

# Washington Wine Report 2007 Passport to Woodinville Woodinville, WA



**March 31<sup>st</sup> & April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007**

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## Overview

What follows is a summary of our trip to Woodinville, Washington for the 2007 Passport to Woodinville Weekend.

The purpose of this report is:

- To provide information about an event weekend in Washington wine country, in this case, the Passport to Woodinville
- To help you plan a visit to Washington wine country by providing information about the wineries located there
- To provide ratings of recently released or to-be-released Washington wines to help you pick out wines you will enjoy



Lindy outside one of the many office park wineries in Woodinville. This one is Chatter Creek.

The report is broken down into several sections. The first, [Report Methodology](#), describes how the wineries and wines were selected and rated. The next section, the [Tasting Summary](#), provides a high level overview of the highlights of the weekend. The [Summary of Double and Single Star Wines](#) provides a list of the wines that received a double star - our highest rating – or a single star during the tasting. Following this list, we provide individual reports of each of the wineries we visited. For each winery, we provide, where possible, information about: who owns the winery; who their winemaker is; what types of red wines they make; how many cases of wine they typically produce; and a list of Seattle stores that carry their wine or have been known to in the past. We then provide information about the wines we tasted at the winery. Finally, at the end of the report is a [References](#) section that contains a list of Washington wine resources.

To sign up to receive future wine reports, send an e-mail to Sean Sullivan at [spsulliv@yahoo.com](mailto:spsulliv@yahoo.com). Feel free to distribute to anyone who may be interested.

## Report Methodology

The Tasters: Sean Sullivan, Lindy Irving

How Wineries Were Selected: There are currently more than thirty wineries in the Woodinville area. While an ambitious individual could attempt to power taste and hit them all in a weekend, we prefer to linger on the wines and enjoy the experience. For this reason, we selected wineries to visit on the following basis, not in this particular order:

- 1) High ratings in the Sullivan System for previous releases (see below)
- 2) High ratings in Wine Spectator for previous releases
- 3) Wineries proximity to each other

How Wineries Were Rated: Each winery is rated as a destination from one star (lowest) to four stars (highest). Wineries in Woodinville are grouped into two general locations – the northern and southern wineries. The northern wineries are banded together in office parks. Most of these are production facilities with modest tasting setups. The southern wineries range from the metropolis of Chateau Ste. Michelle to small office park wineries. Given this, ratings of the wineries were made relative to others in their location. To see a map of all Woodinville winery locations, go to:

<https://www.woodinvillewinecountry.com/map.pdf>

How Wines Were Rated: All wines sampled were rated with the Sullivan System:

- A flawed wine. Refuse this wine if served.
- . A decent wine. Drink it if you must.
- + A good wine. Worth drinking.
- \* An excellent wine. Convince a friend to buy some and share it with you.
- \*\* An exceptional wine. Buy it now and either tell all your friends about it or keep it very, very secret, depending on your personality and availability.

Our interest and therefore focus is overwhelmingly on red wines. In particular, we tend to favor New World-style red wines that are typically fruitier, smoother, and more full-bodied than their European counterparts. This is reflected in our ratings.

Please note this system is heavily affected by Poor Pour Syndrome (PPS). PPS occurs when too few drops of wine are poured into the glass to allow one to swirl and taste. Bouquet and taste are also strongly affected by PPS due to increased oxidation. Many wineries, God bless them, counteract PPS by pouring a generous taste. This results (hopefully) in more wine being poured into the bucket during the tasting. It also results in more people walking out with parcels in hand. I believe this is due to the ability to properly evaluate the wine, although there are alternative explanations.

## Tasting Summary

2 days, 20 wineries, 60 wines tasted.

Ah, the east side! The annual Passport to Woodinville is the only time when all of the Woodinville wineries - including many never open to the public - throw open their doors and pour their wines. This was our first time attending this event and, in many cases, sampling these wines.

Given its proximity to a dense population center (double entendre intended), only 3,500 passports were sold this year to control the crush. One shudders at the thought of what it would be like if more were sold. Most wineries were teeming with people. Several had lines to get in.

The cost is \$50 per person which gets you a nifty looking passport that contains labels from each winery on individual pages along with descriptions of the wineries. Upon arrival at a winery, as if reaching the borders of a foreign land, your passport gets stamped and, voila, you are in! The Passport also gets you a you'll-only-use-it-at-this-event Woodinville Wine glass to bring to the event. These glasses are so hardy that when my compatriot accidentally dropped one of them onto a concrete parking lot prior to the tasting, the glass was almost unaffected.

This year, Passports were snapped up and sold out within two weeks of going on sale. If you are interested in attending in the future, pay attention to the sale date as the craigslist grifters are well aware that this has become a wealthy town.

