

**Washington Wine Report
2008 Holiday Barrel Tasting
Walla Walla, WA**



December 5th, 6th, 7th 2008

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Cover Photo by James Decker

Overview

What follows is a summary of a trip to Walla Walla, Washington for 2008 Holiday Barrel Tasting. Holiday Barrel Tasting, always the first weekend in December, is one of the main event weekends in Walla Walla wine country.

The purpose of this report is:

- To provide information about an event weekend in Washington wine country
- To help you plan a visit to Washington wine country by providing information about the wineries located there
- To provide ratings of currently available Washington wines to help you pick out wines you will enjoy



Photo by James Decker

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 Star Wines](#) provides a list of the wines that received double stars - our highest rating - 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 wine 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 (Note: Check winery websites or contact the winery for local stores that carry their wine). We then provide information about the wines we tasted at the winery. A [Winery Ratings Summary](#) is provided at the back summarizing the rating of each winery as a destination. Finally, at the end of the report is a [References](#) section that contains a list of Washington wine resources.

Please send comments/suggestions/corrections to Sean Sullivan at spsulliv@yahoo.com. Feel free to distribute to anyone who may be interested.

For more information about Washington wine, see the Washington Wine Report blog at: <http://wawinereport.blogspot.com/>

Report Methodology

The Tasters: Sean, Lindy, Pat, Kim, Jim

How Wineries Were Selected: There are currently over ninety wineries in the Walla Walla area. It is therefore not possible to visit more than a handful of them on any given weekend. Wineries were selected based on previous experience or positive press. On each trip, we also try to visit a handful of new wineries or wineries that are new to us.

How Wineries Were Rated: Each winery is rated as a destination from one (★) to four stars (★★★★). This is a rating of the overall aesthetic quality of the winery. It does not take wine ratings into account. Please note that in Walla Walla not all winery locations are created equal. Locations can be grouped as follows: west of town, downtown, south of town, east of town, and the airport. Downtown wineries are, generally, tasting rooms. Airport wineries are typically in small, old military buildings that function as tasting rooms and production centers. Wineries elsewhere range from those with gorgeous tasting rooms surrounded by vineyards (Three Rivers) to winemaker's backyards (Yellow Hawk). Given this, ratings of wineries were made relative to others in their location. A [Winery Ratings Summary](#) is provided at the end of the report. To see a map of Walla Walla winery locations, go to: <http://wallawallawine.com/map>

How Wines Were Rated: All wines were rated by Sean Sullivan as follows:

- ★★ 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.
- ★ An excellent wine. Convince a friend to buy some and share it with you.
- + A good wine. Worth drinking.
- A decent wine. Drink it if you must.
- A flawed wine. Refuse this wine if served.

This is a deliberate departure from the popular, but somewhat harmful, 100 point system. For you addicts out there, the (rough) correspondence to the 100 point system is: ★★ (92-100); ★ (89-91); + (85-88); • (80-84); - (< 80).

Please note this wine rating system is heavily affected by Poor Pour Syndrome (PPS). PPS occurs when too little wine is poured into the glass to allow one to swirl and taste. Bouquet and taste are strongly affected by, among other things, increased oxidation. Many wineries, God bless them, combat PPS by pouring a generous taste. Those that do not, do their wines a disservice. I have noted within a winery summary when this has occurred by the letters "PPS". Note that PPS is more common on large event weekends when the wineries are pouring an extraordinary amount of wine due to the large crowds.

Tasting Summary

3 days, 22 wineries, over 130 wines sampled.

With WAMU shutting down, Merck pulling up stakes in Seattle, and the economy generally in tatters, how would Washington wine country fare on an end of year event weekend?

First off let me say the weather in Walla Walla was better than it had been in several years. The sun was shining throughout the day Friday and Saturday. Although the rain came in on Sunday, most, as usual, were already on their way out of town. In most years, good weather drives a high turnout. Not so this year. Most every winery was, at best, considerably less busy than in previous years. There were almost never wall-to-wall people in any of the wineries. Interestingly, most wineries denied it was much slower than previous years. Many stated that, even if the number of people was down, overall sales were up. It was impossible to tell if this was just posturing or whether it was true. Only one proprietor from a prominent winery admitted that the turnout and sales were markedly lower than in past years.

So, if numbers were down, is the economic downturn the cause? It does not appear so. Cayuse weekend - the unofficial official name for the first weekend in November when Cayuse mailing list members pick up their wine – appears to be cannibalizing Holiday Barrel Tasting weekend. One winery reported that their sales for 2008 Cayuse weekend exceeded sales from the 2007 Holiday Barrel Tasting weekend. It makes sense that Cayuse weekend has grown into an alternate event. Many people are already in town to pick up their wine or are looking for an alternative to the crush of Holiday Barrel Tasting. The question is whether the valley can sustain these two weekends as independent events given their proximity to each other. There has been discussion in the past of moving Holiday Barrel Tasting up to the first weekend in November anyway as the weather tends to be better. Whether this occurs or not, it appears that between these two weekends, the wineries are doing well despite the downturn. New wineries are still popping up all over, and I talked to many aspirants planning to open a winery within the next year.

Every trip to wine country has a story - one wine or winery that separates itself from others in some way. Sometimes it is an elaborate new tasting room. Sometimes it is a new winery splashing on the scene. The story of 2008 Holiday Barrel Tasting weekend was Corliss Estates. Corliss Estates has been quietly working away in downtown Walla Walla since 2003. They produced – and discarded – a 2001 and 2002 vintage at a previous location. Until this point, Corliss has been in stealth mode, to the extent that their building lacks any sign or placard indicating its presence. At Holiday Barrel Tasting, the curtains got pulled up as Corliss opened its doors for a mailing list member pickup. So

Tasting Summary...Continued

the story begins. The wines from Corliss Estates were all monstrous wines with huge, complex noses. On the taste, the wines were all about power. We tasted wines from the 2003 vintage – the only one currently available – as well as the 2004 and 2006 vintages. Each wine was nothing short of stunning and was among the best wines I have tasted from Washington. These are prototypic cellaring wines that will only get better over the next ten to twenty years. Based on initial impressions, it will be a short time before Corliss' name is mentioned as among the best in the state.

We also visited a number of other new wineries - and wineries that were new to us - including [Basel Cellars](#), [DaMa Wines](#), [Elegante Cellars](#), [Hence Cellars](#), [Kontos Cellars](#), and [Sapolil Cellars](#). On Kontos' second day open, winemaker Cameron Kontos, who currently serves as assistant winemaker at Forgeron Cellars, was pouring his first release as well as wines from the barrel. Kontos' wines showed great promise, and this is a winery to keep an eye on. Sapolil Cellars, located in downtown Walla Walla, displayed several exquisite, single vineyard syrahs from different vintages. While I have rarely seen these wines outside the winery, they are ones to look for as this varietal continues to excel in Washington.

So how does the 2006 vintage compare to the exceptional 2005 vintage? My initial impression is that the 2006 vintage is every bit as good. However, the wines, generally, are a bit more subtle and understated. Many showed a fascinating herbal component that was largely absent in the previous vintage. Personally I found this compelling, but some might not. Some wineries, perhaps most notably K Vintners, excelled with their 2006 releases. Others were slightly short of exceptional as their 2005 releases had been. Overall, I would say the 2006 vintage is very strong but perhaps not as immediately compelling and approachable across the board as the 2005s.

Summary of Double Star Wines

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★★ | Amavi Cellars Syrah Les Collines Vineyard 2006 | Packed with intensity on the nose with grilled meat and berry. More refined on the taste than the 2007 vintage. Overall, an intense wine that is loaded with power. | NA |
| ★★ | Chateau Rollat Edouard de Rollat 2005 | A superb nose with cinnamon, spice, chocolate, and black pepper. A pleasing earthiness on the taste with a good structure and finish. Overall a very impressive effort. 75% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc. Seven Hills and Pepper Bridge vineyards. 14.2% alcohol. | \$62 |
| ★★ | Chateau Rollat Edouard de Rollat 2007 | An aromatic, intense nose marked by milk chocolate and anise. Lots of power and grip on the taste. | BS |
| ★★ | Corliss Estates Red Wine 2003 | Dark in color with tartrate crystals showing, the wine is loaded with black pepper, dried fruit, and cranberry. Coffee grounds wind throughout the nose and taste. Outrageous power through the mid-palate and a finish that goes on for minutes. One of the biggest wines I have had. A true cellaring wine that could last for many, many years. | \$65 |
| ★★ | Corliss Estates Cabernet Sauvignon 2003 | Tons, literally tons of black cherry along with earth and bittersweet chocolate. This is an undulating wine that is perfectly balanced and has a beautiful finish. A super thick, chewy wine that takes multiple swallows to consume and then lingers on and on forever. A perfect mixture of subtlety and strength. This is a wine you will dream about when you go to sleep. | \$75 |

