Club™**
Cottonwood Brigette
Catherine 02 \$40
Cottonwood Marina
Piper 02 \$30
Siltstone 02 \$30

**Northwest
Big Reds Club™**
K Vinters "Beautiful"
Syrah 02 \$39
K Vinters "The Boy"
Syrah 02 \$39
Latitude 46 Syrah
"Power & Glory" 02
\$30

**New Discoveries
Club™**
Winters Hill Golden
Nectar 02 \$30
Hatcher PN 02 \$34

**Dessert Wine
Club™**
David Hill Muscat Port
\$30

Big Reds Club continued

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K Vintners

Located in the garage of his modest family home, down the road from Walla Walla Vintners and the local community college, Charles Smith's "K Vintners" is dedicated to making the best Syrah in the world. Along with his friend Christophe Baron, of Cayuse fame, Charles is striving to create the most interesting, complex, intriguing Syrahs possible.



Located at the base of the Blue Mountains in Walla Walla Washington, K Vintners opened its doors to the public on December 3rd, 2001. The property at 820 Mill Creek Road where the winery sits was homesteaded in 1853 with the adjacent farmhouse built in 1872. The winery grounds with Titus Creek flowing through the lawn and the old pioneer planted trees, is a little slice of heartland Americana.

K Vintners is producing wines from 2 distinctive viticultural zones: Wahluke Slope and Walla Walla Valley. Each of these areas are unique and awesome for Syrah and the Field Blends produced.

In April '02 two separate blocks of vineyards were planted to Syrah adjacent to the winery in the rocky dry creek beds that run through K Vintners property.



Latitude 46

Latitude 46 is a Walla Walla based winery making both red and white wines, with a wildly popular gewurztraminer and a red blend, Clifton's Cuvee, their current flagship wines.

The winery is rapidly becoming known for its very reasonably priced, very rich and over-the-top wines.

Latitude 46's partner winery is Harlequin Cellars. The actual navigational marker for the 46th N parallel falls just south of the town of Walla Walla Washington and runs through the great viticultural regions of the state. Blending wine from great sites, coupled with meticulous winemaking, the winemaker strives to create wines of great complexity and nuance.

The Wines

K Vintners "The Beautiful" Syrah 02 \$39

Made from Cayuse's En Cerise Vineyard fruit and Seven Hills Vineyard fruit, this Syrah is HUGE. The 2002 vintage is massive in general, and this wine shows so well, it's ready to drink and stands up to the heartiest foods.



The winemaker says: "A blend of two Walla Walla vineyards. Aromas of violets & cured meat. Floral, floral, floral. this syrah is like a woman who knows what she wants. Beautiful!"

K Vintners "The Boy" Syrah 02 \$39

An unusual blend of Grenache, tempranillo and syrah, this is the most forward and voluptuous of the K wines. Sweet, supple and smooth, with lots of mid palate fruit.

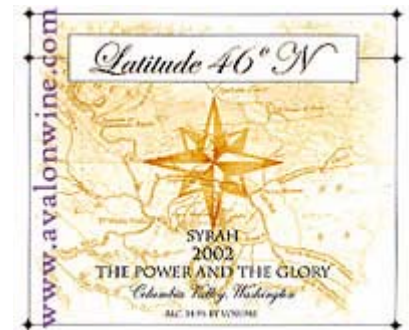
Mind blowing intensity of flavor, made from fruit sourced from the famous stone and gravel vineyard of Cayuse Winery. Although best known for their Syrah, K Vintners is making quite the name for its Merlot, Grenache, and even its Pinot noir! This is a huge wine, a blend of Southern European varietals, Syrah, Grenache, Tempranillo, and more. The label is white, simply says "The Boy". The back label says:

"I'm the boy who can enjoy invisibility" - Serge Gainsbourg

One of those wines that everyone grabs to have more of- big fight at the store over who got to take the leftovers home on this one. Yumm.

Latitude 46 Syrah "Power & Glory" 02 \$30

Yumm! Big juicy luscious wildly intense with lots of body - a total crowd pleaser. A blend of four vineyards, with 17% Grenache. A standout among Washington Syrahs.

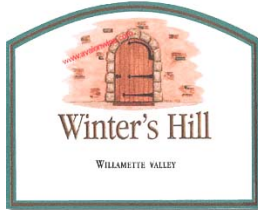


A new small Walla Walla winery, this Syrah is rich and complex, juicy and lush, with an intriguing hint of jasmine/gardenia in the mid-palate. Don says the Milbrandt Vineyard adds the floral note. Carefully crafted from four vineyards, this winemaker understands the importance of blending to add complexity and interest to Syrah, which can be monolithic and boring, but not here. Highly recommended

New Discoveries Club

Winters Hill Golden Nectar Dessert Wine \$30 375 ml

Made from frozen grapes in the style of an ice wine, this wine opens with the floral notes of the white narcissus, and the intense flavors of honey, pears and apples have an underlying spiciness that leads to a crisp and refreshing finish. Split (375 ml).