To play in this reindeer game, a winery must make its wine in Woodinville. There are, therefore, wineries in Woodinville that are not part of the Passport as they are physically located in Woodinville but they make their wines elsewhere. However, most of these wineries generously opened their doors to Passport tasters, and we equally generously took them up on their offer. For this reason, several of the wineries listed here are not officially part of the Passport list.

Like a general surveying the battlefield, we decided to start our trip to Woodinville at Baer Winery up in the northeast corner and then sweep through the northern wineries. As we arrived promptly at 11am, we realized we were late to the fight. This was such an obvious plan of attack that everyone, including several giant tour buses, took it. We subsequently u-turned and worked on plan B. Do not make this mistake. Returning to Baer on Sunday, we parked next to the house and had the place largely to ourselves, although without the barrel tasting we had expected on Saturday.

Of the twenty wineries we visited, three stood out with each wine being of extremely high quality: [Stevens Cellars](#), [Matthews Cellars](#), and [Brian Carter Cellars](#). Unfortunately, master winemaker [Bob Betz](#)' wines were not on display. I believe they had already reached the bottom of the barrel.

In terms of value, for the Passport to Woodinville, we paid \$50 each to visit 20 wineries and taste 60 wines. For Walla Walla, we paid the occasional tasting fee and went to 21 wineries and tasted 115 wines. You decide.



Lines and crowds at the 2007 Passport to Woodinville



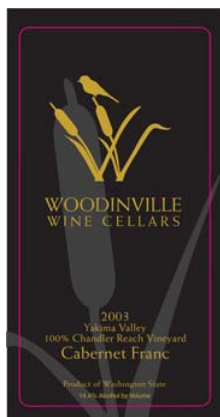
## Summary of Double and Single Star Wines

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
**	Stevens Black Tongue Syrah 2004	Spice. Mushroom. Earthy. Milk chocolate. Toast. Smooth wine with a good finish. Slightly sharp on the finish.	\$29
**	Brian Carter Solesce 1999	Spice. Prune. Tobacco. Big, big nose. Earthy. Smooth, good mouth feel.	\$58
**	Matthews Cellars Red Wine 2001	Great spice. Big nose with a funkiness to it. Nice oak. Tobacco. Very evenly balanced and smooth. An excellent wine. Extended finish.	\$65
*	Woodinville Wine Cellars Ausonius 2004	Toast. Reminiscent of the 2004 Chapellet Mountain Cuvee on the nose. Blackberry. Spice. Anise. Smooth, elegant wine with an easy finish. Overall a very nice wine.	\$35
*	Stevens 424 2004	Spice. Vanilla. Cocoa. Somewhat reminiscent of the Walla Walla Vintners 2004 Merlot. Blackberry and dark fruit. A very nice nose.	\$30
*	Stevens Cabernet Sauvignon XY 2004	Blackberry and dark fruit. Very well put together wine. Heavy on the tongue.	NR
*	Arlington Road Cellars Monolith 2004	Spicy. Subtle nose. Cassis. Berry. Slight earthiness on first pour. Violet. Super smooth wine that opens up in the mouth. Very well made.	\$50
*	Cuillin Cellars Claret 2005	Tobacco. Anise. Bright acidity. Good, full taste. Very good wine for the money.	\$23
*	William Church Winery Viognier 2005	Honeydew. Melon. Pear. Clear and crisp. Best viognier of the day.	\$22

## Summary of Double and Single Star Wines...Continued

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
*	Mark Ryan Winery The Dissident 2005	Very nice wine. Smooth, full wine. Spice. Black pepper. Tobacco. A wine that grows on you.	\$28
*	Baer Ursa 2004	Spice. Dark, rich wine. Vanilla. Cherry. Full taste.	\$30
*	Doyenne Aix 2005	Toast. Blueberry. Smooth, good finish. Nice full feel.	BS
*	Brian Carter L' Etalon 2003	Spicy. Pepper. Anise. A little sharp on the taste. A very good wine.	\$30
*	Matthews Cellars Claret 2004	Berry. Bright. Dark fruit. Spice. Raspberry. Some oak. Not a stunner but a very solid performer. Fairly thick on the tongue.	\$30
*	Matthews Cellars Red Wine 2003	Prune. Raisin. Sweet dried fruit. Good full wine.	\$30 (375)
*	Columbia Winery Alder Ridge Zinfandel 2003	Spicy. Strong, full nose.	\$28

Full report in order tasted follows.



