

**Washington Wine Report
2009 Spring Release Weekend
Walla Walla, WA**



May 1st – 3rd 2009

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Overview

What follows is a summary of a trip to Walla Walla, Washington for 2009 Spring Release. Spring Release, always the first weekend in May, 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



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

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 to winemaker's backyards. 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); + (86-88); • (80-85); - (< 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, 21 wineries, over 110 wines sampled.

Spring Release is one of the most exciting times in Washington wine country. Throughout Walla Walla Valley, vines are starting new growth and wineries are releasing their latest vintages. New wineries are opening their doors for the first time and are busy preparing for one of Walla Walla's busiest weekends.

As usual, we tried to divide up the weekend between wineries we had visited a number of times and wineries we had never visited before. In terms of the former, Walla Walla stalwarts [Long Shadows](#), [Spring Valley](#), and [K Vintners](#) continued to impress. However, two wineries in particular stood up and demanded attention on this visit. These wineries were [Trust Cellars](#) and [Forgeron Cellars](#).

Trust Cellars was started five years ago by Steve Brooks and his wife Lori. After working for twenty years at CNN in Atlanta, Brooks decided it was time for something different. An article in the New York Times about eastern Washington led Brooks to decide it was time for a leap of faith – Trust. In the ensuing years, Brooks learned the wine trade the old fashioned way, taking classes at the Center for Enology and Viticulture in Walla Walla and assisting a number of area wineries. Now releasing his fourth vintage, Brooks is showing why a little faith is not such a bad thing. Trust currently produces a Rosé, a Riesling, a Cabernet, and two Syrahs, one from Columbia Valley and one from Walla Walla Valley. Brooks' wines are expressive and are distinguished both by diversity and exceptional quality across the lineup. While all are noteworthy, some, such as the 2007 Walla Walla Valley Syrah, are sublime. This wine is composed of Syrah from Les Collines and Va Piano vineyards, two of the finest in the valley. Brook's addition of 11% Cabernet from Prosser's Lewis Vineyard gives the wine additional structure and complexity that makes it shine.

Forgeron Cellars was founded in 2001. Marie-Eve Gilla serves as part-owner and winemaker. Forgeron sources grapes from excellent vineyard sources, including Stillwater Creek, Les Collines, Pepper Bridge, Klipsun, and Boushey. While Forgeron uses this fruit to produce a number of standard varietal wines, the winery also produces several less common varietal wines, including an excellent Roussanne and perhaps the best Zinfandel being made in the state. Gilla's wines are simultaneously bold and understated - a compelling combination of the Old World and New. Of these wines, the 2004 Champoux Vineyard Cabernet was simply transcendent, a wine so good that it literally brought all conversation to a stop.

Wineries we visited for the first time included [Le Chateau](#), [Morrison Lane](#), [Garrison Creek Cellars](#), [Grande Ronde Cellars](#), and [Rotie Cellars](#). [Rotie Cellars](#) was celebrating its

Tasting Summary...Continued

first release Spring Release weekend. Winemaker Sean Boyd is currently assistant winemaker at [Waters Winery](#). For his inaugural release, Boyd produced three Rhone-style wines. There are two reds - a 2007 Northern Blend that is Syrah co-fermented with Viognier and a 2007 Southern Blend that is composed of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvedre. These are exciting, dynamic wines that offer restrained alcohol levels and terrific fruit. This is wine to seek out – and seek out quickly I might add. As of this writing Rotie Cellars had about a quarter of these wines remaining just two months after release.

In addition to wineries opening their doors for the first time, long established [Waterbrook](#) was also celebrating on Spring Release weekend. Here the occasion was the unofficial opening of their new facility west of Walla Walla. The production facility and tasting



room were still under construction, so much so that the doors to the production center had just been installed that afternoon. Waterbrook's new buildings are part of a trend over the last several years of creating large facilities west of Walla Walla. This list now includes Reininger (who is expanding), Three Rivers, Long Shadows, and Cougar Crest. However, in terms of scale, all of these facilities pale in comparison to

Waterbrook's 300,000 case production capacity. The majority of that production will serve [Precept Wine Brands](#) other labels, which include Magnificent Wine Company, Apex Cellars, Pine & Post, Pavin & Riley, and Washington Hills among many others.

Another trend that was apparent on this visit was for Walla Walla wineries to open tasting rooms west of the Cascades in Woodinville. In the coming months, look for west side tasting rooms from Dusted Valley Vintners, Tertulia Cellars, Sleight of Hand Cellars, Trust Cellars, and Gifford Hirlinger. I would expect more wineries to do the same in the future. While Walla Walla wineries are heading west, this is no reason not to head east as Walla Walla wine country gets more exciting with each passing year.

Summary of Double Star Wines

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★★	21 Grams 2006	Light chocolate interwoven with cherry, spices, and pencil lead on an elegant nose where everything hangs in balance and always seems to step back and elude you. A gorgeous wine with refined tannins that glide across the palate with chocolate hints mixing in occasionally. An exceptional wine. 92% Cabernet; 6% Merlot; 2% Cab Franc. 100 cases produced.	\$125
★★	Abeja Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley 2006	Blueberry and spice on a nose that also reveals cedar and toasted oak. Lots of oak components emerge as the wine opens, including vanilla and rich dark chocolate. Dark berries lie underneath the oak. Thick and rich with a pretty serious bite to the tannins at present. Needs 1-3 years or extended decanting. Throwing lots of sediment. 81% Cabernet; 14% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc.	\$42
★★	Corliss Estates Cabernet Sauvignon 2004	Fairly light in color for such a super thick, age-me wine. Syrupy, rich fruit with coffee grounds and the darkest of berries. Rich and outrageous, this wine doesn't stop to get to the finish.	NA
★★	Corliss Estates Syrah 2007	Dark, purple, and brilliantly colored. Very light, elegant cured ham aromas with floral notes hanging above. Deep and rich with loads of cured meat on the taste. Exhilarating with a big, thick grip. Sampled at 66 degrees.	BS
★★	Forgeron Cellars Vinfinity Reserve Columbia Valley 2003	A simply gorgeous nose with cherry cola mixed with tobacco, spices, and smoked meat. An exceptionally well-balanced wine.	\$46

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★★	Forgeron Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Champoux Vineyard Horse Heaven Hills 2004	Almost completely opaque. Violets, tobacco, funk, and earth emerge on the nose. Packs a gigantic punch on the taste. A complete whopper. Almost completely overwhelms all senses and then comes back and sails.	\$46
★★	Garrison Creek Cellars Syrah Les Collines Vineyard Block 50 2006	Busting with white and black pepper, beautiful floral aromas, and slate. A rich, creamy texture. A hint of umami on the taste. To be bottle in June 2009.	BS
★★	Garrison Creek Cellars Syrah Les Collines Vineyard 2008	Scorched earth mixes with violets and game. A spectacular taste with, again, a slightly creamy texture. A hint of umami on the taste.	BS
★★	K Vintners Motor City Kitty Columbia Valley 2006	Beautiful earth, funk, and currant mix with olive and brine. A rich, gorgeous wine that coats the palate and is loaded with fruit. A steal for the money. Stoneridge Vineyard. 95 cases produced.	\$30
★★	K Vintners The Boy Walla Walla Valley 2007	A beautiful, earthy funkiness. Plush and full with loads of fruit. Glides along the palate to an extended finish. 90% Grenache; 10% Syrah. 340 cases produced.	\$45
★★	Long Shadows Pirouette 2005	Loads of anise mixes with other spices. Rich with fruit and a super long finish. 57% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 14% Syrah; 5% Malbec; 4% Cab Franc. 14.6% alcohol. 1,733 cases produced.	\$55

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★★	Long Shadows Pirouette 2006	Again, lots of anise, mocha powder, and spice along with a fair amount of caramel. Quite similar on the nose to the 2005. A rich, fruity, syrupy wine with well integrated tannins and a lot of texture. Throwing a good deal of sediment. 54% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 15% Petit Verdot; 6% Cab Franc; 5% Syrah. 14.6% alcohol. 1,733 cases produced.	\$55
★★	Long Shadows Chester-Kidder 2004	Dark in color. An outrageous nose of wheat mixed with berry, pepper, and earth. With a swirl anise comes forward and then steps back. On the taste opens up and attacks with dark fruit and gorgeous tannins. A supremely long finish caps it all off. 58% Cabernet; 29% Syrah; 10% Cab Franc; 3% Petit Verdot. 14.7% alcohol. 1,797 cases produced.	\$50
★★	Long Shadows Poet's Leap Botrytis Riesling Columbia Valley 2005	The nose is marked by sugared grapefruit, honey, and a touch of pineapple. An outrageously rich and opulent taste that is sweet but not overly so. 15% alcohol. 11% residual sugar.	\$50
★★	Spring Valley Vineyard Uriah Walla Walla Valley 2005	A lively nose with strong black licorice and jammy fruit. Lithe and refined on the palate. A lot of texture and grainy tannins. 59% Merlot; 36% Cab Franc; 5% Petit Verdot. 14.8% alcohol. 3,000 cases produced.	\$50
★★	Spring Valley Vineyard Uriah Walla Walla Valley 2006	Rich mocha aromas mingle with cranberry, black cherry, rosehips, and light earth. A rich, thick, multiple swallow wine. 54% Merlot; 33% Cab Franc; 7% Petit Verdot; 6% Malbec. 14.9% alcohol. 5,000 cases produced.	\$50

