

Columbia Gorge
Winegrowers
Celebrate 10th
Anniversary.
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HOLIDAY • GUIDE wine

The Oregonian

What the chefs are drinking this holiday season

DANIELLE CENTONI
SPECIAL WRITER

Turkey dinner with a farmers market of sides. A glistening roast ham shellacked with glaze. Juicy prime rib crusted in herbs. A bakery's worth of pies. The holidays are coming, people. And you're going to need some wine.

Lucky for us there is more world-class wine being made in Oregon than we can possibly drink, which means we can impress our out-of-town guests with an entirely local selection no matter what's on the menu. But with ample choices come tough decisions. To help narrow things down, we checked in with a few local chefs to see what they'll be drinking with their holiday feasts at home. From sparklers to gamay, rose to port, we have 18 chef-chosen bottles so you can drink like the pros this holiday season.

Cheryl Wakerhauser, Pix Patisserie/Bar Vivant

Cheryl Wakerhauser, the Champagne-loving chef behind Pix Patisserie and Spanish-inspired Bar Vivant, is all about bubbly – and the appetizers to go with them. When the holidays arrive, she and her partner Tobias Hogan, proprietor of EAT Oyster Bar and The Parish, know just what to serve to kick off the night.

“On Christmas Eve I go to work at 1 a.m. to fulfill all the Buche de Noel orders. So we keep things simple that evening with about dozen oysters and bubbles. Then the next morning we do the same for breakfast. It's become a tradition!” Her choice pairing with briny oysters: Argyle Blanc de Blancs 2010.



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Teutonic Wine Co.'s Crow Valley Vineyard Brut is a nice sparkling riesling for special occasions.

Non-spicy charcuterie always makes an appearance at her parties, and she says Soter Mineral Springs Rosé Brut 2009 is the perfect pairing for an assortment of prosciutto, jamon serrano, coppa, bresaola and saucisson sec. “There is a hint of perceived sweetness in the wine that plays well with the salty meats.”

And for tasty little fried things, like arancini, or the

croquetas de bacalao she serves at Bar Vivant, she's planning to crack open a special sparkler: Teutonic Wine Co.'s Crow Valley Vineyard Brut 2009, a sparkling riesling.

Ken Forkish, Ken's Artisan Bakery, Ken's Artisan Pizza and Trifecta Tavern

For bakerman Ken Forkish, Thanksgiving was made for pinot. “You can always count me in for a bottle of Oregon pinot to go with Thanksgiving dinner,” he says. “I like the traditional spread: turkey, mashed potatoes, dressing, gravy, and some roasted vegetables.”

Forkish says he's looking forward to the big spread and even bigger guest list, because it gives him the excuse to break out the big bottles. “My whole family's getting together this year, which is perfect because I want to pop a magnum I have of Evesham Wood Mahonia Vineyard Willamette Valley Pinot Noir 2011,” he says “Who doesn't love pouring wine from a big bottle? I think we should all do that more often.”

Jason French, Ned Ludd and Elder Hall

Jason French and his partner in life and business, Michelle Battista, always look forward to infusing the holiday traditions with a little creativity. And this year they'll give their menu a Southern spin in honor of Battista's roots.

“Michelle spent a lot of time with her grandparents in Galax, Virginia, so we like to try to recreate some of that nostalgia at home around the holidays,” says French. “For our creamed brussels sprouts and on-

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ions, I'll shave the brussels sprouts and cook them with mustard powder, white wine and cream, and finish with shaved country ham."

But even though the food will take a Southern turn, don't expect anything but Oregon wine to go with it. French and Battista are big fans. "Oregon continues to be an exciting wine arena for the purists and free thinkers constantly looking for quality and creativity," says French.

To kick off the festivities, he'll reach for refreshing whites. "To start I will be opening a few bottles of Rex Hills Old Vine Chardonnay 2009 but will also have the 2013 Le Communard from Fausse Piste, a delicious blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay that I think will pair well with a wide range of holiday favorites."

At the table, he'll start popping open the reds. "I love pinot noir and have really fallen for the 2012 Walter Scott Wine Pinots but also think the Bow and Arrow 2012 Rhinestones Gamay Noir is both affordable and will provide enough structure and fruit for the foods we love to serve."