<u>Owner:</u>	Unknown
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Sean Boyd
<u>Cases:</u>	2,500
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Blends
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Esquin

Winery: \*\* ½ Office park winery. A charming front room with a tasting bar and several French stoves for events. A large barrel area is in the back. To the side of the winery is a picnic area next to Little Bear Creek.

Summary: Woodinville Cellars' flagship wine, Ausonius, is named after a 4th century poet, professor, courtier, prefect (Gaul), and consul (Rome). Pretentious? Perhaps, but the wines are not. The Ausonius strives to be a Bordeaux-style wine and largely succeeds where many have failed. The Little Bear Creek, named after the creek that runs next to the winery, is a good table wine.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Sauvignon Blanc 2006	Pear. Smooth. Light. Almost clear.	\$18
+	Little Bear Creek 2004	Mushroom. Dark fruit. Excellent nose. Earthy. Bordeaux tribute. Spice. Little less balanced on the taste. Not a super easy drinker. A little astringent and a little thin on the finish. Still, overall a good value.	\$20
*	Ausonius 2004	Toast. Reminiscent of the 2004 Chapellet Mountain Cuvee on the nose. Blackberry. Spice. Anise. Smooth, elegant wine with an easy finish.	\$35

+ Ausonius 2003

Sweet spice. Nice Bordeaux earthiness to this wine. Anise. More subtle and less complex than the 2004 on the nose, but beefier on the taste with more tannins.

\$40



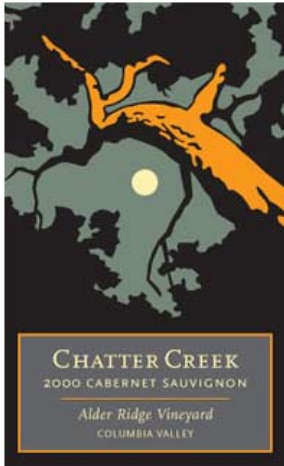
French stoves at Woodinville Wine Cellars tasting room.



Little Bear Creek outside Woodinville Wine Cellars. A picnic area is adjacent.

## Chatter Creek

[www.chattercreek.com](http://www.chattercreek.com)



<u>Owner:</u>	Gordy Rawson
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Gordy Rawson
<u>Cases:</u>	1,700
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Cabernet, Syrah, Blends
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Pete's, Esquin

Winery: \* Office park winery complete with roll-top door.

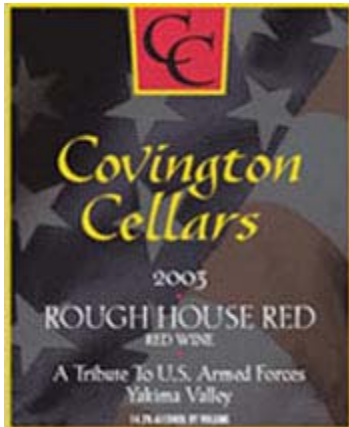
Summary: The last time I visited Chatter Creek, Gordy Rawson was making wine out of his house in the University District. As the accolades came in and the winery grew, he moved his production facility to its current location. Chatter Creek's wines seem to focus more on taste and mouth feel, which are exceptional, than bouquet. The wines all had a pleasant but fairly subtle nose which made their power on the taste that much more of a surprise.

### Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
.	Viognier 2006	Butter. Peach. Almost clear wine. Lychee.	\$20
+	Blend 105 2004	Spice. Tobacco. Not overly big nose or taste but a well-made wine. Smooth and fairly light on the palate. A good table wine.	\$22
+	Lonesome Spring Ranch Syrah 2005	Spice. Fairly light and subtle nose. Smooth, vanilla-like taste. Great mouth feel. A better nose makes this a great wine. Slight hint of green. Perhaps closed still?	\$24

## Covington Cellars

[covingtoncellars.com](http://covingtoncellars.com)



<u>Owner:</u>	David & Cindy Lawson
<u>Winemaker:</u>	David Lawson
<u>Cases:</u>	1,700
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Cabernet, Syrah, Blends
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Winery

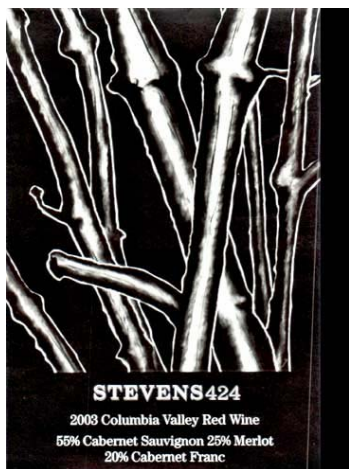
Winery: \* ½ Office park winery. Somewhat cramped tasting setup with a u-shaped line. The ½ star is for the hor' derves from Cater Arts, some of the best food of the day.