Summary of Double Star Wines...Continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★★	Spring Valley Vineyard Frederick Walla Walla Valley 2006	Lovely dried red fruits mix with rosehips and light earth aromas. A bold, powerful taste packed with tannins and coffee notes. Still needs a good deal of time. 54% Cabernet; 27% Cab Franc; 10% Merlot; 7% Petit Verdot; 2% Malbec. 15.4% alcohol. 3,000 cases produced.	\$50
★★	Trust Cellars Riesling Columbia Valley 2008	A beautiful nose with sugared grapefruit and pineapple. Spectacular citrus tastes blend with other fruit flavors. Exceptionally well balanced with mineral and a light sweetness on the taste. 100% Riesling. 38% CS Farms (Wahluke Slope); 30% Pheasant (Yakima); 30% Evergreen (Wahluke Slope); 2% Ancient Lakes. 12% alcohol. 224 cases produced. Sampled at 54 degrees.	\$16
★★	Trust Cellars Syrah Walla Walla Valley 2007	Very dark purple. Light game and floral aromas dance together on the nose. Dry on the palate with beautiful berry tastes. Finish hasn't entirely come together yet but given a little more bottle age will be absolutely superb. 89% Syrah; 11% Cabernet. 61% Les Collines (Block 50 & 30), 28% Va Piano, 11% Lewis (Cabernet). 14.4% alcohol. 214 cases produced.	\$28

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.



Owner: Tom Waliser & Family
Winemaker: Tom Glase
Cases: 3,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Cab Franc, Malbec, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: None
Where: Esquin, Pete's
Contact: info@beresanwines.com
 509.522.2395

Winery: ★★★ South of town. Beresan Winery is set in an exceptionally picturesque location nestled in the southern edge of Pepper Bridge Vineyard which owner Tom Waliser manages. With outdoor seats and benches, it is the perfect place to while away a summer day in Washington wine country.

Summary: Beresan gets its name from the region of the Ukraine the Waliser family hails from. Beresan's wines all have a distinctive style that is chock full of red fruit, dried fruit, and earth aromas. On the palate, the wines are rich, bright, and focused. The winery sources most of its fruit from its estate vineyards which owner Tom Waliser manages. Beresan is planning to increase its focus on these vineyards in future releases. All wines sampled at 65 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★	2007 Sémillon Walla Walla Valley	Just a tinge of straw color. Pretty, tropical fruit mixes with mineral and smoke aromas. Beautifully balanced and even on the palate. 100% Sémillon. Beresan Estate Vineyard. 14.1% alcohol. 131 cases produced.	\$18
+	2006 Buzz	Light caramel mixes with cranberry and currant. A plush texture on the palate. 50% Syrah; 50% Cabernet. 100% Yellow Jacket Vineyard.	\$29

Beresan Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2006 Cabernet Franc Walla Walla Valley	Fairly light in color with an almost orange tinge. A good wine marked by green pepper and spice, but just a bit tart. 14.5% alcohol. 195 cases produced.	\$29
+	2006 Malbec	A deep color. Smoke and pepper stand out on the nose. Evenly balanced with a pleasing finish. 14.4% alcohol. 125 cases produced.	\$29
★	2006 Merlot Columbia Valley	Light in color. Lots of bright berries on this fruit forward wine, including cherry, raspberry, and red currants. Dry on the palate with spice, earth, and fruit. 100% Merlot. 14.5% alcohol. 293 cases produced.	\$29



Beresan Winery is housed in a restored barn

Beresan Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★	2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley	Abundant, jammy fruit along with a touch of spearmint. Very well put together with fruit interwoven with earth and spice. 100% Cabernet. 13.8% alcohol. 380 cases produced.	\$35
+	2006 Syrah Columbia Valley	Distinctive earth aromas along with cranberry and dried fruit. 100% Syrah (45% Estate; 55% Candy Mountain). 14.5% alcohol. 224 cases produced.	\$29
★	2006 Carménère Walla Walla Valley	White pepper is at the fore on the nose with abundant fruit lying underneath it. Well balanced with pretty spices. 100% Carménère. 14.5% alcohol. 90 cases produced.	\$29

Balboa Winery

www.balboawinery.com



Owner: Tom Glase
Winemaker: Tom Glase
Cases: 3,300
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot
Tasting fee: None
Where: Esquin, Pete's
Contact: info@balboawinery.com
509.529.0461

Winery: ★★★ South of town. Balboa is located adjacent to Beresan Winery. Note: Balboa also has a downtown tasting room.

Summary: Tom Glase serves as winemaker for both Beresan and Balboa wineries which are adjacent to each other. The Balboa wines use fruit from Columbia Valley and use less new oak than the Beresan wines. Balboa produces excellent wines at very reasonable price points. Glase's wife creates the distinctive artwork that adorns their labels. Alas, the winery will be moving to more traditional labels in the future, feeling that the screw top bottles and the artsy labels make some take the wine less seriously than it deserves. The Sayulita, named after Glase's business partner's favorite surfing spot, is made from LeFore Vineyard fruit. A couple from Vancouver purchased this vineyard earlier on the day of our visit. The vineyard will be renamed "The Rocks." All wines sampled at 65 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2007 Cat's Meow Columbia Valley	Gorgeous red fruit on the nose, including cherry and raspberry. Nicely put together. 41% Merlot; 41% Syrah; 18% Cabernet. 14.1% alcohol.	\$20
★	2007 Reserve	Beautiful bright cherry aromas along with other red fruit and earth. Richly textured with fruit. Light and very evenly balanced. 75% Syrah; 25% Merlot. 14.2% alcohol.	\$28

Balboa Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★/+	2006 Mith	A brilliant garnet color. Very lively on the nose with lots of fruit and berry. Tart and dry. Very well done. 14.2% alcohol.	\$40
★	2006 Sayulita	Lots of pretty fruit including dark cherry. Carries beautifully across the palate with abundant earth aromas and tastes. 100% LeFore Vineyard.	\$40



Pepper Bridge Vineyard, which is directly next to Balboa and Beresan, provides fruit to many of Washington's top wineries



Owner: Reininger family
Winemaker: Chuck Reininger
Cases: 11,000 (includes Helix)
Red Wines: Cabernet, Carménère, Malbec, Merlot, Sangiovese, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Esquin, Champion Wine Cellars, City Cellars, Pete's
Contact: info@reiningerwinery.com
509.522.1994

Winery: ★★★ West of town. Reininger's location, on the drive in to Walla Walla, offers a very pretty barrel room, an outdoor deck space, and a spacious tasting area.

Summary: Winemaker Chuck Reininger continues to move at his own pace, creating wines that showcase Walla Walla Valley fruit and that often have a bit more bottle age upon release. While the prices have crept up a little after holding the line at a price point that led to the moniker "32 buck Chuck", the quality remains the same. The new release of the Carménère, one of the most popular from the winery, is again a standout. All wines sampled at 68 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2003 Cima Walla Walla Valley	Dried cranberry and baking spices mix with floral and earth aromas on this fragrant nose. Very tart and a bit aggressive on the palate. 53% Sangiovese; 28% Cabernet; 17% Merlot; 2% Cab Franc. 210 cases produced.	\$45
+	2005 Merlot Walla Walla Valley	Quite an unusual nose with dried flowers, baking spices, carob, and a bit of funk. Dry in style. Well put together with a good finish. 94% Merlot; 6% Cab Franc. Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills vineyards. 760 cases produced.	\$36

Reininger Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★	2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley	A whiff of black licorice mixes with dusty earth aromas. A hint of mint lies in the background. Dry and even across the palate. The finish lingers with light milk chocolate. 97.5% Cabernet; 2.5% Petit Verdot. Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills vineyards. 583 cases produced.	\$38
★	2006 Carménère Seven Hills Vineyard Walla Walla Valley	Fairly dark in color. Bell pepper aromas dominate on both the nose and taste. Ramps up quickly on the palate and then backs off a bit. Well done. 100% Carménère. 454 cases produced.	\$45



