

About the Walla Walla Valley:

Appellation

Grape growing in the Walla Walla Valley can be traced back to the late 1850's when immigrants settling in the area began to cultivate vines.

The making of homemade wine soon followed, leading to the production of wines on a commercial basis.

The Valley's reputation for producing wines of superb quality took root in 1977 when the first present day winery was established. In 1984, the region was federally recognized as a unique American Viticultural Area (AVA). It was the third Washington State AVA and at the time, home to just four wineries and 60 acres of vineyards.

As the number of wineries and vineyards continued to grow, so did the camaraderie. Winemakers and growers alike were all bound by a passion for the process, a commitment to quality, and a mutual respect for each other's unique visions. Today more than 80 wineries are operating in the valley and more than 1,700 acres of vineyards have become part of the agricultural landscape. Whether new or established, the members of this community of artisan winemakers and growers openly support each other. The result is a region with as much goodwill as individuality.

Facts and Figures

Location: Walla Walla is in the southeast corner of Washington State at the base of the Blue Mountains.

County: Walla Walla

County Population: 55,200 (4/1/01)

City Population: 29,500 (4/1/01)

Estimated Economic Impact on Walla Walla \$100+ Million

Licensed Wineries: 65 (8/05)

American Viticultural Area: Walla Walla Valley

Federally Designated: 1984/ Revised: 2001

Total Acres: 303,500

Planted Acres: 450 (1999)

Planted Acres: 1052 (2001)

(648 in Washington/403 in Oregon)

Primary Varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah

Other Varietals Include:

Sangiovese, Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Sèmillon and Viognier.

Soil Type: Varying combinations of loam, silt, loess and cobbles

Average Rain Fall: 12.5 inches

Average Growing Degree Days: 3,126

Frost Free Days: 190-220

Typical Growing Season: Budbreak usually occurs around April 10th. Harvest often begins in mid September and continues through mid to late October.

Peak elevation of the Blue Mountains: 4500ft

Typical vineyard elevation Typical vineyard elevation: Vineyard elevation ranges from 650 to 1500 feet with 850 to 1400 feet being most common.

History

The name translates as easily as it rolls off the tongue: Walla Walla. Many Waters. To the earliest Native tribes, the many waters came from the nearby Blue Mountains and gathered to form the Walla Walla River on its way to join the Columbia to the west. The waters flowed first; however, into a fair-sized Valley carved in the mountain's foothills, and bordered in part by the terrain of what is known as the Columbia Plateau. Tribal members knew the Valley's generally milder climate could maintain their people in winter villages. There were lush wild grasses which could sustain horses and attract game from the winter snows of the nearby Blues, or from the giant high plateau that becomes desolate and dangerous during the cold season. The rolling terrain and numerous watersheds offered protection from nature and other hazards of the day. Here the water was plentiful and full of fish and seldom froze, even in the coldest years. The meadows were wonderful places to gather with other people to trade, compete and celebrate treaties. Compared to the region around them, the Walla Walla Valley was a safe refuge from the treacherous conditions which can often be found during the winter for hundreds of miles around.

In this unique growing region, most of the earliest records of grapes and winemaking reference the Italians who had immigrated here in the mid to late 1800's and who brought with them their tradition of growing, making and drinking wine. Vines with these origins still exist in the Valley today. The first post-prohibition winery was Blue Mountain Vineyards. It was bonded in 1950 by the Pesciallo family where they produced Black Prince and other Italian varietal wines for a period of several years before succumbing to economics and climate.

To the wine world of today, Walla Walla has become know for the quality and style of its red wines, especially Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot with Syrah gaining notoriety in recent years.

In the 1970's, the pioneers of today's wine community began to think similar thoughts: that the Walla Walla Valley, with its long history of fruit growing, moderate climate, wine-making heritage, and interesting terrain might just be a place to grow vines and make wine on a commercial scale.

These pioneers of the region applied for and received approval of the Walla Walla Valley as a unique American Viticultural Area (AVA) in 1984. It was the third in Washington State and also includes a portion of land in Oregon. In the time leading to the recognition of the appellation, four wineries had been bonded starting with Leonetti Cellar, and shortly thereafter, Woodward Canyon. L'Ecole N° 41 and Waterbrook soon followed. In addition to the smaller vineyards that were being planted, the Valley's first large-scale, commercial vineyard Seven Hills was established.