Elias Cairo, Olympic Provisions

When most people think of seasonal fall specialties, things like mushrooms and squash usually come to mind. But wine? "I have been really enjoying all of the nouveau releases that come out around now," says Elias Cairo of Olympic Provisions. "It is really fun and pretty interesting to drink really young wine."

Typically nouveau wines are a French thing, a tradition in the Beaujolais region where winemakers bottle some of their just-made wine, less than two months old, and pop it open on the third Thursday in November to celebrate the end of harvest. Without time to mature into something worth sniffing, swirling and studying, it's usually just lively and fun, with aromas of fruit punch. Basically, it's party wine, and more Oregon winemakers, like Brandborg and Division Winemaking Co., are getting in on the fun.

But when he's looking for something with a bit more gravitas, especially during the holidays, Cairo says he turns to Bow and Arrow's Willamette Valley Ga-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Division Winemaking Co.'s Cabernet Franc Mae's Vineyard is a go-to pick for reds.

may Noir. "I do my fair share of hunting for wild birds for dinner during the holidays and it's just a natural fit.

Bow and Arrow's white wine also makes frequent appearances. "I drink a mess of their 2012 Melon Johan Vineyard with oysters," he says. His other go-to white? "Teutonic Riesling is a must-have to get any party going. It is really exciting to me that there are quite a few local and urban wineries that are producing such light, beautiful and drinkable wines."

Aaron Barnett, Restaurant St. Jack

When you're far from family, holidays can be a bit quiet, but when you spend your days running a busy restaurant, quiet can be just what you're looking for. "It can be tough for me to get to Canada to see my folks," says chef Aaron Barnett of Restaurant St. Jack. "My wife, son and I tend to hang out alone, more often than not. We'll have maybe a friend or two for a low-key dinner. Or we'll head out to Beaverton to see my wife's family."

Barnett's not a big fan of turkey, so prime rib, lobster or crab are usually on the menu. "And oysters. Always oysters," he says. To go with the autumnal flavors he'll be using in his cooking, he likes Ovum Riesling Memorista Meyer Vineyard. "Riesling is becoming one of my new go-to

wines for holiday meals. Nice and dry but so full and bright. It's particularly good with poultry and all of the fall flavors. They have such an Old World style that I just can't get enough of.

For reds, he'll turn to Division Winemaking Company's Cabernet Franc Mae's Vineyard. "It's the quintessential autumn wine," he says. "Perfect for all the side dishes from roasted brussels sprouts to sweet potatoes. It's just a perfect wine for food, in general."

And, like Pix's Wakerhauser, he always makes room for something sparkling, and he shares her taste for Soter Mineral Springs Brut Rose. "It's bubbly and in my mind that's really all you need. Bubbles go with everything from pre-dinner to turkey time to pumpkin pie, and this is a particular favorite."

Lisa Schroeder, Mother's Bistro

For years, Lisa Schroeder, chef/owner of Mother's Bistro, spent Thanksgiving cooking a traditional turkey dinner for 350 restaurant diners. But she's finally given herself, and the rest of her staff, permission to take the holiday off. "Now we focus on Thanksgiving Day brunch," she says, "with specials like pumpkin pancakes and chanterelle mushroom scrambles with Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese." So if she's not at the restaurant, does

that mean she'll be cooking a big bird for a house full of guests instead? "This year I will get to be a guest at my daughter's house for Thanksgiving, and for the first time ever I will not have to slave over holiday food!" she says. "Since they're intending to make the whole meal, I'll just bring the wine, and I'm going to make it the Maison L'Envoye "2 Messenger" Pinot Noir, Willamette Valley, 2012. It's complex and fruity and I think it would pair nicely with turkey and other poultry, not to mention the wild mushrooms in season right now."

Sarah Curtis-Fawley, Pacific Pie Co.

It wouldn't be a holiday feast without a grand finale of pies, especially when you're dining with Sarah Curtis-Fawley, co-owner with her husband, Chris Powell, of Pacific Pie Co. "We always have a grand selection of pies at our Thanksgiving feast," she says. "This year I'll be bringing Pumpkin, Chocolate Bourbon Hazelnut, and Apple Cranberry."

In her book, the perfect pour to pair with pie is something a little sweet and fortified – especially when you're talking about pumpkin pie. "Growing up my grandmother always drank sherry with her pumpkin pie, and I follow suit with a nice port. My local pick is VanDuzer Perplexity."

But for those who prefer something sparkling, she's got you covered. "The holidays are a perfect time for bubbles, so with my slice of Chocolate Bourbon Hazelnut pie I'll enjoy King Estate Blanc de Noir."