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★★ | Corliss Estates Syrah 2004 | More of a Rhone style that couldn't be more different than the 2003 and 2006 vintages with chocolate, cherry cola, and stone. | BS |
| ★★ | Corliss Estates Red Wine 2004 | A monster of a wine with a syrupy nose and lots of coffee grounds throughout. Age 5-10 years or decant extensively. | BS |
| ★★ | Corliss Estates Cabernet Sauvignon (preliminary blend) 2006 | Beautifully refined and balanced fruit and tannins. A plush, full wine that is all about power. Nose is still elusive but the taste delivers. | BS |
| ★★ | Corliss Estates Syrah (preliminary blend) 2006 | A humongous gamey, meaty, smoky syrah. A beast of a wine that is a full body assault. | BS |
| ★★ | Dunham Cellars Syrah Double River 2005 | A meaty, gamey, beautiful Rhone style wine with hints of menthol. The taste is light and lively, wrapping power and beauty into one. An exceptional effort. | \$65 |
| ★★ | Ensemble Release No. 3 | A rich wine marked by blackberry, anise, clove, and chocolate. An even, refined mid-palate with a long finish. Bottled in March 2008. 66% Cabernet (Sagemoor, Lodmell, Cold Creek, Red Mountain, Canoe Ridge, DuBrul vineyards); 18% Merlot (DuBrul, Neuffer, Sagemoor Weinbau vineyards); 13% Cab Franc; 3% Petit Verdot. 56% 2003; 31% 2006; 13% 2004. Sampled at 68 degrees. | \$49 |

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| ★★ | Ensemble Release No. 4 | Beautiful sweet oak spices along with jammy blue fruit, anise, and vanilla. A gorgeous, full taste. 67% Cabernet; 13% Merlot; 13% Cab Franc; 7% Petit Verdot. 15% 2005; 57% 2006; 28% 2007. 14.4% alcohol. 412 cases produced. Sampled at 60 degrees. | BS |
| ★★ | K Vintners Syrah Motor City Kitty 2006 | Full on Kalamata olives and brine. An exceptionally smooth, even taste. 95 cases produced. | \$30 |
| ★★ | K Vintners Syrah Morrison Lane Walla Walla Valley 2006 | A beautiful, complex nose with black and green olives. Olive pits mix with light, layered floral aromas and anise. If it sounds strange, it is, but it works. This wine has a lot of power and depth on the taste. A remarkable variability in the aromas when it is swirled and not swirled. 257 cases produced. | \$45 |
| ★★ | Long Shadows Pirouette 2005 | Aniseed, wheat, boysenberry, and spice mark a lively nose. White pepper when not swirled. Chalky tannins and a smooth mid-palate. Holds on for a long finish. 57% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 14% Syrah; 5% Malbec; 4% Cab Franc. 14.6% alcohol. 1,693 cases produced. | \$50 |
| ★★ | Long Shadows Poet's Leap Late Harvest Botyris Riesling 2005 | White grapefruit covered with sugar marks a stunning wine that succeeds at being sweet without being cloying or over the top. This is a beautiful, refreshing dessert wine. 11% alcohol. 15% residual sugar. 56 cases produced. | \$50 |

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

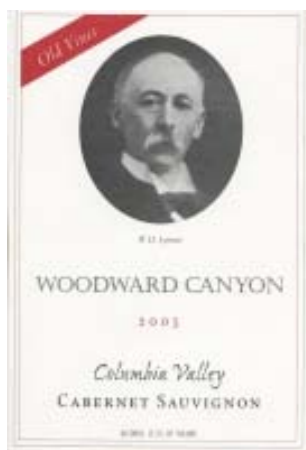
| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| ★★ | Saviah Cellars Une Vallee 2007 | Blue fruit, spice, and chocolate on a nose that still needs to come together. A spectacular mouth feel and taste. Wow! 57% Cabernet (Pepper Bridge); 36% Merlot (Seven Hills); 7% Cab Franc (Stillwater Creek). 343 cases produced. | BS |
| ★★ | Tamarack Cellars Ciel du Cheval Syrah 2006 | A complex, monster of a nose with wheat, herbs, and a floral component. Power and balance all in one with a hyper-extended finish as an exclamation point. | \$50 |
| ★★ | Tamarack Cellars DuBrul Reserve 2007 | A smooth, perfectly polished wine with a refined elegance and an exciting mix of herbs and spices along with anise and layered chocolate. Opens up on the palate with an extended finish. 62% Cabernet; 31% Merlot; 7% Cab Franc. To be released spring of 2010. | BS |
| ★★ | Walla Walla Vintners Bello Rosso 2006 | A big nose with a good deal of complexity marked by wheat, chocolate, cherry, and rose hips. Fairly light on the palate but opens up and sails on the finish. 50% Sangiovese; 50% Cabernet. | \$36 |

Note: A listing of “BS” in the “\$” column indicates that the wine was a Barrel/Bottle Sample. A listing of “NA” in the same column indicates the wine is Not Available for sale.

Full report in order tasted follows.

Woodward Canyon

www.woodwardcanyon.com



Owner: Rick Small & Darcey Fugman-Small
Winemaker: Kevin Mott
Cases: 17,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: City Cellars, Esquin, McCarthy & Schiering, Pete's
Contact: getthedirt@woodwardcanyon.com
509.525.4129

Winery: ★★ West of town. Woodward Canyon is located next to L'Ecole on the way in to Walla Walla. It has a modest facility surrounded by beautiful grounds, including a picnic area.

Summary: In the many times I have visited Woodward Canyon, this was the first time I have gotten a sense of what all the fuss is about. In previous visits, the wines have either been too warm or too tannic to be approachable. While these are clearly wines meant to age rather than pop and pour, Woodward Canyon's new releases seem more focused and immediately approachable, showing both subtlety and strength. I would still recommend sitting on the red wines for a few years or decanting extensively before serving. All wines sampled at 67 degrees. [PPS](#).

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Sauvignon Blanc Estate 2007 | Clear in color. A pleasing nose with grapefruit, hay, and lemon. A very enjoyable wine that is crisp and easy on the palate. 100% Sauvignon Blanc. 13.4% alcohol. 324 cases produced. | \$24 |
| • | Chardonnay Washington State 2007 | Pale yellow in color. Hay aromas stand out. Fairly sharp on the palate. Unfortunately a bit too warm to properly evaluate. 100% Chardonnay. Celilo and Woodward Canyon Estate vineyards. 14.1% alcohol. 841 cases produced. | \$39 |

Woodward Canyon

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| + | Red Wine (Non-vintage) | An intriguing blend of grapes that shows up on both the nose, which is marked by vanilla and spice, and taste. Reasonably plush with a fair amount of tannins without being overwhelming. 49% Cabernet; 27% Merlot; 7% Barbera, 6% Cab Franc; 6% Syrah; 3% Dolcetto, and 2% Petit Verdot. | \$19 |
| + | Syrah Columbia Valley 2005 | A dark wine with a pleasing nose marked by blueberry and spice. A bit uneven on the back end. 100% Syrah. Champoux & DuBrul vineyards. 14.9% alcohol. 267 cases produced. | \$39 |
| + | Merlot Columbia Valley 2006 | Blackberry, spice, and nutmeg show through on a smooth wine with a core of tannins that show through late. Lingers on the palate for a long, long time. A very good effort. 81% Merlot; 15% Cabernet; 4% Syrah. Woodward Canyon, Sagemoor, and DuBrul vineyards. 14.6% alcohol. 623 cases produced. | \$39 |
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon Artist Series #15 2006 | A silky smooth wine that is exceptionally polished with well integrated tannins. Blackberry, anise, and sweet oak aromas show through. Give at least one year. 87% Cabernet; 13% Syrah. 14.5% alcohol. 2,472 cases produced. | \$49 |
| ★ | Charbonneau Red 2005 | A lively nose with black licorice and spice. A refined taste in somewhat of a European style with lots of expression on the palate and a structure that opens up but doesn't overpower. 57% Cabernet; 43% Merlot. Charbonneau Vineyard. 14.2% alcohol. 151 cases produced. | \$69 |

Woodward Canyon

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon Artist Series #16 2007 | Blackberry syrup, tobacco leaf, and touches of pencil shavings. Young but showing a very refined taste that is packed with tannins. | BS |



Owner: Martin and Megan Clubb
Winemaker: Martin Clubb
Cases: 30,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Everywhere
Contact: info@lecole.com
 509.525.0940

Winery: ★★★ ½ West of town. L'Ecole No. 41's tasting room is located in a 1915 schoolhouse whose image, shown through the eyes of an elementary schooler, adorns their label. The building is surrounded by beautiful grounds with an outdoor deck space and picnic area.

Summary: L'Ecole No. 41's wines are always (always) exceptionally well crafted, enjoyable wines at fairly reasonable price points. This visit was no exception. The new red releases are every bit as enjoyable as past vintages with the flagship Apogee and Perigee deserving of their status. Wine temperature not recorded. [PPS](#).