Summary: The highlight at Covington Cellars was Cater Arts. Each tasting area contained a unique appetizer paired to the wine. The food was some of the best of the day. Unfortunately the Starr Syrah appeared to have a taint.

### Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Viognier 2005	Almost clear on the color. Bright acidity. Slight floral nose. Honeydew. A refreshing summer wine.	\$19
-	Starr Syrah 2005	Nail polish and acetone on the nose. A good wine on the taste but...	BS
.	Cabernet Franc 2004	Vanilla. Good structure on the wine. Green pepper.	\$29
.	Tuscan Red 2005	Something biochemical on the nose. Good taste and mouth feel. Overall a decent wine, although I'd like a bit more on the nose.	BS

BS = Barrel Sample



Owner: Tim & Paige Stevens  
Winemaker: Tim Stevens  
Cases: 1,700  
Red Varietals: Merlot, Syrah, Cabernet, Cab Franc  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Winery

Winery: \*\* 1/2 Office park winery. Finally a winery with some music playing! Stevens doesn't have more space than other wineries but uses its space more creatively, with attractive hanging lamps and artwork on the walls.

Summary: Stevens is making remarkable wine with beautiful labels. Distribution is limited, so you will need to look for these, but you will be well rewarded for your efforts. Their 424 wine – whose label changes each year - is named after their distinction as the four hundred and twenty-fourth bonded winery in Washington state. Look out Napa.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
*	Stevens 424 2004	Spice. Vanilla. Cocoa. Somewhat reminiscent of the Walla Walla Vintners 2004 Merlot. Blackberry and dark fruit. A very nice nose.	\$30
**	Black Tongue Syrah 2004	Spice. Mushroom. Earthy. Milk chocolate. Toast. Smooth wine with a good finish. Slightly sharp on the finish. Fruit from Dineen Vineyards in Yakima.	\$29
*	Cabernet Sauvignon XY 2004	Blackberry and dark fruit. Very well put together wine. Heavy on the tongue.	NR

NR = Not Released



Owner: Ken & Robyn Nydam  
Winemaker: Matthew Loso  
Cases: 650  
Red Varietals: Bordeaux blends  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Winery

Winery: \*\* Office park winery. A pretty barrel area. High ceilings with fans and music playing. The experience was unfortunately marred by the overwhelming smell of cooked ham which made getting a handle on the wine challenging.

Summary: With grapes from the exceptional Klipsun, Stillwater, and Milbrandt vineyards in the hands of winemaker Matthew Loso of Matthews Cellars, how could Arlington Road Cellars go wrong? They could not. Their 2004 Monolith is a Bordeaux blend consisting of 62% Cabernet Sauvignon, 21% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 3% Malbec. While the price point is wine is somewhat high, the wine does not disappoint.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
*	Monolith 2004	Spicy. Subtle nose. Cassis. Berry. Slight earthiness on first pour. Violet. Super smooth wine that opens up in the mouth.	\$50



Lindy in the barrel room at Arlington Road Cellars.



Owner: Chris Gorman  
Winemaker: Chris Gorman  
Cases: 1,200  
Red Varietals: Blends  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Esquin

Winery: \*\* Office park winery. One gets the sense that owner/winemaker Chris Gorman paid a visit to Walla Walla's K vintners and had a life altering experience. His winery borrows many features that have made K successful – a rock star atmosphere at the winery with music blaring (Was that Queensryche I heard playing? Oh yes it was.). Guitars are hanging from the walls, and the atmosphere is party central.

Summary: Pair the K theme of the winery with the creative label design and, perhaps, Chris is one "House Wine" away from pay dirt. Gorman's wines are solid. Each time I taste them, I feel they strive to be exceptional but fall just slightly short. Still, there is lots of promise here. And rock music.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Zachary's Ladder 2004	Berry. Vanilla. Spice. Cassis. Not super full on the finish.	\$25
+	The F.O.G (NV)	Prune. Good. A little flat on the palate.	\$30

## Des Voigne Cellars

[desvoignecellars.com](http://desvoignecellars.com)



<u>Owner:</u>	Darren Des Voigne
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Darren Des Voigne
<u>Cases:</u>	Unknown
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Syrah, Blends
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Esquin, McCarthy & Schiering

Winery: \* ½ Office park winery. Des Voigne had music was blaring and was crammed with people. Thankfully the wine kept us (reasonably) calm.

Summary: A sister or in this case brother winery to Cuillin who share the same space, Des Voigne Cellars focuses on Tuscan-style wines.

### Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	San Remo 2005	A little pepper. Spice. Stone. Tart and crisp. A good, reasonably priced wine. Light.	\$25
+	Syrah 2004	Toast. Blueberry.	\$24



Owner: Derek Des Voigne  
Winemaker: Derek Des Voigne  
Cases: 1,700  
Red Varietals: Syrah, Claret, Grenache  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Winery

Winery: \* ½ Shared facility with Des Voigne.

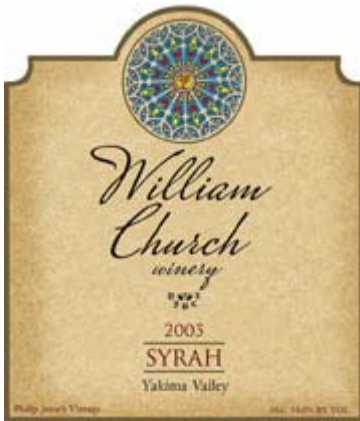
Summary: Cuillin earned two quick called strikes. The first was a crush of people so thick we could barely move. The second was a wine pourer who had a small meltdown about my non-Woodinville-Wine-Country glass (To provide my readers with the most accurate information and as well as to enhance my own enjoyment, I upgraded my stemware to a glass that would break if dropped). However, the wines quickly made amends. As the winemaker poured The Dungeon Syrah while we waited in line, our troubles melted away.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
.	Grenache 2004	Sweet spice. Berry. A decent table wine.	\$21
*	Claret 2005	Tobacco. Anise. Bright acidity. Good, full taste. Very good wine for the money.	\$23
+	The Dungeon Syrah	Violet. Sweet. Good wine overall.	\$27

## William Church Winery

[williamchurchwinery.com](http://williamchurchwinery.com)



<u>Owner:</u>	Leslie & Rod Balsley
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Unknown
<u>Cases:</u>	900
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Cabernet, Syrah
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Winery

Winery: \* Office park winery. Reasonable-sized production facility.

Summary: A surprising number of wineries in Woodinville are currently making a viognier. William Church is making the best. This wine is bursting with fruit but still light on the palate. Why? Because of a unique fermentation and aging method William Churn utilizes involving an egg-shaped concrete vessel, a method common in the Old World but relatively unknown in these parts. Gone is the heaviness of barrel fermentation that can so negatively affect white wine (and red for that matter).

### Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Syrah 2005	Very oaky. Prune. Menthol. Some blueberry. This will be a good wine when it settles down.	NR
*	Viognier 2005	Honeydew. Melon. Pear. Clear and crisp. Best viognier of the day.	\$22

NR = Not Released



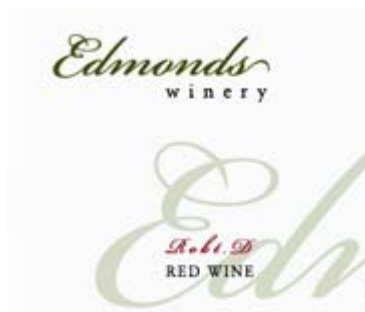
<u>Owner:</u>	Christian & Kelly Sparkman
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Mark Ryan McNeilly
<u>Cases:</u>	500
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Merlot, Syrah, Bordeaux blends
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Winery

Winery: \*\* Sparkman has a pretty front area for tasting and a large barrel area in the back.

Summary: The good news is that Sparkman is making some very solid wines. The bad news is that they are charging \$40 for them. These are wines that at a lower price point would be quite good. At this price point, one has to wonder if these wines are not only named after their children but are priced to put them through school!

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
.	Stella Mae Syrah 2004	Green pepper. Smoky. A good, typical Washington syrah.	\$40
+	Ruby Leigh 2004	Toast. A good, full-bodied Bordeaux blend. Violet, reminiscent of many Red Mountain wines. Unfortunately quite expensive.	\$40



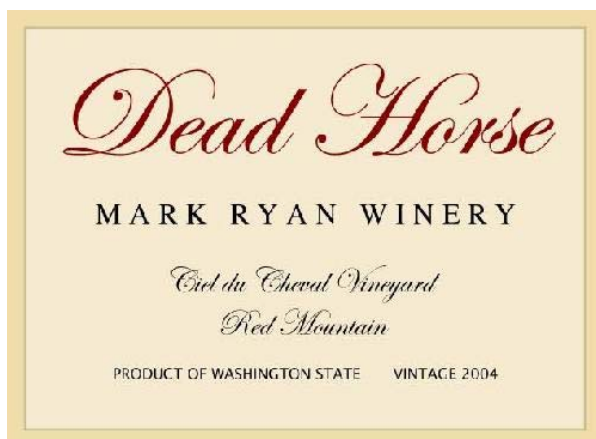
<u>Owner:</u>	Unknown
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Unknown
<u>Cases:</u>	1,000
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Winery

Winery: \* Office park winery. Mainly a production facility.