Hatcher Pinot noir 02 \$34

Wine Spectator rating 90 points. Very limited. From Bill and Deb Hatcher, also known for their "A to Z" good value label.

Wine Spectator says: "A fine debut from Hatcher Wine Works, a partnership of Bill and Deb Hatcher (he managed Domaine Drouhin for 14 years) and their partner-winemaker Sam Tannahill (Shea). Light and elegant, appealing for its pure, clean cherry and white pepper flavors, this one lingers impressively on a crisp finish. It's a graceful wine that needs time to flesh out." H.S.

Production - 400 cases Grapes are sourced from such outstanding vineyards as: Goldschmidt, Stoller, and Ponzi Aurora and Ponzi Linda Vista.

2002 is the first vintage Bill is releasing from Hatcher Wineworks. Made at the Erath winery from grapes sourced from select Dundee-area vineyards, Bill is firmly convinced that blending is the way to go.

"I really believe that with few exceptions, you are able to get a more complex wine by blending. There are very few wines—like Chabertin—that are gestalts within themselves. It's like in cooking, you can always use salt and pepper, but why would you limit yourself to just that?"

"I'm really very pleased with it," says Bill. "For me, elegance is the hallmark of Pinot noir—not just simple prettiness, but a wine that has an integrity to it and a firmness of purpose. That's what I sought to achieve, and now that I taste it in the bottle, I'm extremely happy with the wonderful balance—I am really pleased!"

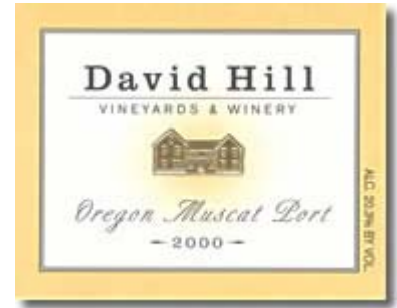


Deb and Bill Hatcher

NW Dessert Wine Club

David Hill
Muscat Port \$30

From the winery: "In the tradition of Greece and Southern France, we offer you this fine port made out of White Muscat grapes from the Willamette Valley. We aged this "Nectar of the Gods" in 132 gallon French oak puncheons. It has intense, intoxicating peach,



Patricia Green Cellars Wine Club

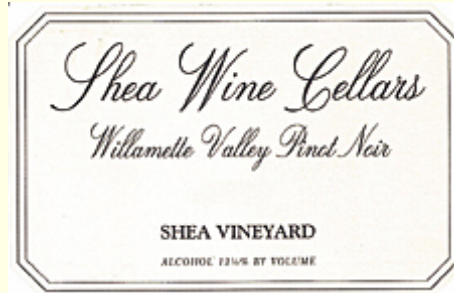
May Club: Focus on Shea Vineyard

Shea 01 \$45

Shea 02 \$35

Shea Wine Cellars 01 \$45 (Patty made the 01 Shea wines)

Details in the PGC Club newsletter.



About the Club

Ten shipments a year starting April 2003.

Four different exclusive "cuvées" selected by Patty and Jim for the club- special barrels expressing aspects of terroir, winemaking, soil, varietal. Available only to Club members.

Newsletter with each shipment containing stories about the wines, insights and anecdotes about the vintage, the winemaking process, Patty's and Jim's evaluations of the wines in the shipment.

First priority on purchase from Avalon of her hardest to get wines- Balcombe 1B, Goldschmidt, Notorious, Bonshaw, etc. Some are very limited, but the Club will get what there is available.

First priority on very limited 2003 Pinot noir futures- the 2003 crop level was down about 15-50% depending on the vineyard, and the wine will go quickly.

Theme shipments exploring Balcombe Vineyard, The Estate Vineyard, Soils, Food Matching, PGC and the influence of Burgundy, Blending, and more.

Reserve Pinot noir Club continued.....**Cottonwood Winery
Pinot noir Marina Piper 02 \$29**

Dark saturated black garnet color, black fruit, cassis, hints of licorice and tobacco, fine grained tannins, a big big long rustic finish. Intriguing, satisfying.



From the winery: "The grapes for our 2002 Marina Piper Pinot Noir come from Cottonwood Vineyard (5%), Durant Vineyard (38%) and Winter's Hill Vineyard (57%)."

Cottonwood Vineyard is located in the Eola Hills and contains one acre of carefully managed Pinot Noir. Clones include Dijon 375, Dijon 10-18, Wadenswil and Pommard. The grapes from this vineyard make an important contribution to the complexity and elegance of this Pinot Noir.

Durant Vineyard is located in the Red Hills between Sokol Blosser Vineyard and Domaine Drouhin Vineyard. We received our grapes from the Paloma block of the vineyard which is planted with Dijon 114. The Durants have been growing wine grapes since the 1970's and are widely recognized as one of the top growers in the state.