But what about that apple-cranberry pie? "I'll save my slice of Apple Cranberry pie for breakfast the morning after – but I might spike my coffee with some East-side Distilling Holiday Spiced Liqueur."

HOLIDAY WINE GUIDE

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On the cover: The Columbia Gorge boasts more than 80 vineyards and 30 boutique wineries. Photo by David Radcliff

Giving thanks in Columbia Gorge

AMY ROBERTS
SPECIAL WRITER

Winegrowers in Columbia Gorge have a lot to be thankful for when they host Thanksgiving weekend open houses this year. As the Columbia Gorge American Viticultural Area (AVA) marks its tenth anniversary, area winegrowers have additional reason to celebrate: a harvest that has provided one of the most ideal vintages ever seen according to the Columbia Gorge Winegrowers Association (CGWA).

With the season’s bounty in mind, Gorge wineries will host open houses from Nov. 28 through Nov. 30. After spending time with family on Thanksgiving, come discover the variety of wines available from the Columbia Gorge and Columbia Valley AVAs. Spend one day visiting Washington wineries, enjoy an overnight stay and explore Oregon wineries on day two.

Throughout the weekend, many wineries will offer something unique including new wine releases, food pairings or holiday discounts. As part of CGWA’s “Gorge Wine Gives Back,” many will also collect food, toy or clothing donations to benefit local charities.

Goldendale, Washington’s, Maryhill Winery — an internationally renowned winery — kicks things off with its Annual Holiday Open House and Sale. For more information on Maryhill’s events, turn to page 4.

Analemma Wines’ Pop-the-Cork weekend celebrates the release of its first sparkling wine. Enjoy the first taste of Analemma’s 2010 Blanc de Noir sparkling paired with a local artisan-made olive oil cake. Attendees can join in special toasts on Nov. 29 from 2-6 p.m. For wine enthusiasts who bring a blanket Nov. 28-30 to donate to a local homeless shelter, the winery will waive the regular tasting fee.

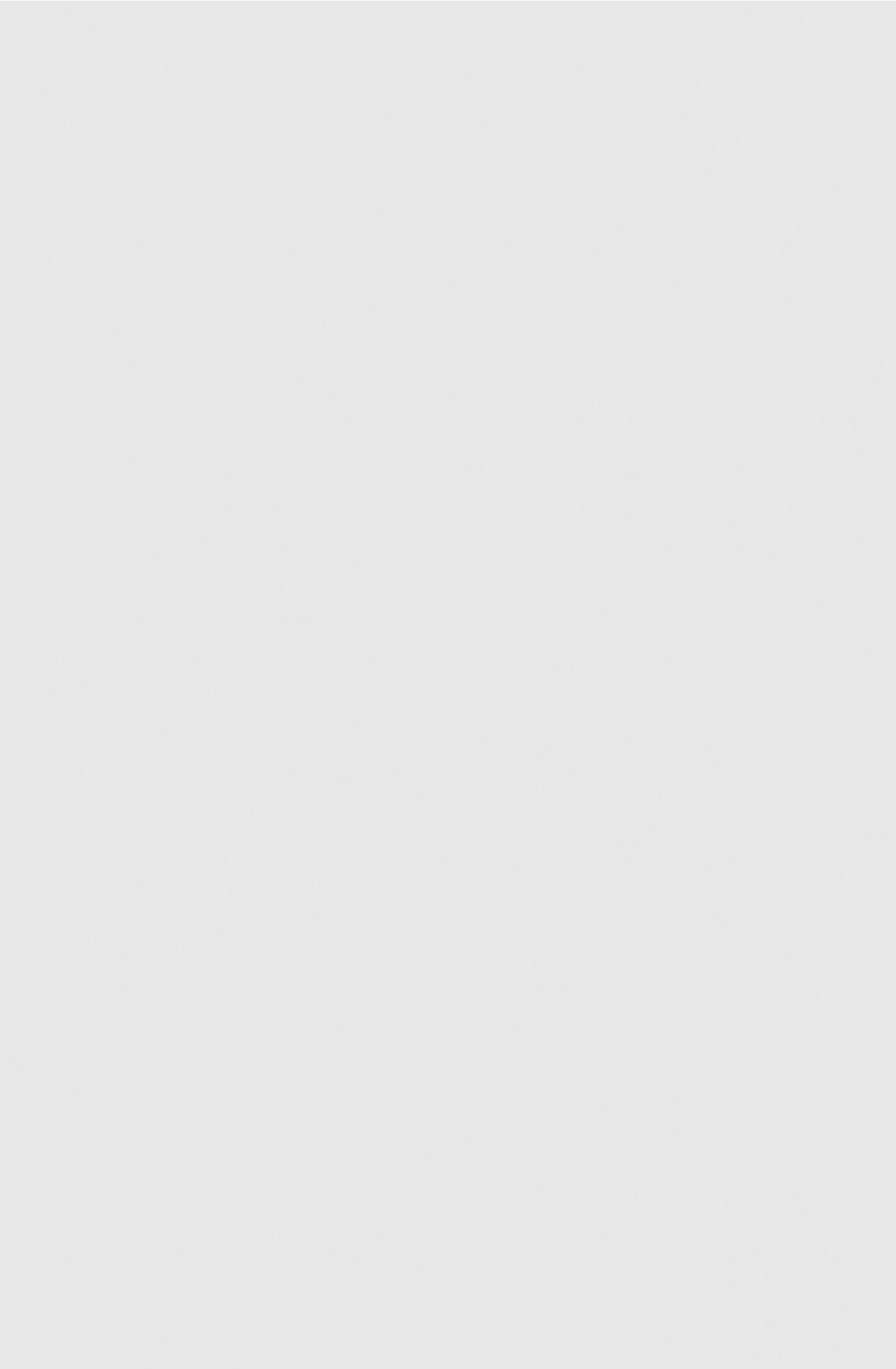
Wine lovers can enjoy tastings in a beautiful fall setting at Cathedral Ridge Winery in Hood River, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov.