Summary: Edmonds is a winery that creates wines with a common bond – the stony, spicy aroma uncommon to most wines in this state. Keep an eye on them. They show great promise.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Cabernet Sauvignon 2003	Strong stone aroma. Chateneuf de Pape-style. Very light color. Good wine overall.	\$20
+	Slide Ridge Claret 2004	Stone. Spice. Nice wine.	\$26
+	Syrah 2004	Prune. Soy. Strong spice.	\$25
+	Syrah 2003	Strong, smoky “campfire” nose. Violets and cedar. Most balanced wine of the group.	\$25



Owner: Mark Ryan McNeilly  
Winemaker: Mark Ryan McNeilly  
Cases: Unknown  
Red Varietals: Bordeaux blends  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Esquin, Pete's

Winery: \*\* 1/2 Office park winery. Mark Ryan puts on some charm at this facility, paying more attention to decorating than most of his colleagues. The winery is in a big space with lots of side rooms. The disco ball brings it all home.

Summary: Mark Ryan McNeilly is an up and coming presence in Washington winemaking. His Dead Horse and Long Haul red wines, neither of which were poured at this event, are making impressions.

### Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Conner Lee Viognier 2006	Almost completely clear. Peach. Pear.	\$28
*	The Dissident 2005	Very nice wine. Smooth, full wine. Spice. Black pepper. Tobacco. A wine that grows on you.	\$28

## Red Sky Winery

[redskywinery.com](http://redskywinery.com)



<u>Owner:</u>	Carol & Jim Parsons
<u>Winemaker:</u>	John Ogburn
<u>Cases:</u>	1,000
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Syrah, Blends
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	
<u>Where:</u>	Winery

Winery: \*\* Office park winery.

Summary: Red Sky is making decent wines. Unfortunately the price point seems a little high.

### Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
.	Semillon 2004	Clear. Straw. Buttery. A little heavy on the palate.	\$15
+	Bordeaux Blend 2003	Pepper. Good, full. A good wine. Knock \$10 off and we are in business.	\$30
+	Syrah 2004	Berry. Full. A good wine that opens up.	\$30



Tasting room at Red Sky Cellars.



<u>Owner:</u>	Mike Januik
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Mike Januik
<u>Cases:</u>	8,000 Januik 12,000 Novelty Hill
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Pete's, Esquin

Winery: \* ½ Office park winery. A large, open space with barrels stacked to the ceiling. Januik is moving to a new facility shortly. Check back.

Summary: This was not a fair fight. Mike Januik, former winemaker at Chateau Ste. Michelle, makes excellent wines. Unfortunately the facility lacked heating, and the wines were therefore served far below drinking temperature. While we tried to cradle the wines to life, most were difficult to get a proper sense of. Januik is moving to a new location with a formal tasting room, so this should not be a problem in the future. Also included here is Novelty Hill, Januik's second label wine. These are excellent wines at a good price point for Washington. Also note that the number of wines Januik poured was several times those of others.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
.	Cold Creek Vineyard Chardonnay 2005	Pear. Light on the nose. Clear. Slightly buttery taste.	\$30
+	Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2004	Mocha. Blackberry. Tart. Slight spice. Light nose. Too cold.	\$30
+	Columbia Valley Merlot 2004	Mocha. Dark fruit. Opens up in the mouth.	\$25
+	Lewis Vineyard Syrah 2004	Toasty. Smoky. Prototypic Washington syrah.	\$30
+	Novelty Hill Semillon 2005	Citrus. Pear. A good, clear, easy drinking wine.	\$16

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**Januik Winery**

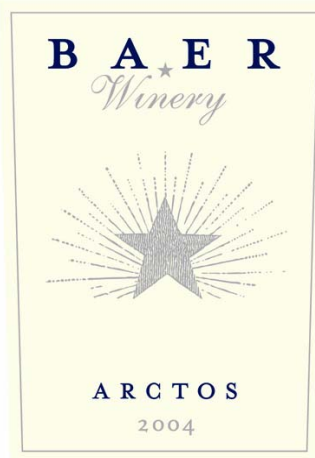
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*continued*

- |   |  |                               |      |
|---|--|-------------------------------|------|
| * | Novelty Hill Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 | Spice. Oak. Light nose.       | \$22 |
| + | Novelty Hill Columbia Valley Merlot 2004             | Oak. Black cherry.            | \$20 |
| + | Stillwater Creek Syrah 2004                          | Fig. Very easy on the palate. | \$28 |



Lindy at Januik's production facility. Januik moves to a new state-of-the-art facility with a dedicated tasting room in spring 2007.