Reininger
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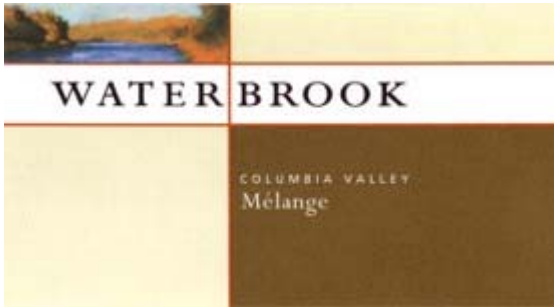
Reininger Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2006 Syrah Pepper Bridge Vineyard Walla Walla Valley	A lot of spice on the nose, including clove and vanilla, along with tobacco, blueberry, and just a touch of whiskey barrel. Big and chewy on the taste. 100% Syrah. 171 cases produced.	\$41
+	2005 Helix Pomatia	Lots of baking spices mix with fruit and chocolate on this appealing nose. A bit thinner across the palate than you might want but still a good value. 53% Cabernet; 31% Merlot; 8% Cab Franc; 8% Syrah. Ash Hollow, Bacchus, Minnick, Pepper Bridge, Phinny Hill, Pleasant, Seven Hills, and Stillwater Creek vineyards. 3,265 cases produced.	\$21



Reininger's barrel room, adorned with artwork for Spring Release (Photo by Lindy Irving)



Owner: Precept Brands
Winemaker: John Freeman
Cases: 80,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Everywhere
Contact: michelle@preceptbrands.com
 509.522.1263

Winery: ★★★ West of town.

Summary: Waterbrook’s new production facility on Highway 12 west of Walla Walla is astonishing in its scale. Rows and rows of gigantic stainless steel tanks line the facility, seeming almost like missile silos. This building will house all of Precept Wine Brands’ wine production, a total capacity of approximately 300,000 cases annually. The production facility, which will also contain an event area, was open for Spring Release although much work remained to be done (the doors to the facility were put on several hours before our arrival). The Grand Opening was slated for Vintage Walla Walla weekend a month later. The tasting room, designed by architect Dan Kinkella who showed us the facility, is beautiful and airy. The main room features high ceilings and breathtaking views of the Blue Mountains. Now in its 25th year, Waterbrook continues to produce a number of wines with excellent QPRs (Quality to Price Ratio). Waterbrook’s former facility in downtown Walla Walla will now be a tasting room for Precept Wine Brands. In a sign of the last minute preparations taking place all over town on Friday, we saw the Waterbrook sign being taken down as we drank our coffee. All wines sampled at 64 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Columbia Valley	Dark purple. Lots of brown licorice, syrup, and a bit of pepper. Evenly balanced and richly textured. 87% Cabernet; 7% Merlot; 4% Malbec; 2% Cab Franc. Blackrock, Red Mountain, Stonetree, and Oasis Farms vineyards. 13.7% alcohol. 4,070 cases produced.	\$22

Waterbrook

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
+	2006 Merlot Reserve Columbia Valley	Lots of chocolate and dark berry. Light but well textured on the palate. 99% Merlot; 1% Cabernet. Blackrock, Loess, and Stonetree vineyards. 13.7% alcohol. 3,024 cases produced.	\$22
+	2007 Syrah Reserve Columbia Valley	Blueberry and maple spice mix with chocolate on this rich nose. A bit of alcohol comes off on the taste. 87% Syrah; 8% Cabernet; 5% Viognier. Mirage, Oasis, Willard, and WF&P vineyards. 13.8% alcohol. 2,850 cases produced.	\$22



Waterbrook's
new tasting
room in Walla
Walla

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★	2005 Meritage Columbia Valley	Cocoa powder and dark fruit mark the nose. Very elegant and evenly balanced with a touch of vanilla and blueberry toward the finish. 45% Cabernet; 17% Petit Verdot; 16% Cab Franc; 12% Merlot; 10% Malbec. Blackrock, Red Mountain, Loess, and Stonetree vineyards. 13.7% alcohol. 999 cases produced.	\$28
★	2005 Browne	Dark to the point of almost being opaque. An appealing nose of chocolate, light spices, and caramel. A light earthiness glides along the taste. 90% Cabernet; 10% Cab Franc. Blackrock and Loess vineyards. 13.7% alcohol. 92 cases produced.	\$50
★	2007 Cabernet Franc	Almost completely opaque. Blue fruit mixes with spice and caramel. A very pretty lick of tannins. Showing exceptionally well for such a young wine.	BS



Precept's new production facility on the way in to Walla Walla

Long Shadows

www.longshadows.com



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: This trip to Long Shadows provided the opportunity to taste a lineup of new releases alongside their predecessors. The event, which took place on Friday evening, created quite a buzz with one visitor even flying in on a helicopter (Long Shadows does not have a landing strip at the moment, so the jet had to be left at home). Allen Shoup's project of pairing some of the world's top winemakers with Washington fruit continues to excel. The new releases match and in some cases exceed their predecessors. All wines sampled at 69 degrees unless otherwise noted.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★	2008 Poet's Leap Riesling	Lightly colored. A beautiful, fragrant nose marked by pear and honey. A very even, rounded wine. 12.9% alcohol. 2,656 cases produced.	\$20
★	2006 Saggi	Rose hips and dried cranberries on a very appealing nose. Beautifully even with a rich palate laced with oak. 42% Cabernet; 39% Sangiovese; 19% Syrah. 14.6% alcohol. 1,725 cases produced.	\$45

Long Shadows

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2006 Feather	An exuberant nose with spice and anise. Chalky tannins and a long finish. A bit of a dip in the middle is all that holds this wine back. 100% Cabernet. Primary blend Horse Heaven Hills (32%); Stillwater Creek (23%); Wahluke Slope (19%). Remaining percentage a variety of vineyards and AVAs. 14.2% alcohol. 2,238 cases produced.	\$60
+	2006 Pedestal	Anise and rich chocolate aromas stand out on an oak-dominated nose. A bit of the oak monster on the taste. 86% Merlot; 8% Cabernet; 4% Petit Verdot; 2% Malbec. 14.7% alcohol. 1,877 cases produced.	\$55
★★	2005 Pirouette	Loads of anise mixes with other spices. Rich with fruit and a super long finish. 57% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 14% Syrah; 5% Malbec; 4% Cab Franc. 14.6% alcohol. 1,733 cases produced.	\$55
★★	2006 Pirouette	Again, lots of anise, mocha powder, and spice along with a fair amount of caramel. Quite similar on the nose to the 2005. A rich, fruity, syrupy wine with well integrated tannins and a lot of texture. Throwing a good deal of sediment. 54% Cabernet; 20% Merlot; 15% Petit Verdot; 6% Cab Franc; 5% Syrah. 14.6% alcohol. 1,733 cases produced.	\$55

Long Shadows

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★★	2004 Chester-Kidder	Dark in color. An outrageous nose of wheat mixed with berry, pepper, and earth. With a swirl anise comes forward and then steps back. On the taste opens up and attacks with dark fruit and gorgeous tannins. A supremely long finish caps it all off. 58% Cabernet; 29% Syrah; 10% Cab Franc; 3% Petit Verdot. 14.7% alcohol. 1,797 cases produced.	\$50
★	2005 Chester-Kidder	Lots of anise seed and a bit of funk on the nose. Fairly dry and very tart. Needs time. 55% Cabernet; 40% Syrah; 5% Merlot. 14.7% alcohol. 1,586 cases produced.	\$50
★	2006 Sequel	Rich with coffee grounds and black licorice on an alluring nose. Fairly tight on the taste at present. Give 6-12 months. 96% Syrah; 4% Cabernet. 14.7% alcohol. 2,012 cases produced.	\$55
★★	2005 Poet's Leap Botrytis Riesling Columbia Valley	The nose is marked by sugared grapefruit, honey, and a touch of pineapple. An outrageously rich and opulent taste that is sweet but not overly so. 15% alcohol. 11% residual sugar.	\$50



Owner: Sean Boyd
Winemaker: Sean Boyd
Cases: 1,000
Red Wines: Blends
Tasting fee: No
Where: Cellar 46, McCarthy & Schiering
Contact: 253.312.5991

Winery: Rotie Cellars does not have a dedicated space as of this writing.

Summary: Sean Boyd is up to something special at his new winery, Rotie Cellars. The winery focuses on Rhone-style blends. The Northern Blend is 97% Syrah co-fermented with 3% Viognier. The Southern Blend is a combination of Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvedre. Both wines are standouts. Boyd, who serves as assistant winemaker at Waters Winery, is perhaps most excited about his 2008 Grenache. This wine, still in the barrel, comes from Alder Ridge Vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills AVA. This Grenache will provide the backbone for the 2008 Southern Blend. Boyd's style shows restraint, letting the fruit and the land speak largely for themselves. Wines sampled at 68 degrees with the exception of the Roussanne-Viognier (60 degrees).