28-30. Cathedral Ridge will offer special Thanksgiving wine flights and great discounts throughout the weekend. Anyone planning holiday celebrations should check out this winery’s “Thanksgiving Feast Pack.” Additionally, Cathedral Ridge will collect donations for Home at Last Humane Society. Bring unused dog toys, canned food or treats to receive a two-for-one tasting at Cathedral Ridge Winery.

Memaloose Winery, which serves wines perfect for food pairings, will be open Nov. 28-30 from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., offering fabulous close-out specials and other discounts. It will also have cheeses to nibble and will celebrate two new 2012 red wine releases. Anyone who brings a non-perishable food item to donate to FISH Food Bank when visiting Memaloose during the Thanksgiving weekend can have the tasting fee waived for themselves and a guest.

The Pines 1852 in Hood River will be open Friday, Nov. 28 from noon to 10 p.m. with live music from 6-9 p.m., and on Saturday and Sunday from noon to 7 p.m. Celebrate the bounty of Thanksgiving at The Pines by tasting a flight of the winery’s boutique offerings including the new release its first vintage of Chardonnay. Complete holiday shopping at The Pines with a special holiday discount of 20 percent off six or more bottle purchases. Bring three cans of food to donate to FISH Food Bank to receive two-for-one wine tastings throughout The Pines’ open house.

Located in Hood River, Springhouse Cellar produces hand-crafted, European-style wines. From noon to 6 p.m. Nov. 28-30, this unique Gorge winery will give back by donating 10 percent of the sale of each bottle of Ruins Red to Hood River Adopt A Dog. During the holiday weekend, Springhouse will also collect new collars, leads, toys and pet food or treats in new, unopened packages. Sample Springhouse Cellar’s boutique wines,



WILLAMETTE VALLEY WINES: WHERE TO GO



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enjoy some nibbles and give a little to furry friends in need of homes.

