

Washington's Green Vineyard Tour

Healthy vines offer eco-wines...

With our local food community absolutely booming with green influence, organic *this* and sustainable *that*, it's no surprise the wine industry has followed. Boasting over 500 wineries and nine designated appellations, Washington is ripe for shifting toward eco-friendly vineyards.

"There is an increased consumer interest in all things green and an interest in buying local," agrees Larry Nussbaum, Program Director of Stewardship Partners, a local organization that awards the Salmon Safe eco-label certification to vineyards in Washington and Oregon. "Vineyards see the Salmon-Safe label as a way to market themselves and let consumers know they are both a local and environmentally friendly Northwest wine." While Salmon-Safe cannot certify a vineyard organic, it is one of the first steps that winemakers can take to go green, as it endorses water quality and habitat protection on vineyards, partnered with on-farm biodiversity.

With the upcoming crush season upon us, we've compiled a few eco-friendly wineries—sustainable, organic and biodynamic—to visit whilst soaking up the last

of the summer heat. Tasting room hours vary, so it's best to call ahead.

Sustainable Vineyards

These vineyards incorporate environmentally friendly practices, such as water conservation, for the land. Additionally, some wineries have added the element of green architecture or green energy to their properties for a complete environmental approach.

Novelty Hill

14710 Woodinville-Redmond Road NE
Woodinville, Washington 98072
425-481-5502

Tasting Room

Daily 11am–5pm

www.noveltyhillwines.com

Novelty Hill wines are made from the young Stillwater Creek Vineyard in the Columbia Valley, a Salmon-Safe certified vineyard. With award-winning wines made by Mike Januik and a tasting room that is a mere 20 minutes away from Seattle, Novelty Hill is a sure bet. Their newest

wine, Spring Run Rosé (only available at the winery), donates two dollars from every bottle sold to the Washington-based Salmon-Safe program.

Wind River Cellars

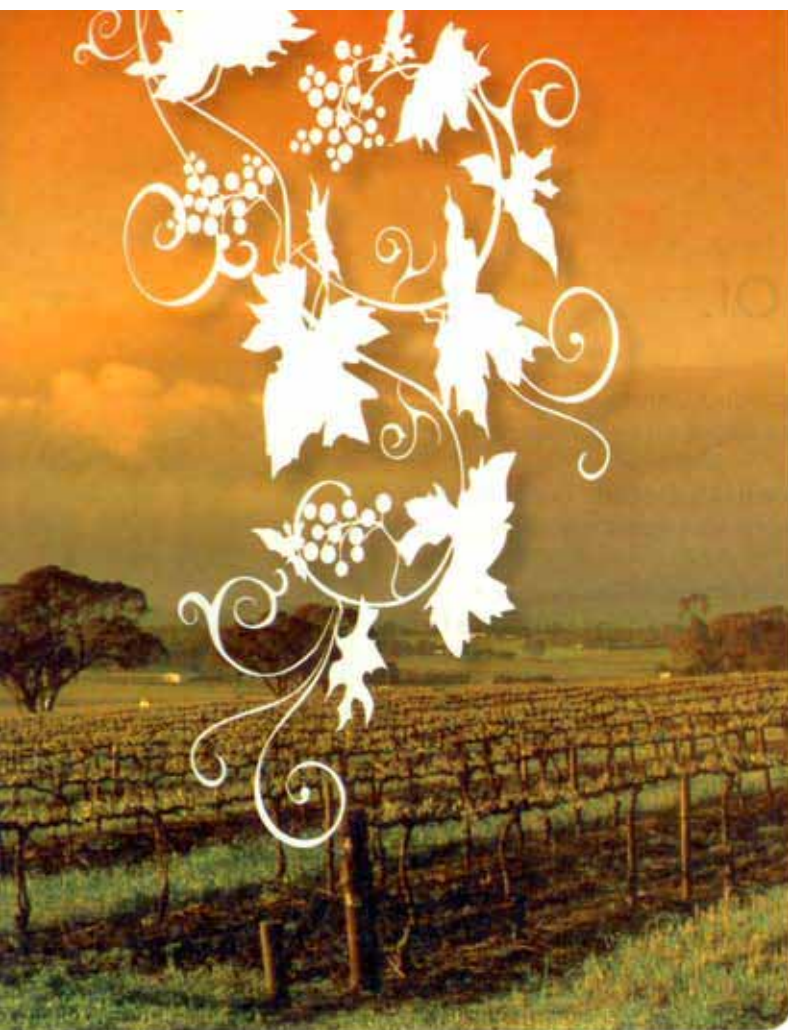
196 Spring Creek Rd.
Husum, WA 98623
509.493.2324