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Semillon Fries Desert Wind Vineyard Wahluke Slope 2007 | Fairly clear in color except for a beautiful golden hue. The nose shows star fruit, grass, and a spicy aroma. A fairly full mouth feel. 100% Semillon. 14.4% alcohol. 276 cases produced. | \$19 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2006 | Tart and a little overwhelming on the palate. A light nuttiness on the nose. Perhaps a bit too young at present. 100% Cabernet. 14.4% alcohol. 4,805 cases produced. | \$32 |

L'Ecole No. 41

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2006 | An appealing nose with leather, earth, spice, and a bit of anise and dark fruit. Smooth on the palate with chalky tannins. A good balance of acidity rounds it out. Seven Hills, Loess, Va Piano, Pepper Bridge, and Yellow Jacket vineyards. 14.4% alcohol. | \$39 |
| ★ | Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard Walla Walla Valley 2006 | A complex nose with espresso, dark fruit, spice, and a light herbal component. Tea notes also show through. More about elegance than power, this wine is front loaded on the palate and then lightens up at the end. 56% Cabernet; 34% Merlot; 10% Cab Franc. 14.4% alcohol. 1,627 cases produced. | \$49 |



L'Ecole No.
41's
schoolhouse
on the way in
to Walla
Walla

L'Ecole No. 41

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Apogee Pepper Bridge Vineyard Walla Walla Valley 2006 | An Old World style wine layered with black pepper, earth, and a high spice note with anise sitting above it. Again, more about elegance than power. Fairly light bodied with a tart crispness at the back end. 46% Cabernet; 42% Merlot; 8% Malbec; 4% Cab Franc. 14.3% alcohol. 1,748 cases produced. | \$49 |
| + | Syrah Seven Hills Vineyard 2006 | A rich, compelling nose with blackberry syrup, spice, and light milk chocolate. 100% Syrah. 14.8% alcohol. 858 cases produced. | \$36 |
| + | Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard 2007 | A complex nose loaded with baking spices and dark fruit. Fairly light bodied and front loaded on the palate. | BS |
| + | Apogee Pepper Bridge Vineyard 2007 | A complex nose with a syrupy, jammy component along with a generous amount of spice, pepper, earth, and blueberry. Fairly light bodied but comes on with pleasing tannins. | BS |



Holiday greetings from
L'Ecole No. 41



Owner: Allen Shoup
Winemaker: Multiple
Cases: 12,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$10, refundable with purchase
Where: City Cellars, Esquin, McCarthy & Schiering, Pete's
Contact: info@long-shadows.com

Winery: ★★★★★ West of town. Long Shadows' facility is beautiful in its elegant simplicity. Stone floors and Chihuly glass sculptures are surrounded by floor-to-ceiling windows looking out on the surrounding desert.

Summary: Anyone who has read my previous reports from Walla Walla knows that I have been consistently impressed with Long Shadows. Long Shadows not only does not make a bad wine, almost every wine they make is exceptional. A good example of this is their 2005 Late Harvest Botrytis Riesling. Botrytis Riesling is a result of grapes infected by Noble Rot (*Botrytis Cinerea*). The Botrytis shrivels the grapes, concentrating sugar and flavors. The results in this dessert wine are nothing short of stunning.

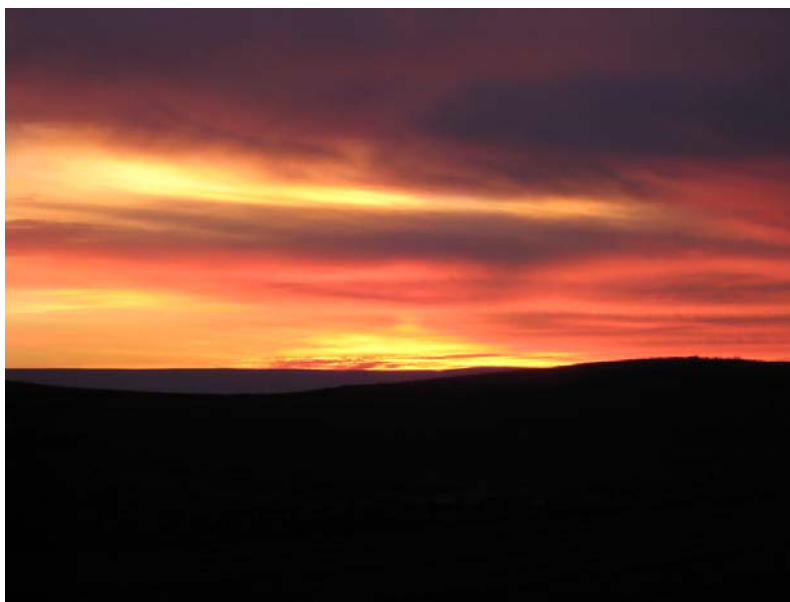
The new releases from Long Shadows continue their tradition of excellence. However, as was the case with a number of wineries we visited who tried to counter the cold December temperatures by warming up the winery, the wines were a bit warmer (68 degrees) than I prefer to sample wines at (62-65). I have indicated when I had a degree of uncertainty rating the wine due to the temperature with a (+?). Still, even at warmer temperatures, Long Shadows' wines were all standouts and among the best we tried of the weekend. All wines sampled at 68 degrees with the exception of the Late Harvest Riesling which was chilled.

Long Shadows

continued

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Chester Kidder 2006 | Clove, spice, and aniseed accent rich, dark fruit. A plush wine that has just a trace of sharpness that runs through the palate. The finish hangs. Will be an excellent wine. 44% Cabernet; 37% Syrah; 9% Cab Franc; 9% Petit Verdot; 5% Merlot. To be bottled in March 2009. | BS |
| ★ (+?) | Chester Kidder 2005 | A bold wine with dark fruit, spice and an expressive palate marked by black licorice, a solid tannin profile, and a pleasing tartness. 55% Cabernet; 40% Syrah; 5% Merlot. 14.7% alcohol. 1,586 cases produced. | \$50 |
| ★ | Saggi 2006 | Cranberries laced with bitter sweet chocolate layered with rich dark fruit. The nose has a lot of complexity. 42% Cabernet; 39% Sangiovese; 19% Syrah. 14.6% alcohol. 1,725 cases produced. | \$45 |



Sunset from
Long Shadows

Long Shadows

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ (+?) | Sequel 2006 | Generous amounts of red and black dried fruit along with kisses of chocolate. A lot of tartness on the taste. 96% Syrah; 4% Cabernet. 14.7% alcohol. 2,012 cases produced. | \$50 |
| ★★ | Pirouette 2005 | Aniseed, wheat, boysenberry, and spice mark a lively nose. White pepper when not swirled. Chalky tannins and a smooth mid-palate. Holds on for a long finish. 57% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 14% Syrah; 5% Malbec; 4% Cab Franc. 14.6% alcohol. 1,693 cases produced. | \$50 |
| ★★ | Poet's Leap Late Harvest Botyris Riesling 2005 | White grapefruit covered with sugar marks a stunning wine that succeeds at being sweet without being cloying or over the top. This is a beautiful, refreshing dessert wine. 11% alcohol. 15% residual sugar. 56 cases produced. | \$50 |



Glass sculptures at Long Shadows



Owner: Richard Funk & Family
Winemaker: Richard Funk
Cases: 4,200
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Cab Franc, Malbec, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: Broadway QFC, Esquin, Pete's
Contact: 509.520.5166

Winery: ★★ ½ South of town. Saviah Cellars – located by the Oregon border – has a straightforward tasting room featuring pretty artwork and a small barrel room. The winery has a young, adjacent vineyard and beautiful views.

Summary: Richard Funk's Saviah Cellars is one of the reasons I fell in love with Washington wine. Saviah's 2003 Une Vallee remains one of my all time favorites. Saviah's wines never disappoint; the price points are always right; and Richard Funk is always adding a new and exciting wrinkle to his operation. Recently, it was a reserve Merlot and a Malbec. This year it is a Cabernet Franc, a grape that an increasing number of wineries are experimenting with as more than a blending wine. Like all of Saviah's wines, the 2006 Cabernet Franc is expertly crafted and extremely enjoyable with a much softer profile than many being made in the valley. Saviah Cellars' record of success brings to mind two questions. One, can Richard Funk keep it going? The answer here is a resounding yes. The 2007 Une Vallee barrel sample may be the best vintage of this wine yet. Second, what will Mr. Funk do next? On this, only time will tell. Wine temperature not recorded.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Chardonnay Stillwater Creek 2006 | Melon, pear, and mineral with just a touch of grassiness. If you like chardonnay, chances are you will like this wine. Single clone Dijon 25. 226 cases produced. | \$25 |

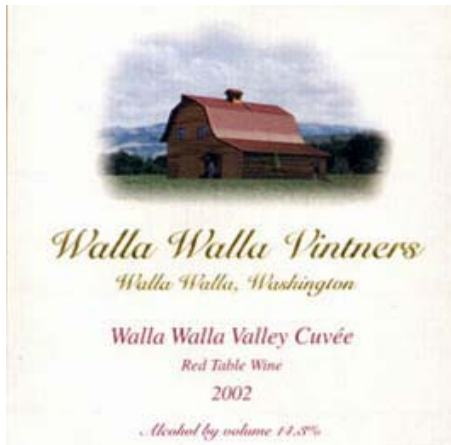
Saviah Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Cabernet Franc 2006 | Blueberry and other blue fruit along with touches of spicy oak. A nice soft structure. Seven Hills and McClellan Estate vineyards. 191 cases produced. | \$28 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 | Herbs and spices mark this enjoyable wine that is up front on the palate and then thins out a bit. A good food wine. 304 cases produced. | \$28 |
| ★ | Syrah Stillwater Creek 2005 | A gorgeous, lively nose with violets, spice, and touches of chocolate. On the taste, a pleasing tartness but a little lighter in the mid-palate. Still, a very good wine. 14.2% alcohol. 151 cases produced. | \$32 |
| ★ | Big Sky Cuvee 2006 | Loaded with chocolate and bramble spices along with a dusting of earth. On the taste, opens up and expands with generous amounts of chocolate. 61% Merlot; 26% Cabernet; 8% Cab Franc; 3% Malbec; 2% Petit Verdot. 536 cases produced. | \$35 |
| ★ | Malbec 2006 | A very enjoyable wine rich with spices and brambly fruit. Not as opulent as the 2005. 170 cases produced. | \$30 |
| ★ | Merlot Reserve 2006 | A fair amount of greenness to it right now. As it opens, herbs show through. A pleasing mouth feel and a long, long finish. Give at least one year. 92 cases produced. | \$45 |
| ★★ | Une Vallee 2007 | Blue fruit, spice, and chocolate on a nose that still needs to come together. A spectacular mouth feel and taste. Wow! 57% Cabernet (Pepper Bridge); 36% Merlot (Seven Hills); 7% Cab Franc (Stillwater Creek). 343 cases produced. | BS |

Walla Walla Vintners

www.wallawallavintners.com



Owner: Myles Anderson & Gordon Venneri
Winemaker: Myles Anderson & Gordon Venneri
Cases: 4,500 to 5,500
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Cab Franc, Merlot, Sangiovese, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: City Cellars, Esquin, Leschi Market, Pete's
Contact: info@wallawallavintners.com
509.525.4724

Winery: ★★ ½ East of town. Walla Walla Vintners' tasting room is located in an old farm building east of Walla Walla. The tasting room has cement floors (winemaking occurs in this room) and bright lighting making it somewhat less atmospheric than it could be given the pretty surroundings.