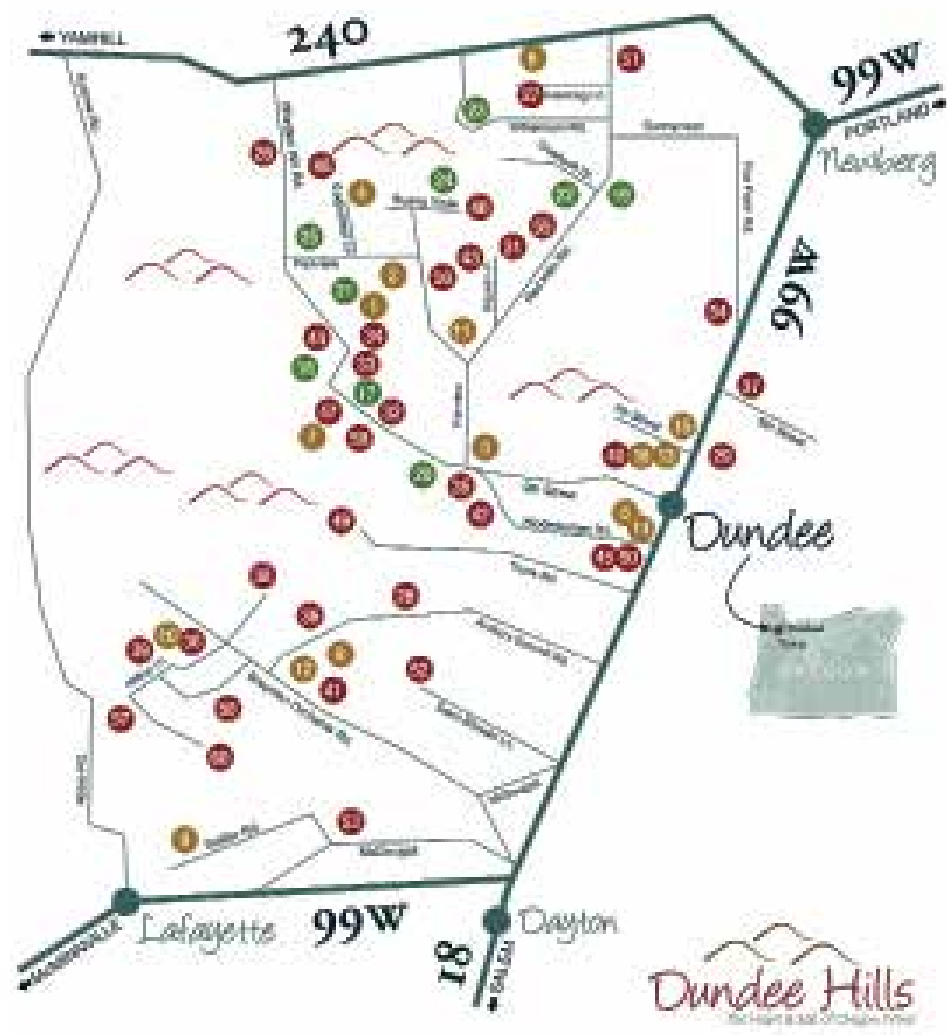
Other wineries in the CGWA may not have specific Thanksgiving celebrations. However, wineries such as Viento or Domaine Pouillon can provide a nice break from the hustle and bustle of the holidays or offer the perfect wine for any holiday need.

Viento Wines in Hood River carefully crafts all of its wines to emphasize balance, fruit character and the vineyard. Viento practices the art of winemaking with respect for traditions and creator Rich Cushman's personal style. Sample elegant, small-batch wines in Viento's new tasting room each day of the week except Tuesday.

A peaceful country setting is what wine enthusiasts will find in Lyle's Domaine Pouillon. This winery and vineyard specializes in the art of blending Rhône varieties of grapes to produce wines with a nuanced finish. Check out Domaine Pouillon year-round from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Thursday through Sunday.

To learn more about Columbia Gorge wineries, the CGWA or any holiday open houses, visit www.columbiagorgewine.com.

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Editor's Note: These maps have been provided courtesy of the Dundee Hills Winegrowers Association, Eola-Amity Hills AVA Association, and Willamette Valley Wineries Association. Only wineries with memberships in these associations are shown. Any inquiries about perceived inaccuracies in these maps should be addressed to the individual associations.

Maryhill Winery serves up holiday specials

AMY ROBERTS
SPECIAL WRITER

Maryhill Winery, an internationally acclaimed winery in Washington’s scenic Columbia Gorge, is gearing up for its Holiday Open House and Wine Sale.

The event will run Nov. 22 through Nov. 30 with the winery open daily except on Thanksgiving Day. During this time, Maryhill Winery – ranked one of the top 10 wineries in the world— will offer a variety of events and

specials. Visitors can enjoy wine tastings and holiday shopping or roast their own hot dogs and marshmallows on Maryhill’s terrace on an open house weekend. Wine enthusiasts can take advantage of up to 50 percent off

select cases or up to 35 percent off all wine. Additional discounts do not apply to wine by the glass, merchandise or case specials.