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	2008 Roussanne-Viognier	Completely clear in color. Banana and pear aromas mark a wine that has yet to completely reveal itself due to the recent bottling. Crisp and clean on the palate. 55% Viognier; 45% Roussanne. 200 cases produced.	\$25

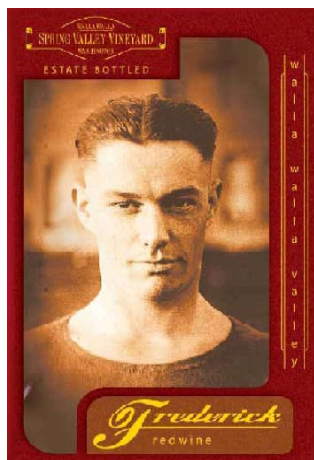
Rotie Cellars

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★	2007 Southern Blend	A drop dead gorgeous nose with earth and mineral aromas surrounded by violets and a heaping of raspberries. Beautiful acid balance with a focus on the fruit and the land. The oak is there but is far out of the way. A long finish caps it off. 55% Grenache; 35% Syrah; 10% Mourvedre. 400 cases produced.	\$35
★	2007 Northern Blend	Dark in color. Beautiful fruit (raspberries), bittersweet chocolate and exhilarating seed aromas on a thrilling nose. An intricate taste that plays effortlessly across the palate. A long, lingering finish that hangs and hangs. 97% Syrah co-fermented with 3% Viognier. 400 cases produced.	\$35

Spring Valley Vineyard

www.springvalleyvineyard.com



<u>Owner:</u>	Chateau Ste. Michelle
<u>Winemaker:</u>	Serge Laville
<u>Cases:</u>	3,700
<u>Red Wines:</u>	Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
<u>Tasting fee:</u>	\$8, non-refundable (tasting room)
<u>Where:</u>	Broadway QFC, Esquin, Leschi Market, Pete's
<u>Contact:</u>	info@springvalleyvineyard.com 509.525.1506

Winery: ★★★★★ Spring Valley is not only the standard bearer for Walla Walla wine, it also boasts the most scenic location of any winery in the valley. A drive out to the farm – now open only during Spring Release – and a chance to sample their wines offer an experience none can touch. But it doesn't stop there. The family pictures that adorn their bottles. The family members who greet you on each visit. This winery is special. Spring Valley also has a downtown tasting room (★★½).

Summary: Winemaker Serge Laville calls the 2006 vintage “our most labor intensive vintage ever” with almost all of the grape varietals reaching their peak simultaneously. Harvest took place over an intense three week period. While 2005 was an across the board excellent vintage for Washington state, Spring Valley's 2006 wines exceed the 2005's. Spring Valley favors a fairly extracted style and flirts with quite high alcohol levels. However, the distinctive style of their estate vineyards still shows through. Spring Valley will be producing 160 cases of Cabernet Franc to be released in the fall. All wines sampled at 60 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	2005 Muleskinner Merlot Walla Walla Valley	Pretty herbal aromas mix with cherry, cocoa, and bright raspberries. Lush and full, although a bit astringent at times. Cranberry lingers on the finish. 94% Merlot; 6% other varietals.	\$35

Spring Valley Vineyards

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2006 Muleskinner Merlot Walla Walla Valley	Raspberries and bittersweet chocolate laced with light floral notes mark the nose. Rose hips and light herbal notes show through as the wine opens. Rich on the palate. Opens up and sails. The better of the two vintages. 100% Merlot. 14.9% alcohol.	\$45
★★	2005 Uriah Walla Walla Valley	A lively nose with strong black licorice and jammy fruit. Lithe and refined on the palate. A lot of texture and grainy tannins. 59% Merlot; 36% Cab Franc; 5% Petit Verdot. 14.8% alcohol. 3,000 cases produced.	\$50



Spring Valley will be releasing a Cabernet Franc later this year

Spring Valley Vineyards

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★★	2006 Uriah Walla Walla Valley	Rich mocha aromas mingle with cranberry, black cherry, rosehips, and light earth. A rich, thick, multiple swallow wine. 54% Merlot; 33% Cab Franc; 7% Petit Verdot; 6% Malbec. 14.9% alcohol. 5,000 cases produced.	\$50
★★	2006 Frederick Walla Walla Valley	Lovely dried red fruits mix with rosehips and light earth aromas. A bold, powerful taste packed with tannins and coffee notes. Still needs a good deal of time. 54% Cabernet; 27% Cab Franc; 10% Merlot; 7% Petit Verdot; 2% Malbec. 15.4% alcohol. 3,000 cases produced.	\$50
★	2006 Derby Cabernet Sauvignon Walla Walla Valley	Light blackberry, earth, herbs, and dried fruit sprinkled with crumbles of dark chocolate. Very tight and still a bit green at times. Packs a puckering punch and is rich with syrupy fruit. Hasn't completely come together yet but will be excellent. 100% Cabernet. 15.6% alcohol.	\$50
★	2006 Nina Lee Walla Walla Valley	Oak spices weave through black and blue fruit. Wow this is a thick wine! Extremely tightly wound at the moment, though showing anise and blackberry. A bit heavy on the alcohol at times. 100% Syrah. 15.6% alcohol. 1,000 cases produced.	\$50



Owner: Charles Smith
Winemaker: Charles Smith
Cases: 2,000
Red Wines: Blends, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: Everywhere
Contact: 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: While there was a good deal of excitement about the new K Vintners wines being poured, the buzz was about a wine that was not being poured – the Charles Smith 2006 Royal City Syrah. The week prior to Spring Release Paul Gregutt of Wine Enthusiast scored this wine at 100 points, the first time Gregutt has awarded this honor to a wine. The Royal City Syrah will be released in the fall of 2009. All wines sampled at 58 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2008 Rosé Walla Walla Valley	Lightly colored. A pleasing nose with mineral, stone, and bright fruit. Light on the palate with a crisp, tart finish. 66 cases produced.	\$20
+	2008 Viognier Columbia Valley	Light gold color. Hay and melon with a lot of white peach thrown in on the nose and taste. Tart with abundant citrus notes. White grapefruit comes out on the nose and dominates the taste as the wine opens up.	\$20

K Vintners

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2006 Guido Walla Walla Valley	Lightly colored. An interesting nut aroma at the fore on a fascinating nose marked by light spice, rose petals, a touch of caramel. Light and refined on the palate with soft tannins. 80% Sangiovese; 20% Syrah. 140 cases produced.	\$40
★★	2007 The Boy Walla Walla Valley	A beautiful, earthy funkiness. Plush and full with loads of fruit. Glides along the palate to an extended finish. 90% Grenache; 10% Syrah. 340 cases produced.	\$45
★	2007 Milbrandt Syrah Wahluke Slope	Lush red fruit including spicy red currant and raspberry. Opens up beautifully on the palate. Lets off a little bit about two-thirds of the way through. An exceptional value.	\$25

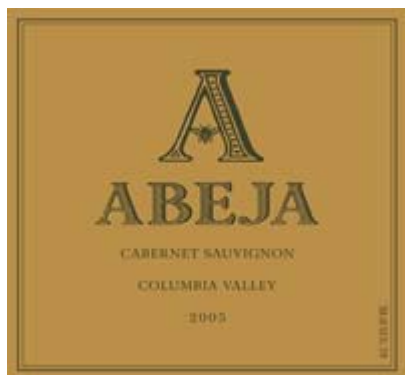


A quintessential wine country scene of the angry Porsche driver boxed in by the Beamer

K Vintners

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2007 Pheasant Wahluke Slope	Red licorice and rose petals mark the nose. Thick with grainy tannins on a wine that hasn't come together completely. Tart and pleasing. Needs time but will be a powerhouse of a wine for the money. 191 cases produced.	\$35
★★	2006 Motor City Kitty Columbia Valley	Beautiful earth, funk, and currant mix with olive and brine. A rich, gorgeous wine that coats the palate and is loaded with fruit. A steal for the money. Stoneridge Vineyard. 95 cases produced.	\$30



Owner: Ken and Ginger Harrison
Winemaker: John Abbott
Cases: 4,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah
Tasting fee: Only open to mailing list members on event weekends
Where: Esquin, City Cellars, Leschi Market, Pete's
Contact: info@abeja.net
 509.526.7400

Winery: ★★★ ½ East of town. Abeja is in a gorgeous location and has a spacious tasting area next to a beautiful barrel room. The winery has a bed and breakfast adjacent to it.