Summary: Walla Walla Vintners makes excellent wine with a consistent style dominated by rich chocolate and cherry. The 2006 releases all seemed to have a light herbal component that added a layer of complexity. Surprisingly, as this wine has been a consistent favorite from the winery, the 2007 Cabernet Franc barrel sample was a disappointment. Perhaps some additional time in the barrel will bring it around. Wine temperature not recorded. [PPS](#).

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| • | Cabernet Franc Columbia Valley 2007 | Nose still very young and a bit off-putting, reminiscent of Mentos. On the taste, mainly cranberry but overall too young to get much of an idea of it. | BS |
| + | Sangiovese Columbia Valley 2006 | Lots of cranberry and rose hips. Tart and crisp on the taste. 83% Sangiovese; 12% Syrah; 5% Malbec. | \$24 |

Walla Walla Vintners

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Washington State Cuvee 2006 | Classic Walla Walla Vintners cherry aromas and flavors. A big nose with an almost gritty aspect to it along with wheat and chocolate. A pleasing tartness and an even body. 38% Merlot; 24% Cab Franc; 13% Cabernet; 8% Petit Verdot; 7% Carmenere; 5% Malbec; 5% Syrah. Cordon Grove, Dwelley, Frazier Bluff, Killian, Sagemoor, Spring Creek, and Weinbau vineyards. | \$28 |
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2006 | Classic Walla Walla Vintners nose with chocolate covered cherries laced with rose hips along with a beautiful, light herbal quality. Very smooth body, although a bit lighter than in previous years. 76% Cabernet; 10% Cab Franc; 6% Merlot; 3% Malbec; 3% Petit Verdot; 2% Carmenere. Dwelley, Frazier Bluff, Pepper Bridge, Seven Hills, Tokar, and Windrow vineyards. | \$35 |



Photo by James
Decker

Walla Walla Vintners

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon Sagemoor Vineyard Columbia Valley 2006 | Rich chocolate along with touches of cassis, pencil shavings, and Herbes de Provence. Tart with a full mid-palate and a long finish. 79% Cabernet; 21% Cab Franc, Malbec, and Merlot. | \$40 |
| ★★ | Bello Rosso 2006 | A big nose with a good deal of complexity marked by wheat, chocolate, cherry, and rose hips. Fairly light on the palate but opens up and sails on the finish. 50% Sangiovese; 50% Cabernet. | \$36 |



View from Walla
Walla Vintners

Photo by
James Decker



| | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <u>Owner:</u> | Charles Smith |
| <u>Winemaker:</u> | Charles Smith |
| <u>Cases:</u> | 2,000 |
| <u>Red Wines:</u> | Blends, Syrah |
| <u>Tasting fee:</u> | No |
| <u>Where:</u> | Everywhere |
| <u>Contact:</u> | Charles@kvintners.com 509.526.5230 |

Winery: ★★ East of town. We come to K for the atmosphere. Like we've lucked into some backstage passes to the oenophile rock show. K's winery is literally in a garage with barrels stacked to the ceiling. It gives the appearance of a true garagiste operation.

Summary: Charles Smith's K Vintners has long been a Walla Walla Valley favorite. Known for his rock and roll roots, his hair, and his distinctive black and white labels, Smith has also always garnered excellent reviews. K Vintners sources much of its fruit from some of the most highly regarded vineyards in the state, including a number from the vineyards of cult phenom Christophe Baron of Cayuse.

There were several factors up front that guaranteed to make this visit to the winery exceptional. The first is that K did not have its usual cheek to jowl crowd. Perhaps this was because we came a bit earlier in the day. Perhaps it was because the overall number of visitors in Walla Walla was down. Regardless, it was much easier to focus on the wines. Additionally, K gave the first extremely generous pours of the weekend where there was enough wine to smell, sip, consider, and repeat this several times without smelling an empty glass. While this means more wine gets tossed into the buckets (hopefully), it also means you can really spend a good deal of time with the wines. These wines deserved no less as they were all intense, complex, and evolving. One thing I noticed about K's wines in particular were the fascinating variations in the bouquet when the glass was swirled and when it was not. All this combined with an excellent serving temperature (61 degrees) made these wines absolutely shine.

K Vintners

*continued*Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Viognier Columbia Valley 2007 | Almost clear in color. An engaging nose with white peach and mineral hints. Not swirled, tropical fruit shows through. On the taste, just a touch of sweetness and peach. A very enjoyable wine. | \$20 |
| ★ | Syrah Milbrandt Vineyard 2006 | Lots of red fruit, most notably raspberries, along with cured meat and nut aromas. Raspberries on the taste complement a very pleasing mouth feel that is plush but not overbearing. The only thing that holds this wine back is that the nose seems a bit disconnected from the taste. | \$25 |
| ★★ | Syrah Motor City Kitty 2006 | Full on Kalamata olives and brine. An exceptionally smooth, even taste. 95 cases produced. | \$30 |
| ★★ | Syrah Morrison Lane Walla Walla Valley 2006 | A beautiful, complex nose with black and green olives. Olive pits mix with light, layered floral aromas and anise. If it sounds strange, it is, but it works. This wine has a lot of power and depth on the taste. A remarkable variability in the aromas when it is swirled and not swirled. 257 cases produced. | \$45 |
| ★ | Phil Lane Walla Walla Valley 2006 | Nose has a lot going on with some classic Walla Walla gamey, meaty Syrah aromas. Elegant and smooth with violets on the taste. An excellent effort that is just short of a double star wine. 140 cases produced. | \$70 |

K Vintners

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Ovide 2007 | Wow what a crazy, funky nose! Taste has a beautiful, feminine quality to it. Will be an excellent wine. Some sulfites still seem to be showing. | BS |



With
winemaker
Charles Smith
(second from
left)

Photo by
James Decker

Ensemble Cellars

www.ensemblecellars.com



Owner: Craig Nelsen
Winemaker: Craig Nelsen
Cases: 380
Red Wines: Blends
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Winery
Contact: 509.525.0231

Winery: ★★ Airport winery. Ensemble has a small, pretty tasting room that one of my companions claims is “the cleanest tasting room in Walla Walla.”

Summary: Craig Nelsen is doing something no other winemaker in Washington is doing. He takes grapes from three successive vintages and blends them all into one wine that he assigns a numerical release to. His stated goal is to make a Bordeaux-style wine that has exceptional consistency across releases. After tasting Ensemble Release Number 4 – to be released in 2009 – from the barrel, Ensemble continues to excel. The blending of multiple vintages gives Nelsen’s wines added complexity and a beautiful blend of age and youth within the same wine. I have not seen Ensemble’s wines outside of the winery unfortunately. However, this is definitely not one to miss if you see a bottle or if you travel to Walla Walla.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★★ | Release No. 4 | Beautiful sweet oak spices along with jammy blue fruit, anise, and vanilla. A gorgeous, full taste. 67% Cabernet; 13% Merlot; 13% Cab Franc; 7% Petit Verdot. 15% 2005; 57% 2006; 28% 2007. 14.4% alcohol. 412 cases produced. Sampled at 60 degrees. | BS |

Ensemble Cellars

continued

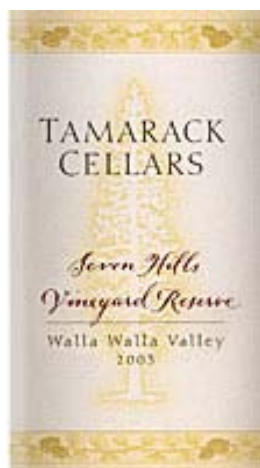
| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★★ | Release No. 3 | A rich wine marked by blackberry, anise, clove, and chocolate. An even, refined mid-palate with a long finish. Bottled in March 2008. 66% Cabernet (Sagemoor, Lodmell, Cold Creek, Red Mountain, Canoe Ridge, DuBrul vineyards); 18% Merlot (DuBrul, Neuffer, Sagemoor Weinbau vineyards); 13% Cab Franc; 3% Petit Verdot. 56% 2003; 31% 2006; 13% 2004. Sampled at 68 degrees. | \$49 |



Photo by James Decker

Tamarack Cellars

www.tamarackcellars.com



Owner: Ron and Jamie Coleman
Winemaker: Ron Coleman
Cases: 12,000
Red Wines: Blends , Cabernet, Cab Franc, Merlot, Sangiovese, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Everywhere
Contact: 509.526.3533

Winery: ★★ ½ Airport winery. Tamarack Cellars' tasting room is located in a restored World War II fire station. It is an open space with cement floors but offers a little more charm than many of the airport locations.