Recently, Maryhill Winery was ranked second in the United States and 10th internationally by the World Association of Wine Writers and Journalists. Earlier this year, Maryhill Winery was named “Winery of the Year” after the 2014 San Francisco International Wine Competition judged more than 4,500 wines from 1,400 wineries across 26 states and 31 countries. In addition to this overall honor at the San Francisco competition, Maryhill won 30 awards for its

wines there, including four gold, 11 bronze and 10 silver as well as two “Best of Show” honors and three double golds. These successes follow other recognition including wins at the Seattle Wine Awards, Northwest Wine Summit and Riverside International.

Established in 1999 by Craig and Vicki Leuthold, Maryhill Winery is the 10th largest winery in Washington and produces 90,000 cases annually. Nestled among rows of vines along the Columbia River in Goldendale, Washington, Maryhill is a popular destination for wine tastings, tours, concerts and special events.

Maryhill’s 3,000-square-foot tasting room and 1,200-square-foot Reserve Room draw more than 75,000 wine enthusiasts from around the globe each year, ranking among the top five most visited wineries in the state. Maryhill sources more than 30 different varieties of grapes from some of the most highly regarded vineyards in the state, producing nearly 40 different wines. The winery has claimed more than 2,500 awards since 2001.

To take advantage of holiday specials, visit Maryhill Winery during its holiday open house or go to www.maryhillwinery.com.

Willamette wineries initiate food drive

The fall and winter seasons are often the most severe in terms of need for support at local food banks. That’s why over 70 Oregon wineries have banded together and are asking visitors to help share the bounty of the season this year.

Sponsored by the Willamette Valley Wineries Association (WVWA), the Willamette Cares Food Share aims to collect 100 tons, or 200,000 pounds, of non-perishable food for food banks, between Nov. 1 and Dec. 20. The drive is both a response to wineries’ growing concern for basic needs in the region and a holiday event befitting the spirit of giving.

During the drive, wineries and tasting rooms throughout the valley will accept non-perishable food donations, and many will offer 2-for-1



passes and special pricing in exchange for contributions. The WVWA is partnering with the Oregon Food Bank network to transport donations to several food banks, ensuring that meals and groceries are delivered to those in need. Willamette Cares Food Share is the first campaign of its kind conducted by the WVWA, and is part of a broader seasonal group of events titled ‘Harvest to Holidays’ that celebrate fall in Willamette Valley’s wine

country.

“Giving back to the community is important for every brand of business, but especially for the Oregon wine industry,” said Sue Horstmann, WVWA Executive Director. “Wineries are strongly connected not only to the land but also to the people of our region. As a thriving industry rooted in camaraderie and generosity, Willamette Valley producers embrace the opportunity to make a difference in our community.”

Wine country visitors will be able to donate food and funds at all participating wineries and tasting rooms. Donations can also be made online through the Oregon Food Bank at www.oregonfoodbank.org/goto/willamette-cares. Additional details are available at www.willamettewines.com.

Umpqua winegrowers celebrating 30 years

AMY ROBERTS
SPECIAL WRITER

The unique settings of Oregon’s Umpqua Valley AVA coupled with the region’s winemaking history make it an interesting wine destination this holiday season.

According to Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association President Terry Brandborg, this American Viticultural Area, or

AVA, has a cool maritime climate that helps distinguish it from the warmer, drier climate of southern Oregon. As a result the Umpqua Valley AVA produces a tremendous variety of wines.

“In essence, (it’s like) you can travel from Alsace, Burgundy, the Rhone, Bordeaux and on to Spain in less than an hour and sample excel-

lent examples of many of the wines from those regions,” noted Brandborg, who is also a winemaker and owner of Brandborg Vineyard and Winery.

Brandborg shared that pinots, rieslings, gewurztraminers, Spanish varieties such as Tempranillo and Albarino and more are available from the region’s world-class wineries.

“Other varieties grown in the Umpqua Valley include Rhone and Bordeaux grapes and those, too, do very well in the appropriate microclimes,” he added.

Located in three regions of Umpqua – the North Valley, Central Valley and South Valley — the 24 winery members of the UVWA are open throughout the year. Many offer events and promotions throughout the holiday season.

Delfino Vineyards kicks off the holidays with a pre-Thanksgiving open house on Nov. 22. Brandborg Wines in Elkton has

a Thanksgiving Wine Tasting Weekend Nov. 28-30. MarshAnne Landing near Oakland has two of its noted music events coming up including a Yuletide celebration on Dec. 7.