Winter's Hill Vineyard is also located in the Red Hills between Stoller Vineyard and Domaine Serene Vineyard. Our Pinot Noir from this vineyard includes Pommard, Dijon 115 and Dijon 777. Winter's Hill is a very carefully managed, low input vineyard. The "terroir" of this vineyard shows very nicely in this wine.

The grapes from all three vineyards were carefully picked and then, after being chilled to 40 degrees Fahrenheit, were gently destemmed and allowed to cold macerate for four days. With about 1% sugar remaining in the grapes they were lightly pressed and the wine transferred to barrels to finish fermentation and for subsequent aging. The wine was raked a total of three times to achieve clarity and stability, it is unfiltered and unfiltered. 383 cases produced.

Siltstone Winery Pinot noir 02 \$30

Siltstone wines is a part of Vinetenders. Vinetenders is a vineyard management company that is owned by Joel and Louise Myers in Yamhill County. They have owned and operated this business since 1984. Joel has managed vineyards in Oregon since 1980. Actually, he helped with some vineyard projects in Oregon as early as 198 and through the early 70's. Vinetenders manages approximately 250 acres of premium vineyards in Yamhill county, growing Pinot noir, Pinot gris and Chardonnay. The current vineyard management clients are: **Guadalupe**, Two Barns, Domaine Serene, Soter Vineyards and Penner-Ash. Past clients include BrickHouse, Willakenzie and Eyrie Vineyards.

Siltstone Wines are produced from **Guadalupe Vineyard** located in Yamhill County between Newberg and Carlton. The Vineyard is owned by Jim Stonebridge and Kathleen Boeve, both doctors. The property was purchased in 1987 and was one of the oldest orchard sits in the area. The planting of grapes began in 1988 and has continued through 1998. The vineyard size is 40 acres. We have participated in the project since the beginning and completely operate the site. Guadalupe sells fruit to: Ken Wright Cellars, Solena Wines, Domaine Serene, King Estate, and Edgefield Winery.

The current production is about 150 cases of Pinot Noir and 125 plus of Pinot Gris. Both wines were bottled at Walnut City Wineworks.

These are the ultimate wines that experienced growers of premium fruit bring to you in bottle their best efforts. The Myers had the opportunity to have access to a small portion of the Guadalupe site to bring their business full circle and have wine produced under their own label. The label denotes the single-vineyard bottling from Guadalupe plus the mark of "Vinetenders Selection" which is the indication that the Myers are fully committed to actively participating in all levels of the wine's production from field to bottle.

TASTING NOTES-

This lush Pinot Noir jumps out of the glass with a core of deep cherry, stone fruits, and bruised strawberry. The nose is laced with tobacco, spice, raked leaves, caramel, roasted meats, crème Brule and leather. The wine has a silky, full bodied palette with a long finish. Unfiltered and unfiltered.

The Wines**Cottonwood Winery
Pinot noir Brigitte Catherine 02 \$40**

Dark saturated black color, nose with hints of wild strawberry, rose and violets, viscous, rich mouthfeel, layers of black fruit, cassis, big dark finish. Yow, this is a really nice Pinot. Big, for people who like big Pinots. Very age-worthy.

Sometimes I just can't get a wine out of my head... not very often, but once in awhile. My first Turley Zinfandel, a great Condrieu, Owen Roe's Dubruls, and now this Pinot noir. It's a fascinating wine, dark and huge, and there's something about it that says that this guy's going to be a star. Highly recommended.- JY

From the winery: "The grapes for our 2002 Bridgette Catherine Pinot Noir come from Durant Vineyard (83%) and Winter's Hill Vineyard (17%). Durant Vineyard is located in the Red Hills between Sokol Blosser Vineyard and Domaine Drouhin Vineyard. We received the grapes for this wine from the Casita block of the vineyard, one of the highest elevation blocks of the vineyard.

Casita contributes incredibly rich flavors of black currants, pears and small ripe Oregon strawberries. These are young vines which show great promise as evidenced by this fine wine. I will take great pleasure in watching this block develop to its full potential. The Durants have been growing wine grapes since the 1970's and are widely recognized as one of the top growers in the state.

Winter's Hill Vineyard is also located in the Red Hills between Stoller Vineyard and Domaine Serene Vineyard. The Pinot Noir for this wine came from old Pommard vines. Winter's Hill is a very carefully managed, low input vineyard. The wine made from these Winter's Hill vines balances the luscious fruit of the Durant with notes of tobacco, licorice and spices.

The wine is full-bodied and smooth with an excellent tannin profile. Try this wine with roast wild turkey, mushroom stuffed lamb chops, roasted young saddle of venison or baked tempeh and rice.

The grapes from both vineyards were carefully picked and then, after being chilled to 40 degrees Fahrenheit, were gently destemmed and allowed to cold macerate for four days. With about 1% sugar remaining in the grapes they were lightly pressed and the wine transferred to French, oak barrels (33% new) to finish fermentation. We allowed this wine to age for 16 months in barrel before bottling. The wine was raked a total of four times to achieve clarity and stability, it is unfiltered and unfiltered. 154 cases produced.