Summary: The Fall 2008 release marked some interesting changes for Tamarack Cellars. For the first time, Tamarack is making a single vineyard Syrah from the famed Ciel du Cheval Vineyard on Red Mountain. The results are spectacular. Tamarack is also making a first ever Pinot Noir using grapes sourced from Oregon. When offered the Ciel grapes, Tamarack smartly said they would be much more interested if they could receive an allotment in subsequent years rather than as a one off. The vineyard obliged so look for more Ciel releases in the future. All wines sampled at 64 degrees.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Chardonnay 2007 | A classic chardonnay nose with a fair amount of oak showing. Surprisingly the oak seems more restrained on a pleasing, even taste. If you like chardonnay, you will like this wine. 100% Chardonnay. 13.89% alcohol. 1,740 cases produced. | \$18 |

Tamarack Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Merlot Columbia Valley 2006 | Tobacco, light eucalyptus oil, and rose hips on a spicy wine where the use of Hungarian oak shows through. Initially smooth on the taste and then the tannins come on. A bit aggressive on the tannins or I might have bumped it up. 81% Merlot; 12% Cabernet; 7% Cab Franc. Taptiel, Weinbau, DuBrul, Gamache, Spring Creek, Seven Hills, and Bacchus vineyards. 14.28% alcohol. 1,456 cases produced. | \$28 |
| + | Cabernet Franc 2006 | A pleasing nose with anise and a dark chocolate component when aggressively swirled. Fairly tart on the taste. 100% Cab Franc from Weinbau and DuBrul vineyards. 14.19% alcohol. 554 cases produced. | \$28 |
| + | Firehouse Red 2007 | Bursting with chocolate, chalk, and berry with hints of anise showing through. A good body that is right down the fairway, although a bit tart. A very good wine to pair with food. Give six months and/or pair with food to tame it. 31% Cabernet; 27% Syrah; 16% Merlot; 14% Cab Franc. 3% Sangiovese; 7% Malbec; 1% Carmenere; 1% Petit Verdot. 13.92% alcohol. 8,500 cases produced. | \$20 |
| ★★ | DuBrul Reserve 2007 | A smooth, perfectly polished wine with a refined elegance and an exciting mix of herbs and spices along with anise and layered chocolate. Opens up on the palate with an extended finish. 62% Cabernet; 31% Merlot; 7% Cab Franc. To be released spring of 2010. | BS |

Tamarack Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Ciel du Cheval Reserve 2007 | Floral notes mixed with earth, violets, and herbs. A very even, well crafted wine that is subtle, not overpowering. | BS |
| + | Pinot Noir 2006 | A smoky nose with raspberries and red fruit. Not getting quite as much on the taste. | \$22 |
| ★ | Sagemoor Reserve 2005 | A subtle, somewhat elusive nose with light dried and dark fruit. On the taste, it is light and reserved. 75% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc. 13.98% alcohol. 28 cases produced. | \$50 |
| ★★ | Tamarack Cellars Ciel du Cheval Syrah 2006 | A complex, monster of a nose with wheat, herbs, and a floral component. Power and balance all in one with a hyper-extended finish as an exclamation point. | \$50 |



Owner: Huse Family
Winemaker: Matt Huse
Cases: 3,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Malbec, Merlot, Sangiovese, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Champion Wine Cellars, City Cellars, Esquin, Pete's
Contact: 509.527.8400

Winery: ★★ Airport winery. The winery has a nice bar-style tasting area.

Summary: Like many in the valley, Five Star is playing with some new varietals, including a wine that is predominantly Petit Verdot and another pure varietal Malbec. Additionally, the 2005 Stellar is Five Star's first Bordeaux blend. All wines sampled at 68 degrees. [PPS](#).

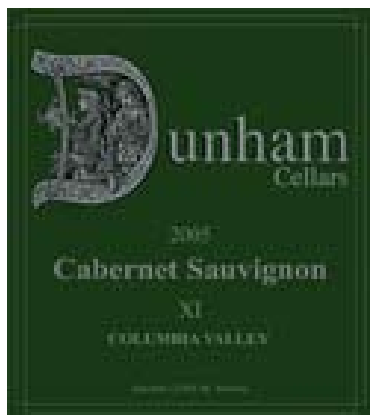
Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Sangiovese Walla Walla Valley 2006 | Nose is fairly subtle with cranberry and Herbes de Provence. A very soft, pretty wine. Taste isn't entirely typical of the varietal. 100% Sangiovese. Nueffer, Seven Hills, and Pepper Bridge vineyards. | \$28 |
| ★ | Merlot Walla Walla Valley 2006 | The nose evolves continuously with an almost sweet aspect with candied fruit, rose hips, and kisses of chocolate. Beautifully refined with silky tannins. 98% Merlot; 2% Malbec. Seven Hills, Pepper Bridge, Pheasant Run, and Birch Creek vineyards. 14.2% alcohol. | \$32 |

Five Star Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2006 | Nose is gamey but not overwhelmingly so, with chocolate threads winding through it. Taste is large and expressive with a long finish marked by sweet components. 100% Syrah. Les Collines & Spofford Station vineyards. | \$30 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2006 | An elegant nose with espresso and red fruit. Taste doesn't quite live up to it with the wine not carrying completely across the palate and possessing some green notes. Perhaps will improve with some bottle age. 93% Cabernet; 4% Merlot; 2% Petit Verdot; 1% Cab Franc. Les Collines, Seven Hills, Pepper Bridge, Heather Hill, and Frazier Bluffs vineyards. | \$34 |
| + | Petit Verdot/Cabernet Franc Walla Walla Valley 2006 | Black and white pepper predominate. A bit of a roller coaster that starts out aggressively and then becomes tamer. 67% Petit Verdot; 33% Cab Franc. Frazier Bluffs & Seven Hills vineyards. | \$38 |
| ★ | Stellar Walla Walla Valley 2005 | A big nose with tobacco, menthol, and loaded with white pepper. A chewy wine with a lot of cherry. 60% Cabernet; 30% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc; 5% Malbec. | \$56 |
| ★ | Stellar 2006 | A rich, syrupy wine with cherry cola notes. Taste is very well put together. Will be a very good wine when it grows up. | BS |
| + | Malbec 2007 | A bit fruitier than the other wines Five Star makes with light black fruit, cherry cola, and hints of menthol. Some bite on the taste. | BS |



Owner: Dunham Family
Winemaker: Eric Dunham
Cases: 20,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable
Where: Everywhere
Contact: 509.529.4685

Winery: ★★★ Airport winery. Compared to most other facilities at the airport, Dunham's winery stands out. The winery is located in a remodeled World War II airplane hangar that has considerably more charm than most of the military buildings in the area. Of course, the people at the winery are responsible for a good deal of this. More than most wineries, Dunham took decorating for the holiday season seriously with ornaments hanging from the ceiling throughout the building.

Summary: This was my first visit to Dunham in some time. In the middle of the tasting, I thought I was suffering from palate fatigue as I was getting cherry cola on every wine. Thankfully, winemaker Eric Dunham said, unprompted, "Lewis Vineyard is all about cherry cola." In addition to their single vineyard wines from Lewis Vineyard, Dunham is also making single vineyard wines from Double River. The Double River Vineyard is located just south of Walla Walla near the Oregon border. Mike Dunham did us the honor of opening a bottle of the 2005 Double River Syrah which was exceptional. All wines sampled at 66 degrees.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Four Legged Riesling Columbia Valley 2006 | Just a trace of yellow in color. Nose is a bit sharp. A fair amount of sweetness and mineral notes with a pleasant mouth feel. 12.4% alcohol. 2,378 cases produced. | \$16 |
| + | Riesling Lewis Vineyard Columbia Valley 2007 | Don't care for the nose which seems grassy. The taste is pleasing but is a touch too sweet. 12.8% alcohol. 529 cases produced. | \$26 |

Dunham Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| • | Chardonnay Shirley Mays 2007 | Over the top oak on the taste, although not as predominant on the nose. 90% stainless steel, 10% oak. 14.9% alcohol. 329 cases produced. | \$24 |
| + | Merlot Lewis Vineyard 2006 | Nose is reminiscent of Boudreaux Cellars' wines with dark licorice and lots of cola. Very, very tight right now. A bit too young to get a clear sense of it but has a big upside. | BS |
| ★ | Syrah Lewis Vineyard 2006 | Menthol, cherry cola, and dark licorice stand out. A pleasing mouth feel. Needs a whole lot of time but will be excellent. To be bottled in two weeks. | BS |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon IX Columbia Valley 2005 | An appealing nose with chocolate and bramble berry. Taste is fairly sharp and unexpected. 100% Cabernet. Lewis Estate & Double River Estate vineyards. 13.4% alcohol. 1,786 cases produced. | \$45 |

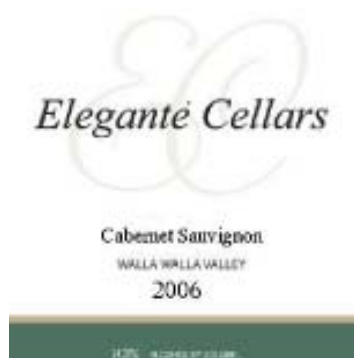


Festive
decorations at
Dunham Cellars

Dunham Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Syrah Columbia Valley 2005 | Somewhat reminiscent in style of Five Star Cellars' Syrah, the nose shows a lot of chocolate, wheat, and raspberry. Light and smooth on the taste. 100% Syrah. 14.3% alcohol. 1,612 cases produced. | \$45 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Lewis Vineyard 2005 | Cola and dark licorice jump out on the nose. Taste is a bit too tart and thin across the mid-palate. 100% Cabernet. 13.6% alcohol. 437 cases produced. | \$75 |
| ★★ | Syrah Double River 2005 | A meaty, gamey, beautiful Rhone style wine with hints of menthol. The taste is light and lively wrapping power and beauty into one. An exceptional effort. | \$65 |



Owner: Doug Simmons
Winemaker: Doug Simmons
Cases: 1,200
Red Wines: Cabernet, Merlot
Tasting fee: No
Where: Winery
Contact: 509.522.0729

Winery: ★ Airport winery.