Henry Wine Estates in Umpqua will host its holiday open house from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Nov.28, 29 and 30 while Oakland’s Misty Oaks Vineyards will host a Thanksgiving weekend open house as well.

The Southern Oregon Wine Institute hosts wine tasting events on Friday and Saturday throughout November and December.

Abacela will hold its annual open house Nov. 28 and 29. To further Abacela’s holiday celebrations, Santa will visit this winery on Dec. 7, as part of its Toys for Tots drive.

In addition to carrying wine perfect for any holiday party or gift, Freed Estate Winery in Winston also displays and offers artwork from local artists

for more unique holiday gift options.

At Giradet Vineyards, shoppers can enjoy the winery’s new releases as well as food and wine pairings and holiday specials during Giradet’s Thanksgiving Weekend Open House from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Nov. 28, 29 and 30.

Melrose Vineyards on the South Umpqua River will also host a Thanksgiving open house on Nov. 28 and 29. This boutique winery offers a picturesque setting for private events including festive holiday parties. Melrose Vineyards can also create custom wine gift baskets for any holiday gift need.

Spangler Vineyards offers a wide selection of gift items as well. This family-owned Roseburg winery can also host an array of events or special occasions including holiday parties. Stop by Spangler’s tasting room in downtown Portland on

weekend afternoons.

The holidays are the perfect time to visit Umpqua Valley’s historical wineries as they celebrate this wine-growing region’s 30th anniversary. It is considered to be Oregon’s oldest fine wine region according to the association. German immigrants to the area first established vineyards here around 1880. Following Prohibition, Richard Sommers at Hillcrest was the first to plant pinot noir in Oregon. The area also had the first regional winegrowers association that eventually became the state’s Oregon Winegrowers Association.

For more information on the UVWA, visit www.umpquavalleywineries.org. From this website, follow links to the region’s wineries’ websites to learn more about each or find out about the many upcoming open houses or holiday events from these world class wineries.

Wizer’s Fine Wines great for holiday, year-round shopping

Tom Reider of Wizer’s Fine Wines in Lake Oswego doesn’t mince words when he describes his store’s philosophy about sparkling holiday wines. “Great sparkling wines can be enjoyed year-round, not just during the holidays,” says Reider, a 25-year veteran of Wizer’s. “In fact,” he says, “They’re meant to be enjoyed year-round.”

His point is that while many wine drinkers view the holidays as a time to make a special purchase of sparkling wine, many more discerning wine enthusiasts enjoy his store’s bountiful selection at all times throughout the year.

The store’s approach is simple: stock a tremendous selection of fabulous wines, many of which either are hard-to-find elsewhere in the Portland area, or are simply not available anywhere else. The selection of somewhere between 23,000 and 25,000 bottles includes ages and vintages that go much deeper than what

other wine shops can offer, including those that are going to age the best.

“Wines can age gracefully, and over time they can become more balanced,” explains Jim Vincent, a 36-year Wizer’s veteran. “Their tannins soften and the edges come off over time, allowing the wine’s true character to come out. That’s when wines reach their peak.”

Vincent says that when wine critics rate a current vintage, they may forecast the anticipated “peak” for that wine to be anywhere from 10 to 20 years into the future; enjoying the wine at its peak requires the connoisseur to be incredibly patient and forward-thinking. Most consumers aren’t that patient, and don’t plan that well.

That’s why Wizer’s stocks a deep selection of wines from vintages going back to the 1990s and early 2000s, which may be just reaching their peak drinking years now. This allows wine lovers to stop

in and find any number of fabulous wines from around the world right at their very peak.

The store has a special fondness for wines from Italy, France’s Rhone Valley, Oregon and Washington. But, Reider advises wine drinkers to explore. “We always say, pick a region, a varietal, and a producer who you like, and if they’re good, they’re bound to be fairly reliable across the years, regardless of vintage.”

In addition to its Lake Oswego store, Wizer’s lists its inventory online at www.wizers.com, and has built a solid business shipping wines throughout the U.S. The website includes Wizer’s Wine Cellar Collection, with all wines extensively sorted by region. Also found online are Wizer’s featured Wine Specials, many with opportune pricing.

Wizer’s is located at 330 First St. in Lake Oswego, and is open Tuesday-Saturday, 10:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.