Summary: For the 2007 vintage Abeja has rebranded the Beekeeper's Blend – their red table wine made from declassified barrels – as the 2007 House Red. This wine includes a percentage of Petit Verdot for the first time. Fear not, the Beekeeper's Blend name will reemerge as a new mid-tier wine in the future. Red wines sampled at 64 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★	2007 Chardonnay Washington State	Lightly colored. A classic chardonnay nose with grass and mineral along with some tropical fruit. A thick, slightly buttery feel. A fair amount of oak but well integrated. Just a touch of spice and citrus on the finish. 100% Chardonnay. Sampled at 59 degrees.	\$36
★	2008 Viognier Walla Walla Valley	Very lightly colored. Pear, honey, and melon on an engaging nose with a lot of sweet hints. Mineral and a slight spice component on the taste. A touch of lemon zest on the finish. Very young at present. 100% Viognier. Mill Creek Vineyard. Sampled at 53 degrees.	\$28

Abeja

continued

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★	2007 House Red Columbia Valley	Smoke and a light gaminess mark the nose. Dry and velvety on the palate with a lot of black fruit. An excellent wine for the money. 84% Cabernet; 7% Cab Franc; 6% Petit Verdot; 3% Merlot.	\$21
★★	2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley	Blueberry and spice on a nose that also reveals cedar and toasted oak. Lots of oak components emerge as the wine opens, including vanilla and rich dark chocolate. Dark berries lie underneath the oak. Thick and rich with a pretty serious bite to the tannins at present. Needs 1-3 years or extended decanting. Throwing lots of sediment. 81% Cabernet; 14% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc.	\$42
+	2007 Syrah Walla Walla Valley	Dark in color. A light egg aroma along with game, blueberry, and cured meats. A bit sharp and aggressive on the palate. Hard to see exactly where it is going right now. 97% Syrah; 3% Viognier. Mill Creek Vineyard.	\$32



In addition to the winery (pictured here) Abeja's facility includes a Bed and Breakfast



Owner: Zach Brettler
Winemaker: Zach Brettler
Cases: 2,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Esquin, McCarthy & Schiering
Contact: 509.522.0484
info@syzygywines.com

Winery: ★★ Airport winery.

Summary: SYZYGY's wines were unfortunately a bit warm on this visit and did not seem to be showing well. All wines sampled at 69 degrees.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2006 Red Wine	Nose is marked by floral aromas (violets) and mint. At times it seems a bit herbaceous. Very tart and astringent at present. 56% Syrah; 20% Merlot; 13% Cabernet; 11% Malbec. 850 cases produced.	\$24
+	2006 Syrah Walla Walla Valley	A pretty nose with blueberry, game and light floral notes. A lot of citrus components on the taste. Might show better at a cooler temperature. Morrison Lane, Les Collines, and Seven Hills vineyards. 370 cases produced.	\$33
+	2006 Cabernet Sauvignon	Very light for a cabernet. Nose is marked mainly by tobacco. A fairly astringent, puckering wine. Conner Lee, Sagemoor, Klipsun, and Wallula vineyards. 455 cases produced.	\$36

SYZYGY

continued

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★	2005 Saros	Lots of dark chocolate and mocha powder along with a pleasant earth aroma. Opens up beautifully with raspberry and red fruit. A long, lingering finish. 44% Tempranillo; 44% Malbec; 12% Cabernet. Conner Lee, Stone Valley, and Sagemoor vineyards. 217 cases produced.	\$45



SYZYGY is located in the airport region

Buty Winery

www.butywinery.com



Owner: Caleb Foster and Nina Buty Foster
Winemaker: Caleb Foster
Cases: 3,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Malbec
Tasting fee: \$5, non-refundable
Where: Pete's
Contact: caleb@butywinery.com
509.527.0901

Winery: ★★ Airport winery.

Summary: Buty makes some of the most compelling wines in Walla Walla. Unfortunately trips to the winery for event weekends always come off as unsatisfying. The space is extremely small and unable to accommodate event crowds. Like many wineries, Buty charges a nominal tasting fee of \$5 (the money is donated to charity). I have no issue with this as it both keeps the crowds a bit at bay and raises money for a good cause. However, the pours at Buty are always exceptionally short ([PPS](#)) making it difficult to get as good of a sense of the wines as one would like. This is a shame as it prevents the wines from showing at their best. The temperatures of all of the wines were a bit warm as well (68 degrees unless otherwise noted).

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★	2007 Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Muscadelle Columbia Valley	Lightly colored. Buttery with pineapple and spice. A pleasing, richly textured wine. 76% Sémillon; 20% Sauvignon Blanc; 4% Muscadelle. Spring Creek, Rosebud Ranches, and Lonesome River Ranch vineyards. 13.9% alcohol. 660 cases produced.	\$25
★	2007 Chardonnay Conner Lee Vineyard Columbia Valley	A beautiful, buttery aroma along with a light grassiness. Crisp and exceptionally clean on the palate. 100% Chardonnay. 14.4% alcohol. 520 cases produced. Sampled at 64 degrees.	\$35

Buty Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2006 Beast of the Stones Rosé LeFore Vineyard Walla Walla Valley	Just a tinge of pink color. Fragrant fresh fruit and wet stone. Tart with citrus components on the taste. A bit sharp but also very warm. Young vine Malbec. 13.5% alcohol.	\$19
+	2006 BEAST Cabernet Sauvignon Phinny Hill Horse Heaven Hills	Mint mixes with blackberry. Earthy, dry, and slightly puckering on the taste. Would be an excellent food wine. 14.5% alcohol.	\$35
★	2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Champoux Vineyard Horse Heaven Hills	Earth mixes with violets and dried fruit on this dry, gorgeous nose. Light, high pencil shavings along with red currant. A deep, rich, fruit-forward taste that still retains its vineyard characteristics. 89% Cabernet; 11% Cab Franc. 14.5% alcohol. 94 cases produced.	\$55



Another reason
not to drink and
drive



Owner: Unknown
Winemaker: Unknown
Cases: 1,200
Red Wines: Blends, Cab Franc, Sangiovese
Tasting fee: \$5
Where: Winery,
www.americanwinery.com
Contact: info@lechateauwinery.com
509.956.9311

Winery: ★★ Airport winery. Le Chateau is most recognizable for the mural of a French chateau along one side of the building.

Summary: Unfortunately, the thick glass goblets and warm temperatures (72 degrees) did not help these wines. I have included my notes on the wines but have not rated them due to the temperature.

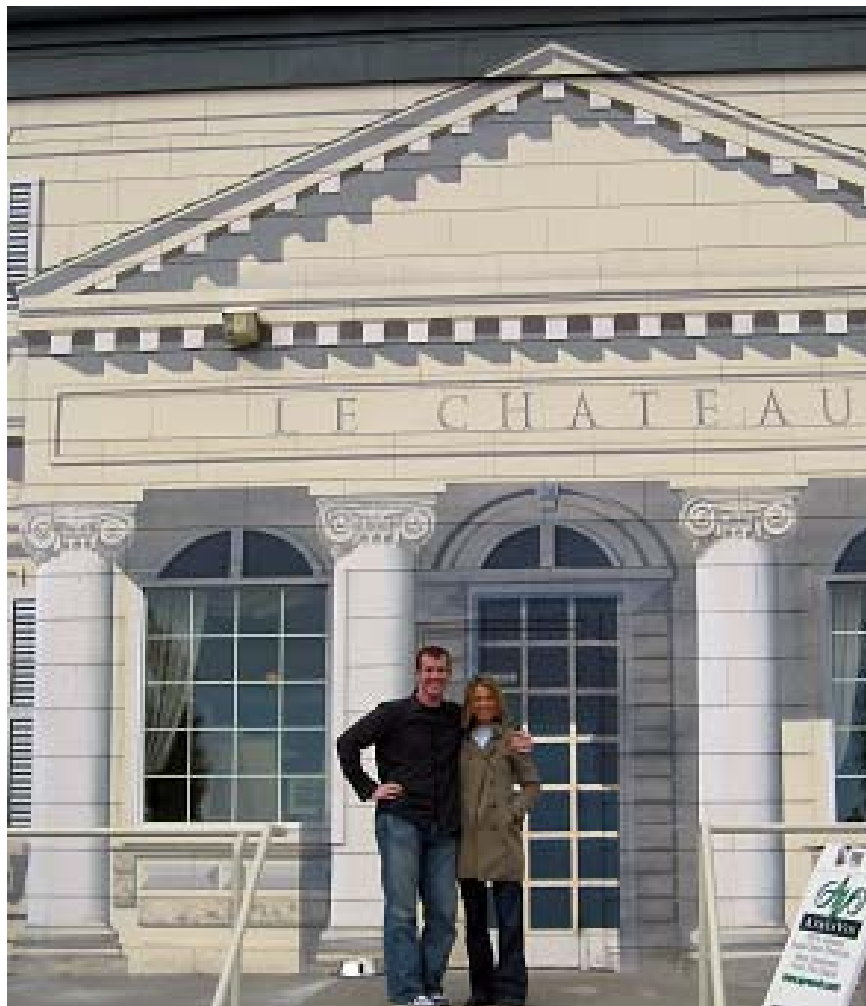
Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
NR	2006 Sangiovese Columbia Valley	A fairly classic sangiovese style with lots of cranberry aromas and tastes. A bit sharp on the taste but may be due to the temperature. 90% Sangiovese; 5% Merlot; 5% Cab Franc.	\$34
NR	2006 Cabernet Franc Columbia Valley	Black pepper and chocolate dance around the nose. Tart with expressive fruit. Fairly well put together. 90% Cab Franc; 5% Sangiovese; 5% Merlot.	\$34