Tasting Room

Daily 10am–6pm

www.windrivercellars.com

Located on the White Salmon River, adjacent to Hood Canal, this 12-acre vineyard is overseen with a careful eye and a dedication to environmental friendliness. Their wines are produced by using 100% wind power (via the purchase of "green tags"), they plant between rows to diminish soil erosion and steer clear of chemical sprays. Involved in the local group, Gorge Grown, which promotes organic and sustainable farms, Wind Rivers sells their wines each week at the local Husum market on Saturdays from 9am–1pm. Come October, they host an annual Harvest picking. "We trade labor for wine and have a harvest



celebration afterwards," says Kris Goodwillie, part of the husband-wife team that works the land. You can book a three-day holiday and spend time on their farm getting your hands dirty and living your Dream Job as a winemaker.

Turning Grapes to Wine...

Organic wineries follow the guidelines set forth by the state and federal governments. Grapes are grown in a natural environment and true organic wineries do not add sulfites during the winemaking process. (There is big debate about the benefit of adding or withholding sulfites in the wine industry.) Some say sulfites are needed to deter bacteria and stabilize the wines. Others think sulfites unnecessary. USDA labeling requires a distinction, however, so while you will often see "wines made from organic grapes," they

may not be labeled "organic wine" due to the addition of sulfites during winemaking.

China Bend Winery

3751 Vineyard Way
Kettle Falls, WA 99141
(800) 700.6123

Tasting Room

Daily 12-5pm, April-Oct.

By appointment only in the off season

www.chinabend.com

Bart Alexandar and his family have been practicing the art of natural wine-making for years. They hand-pick their grapes and produce Estate Wines available for purchase at their on-site winery. "Our vineyard, garden, unique winery, and kitchen were created to maximize the natural goodness and health-giving properties of our wine and foods," says Bart. They have an intimate and quiet B&B on the property,

where you can grab a little r& and eat well with garden-fresh organic meals, paired with a hand-crafted glass of wine. Bart's favorite? The Marechal Foch.

Badger Mountain

1106 S. Jurupa Street

Kennewick, WA

800.643.9463

www.badgermtnvineyard.com

Tasting Room

Daily 10am-5pm

A father-son team purchased this vineyard in 1982 and the Washington State Department of Agriculture bestowed them the honor of first organic winery back in 1989—progressive! In 1996 Bill Powers was named Washington Wine Grape Grower of the year. He's been around a long time and was at the head of the curve when he chose to turn his land organic.

By the Light of the Moon

Finally, biodynamic, which is perhaps the most controversial practice, takes organic farming one step further and adds a holistic approach to farming, which includes timed plantings and harvest with the astrological calendar and strengthening the life forces on the farm. Some might say its pure alchemy.

Cayuse Vineyards

17 E. Main Street

Walla Walla, WA

509.526.0686

www.cayusevineyard.com

Tasting Room

Currently closed, you may join the waiting list by emailing info@cayusevineyards.com

Christophe Baron grew up in the countryside of France with wine in his veins. Cayuse Vineyards has the distinction of be-

ing the only known certified biodynamic winery in Washington State. A bit of a rogue winemaker, the tasting room is seldom open and you must be on the wait list. His latest wines will release in November of this year.

Syncline Wine Cellars

111 Balch Road

Lyle, WA 98635

509.365.4361

www.synclnewine.com

Tasting Room Hours

Memorial Day-September

Thurs.-Sunday 12-6pm

James and Poppy bought their vineyard in 2001 and have turned out noteworthy wines ever since. This summer, energy efficiency was at the forefront when they built a new winery building with Rastra block materials (made from 85% post-consumer recycled content) and incorporated radiant heat and cooling. The framing material is salvaged wood that was remilled locally.

In the vineyard, they have always farmed organically, and recently introduced biodynamic farming practices. "The dry climate has always allowed for 'softer' farming techniques that would leave many other regions envious," says James Mantone, the official Winemaker and Vineyard Manager of Syncline. In addition to the farm, on their property they maintain a seven-acre original growth oak forest and seasonal creek along with its adjacent riparian zone. ●

Amy Pennington spent two days last September hand-picking grapes from her families' vineyard in Slovenia. From that experience, she learned that she is a better eater than a picker.