Summary: Elegante Cellars is a new winery started by Doug Simmons, a retired school teacher. All wines sampled at 70 degrees. [PPS](#).

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Merlot 2006 | A lot of strawberry and strawberry leaf on the nose. A bit of sweetness on the taste which I personally do not care for. 83 cases produced. | \$28 |
| • | Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 | Strawberry runs throughout. Again, a bit sweeter than I care for. 110 cases produced. | \$30 |



Owner: Kontos Family
Winemaker: Cameron Kontos
Cases: 450
Red Wines: Blends, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: Winery
Contact: 509.386.4471

Winery: ★★ Airport winery. Kontos Cellars is a new winery located in the winery incubator area at the airport.

Summary: Cameron Kontos – whose eponymous winery is located in the incubator region at the airport – is currently assistant winemaker at Forgeron Cellars. This is the winery’s first release and their second day being open. This is definitely a winery to keep an eye on as all Kontos’ wines show a great deal of promise. All wines sampled at 66 degrees.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Gossamer White Columbia Valley 2007 | A very pleasing, easy drinking wine with a light nuttiness. Chardonnay and Viognier. | \$22 |
| + | Alatus Blend 2006 | Again, light nut aromas mark the nose. Taste is tart and upfront but quite enjoyable. 33% Cab Franc; 33% Cabernet; 33% Merlot. | \$32 |
| + | Syrah Boushey Vineyard 2006 | Bacon fat, burnt wood, and a light egg note mark a nose that still needs to open up a bit. A pleasing, thick taste on an excellent first effort. | \$36 |
| ★ | Merlot 2006 | Dark licorice and, again, light egg aromas (perhaps from the fining?) mark the nose. A full, rich taste on an enjoyable wine. To be released in Spring 2009. | BS |

Kontos Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Petit Verdot Lonesome Spring Vineyard 2007 | Anise and blackberry on a reasonably quiet nose. On the taste, a gripping wine with a whole lot of power. | BS |
| + | Malbec Stone Tree Vineyard 2007 | A prototypic Malbec with dark fruit, spice, and chalk. A huge amount of power and grip on the taste. | BS |



Winery incubator region at the airport. From left, Lodmell, Trio Vintners, and Kontos.



Owner: Michael Corliss
Winemaker: Kendall Mix
Cases: 1,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: Winery
Contact: 509.526.4400

Winery: ★★★ Downtown winery. Corliss Estates is inconspicuously located in downtown Walla Walla in an old brick building that previously served as a bakery. It is an open facility with a downstairs used for winemaking.

Summary: Corliss Estates has been quietly making wine in downtown Walla Walla for a number of years. However, you would never know it. The winery, located in an old bakery building which has been retrofitted into a state of the art winery, does not have a placard or sign anywhere to reveal its presence. In fact, while they have been toiling away since the early part of the decade, Corliss' wines have never seen the light of day until now.

The winery opened its mailing list three weeks prior to Holiday Barrel Tasting weekend. This event marked the first time Corliss was open for pick up of their inaugural releases – a 2003 Red Wine, Cabernet, and Syrah. The winery also tasted their 2004 and 2006 vintages. Corliss' wines are exceptional and are among the best I have had from Washington. The wines have incredible complexity and jaw dropping amounts of power. These wines are tasting exceptionally well now but you could lay them down for many, many years and they would only get better.

The drawback? Don't expect to see these wines on the shelves. Your best chances are to join Corliss' mailing list to receive future releases. The 2003 Cabernet and Syrah were sold out by Holiday Barrel Tasting weekend. I would expect the Red Wine to not survive long if it is not gone already. The small allocation of wine Corliss brought to McCarthy and Shiering in Seattle sold out within four hours. The winery is not planning to produce more than 2,000 cases per year so if you are interested in joining the mailing list, make haste. All wines sampled at 62 degrees.

Corliss Estates

*continued*Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★★ | Cabernet Sauvignon (preliminary blend) 2006 | Beautifully refined and balanced fruit and tannins. A plush, full wine that is all about power. Nose is still elusive but the taste delivers. | BS |
| ★ | Red Wine (preliminary blend) 2006 | Fairly quiet on the nose at present with earth and black pepper. Quite smooth with just a bit of tartness at the end. More subtle in style than the 2006 Cabernet. | BS |
| ★★ | Syrah (preliminary blend) 2006 | A humongous gamey, meaty, smoky syrah. A beast of a wine that is a full body assault. | BS |



Candlelit
entrance to
Corliss
Estates

Corliss Estates

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★★ | Red Wine 2003 | Dark in color with tartrate crystals showing, the wine is loaded with black pepper, dried fruit, and cranberry. Coffee grounds wind throughout the nose and taste. Outrageous power through the mid-palate and a finish that goes on for minutes. One of the biggest wines I have had. A true cellaring wine that could last for many, many years. | \$65 |
| ★★ | Cabernet Sauvignon 2003 | Tons, literally tons of black cherry along with earth and bittersweet chocolate. This is an undulating wine that is perfectly balanced and has a beautiful finish. A super thick, chewy wine that takes multiple swallows to consume and then lingers on and on forever. A perfect mixture of subtlety and strength. This is a wine you will dream about when you go to sleep. | \$75 |
| ★ | Syrah 2003 | A gamey, smoky, intense syrah that is an excellent example of what Washington can do with this varietal. A whopper of a wine with a lot of complexity wrapped around a tight fruit core. Lots of sediment. | \$55 |
| ★★ | Syrah 2004 | More of a Rhone style that couldn't be more different than the 2003 and 2006 vintages with chocolate, cherry cola, and stone. | BS |
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 | A pleasing nose, although not as compelling as the 2003. White pepper and coffee grounds mark the nose and taste. A chewy wine that is very big on the palate. | BS |
| ★★ | Red Wine 2004 | A monster of a wine with a syrupy nose and lots of coffee grounds throughout. Age 5-10 years or decant extensively. | BS |



Owner: Basel Family
Winemaker: Justin Basel
Cases: 8,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Cab Franc, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable
Where: Everywhere
Contact: info@baselcellars.com
 509.522.0200

Winery: ★★★★★ South of town. Basel Cellars is an estate high on a hill overlooking the Blue Mountains. The winery is surrounded by vineyards.

Summary: The story of Basel Cellars stunning facility south of Walla Walla is a good one. The winery is best described as an encampment on a hill overlooking Walla Walla and the Blue Mountains. The facility was built in the early part of the decade as a home. The gigantic underground facility that is the wine making center was the owner’s garage to store his considerable car collection. Alas, he divorced within six months of moving in and this opulent estate now belongs to the Basel family. All wines sampled at 66 degrees unless otherwise noted.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Forget Me Not 2007 | Lemongrass and mineral mark the nose. A good easy drinker that has a bit of weight on the tongue. 1,000 cases produced. | \$18 |
| • | Claret 2006 | Jammy with lots of dried fruit and a touch of menthol. A fairly chewy wine with a small amount of sweetness that is a bit off-putting. Merlot; Cabernet; Cab Franc; and Syrah. 1,400 cases produced. | \$20 |

Basel Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| • | Mirage Cabernet 2006 | Lots of plum and jam aromas. Again a bit of sweetness on the taste. | \$22 |
| + | Merlot Pheasant Run Vineyard 2005 | An appealing nose with smoke, menthol, white pepper, and sweet fruit. Fairly chewy with grainy tannins. 499 cases produced. | \$28 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Pheasant Run Vineyard 2005 | Nose is marked by jammy fruit, cola, cherry, and chocolate. Smooth and even on the taste. 1,058 cases produced. | \$36 |
| + | Merriment 2005 | Cherry cola predominant with light floral notes throughout. Dry and fruit forward in style. 50% Merlot; 46% Cabernet; 4% Cab Franc. 585 cases produced. | \$48 |
| + | Cabernet Franc Chelle Den Millie Reserve Columbia Valley 2006 | A lively nose with earth and green pepper mixed with dark fruit. Incredibly soft and smooth on the palate. The taste is up front but then trails off. | \$36 |



Entranceway to Basel Cellars

Basel Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| • | Earth Series Volume I 2007 | This Bordeaux blend shows lots of fig and is a smooth, easy drinker with just a touch of sweetness. | BS |
| • | Syrah Pheasant Run Vineyard 2007 | A distinctive style with cola, dried fruit, and light smoke. Some grip on the taste. | BS |
| • | Carmenere Chelle Den Mille Vineyard 2006 | A big nose loaded with bell pepper. Whopping amounts of bell pepper come through on the taste. Sampled at 58 degrees. | BS |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2007 | A mellow wine with plum, dried fruit, and pleasing tannins. Sampled at 58 degrees. | BS |



Blue
Mountains in
the distance

Va Piano Vineyards

www.vapianovineyards.com



Owner: Justin and Liz Wylie
Winemaker: Justin Wylie
Cases: Approx 1,500
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Esquin, Leschi Market, Pete's
Contact: info@vapianovineyards.com
509.529.0900

Winery: ★★★ ½ South of town. Take the turn in to Va Piano Vineyards and suddenly you are transported several thousand miles south to Napa. The rolling hills of vineyards. A winding road through them. A beautiful building at the end with a small, charming tasting room inside. This is what you want a visit to a winery to be. And the wines do not disappoint.