Owner: Lance & Les Baer  
Winemaker: Lance Baer  
Cases: 1,200  
Red Varietals: Cabernet and Merlot Blends  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Pete's, Esquin, Champion Wine Cellars, McCarthy & Schiering

Winery: \*\*\* Fun and festive with live music playing. The winery is located at the Baer residence. Unfortunately they are only open for releases and the Passport.

Summary: Baer is making very small quantities of very good wine. The Ursa – their merlot blend - constitutes the bulk of their production at about 900 cases. If you are lucky enough to spot a bottle of the lower production Arctos – their cabernet blend - don't hesitate. A bottle last year made me a believer.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
*	Ursa 2004	Spice. Dark, rich wine. Vanilla. Cherry. Full taste.	\$30



Live music at Baer.



1999

**CABERNET SAUVIGNON**

TRADITIONALLY PRODUCED BORDEAUX STYLE WINE

COLUMBIA VALLEY

PRODUCED AND BOTTLED BY  
DISTEFANO WINERY, LTD. WOODINVILLE, WA.

750 ML. ALC. 13.5% BY VOL.

<u>Owner:</u>	Mark Newton, Donna DiStefano
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Mark Newton
<u>Cases:</u>	Unknown
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Cabernet, Merlot, Cab Franc, Syrah, Meritage
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Pete's, Esquin

Winery: \*\*\* Office park winery. The winery has a dedicated tasting room unlike many.

Summary: DiStefano is making a number of excellent, rich, full-bodied wines. Unfortunately none of them were on display here. Perhaps, as I often ask myself, DiStefano wonders, what is the point of pouring high end wine to a crowd that by and large doesn't know the difference? My answer is simply to seduce them. To seduce them. We left alone.

### Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Sauvignon Blanc 2005	Citrus. A clear, refreshing wine.	\$15
+	Merlot 2002	Black pepper. Rich. Coats the mouth. Bit of a one trick pony on the pepper.	\$32
+	Syrah R 2003	Toasty. Smooth, full wine. Best of the three.	\$36



Owner: Greg Lill, Jay Soloff,  
Chris Upchurch,  
Charles Lill, Pat  
Jorgenson

Winemaker: Chris Upchurch

Cases: 5,000

Red Varietals: Bordeaux blends

Tasting fee: NA

Where: City Cellars,  
Broadway QFC,  
Pete's

Winery: \*\*\*\* DeLille is everything you would want a trip to a winery to be. Located in a gorgeous building, DeLille has beautiful grounds and a beautiful tasting area with hardwood floors and a fireplace. They also have an unusually pretty view of the surrounding area.

Summary: DeLille, while sporting quite expensive wines, is making a mark in Washington state. Their D2, named after a highway in Bordeaux, is their "low end" wine at about \$35. In some years, it has been quite good. In other years it has been transcendent. Alas, their high end Chaleur Estate and Harrison Hill were not on display here. They will cost you considerably more to taste if you were to buy a bottle.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	D2 2005	Nail polish on first pour. A little sharp. Boysenberry. Needs time. Fairly full mouth feel.	BS
*	Doyenne Aix 2005	Toast. Blueberry. Smooth, good finish. Nice full feel.	BS

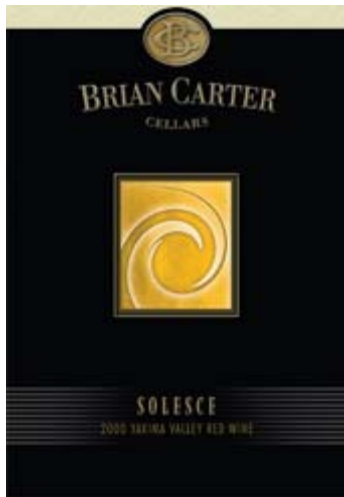
BS = Barrel Sample



The entranceway to DeLille's chateau.



Sean and Lindy on the grounds of DeLille.



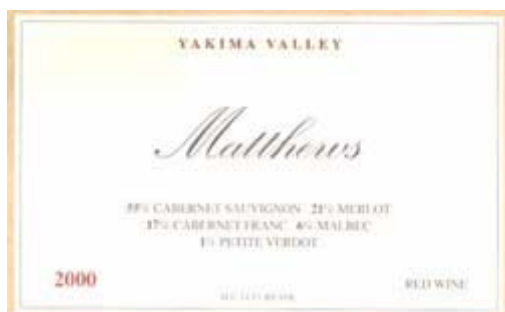
<u>Owner:</u>	Brian Carter
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Brian Carter
<u>Cases:</u>	3,000
<u>Red Varietals:</u>	Blends
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	NA
<u>Where:</u>	Pete's, Esquin

Winery: \*\* ½ Brian Carter Cellars has a pretty tasting room with a beautiful view. They are moving their production facility to Januik's, so they should officially be part of the Passport in the future.