Le Chateau

continued

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
NR	2005 Castle Red	Very light in color. Loads of tobacco and funk. Abundant pencil shavings on the nose and taste. Very tart. 60% Syrah; 31% Merlot; 9% Cabernet.	\$36



Pat and Lindy in front of the Le Chateau mural



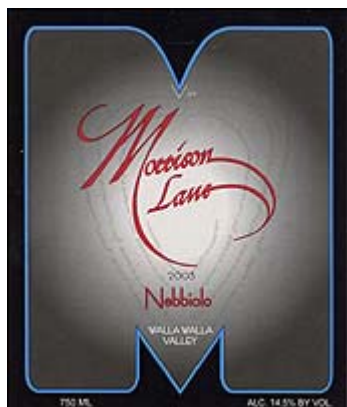
Owner: Dave Westfall, John Mueller,
and David Page
Winemaker: Dave Westfall
Cases: 1,700
Red Wines: Cabernet, Merlot
Tasting fee: None
Where: Winery,
www.americanwinery.com
Contact: dlwestfall@msn.com
509.455.8161

Winery: ★ ½ Downtown tasting room. Grande Ronde winery is pouring their wines at Morrison Lane Winery.

Summary: Unfortunately the wines at Grande Ronde were too warm to be properly evaluated. I have included my notes but have not rated the wines. All wines sampled at 72 degrees or warmer.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
NR	2006 Cellar Red Walla Walla Valley	Green pepper stands out on this wine along with cola, cherry, and spice. Tart and sharp along the palate but perhaps due to the temperature.	\$23
NR	2003 Merlot Seven Hills Vineyard	A pretty nose marked by cola and cherry. Sharp and astringent on the taste but perhaps due to temperature.	\$30
NR	2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Seven Hills Vineyard	Dark purple. Lots of black pepper, anise, and wheat. A dark, brooding wine with tightly compacted fruit. The best of the group. A fair amount of alcohol shows at times although may be due to temperature.	\$30



Owner: Morrison family
Winemaker: Dan Morrison
Cases: 1,200
Red Wines: Carménère, Cinsault, Dolcetto, Nebbiolo, Syrah
Tasting fee: None
Where: West Seattle Cellars
Contact: verdie@morrisonlane.com
 509.526.0229

Winery: ★ ½ Downtown tasting room. While in a charming old building, the interior comes off as a bit shabby and unkempt.

Summary: Dean and Verdie Morrison of Morrison Lane are long-time residents of Walla Walla. Their son Dan serves as winemaker. Morrison Lane is perhaps best known for the fruit from the vineyard that bears its name. A number of the area's producers source fruit from this vineyard. K Vintners makes a vineyard designate Syrah from Morrison Lane Vineyard that is a standout. As a winery, Morrison Lane is notable for numerous single varietal bottling including Viognier, Roussanne, Cinsault, and Nebbiolo. All wines sampled at 70 degrees, including whites.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	2006 Viognier Walla Walla Valley	Ripe peaches leap from the glass. A thick wine that coats the palate. Very well done. Might shine at a proper temperature.	\$24
+	2004 Roussanne Walla Walla Valley	Light yellow color. Pleasing aromas of fresh cut Golden Delicious apples. A crisp, tart wine that might shine at a proper temperature.	\$23
+	2004 Cinsault Walla Walla Valley	Very lightly colored. Some light nut aromas. Light and refreshing with pencil lead on the nose and taste. 13.5% alcohol.	\$27

Morrison Lane

continued

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2004 Nebbiolo Columbia Valley	Very lightly colored and slightly browned. Lots of tobacco and grippy fruit. A slightly puckering wine that would pair well with food but doesn't completely stand up on its own. McKineley Springs Vineyard used due to the freeze in 2004. 14.3% alcohol.	\$35
•	2005 Counoise Walla Walla Valley	Very light in color. Lots of tobacco and spice on a fun nose. Very, very tart on the taste. 12.9% alcohol.	\$33
+	2005 Sangiovese	Pretty floral aromas and rose hips on a prototypic sangiovese nose. Tart and well textured on the palate. 14.2% alcohol.	\$26



Morrison Lane's tasting room is in a downtown storefront



Owner: Michael Corliss
Winemaker: Kendall Mix
Cases: 1,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: No
Where: Cellar 46, McCarthy & Schiering, 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: For Corliss Estates’ inaugural release in December 2008, the winery opened its doors to the barrel area. This time around the whole facility was opened up. Corliss’ tasting room is enormous and features high ceilings and chandeliers. A beautiful tasting bar is off to the left hand side of the room.

On this occasion – the release of the 2004 Syrah – Corliss provided barrel samples of their 2007 Syrah and Cabernet. While these wines have not yet been blended, both are excellent at a young age. Corliss recently purchased the Nicholas Cole facility in Walla Walla. This building will be used for a new winery called Tranche Cellars. This label will focus predominantly on white wine. All wines sampled at 69 degrees unless otherwise noted.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2004 Red Wine	Lots of freshly ground, dark roasted coffee beans, black cherry and graphite. Rich and thick with lots of texture. Beautifully integrated with abundant coffee grounds on the taste. A multiple swallow wine.	NA

Corliss Estates

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★★	2004 Cabernet Sauvignon	Fairly light in color for such a super thick, age-me wine. Syrupy, rich fruit with coffee grounds and the darkest of berries. Rich and outrageous, this wine doesn't stop to get to the finish.	NA
★★	2007 Syrah	Dark, purple, and brilliantly colored. Very light, elegant cured ham aromas with floral notes hanging above. Deep and rich with loads of cured meat on the taste. Exhilarating with a big, thick grip. Sampled at 66 degrees.	BS
★	2007 Cabernet Sauvignon	Light, brilliant garnet. Freshly ground coffee beans along with a mix of chocolate and dark berries on the nose. An intense, thick, expressive wine laced with graphite and dark fruit.	BS



Corliss' tasting room
boasts chandeliers
and vaulted ceilings



Owner: Steve Brooks
Winemaker: Steve Brooks
Cases: 1,500
Red Wines: Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: McCarthy & Schiering
Contact: steve@trustcellars.com
509.529.4511

Winery: ★★ ½ South of town. Trust is located in a small building that serves as a tasting room and production facility. The Blue Mountains and vineyards serve as a backdrop to the winery.

Summary: One of the most exciting parts of this trip to Walla Walla was the stop at Trust Cellars. Winemaker Steve Brooks began making wine in 2005 after leaving his job at CNN. While his initial releases showed great promise, Brooks' new releases realize that potential and more. Two of these wines – the 2008 Riesling and 2007 Walla Walla Valley Syrah – my friends and I talked about quite literally for the remainder of the weekend. With an exceptional lineup of wines and a wine club with a waiting list, there appears to be no limit to where this winery can go. All wines sampled at 65 degrees unless otherwise noted.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★★	2008 Riesling Columbia Valley	A beautiful nose with sugared grapefruit and pineapple. Spectacular citrus tastes blend with other fruit flavors. Exceptionally well balanced with mineral and a light sweetness on the taste. 100% Riesling. 38% CS Farms (Wahluke Slope); 30% Pheasant (Yakima); 30% Evergreen (Wahluke Slope); 2% Ancient Lakes. 12% alcohol. 224 cases produced. Sampled at 54 degrees.	\$16