Summary: Va Piano Vineyards year in and year out makes excellent wine. More than many wineries from Walla Walla, these wines really seem to be made with food in mind. This fall, winemaker Justin Wylie and wife Liz welcomed a new member – Sienna – to their family. Meanwhile, assistant winemaker Ryan Crane is planning to start his own label in the future which will be called Kerloo. Crane is planning to create a Tempranillo as well as other red varietals. All wines sampled at 65 degrees. The inverse of PPS - Giant Pour Syndrome.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Syrah Columbia Valley 2007 | A refined style with light spices, blackberry, and blueberry. Smooth and even taste. 38% Lewis, 32% Portteus, 16% Minick, 14% Va Piano vineyards. | BS |
| ★ | Columbia Valley Blend 2007 | The nose is light with an occasional herb component and touches of anise. A beautiful, dry wine with a long hang time and a lot of pucker to it. 82% Cabernet; 8% Cab Franc; 7% Merlot; 2% Malbec; 1% Petit Verdot. Va Piano, Klipsun, Portteus, Pepper Bridge, and Seven Hills vineyards. | BS |

Va Piano Vineyards

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | \$ |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| ★ | Syrah 2006 | Gorgeous spices and herbs mark the nose. A pleasing mouth feel on a tart wine with a lot of black pepper. | \$38 |
| + | Bruno's Blend IV Columbia Valley | Vanilla and clove mark the nose. Tart and crisp on the taste. A great food wine. Syrah; Malbec. | \$23 |
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 | Loaded with spice, tobacco, cherry, and bramble berry along with touches of cassis. On the taste, tart and crisp with a solid tannin profile without being overpowering. 94% Cabernet; 3% Petit Verdot; 3% Cab Franc. Va Piano, Seven Hills, Portteus, Klipsun, and Phinney Hill vineyards. 14.1% alcohol. 392 cases produced. | \$45 |



Photo by
James
Decker



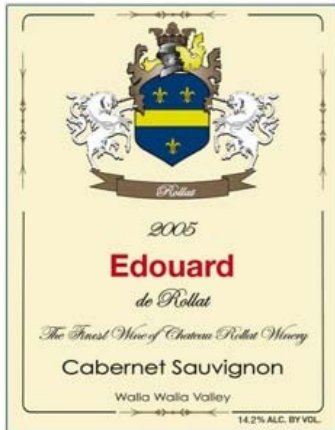
Owner: Steve Brooks
Winemaker: Steve Brooks
Cases: 800
Red Wines: Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: McCarthy & Schiering
Contact: steve@trustcellars.com
 509.529.4511

Winery: ★★ South of town. Trust is located in a small building that serves as a tasting room and production facility.

Summary: Steve Brooks' wines are as outspoken as he is unassuming. Trust's wines have started to receive some distribution so keep an eye out for them. All wines sampled at 66 degrees.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Syrah Lewis Vineyard 2007 | Light gamey notes and lots of fruit on the nose. Very smooth and evenly balanced. | BS |
| ★ | Syrah Columbia Valley 2006 | Wheat, white pepper, and spice alongside blackberry and other berry aromas. A nice dry, medium-bodied wine. 100% Syrah. Lewis, Minnick, and Portteus vineyards. 14.0% alcohol. 216 cases produced. | \$28 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2005 | Tons of clove on the nose. The tannins have an engaging grittiness to go along with a tart cherry taste. 75% Cabernet; 25% Merlot. Va Piano, Champoux, Pepper Bridge, and Lewis vineyards. 13.8% alcohol. 180 cases produced. | \$36 |



Owner: Bowin Lindgren
Winemaker: Christian LeSommer, consulting; Bowin Lindgren
Cases: Unknown
Red Wines: Blends
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: McCarthy & Schiering, Pete's
Contact: sales@rollat.com

Winery: ★★ South of town. Chateau Rollat shares a facility with Trust.

Summary: After the initial release of their standout 2005 wines a year or more ago, my main question was whether Rollat was in it for the long haul. With the 2006 Merlot-based Sophie released earlier this year and the 2007 Edouard de Rollat sampled from the barrel this weekend, it is clear that Chateau Rollat is here to stay. Rollat's wines have limited distribution but are well worth the trouble to look for. All wines sampled at 66 degrees.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Rollat 2005 | Pops out of the glass with black pepper and vanilla. A pleasing weight on the taste. 80% Cabernet; 15% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc. Pepper Bridge & Seven Hills vineyards. 14.1% alcohol. | \$38 |
| ★ | Rollat Walla Walla Valley 2007 | Reasonably light in color, this wine is marked by rich chocolate mixed with black cherry on the nose. On the taste, black pepper and spice show through on a beautifully structured wine with just the right amount of acidity. | BS |

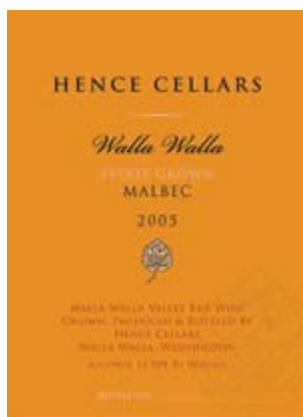
Chateau Rollat

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★★ | Edouard de Rollat 2005 | A superb nose with cinnamon, spice, chocolate, and black pepper. A pleasing earthiness on the taste with a good structure and finish. Overall a very impressive effort. 75% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc. Seven Hills and Pepper Bridge vineyards. 14.2% alcohol. | \$62 |
| ★★ | Edouard de Rollat 2007 | An aromatic, intense nose marked by milk chocolate and anise. Lots of power and grip on the taste. | BS |
| ★ | Ardenvoir Semillon 2007 | Touches of lemon and yeast on the nose. The taste is marked by a hint of honey, a beautiful smoothness, and a crisp, tart finish. 13% alcohol. | \$22 |
| ★ | Rose Columbia Valley 2007 | Slightly aged looking in color, this delicious rose is marked by watermelon and mineral. Merlot, Cab Franc, and Cabernet. | \$16 |



With
winemaker
Bowin
Lindgren.
From left,
Bowin, Kim,
Jim, Pat,
Sean, and
Lindy.



Owner: Henderson Orchard
Winemaker: Troy Ledwick
Cases: 750
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Malbec, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable
Where: Esquin
Contact: 509.529.4010

Winery: ★★★ South of town. Hence has a beautiful facility south of Walla Walla surrounded by vineyards, rolling hills, and views of the Blue Mountains.

Summary: Hence is making limited production red wine – typically one to two barrels for each of their releases. The winery is making single varietal bottlings of Cab Franc, Malbec, and Petit Verdot. Their flagship wine is a Bordeaux blend called Cultivar. Wine temperature not recorded.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| - | Cultivar 2005 | An overwhelming amount of anise. Seems flawed with high levels of ethyl acetate. | \$45 |
| + | Cabernet Franc Boushey Vineyard Columbia Valley 2006 | Very tight right now with strong pencil shavings on the nose. Soft, plush taste. 100% Cab Franc. 47 cases produced. | \$45 |
| + | Malbec Power Line Estate Vineyard 2006 | Intense aromas of dark licorice. Some grip on the taste. 35 cases produced. | \$45 |
| + | Petit Verdot 2005 | A fragrant bouquet with pencil shavings and lots of cola. An intense, gripping taste. 100% Petit Verdot from Boushey Vineyard. | \$45 |

DaMa Wines

www.damawines.com



Owner: Dawn Kammer & Mary Derby
Winemaker: Dawn Kammer & Mary Derby
Cases: 2,100
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: Esquin
Contact: 509.520.9687

Winery: ★★½ Downtown winery. DaMa's tasting room is located in a storefront with picture glass windows along East Main Street. The facility is bright and well decorated.

Summary: The name DaMa comes from a joining of the two first names of winemakers Dawn Kammer and Mary Tuuri Derby. Mary Derby previously worked with her late husband, Devin Derby, at Spring Valley Vineyards. All wines sampled at 71 degrees.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <u>Name</u> | <u>Notes</u> | <u>\$</u> |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Riesling 2006 | Granny Smith apples and kiwi mark an enjoyable wine that has a touch of sweetness but not so much that it is overwhelming. 13.5% alcohol. 280 cases produced. | \$16 |
| + | Chardonnay Columbia Valley 2006 | A bit of almond shows on the nose. Fairly light, enjoyable taste. Grandview & Gamache vineyards. 13.8% alcohol. 323 cases produced. | \$21 |
| + | Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 | A lot of green pepper and smoke on the nose. Reasonably full bodied with just a touch of sweetness. Conner Lee & Les Collines vineyards. | \$25 |

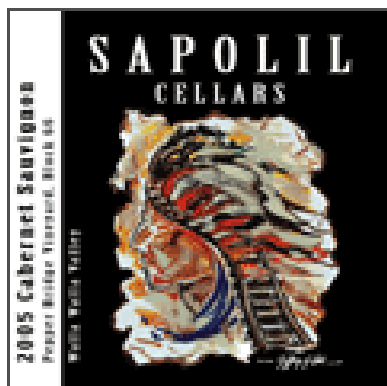
DaMa Wines

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Smoke, caramel, and tobacco show through on the nose. A spicy, sweet profile. Very well balanced. 14.2% alcohol. 336 cases produced. | \$27 |
| • | Cowgirl Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2005 | A complex nose with whiskey barrel, soy, and a whiff of nail polish. Thick and chewy. Bradenvue & Spofford Station vineyards. 14.7% alcohol. 250 cases produced. | \$21 |
| + | Syrah 2007 | All sorts of green notes on the nose. The taste is very fruit forward, almost to the point of seeming grapey. | BS |



Photo by James Decker



Owner: Unknown
Winemaker: Bill Schwerin
Cases: 500
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: European Vine Selections
Contact: 509.520.5258

Winery: ★★★ Downtown tasting room. Sapolil’s tasting room is located along East Main Street in downtown Walla Walla. It is a pretty facility, complete with a baby grand piano, that is quite large for the area.