Summary: Brian Carter is on to something. Former winemaker at Apex Cellars, Brian struck out on his own and has met with great success. Producing a Super-Tuscan, a Rhone-style wine, and two Bordeaux blends, his wines are bold and show unique properties from other wines in the state. The high-priced Solesce is the flagship. Stephen Black creates the excellent artwork for the labels.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	Oriana 2005	Some sweetness on the wine. Floral. A very interesting mix of wine. Good, extended finish.	\$24
+	Abracadabra 2003	Spicy. Pepper. Earthy. Good nose. Great wine for the money.	\$17
*	L' Etalon 2003	Spicy. Pepper. Anise. A little sharp on the taste. A very good wine.	\$30
**	Solesce 1999	Spice. Prune. Tobacco. Big, big nose. Earthy. Smooth, good mouth feel.	\$58



Owner: Matthew Loso  
Winemaker: Matthew Loso  
Cases: 3,400  
Red Varietals: Cabernet, Syrah, Bordeaux blends  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Pete's, Esquin

Winery: \*\*\* While in the inside of the winery is quite dark, Matthews boasts a number of interesting fermentation devices that lighten up the trip (see next page).

Summary: Matthews is committed to innovation. Or perhaps more precisely stated they are committed to not reinventing the wheel. Matthews is using a number of winemaking devices unseen in other wineries in the state but common in Old World wineries. The result? Some of the best wines the area has to offer. Unfortunately, they know it, as is reflected in the price. Treat yourself to this one.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
*	Claret 2004	Berry. Bright. Dark fruit. Spice. Raspberry. Some oak. Not a stunner but a very solid performer. Fairly thick on the tongue.	\$30
**	Red Wine 2001	Great spice. Big nose with a funkiness to it. Nice oak. Tobacco. Very evenly balanced and smooth. An excellent wine. Extended finish.	\$65
*	Red Wine 2003	Prune. Raisin. Sweet dried fruit. Good full wine.	\$30 (375)
+	Red Mountain Syrah 2005	Sweet, strong nose. Blackberry. Still very young.	BS

BS = Barrel Sample



Matthews Cellars is using a number of innovations with their wine. Above, a concrete egg-shaped vessel is used to ferment white wine. They also have several French oak upright tanks.



Owner:  
Winemaker: David Lake  
Cases: 200,000  
Red Varietals: Zinfandel, Syrah, Cabernet, Merlot  
Tasting fee: NA  
Where: Everywhere

Winery: \*\*\* Columbia is a giant producer with a huge tasting bar and retail area.

Summary: Columbia is producing one hundred times as much wine as most of the wineries listed here, mostly whites. They showed, however, that they can produce good reds at reasonable price points.

Wines:

<i>Score</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
*	Alder Ridge Zinfandel 2003	Spicy. Strong, full nose.	\$28
+	Milestone Merlot 2000	Vanilla. A good wine for the money. Somewhat sharp on the finish.	\$25
.	Cabernet/Merlot	Simple but good table wine. Candied smell.	\$12



The chateau at Columbia Winery.

## References

### Select Seattle-Area Wine Stores

<u>Name</u>	<u>Seattle Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Website</u>
Esquin	2700 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave S	682.7374	<a href="http://www.esquin.com">www.esquin.com</a>
City Cellars	710 N 45th St	632-7238	<a href="http://www.citycellar.com">www.citycellar.com</a>
Seattle Cellars	2505 2nd Ave	256.0850	<a href="http://www.seattlecellars.com">www.seattlecellars.com</a>
McCarthy & Schiering	2401 B Queen Anne Ave N	282-8500	<a href="http://www.mccarthyandschiering.com">www.mccarthyandschiering.com</a>
Pete's Supermarket	58 E. Lynn	322-2660	<a href="http://petes.cc">petes.cc</a>
Madison Park Cellars	4227 E. Madison	323-9333	
Champion Wine Cellars	108 Denny Way	284-8306	<a href="http://www.championwinecellars.com">www.championwinecellars.com</a>

### Select On-line Wine Stores Featuring Washington Wine

[www.avalon.com](http://www.avalon.com)

[www.compasswines.com](http://www.compasswines.com)

### Woodinville/Washington Wine Resources

[www.woodinvillewinecountry.com](http://www.woodinvillewinecountry.com)

[www.woodinvillechamber.org](http://www.woodinvillechamber.org)

[www.washingtonwine.org](http://www.washingtonwine.org)