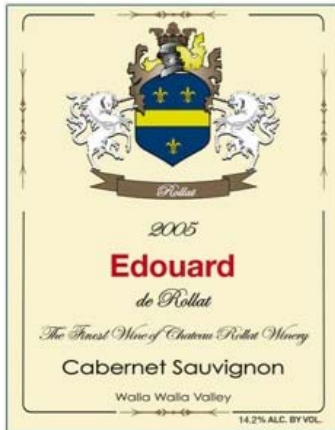
Trust Cellars

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
+	2008 Rosé of Cab Franc Columbia Valley	Light smoky hints accompany pepper and a slight mustard component. Crisp and clean on the palate. An excellent summer wine. 100% Cab Franc. Bacchus Vineyard. 13.4% alcohol. 151 cases produced. Sampled at 60 degrees.	\$16
★	2007 Syrah Columbia Valley	Dark purple. Blueberry and other light berries along with a hint of wintergreen mark the nose and taste. Two months in the bottle. Unfined and unfiltered. 54% Lewis; 31% Portteus; 13% Sundance vineyards. 14.5% alcohol. 320 cases produced.	\$28
★★	2007 Syrah Walla Walla Valley	Very dark purple. Light game and floral aromas dance together on the nose. Dry on the palate with beautiful berry tastes. Finish hasn't entirely come together yet but given a little more bottle age will be absolutely superb. 89% Syrah; 11% Cabernet. 61% Les Collines (Block 50 & 30), 28% Va Piano, 11% Lewis (Cabernet). 14.4% alcohol. 214 cases produced.	\$28
★	2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley	Extremely dark to the point of almost being opaque. A compelling nose marked by pencil lead, light anise, and white pepper. Beautifully integrated tannins. 80% Cabernet; 20% Merlot. 39% Phinny; 20% Baccus; 11% Kelly; 10% Champoux. 20% Conner Lee (Merlot). 13.8% alcohol.	\$36

Chateau Rollat

www.rollat.com



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.

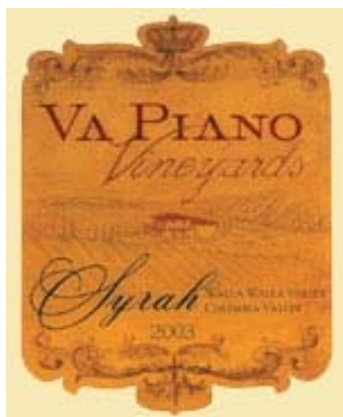
Summary: Chateau Rollat was not featuring any new releases this go round. The 2006 Edouard and Rollat are due to be released in the fall.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2007 Ardenvoir Rosé	An almost orange, slightly aged look. Watermelon and mineral mark the nose. Crisp, fresh, and pleasing. Sampled at 58 degrees.	\$16

Va Piano Vineyards

www.vapianovineyards.com



Owner: Justin and Liz Wylie
Winemaker: Justin Wylie
Cases: 2,500
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: While many wineries were, as usual, fairly quiet on Sunday, Va Piano was as busy as I have seen it with cars lining the roadway. Saturday, always the busier of the two days, was apparently even more crowded. Indeed, Va Piano gives every appearance of a winery in full stride as their estate fruit continues to improve with each vintage. The winery also boasts one of the prettiest settings in the valley. All wines sampled at 68 degrees unless otherwise noted.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2008 Sémillon Columbia Valley	Light gold colored. Hay aromas mix with light oak spices, and a touch of lemon. A good dose of acidity on a wine that still needs to calm down and come into its own. Give 3-6 months. Bottled in January 2009. 90% Sémillon; 10% Sauvignon Blanc. Sampled at 61 degrees.	\$22
+	Bruno's Blend IV NV	Light cashew notes and smoke on the nose. Brightly tart and lively on the palate. A great wine to pair with a zesty red pasta sauce.	\$23

Va Piano Vineyards

continued

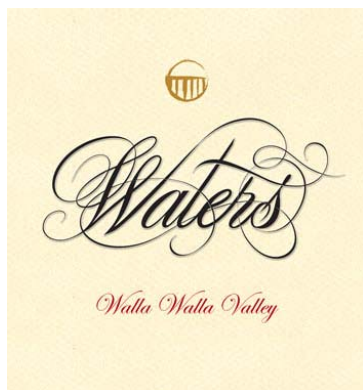
<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★	2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia & Walla Walla Valley	A fruit-filled wine loaded with dried currants, sweet spices, tobacco, and anise along with a whiff of white pepper. Dry and tart on the taste. 14.1% alcohol. 392 cases produced.	\$38
★	2006 Syrah Columbia & Walla Walla Valley	Light floral aromas mix with clove, vanilla, and spice on an appealing nose. A very slight hint of game. Tart and dry with lots of red fruit on the taste. 14.1% alcohol. 660 cases produced.	\$38



Va Piano's
tasting room is
surrounded by
the winery's
estate vineyard

Waters Winery

www.waterswinery.com



Owner: Jason Huntley & James Brown
Winemaker: James Brown
Cases: 4,000
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Syrah
Tasting fee: \$10
Where: Esquin, Pete's
Contact: 509.525.1590

Winery: ★★★ South of town. Waters facility boasts beautiful views, a pretty tasting room, and an excellent winemaking facility.

Summary: While Waters Winery is perhaps best known for its red wines, including its vineyard-designated syrahs, this winery also makes one of Washington's finest viogniers and a perfect summer rosé. All wines sampled at 65 degrees unless otherwise noted.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★	2008 Viognier Columbia Valley	Almost clear in color. A fragrant nose with pear and light spices. Rich and opulent while still being dry. Very well done. 100% Viognier. 110 cases produced. Sampled at 57 degrees.	\$25
★	2008 Rosé Walla Walla Valley	Just a touch of pink in color. Light strawberry aromas stand out on the nose. Very dry and exceptionally clean on the palate. An excellent, refreshing rosé. 67% Syrah; 33% Viognier. 100 cases produced. Sampled at 57 degrees.	\$18
+	2007 Interlude Red Wine Walla Walla Valley	Rhubarb and dried cherry on a light, pretty nose. Tart and dry with a fair amount of grip on the palate. 53% Merlot, 40% Cabernet; 7% Cab Franc. 1,024 cases produced.	\$30

Waters Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2007 Syrah Columbia Valley	Brilliant garnet. Light nut aromas mix with very light game notes. Tart with a lot of red fruit. 100% Syrah. Minick Vineyard. 1,054 cases produced.	\$30
+	2006 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley	Dark ruby color. Wintergreen and pencil lead mix with cherry and rose petals. Pencil lead on the taste as well. Fairly dry and a bit puckering. 100% Cabernet. Cold Creek and Pepper Bridge vineyards. 346 cases produced.	\$50
+	2006 Syrah Pepper Bridge Vineyard Walla Walla Valley	A very pretty nose with raspberry and a touch of game. Lots and lots of raspberries on the taste. Seems a bit flat on the mid-palate. 100% Syrah. 14.6% alcohol. 174 cases produced.	\$40



A perfect spot to while away an afternoon, sipping wine and looking at the Blue Mountains

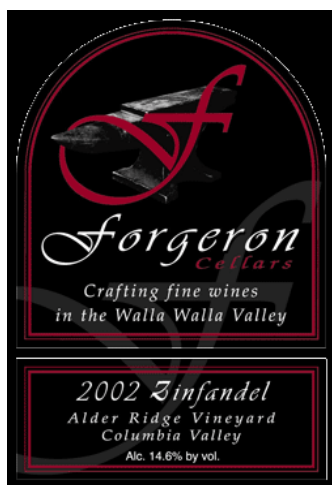
Waters Winery

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
★	2006 Syrah Forgotten Hills Vineyard Walla Walla Valley	Abundant smoked meat aromas mix with green pepper and game on a very lively nose that also has touches of chocolate. Bright and tart on the palate. 100% Syrah. 13.8% alcohol. 336 cases produced.	\$40
★★	2006 21 Grams	Light chocolate interwoven with cherry, spices, and pencil lead on an elegant nose where everything hangs in balance and always seems to step back and elude you. A gorgeous wine with refined tannins that glide across the palate with chocolate hints mixing in occasionally. An exceptional wine. 92% Cabernet; 6% Merlot; 2% Cab Franc. 100 cases produced.	\$125



Rolling vineyards near Waters Winery



Owner: Marie-Eve Gilla (Co-owner)
Winemaker: Marie-Eve Gilla
Cases: 4,500
Red Wines: Blends, Cabernet, Merlot, Sangiovese, Zinfandel,
Tasting fee: \$5, refundable with purchase
Where: Esquin, Pete's
Contact: info@forgeroncellars.com
 509.522.9463

Winery: ★★ ½ Downtown winery. Forgeron Cellars has a pretty but somewhat dark tasting room.