Summary: This visit to Sapolil Cellars, my first, gave us the opportunity to try several single vineyard Syrah. The Dwelley and Patina Vineyards, both located in the Walla Walla AVA, have considerably different elevations and aspects. These differences show through beautifully across the wines and across years providing additional evidence, if any were needed, that not only does terroir exist, it exists in Washington state. All wines sampled at 65 degrees.

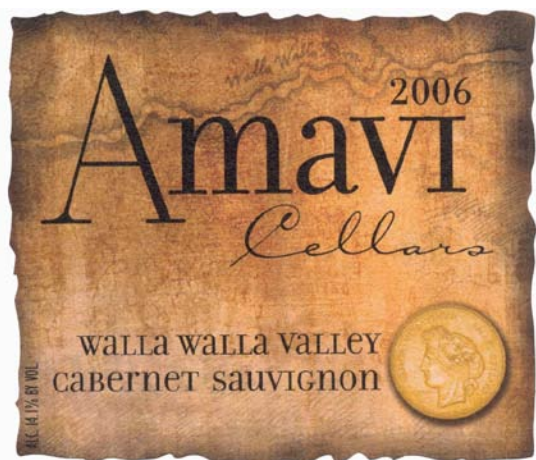
Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Chardonnay Yakima Valley 2007 | Beautifully clear in color, the nose is fairly light and marked by lemongrass. A gorgeous, medium bodied taste. | \$18 |
| ★ | Syrah Dwelley Vineyard 2005 | A complex wine with cola, dark brown licorice, some gaminess, and dark fruit. 14% alcohol. | NA |
| ★ | Syrah Patina Vineyard Walla Walla Valley 2005 | Lots of anise, cola, and soy. A very good wine that seems like it might have been open for a bit. | \$38 |
| ★ | Syrah Patina Vineyard Walla Walla Valley 2006 | An interesting nose with lots of dark, brown spices. A very subtle, pretty taste. | \$38 |

Sapolil Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| • | Papa Louis Mambo Columbia Valley 2007 | Black licorice is predominant on the nose. A rich wine with a bit too much sweetness to it. 70% Syrah; 20% Sangiovese; 10% Cabernet. | \$32 |



Owner: Goff, McKibben, and Pellet families
Winemaker: Jean-François Pellet
Cases: 8,500
Red Wines: Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5
Where: Esquin, Pete's
Contact: info@amavicellars.com
 509.525.3541

Winery: ★★½ Downtown winery. Amavi's tasting room is a reconstruction of a turn-of-the-century log cabin its owners saved from demolition.

Summary: Amavi's name comes from a combination of the Latin root words, "am" (love) and "vi" (life). Sharing a winemaker and vineyards with Pepper Bridge Winery, Amavi produces excellent red wines at reasonable prices. All wines sampled at 69 degrees.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Semillon Columbia Valley 2007 | Orange peel, mineral, and a light smoky component. A very pleasing, enjoyable wine. All stainless steel fermentation. 100% Semillon. 13.95% alcohol. 576 cases produced. | \$20 |
| ★ | Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley 2006 | White pepper, tobacco, and baking spices on an expressive nose. A gorgeous wine with a big, plush taste and beautifully smooth tannins. 14.1% alcohol. 3,941 cases produced. | \$28 |
| ★ | Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2006 | A gripping, gamey wine with lots of berry up front and a dark fruit core. A very long finish with pipe tobacco. 14.1% alcohol. 1,422 cases produced. | \$28 |

Amavi Cellars

continued

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| ★ | Syrah Les Collines Vineyard 2007 | A gigantic syrah with bacon fat, berry, and gamey aromas. A chewy, multiple swallow wine with cured meat on the taste. Give 3 plus years or extended decanting upon release. | BS |
| ★★ | Syrah Les Collines Vineyard 2006 | Packed with intensity on the nose with grilled meat and berry. More refined on the taste than the 2007 vintage. Overall, an intense wine that is loaded with power. | NA |
| + | Late Harvest Semillon 2008 | Super sweet, thick dessert wine. Nose has a slightly sherried smell to it. | NA |



Owner: John Edwards, Larry and Sally Thomason
Winemaker: Steve Lessard
Cases: 8,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Esquin, Pete's
Contact: info@whitmancellars.com
 509.529.1142

Winery: ★★ ½ Downtown winery. Whitman has a bar-style tasting room as well as a large barrel area utilized for tastings on event weekends.

Summary: Sunday is normally a quiet day in Walla Walla on event weekends as most people begin the trek home. Add to this that it was a particularly quiet weekend and that it was pouring rain and we had Whitman Cellars to ourselves. This was, unexpectedly, somewhat of a shame. Since almost no one had come in during the last hour, the winery was packing up shop. Additionally, all of the wines, unfortunately, were a bit too warm (69 degrees unless otherwise noted). See notes from Spring Release 2008 as many of these wines were sampled there.

Wines:

| <u>Score</u> | <i>Name</i> | <i>Notes</i> | <i>\$</i> |
|--------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| + | Viognier Columbia Valley 2007 | Mineral, orange blossom, and hay. Sampled at 66 degrees. | \$19 |
| ★ | Narcissa 2004 | An opulent, thick wine with beets, dried fruit, and rich black fruit. Seems to have been open for a while. | \$24 |
| + | Killer Cabernet 2006 | Lots of black pepper and black cherry along with a good mouth feel. | \$18 |
| ★ | Merlot 2005 | Blackberry stands out. A big wine that opens up and has a gorgeous plush taste. Perhaps double star at proper temperature. | \$32 |

Winery Ratings Summary

Below is a summary of each winery as a destination from four stars (highest) to one star (lowest). Please note that this rating is based on the attractiveness of the winery/tasting room. It is not based on the wines themselves which are rated independently.

| <u>Winery</u> | <u>Rating</u> | <u>Page Number</u> |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| <u>Basel Cellars</u> | ★★★★ | 44 |
| <u>Long Shadows</u> | ★★★★ | 17 |
| <u>L'Ecole No. 41</u> | ★★★ ½ | 14 |
| <u>Va Piano Vineyards</u> | ★★★ ½ | 47 |
| <u>Corliss Estates</u> | ★★★ | 41 |
| <u>Dunham Cellars</u> | ★★★ | 35 |
| <u>Hence Cellars</u> | ★★★ | 52 |
| <u>Sapolil Cellars</u> | ★★★ | 55 |
| <u>Amavi Cellars</u> | ★★ ½ | 57 |
| <u>DaMa Wines</u> | ★★ ½ | 53 |
| <u>Saviah Cellars</u> | ★★ ½ | 20 |
| <u>Tamarack Cellars</u> | ★★ ½ | 30 |
| <u>Walla Walla Vintners</u> | ★★ ½ | 22 |
| <u>Whitman Cellars</u> | ★★ ½ | 59 |
| <u>Chateau Rollat</u> | ★★ | 50 |
| <u>Ensemble</u> | ★★ | 28 |
| <u>Five Star Cellars</u> | ★★ | 33 |
| <u>K Vintners</u> | ★★ | 25 |
| <u>Kontos Cellars</u> | ★★ | 39 |
| <u>Trust</u> | ★★ | 49 |
| <u>Woodward Canyon</u> | ★★ | 10 |
| <u>Elegante Cellars</u> | ★ | 38 |

References

Select Seattle-Area Wine Stores

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Seattle Address</u> | <u>Phone</u> | <u>Website</u> |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Esquin | 2700 4 th Ave S | 682.7374 | www.esquin.com |
| City Cellars | 710 N 45th St | 632.7238 | www.citycellar.com |
| Seattle Cellars | 2505 2nd Ave | 256.0850 | www.seattlecellars.com |
| McCarthy & Schiering | 2401 B Queen Anne Ave N | 282.8500 | www.mccarthyandschiering.com |
| Pete's Supermarket | 58 E. Lynn | 322.2660 | www.peteswineshop.com |
| Madison Park Cellars | 4227 E. Madison | 323.9333 | |
| Champion Wine Cellars | 108 Denny Way | 284.8306 | www.championwinecellars.com |

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www.avalonwine.com
www.compasswines.com

Select Walla Walla Resources

www.wallawallawinenews.com
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www.wallawalla.com
www.wallawalla.org
www.vineatrust.org

Select Washington Wine Books

[Washington Wines and Wineries: The Essential Guide](#) by Paul Gregutt
[WineTrails of Washington](#) by Steve Roberts