—Aaron Cooper

JAY MCDONALD: A driving force, and a product of, Carlton's wine boom

DANIELLE CENTONI

SPECIAL WRITER

If you want the history of Carlton's wine boom in a nutshell, just look at Jay McDonald's resume.

He arrived in Carlton in 1993, before wine tasting rooms, before the tourists, before the national magazines had even heard of it. Twenty years later, he's gone from hobbyist to apprentice to winemaker. He's gone from being on the wine-making fringe, to negotiant (French: wine merchant) to bonded winery owner making his own wine. He's both a driving force and a product of Carlton's growing wine industry, his career evolving in lock-step with the city itself.

When he first arrived from the East Coast, Carlton was a sleepy agricultural town without much wine presence to speak of. His move was sparked by a desire to pursue a new career and put down some roots after a lifetime of moving around. "I was born in Texas but we left when I was three," he says. "We moved every three to five years when I was growing up."

He was 30 and working in finance in Manhattan when he decided it was time to get out. "You get to a point in your life and you wake up. You think, 'I'm pretty good at this but I'm not so good at dealing with all of the humanity of New York City.'" He needed a change of pace and a change of scenery, "And where wine grapes are grown is usually an attractive place to live."

He had been bitten by the wine bug in college ("I was the weirdo who had wine in his fridge instead of beer") so he started looking into making wine as a new career. He traveled to several wine regions, including New York, Texas and California to talk to winemakers and get a sense of whether or not his dream was viable. "I wanted to see what was happening. I spent about a week in each place. Sonoma County was too expensive. Mendocino was too far from civilization. And they were not very enthusiastic. But in Oregon, everyone was much more

embracing. I was introduced to 14 different winemakers in the first two days."

McDonald started out making wine with a group of home winemakers, many of whom went on to start wineries of their own, like Belle Ponte. "We all made wine together," he says. But he wasn't ready to jump into the commercial winemaking business just yet. Instead, he ended up becoming a catalyst for Carlton's wine tourism industry, buying downtown's historic bank building in 1995 and turning it into The Tasting Room, where visitors could taste wines from all over the Willamette Valley in one place.

"The winery owners suggested I do it," says McDonald. "Most were very small at the time. When we started we had Domaine Drouhin, Bergstrom, Ken Wright Cellars, and Cameron. They've all grown and have their own tasting rooms. But at the time they were too small and too busy. Winemaking takes up a lot of your time. It's like cooking. When you're cooking you can't leave the stove, and that stove is your winery. And you can't really delegate your wine-making. It's like delegating your love-making."

Within a year he began working with some of the wineries whose wines he carried, apprenticing in all aspects of production, from viticulture



Ross William Hamilton

Jay McDonald (left) has helped cement Carlton's wine industry with his label EIEIO & Co.

and harvest to fermentation and bottling. As the wine industry grew, so did his skill, contacts and resources. He put them all together in 1998 to launch his own label: EIEIO & Co. "I started purely as a negotiant," he says. "You make some wine and you buy wine or have wine made for you."

It was the perfect way for him to build a following and explore his personal winemaking style. "I think I've got my style figured out," he says. "It's Old World pinot. Nothing is added to it. No acid, no yeast, no enzymes. What-

ever nature gives me is what it is. That's what I think wine should be: History in the bottle."

In 2003, with Carlton's wine scene gaining steam, EIEIO became a fully bonded winery with McDonald responsible for all winemaking. Renting space from Josh Bergstrom of Bergstrom Winery, he invested in his own equipment to make pinot noir, white pinot noir and critically acclaimed chardonnay from grape to glass.

He still owns The Tasting Room, which features about 30 different win-

eries at any given time. "They come and go," he says. "Some are such limited production that we go through it pretty quickly. With others there's enough wine that there's always some around."

And with so many new, small labels emerging on the scene, The Tasting Room continues to be the place where small producers and curious wine-lovers can intersect.

"There are so many people launching their own labels now," says McDonald. "It's a natural progression. You start as an assistant and you have

your own wine on the side. There's a massive boom right now."

And he's not the least bit surprised. "Winemaking is tons of fun. Look at the business in a big-picture way: You're doing the earth a favor by planting something that's fairly low-impact. The next thing you know you're making a product that's, for the most part, good for you. And it has a low percentage of difficult people because everyone's into it because they want to do it. It's not a job. It's interesting, and it attracts people who are interesting."

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