Summary: Marie-Eve Gilla continues to impress at Forgeron. Her 2004 Boushey Vineyard Syrah was my top wine at [Uncorked's Syrah event](#) in April. This time around it was the 2004 Champoux Vineyard Cabernet that grabbed my attention, leading my friend Lindy to interrupt a conversation we were having with people from the winery to exclaim "Oh my God!" After a minute more of conversation I sampled the wine and also said "Oh my God! You weren't kidding!" This is a big, bold wine that demands attention. Gilla's wines display both a feminine and a French touch. The results speak for themselves and demonstrate why Gilla is one of the best winemakers in Walla Walla Valley. NB: Forgeron Cellars 2005 Zinfandel also came in second in our [2008 Reader Survey](#). All wines sampled at 64 degrees unless otherwise noted.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
+	2008 Roussanne Columbia Valley	Just a hint of color. A touch of lemon zest and mineral on this bright, tartly acidic wine. An excellent wine to pair with seafood. 100% Roussanne. Crawford, Lonesome Springs, Alder Ridge vineyards. Sampled at 62 degrees.	\$23

Forgeron Cellars

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
+	2006 Barbera Columbia Valley	The nose is marked by spice, green pepper, tobacco, and – at times – chocolate. Very tart and puckering on the palate. The alcohol shows through occasionally. 100% Barbera. Sagemoor Vineyard.	\$30
+	2003 Syrah Columbia Valley	An anise bomb that is also loaded with cola. Very evenly textured and opens up on the palate. 100% Syrah. Les Collines, Boushey, Milbrandt, Stonetree, and Den Hoed vineyards.	\$30
★	2003 Cabernet Sauvignon Pepper Bridge Vineyard Walla Walla Valley	Pretty spices and a beautiful earth component on an appealing nose that is also marked by anise, coffee notes, and cola. Taste has a good acid balance. A touch of pencil lead on the finish. 100% Cabernet.	\$46
★	2001 Merlot Columbia Valley	A fair amount of browning in the color. Campfire, sarsaparilla, and pain grille show on the nose. Very evenly balanced with just the right mix of fruit and grip along with a beautifully rich texture. Lots of life left on it.	NA
★★	2003 Vinfinity Reserve Columbia Valley	A simply gorgeous nose with cherry cola mixed with tobacco, spices, and smoked meat. An exceptionally well-balanced wine.	\$46
★	2005 Zinfandel Columbia Valley	Nose jumps out of the glass with spice, eucalyptus, orange blossom, and a faint hint of graphite. Rich and intense on the palate. A long, lingering finish.	\$30

Forgeron Cellars

continued

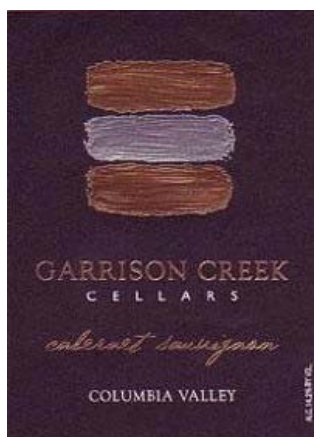
<u>Score</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Notes</u>	<u>\$</u>
★★	2004 Cabernet Sauvignon Champoux Vineyard Horse Heaven Hills	Almost completely opaque. Violets, tobacco, funk, and earth emerge on the nose. Packs a gigantic punch on the taste. A complete whopper. Almost completely overwhelms all senses and then comes back and sails.	\$46



Lindy outside
Forgeron
Cellars

Garrison Creek Cellars

No Website At Present



Owner: Michael Murr & David March
Winemaker: David March
Cases: 1,000
Red Wines: Cabernet, Malbec, Syrah, Zinfandel
Tasting fee: None
Where: Winery
Contact: 509.386.4841

Winery: ★★★★★ South of town. The setting of Garrison Creek Cellars is easily as pretty as any Walla Walla Valley has to offer. The winery is surrounded by Les Collines Vineyard. Starting with the 2003 vintage which is, as of yet, unreleased, Garrison Creek is sourcing all of its fruit from Les Collines, one of the finest vineyards in the state. The winery building is modeled after an old barn and features vaulted ceilings and enormous beams spanning the building's length. Large windows frame the Les Collines Vineyard with the Blue Mountains serving as a backdrop. The downstairs boasts a state-of-the-art cave-style cellar modeled after the one built at Leonetti Cellars. Note: Open by appointment.

Summary: The story of Garrison Creek Cellars is one of trial and tribulation. Owners Michael Murr and David March fought for a number of years to establish the winery and the adjacent Les Collines Vineyard. A group of local farmers had concerns about wineries and vineyards branching in to this area of the valley. Finally, Murr and March prevailed.

While the 2001 and 2002 vintage wines from the Columbia Valley were enjoyable, the barrel samples from the Les Collines Vineyard provide something to look forward to. Winemaker David March prefers extended time in the barrel – up to three years-followed by additional bottle time before release so you won't be seeing these wines any time soon unfortunately.

Wines:

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★	2007 Zinfandel Les Collines Vineyard	Prototypic Les Collines aromas on the nose along with game, vanilla, and a touch of banana. Beautifully lush with a gorgeous mouthfeel.	BS

Garrison Creek Cellars

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★★	2006 Syrah Les Collines Vineyard Block 50	Busting with white and black pepper, beautiful floral aromas, and slate. A rich, creamy texture. A hint of umami on the taste. To be bottled in June 2009.	BS
★	2008 Malbec	Roasted coffee beans jump out at you. Beautifully soft and clean on the palate.	BS



Garrison
Creek
Cellars

Garrison Creek Cellars

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>\$</i>
★★	2008 Syrah Les Collines Vineyard	Scorched earth mixes with violets and game. A spectacular taste with, again, a slightly creamy texture. A hint of umami on the taste.	BS
+	2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley	Lots of jammy fruit, blackberry seed, earth and raspberry on the nose and taste. Dry with the Red Mountain earth flavors showing through. Kiona and Alder Ridge vineyards.	\$45



The Blue Mountains and Les Collines Vineyard from inside Garrison Creek

Garrison Creek Cellars

continued

<u>Score</u>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Notes</i>	\$
+	2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Columbia Valley	Lots of black licorice, tobacco, funk and black pepper along with clove and other spices on the nose. Tart and dry with lots of fruit on the taste. 88% Cabernet; 22% Merlot.	\$45
★	2002 Syrah Columbia Valley	Abundant black pepper on a nose laced with herbal notes and light floral aromas. Rich and intense on the taste. 100% Syrah. Milbrandt and Spofford Station vineyards. 14.5% alcohol. 168 cases produced.	\$45



Garrison
Creek's
cave-style
barrel room

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>Garrison Creek Cellars</u>	★★★★	58
<u>Long Shadows</u>	★★★★	23
<u>Spring Valley Vineyards</u> (farm location)	★★★★	28
<u>Abeja</u>	★★★★ ½	34
<u>Va Piano Vineyards</u>	★★★★ ½	50
<u>Balboa Winery</u>	★★★	15
<u>Beresan Winery</u>	★★★	12
<u>Corliss Estates</u>	★★★	45
<u>Reininger</u>	★★★	17
<u>Waterbrook</u>	★★★	20
<u>Waters Winery</u>	★★★	52
<u>Chateau Rollat</u>	★★ ½	49
<u>Forgeron Cellars</u>	★★ ½	55
<u>Trust</u>	★★ ½	47
<u>Buty Winery</u>	★★	38
<u>K Vintners</u>	★★	31
<u>Le Chateau</u>	★★	40
<u>SYZYG</u>	★★	36
<u>Morrison Lane</u>	★ ½	43
<u>Grande Ronde</u>	★ ½	42

References

Select Seattle-Area Wine Stores

<u>Name</u>	<u>Seattle Address</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Website</u>
Cellar 46	7650 SE 27th St, Mercer Island	206.407.3016	www.cellar46.com
Champion Wine Cellars	108 Denny Way	206.284.8306	www.championwinecellars.com
City Cellars	710 N 45th St	206.632.7238	www.citycellar.com
Esquin	2700 4 th Ave S	206.682.7374	www.esquin.com
Madison Park Cellars	4227 E. Madison	206.323.9333	
McCarthy & Schiering	2401 B Queen Anne Ave N	206.282.8500	www.mccarthyandschiering.com
Pete's Supermarket	58 E. Lynn	206.322.2660	www.peteswineshop.com
Seattle Cellars	2505 2nd Ave	206.256.0850	www.seattlecellars.com
Seattle Wine Company	1950 130th Ave NE, Bellevue	425.869.0609	www.seattlewineco.com

Select On-line Wine Stores Featuring Washington Wine

www.avalonwine.com
www.compasswines.com
www.americanwinery.com

Select Walla Walla Resources

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

References Continued

Select Washington Wine Books

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