By the time the BATF recognized the Walla Walla Valley AVA, the Valley was beginning to gain attention from within the wine industry, as well as, attracting publicity from journalists and media outside the region. The foundation for today's industry had been laid and the benchmark for quality had been set. In addition, fruit from the area was now being harvested and a baseline for understanding the local growing conditions was being constructed.

Every few years another winery would join the fold and take up the challenge of producing the highest quality wine and the growing of outstanding fruit. Seven Hills Winery and Patrick M. Paul each got their start during this time. More vines were added, although acreage increases were small each year. The industry was small and everyone knew everyone else involved, while the welcome mat remained out for any newcomers. Growers and winemakers alike regularly shared time in the cellar or at the table and together learned more about wines and vines.

By 1990 there were just six wineries and the Valley's grape acreage stood at perhaps 100 acres. The total collective production of wine was microscopic by any measure, but it was the quality that was being noticed by many inside and outside the trade. As the tiny trickle of wine produced in the Walla Walla AVA began to flow to the outside world, a "wine renaissance" was beginning to happen globally. The Pacific Northwest had staked a claim in this new wine world and as people learned about the region, they also began to hear about Walla Walla. This interest spread rapidly to those with Walla Walla connections. The early 1990s saw the planting of more vines and the establishment of another large-scale vineyard, Pepper Bridge. At the same time, a group of local investors, working closely with the Napa based Chalone Wine group, laid the foundation for Canoe Ridge Vineyard, the Valley's first winery supported in part by a major outside investor.

As the industry has grown, many new wineries have gotten their start in the arms of an established winery. Waterbrook Winery's modern production facility started the trend, sharing space, equipment, and any help needed. Other wineries also adopted "extra guests," a practice that has helped form close, personal relationships throughout the local industry.

By the turn of the new century, the Walla Walla Valley wine industry had 22 wineries and 800 acres of grapes. In the year 2000 the AVA had been expanded back to the original boundaries proposed in the 1984 application. The year 2000 also saw the formation of the Walla Walla Valley Wine Alliance with 100% of the Valley's wineries and 98% of the Valley's planted acreage represented.

Today, more than 80 Walla Walla Valley wineries and more than 1,700 acres of Walla

Walla Valley grapes contribute to the ever growing, international acclaim garnered by the wines of this newly-emerging region of Washington State.

Terrior

The many waters of the Walla Walla River begin in the Blue Mountains in small trickles of snowmelt and natural springs. Each little stream gathers momentum and size as the mountains turn to one of several steep canyons, which are the watersheds of the Valley - a feature that influences today's viticulture. Each of these watersheds is also an air drainage, which together and separately funnel a mix of warm, cold, wet and dry air, which travels the region and bumps into this beautiful mountain range. These above ground waters and deep underground wells provide irrigation for the region.

Millions of years earlier, during the Cenozoic era, the soils of our area were created by a series of unique cataclysmic events. Arguably one of the earth's largest basalt flows covered the Columbia Plateau where much winegrowing takes place. This contribution from deep in the earth covered ancient strata and ocean beds, and it is our good fortune that the earth does gift the ocean floor back to the surface in the ash coming from the volcanic peaks of the Cascades.

The other unique cataclysm that affected this area was huge floods created by glaciers of the ice age. Continental glaciers dammed huge pools of water only to spill the contents in unimaginable rushes of water that not only tore channels in the basalt but also brought granite rocks from the far north to add to the mix of parent materials of our unique soils. Much of the soil in the Walla Walla Valley is a blown in mix called loess. These soils containing particles from hundreds of square miles were piled in hills and were sometimes reworked by local streams and mixed with cobbles from the Blue Mountains. Fire and ice made a fine mix of elements for the roots of grapes to explore as they put together the flavors that help define our unique terroir. It would be hard to find soils as complex, nourishing the roots of vines elsewhere.

Overview of the Washington Wine Region

Washington State is a premium wine producing region located in the northwest corner of the United States. Although a relatively young wine industry, it is now the nation's second largest wine producer and is ranked among the world's top wine regions. Washington wines are found nationally in all 50 states and internationally in more than 40 countries.

With 30,000+ acres planted, the state has ideal geography and conditions for growing premium vinifera wine grapes. Primarily grown on their own root stocks, the vines produce grapes of consistent quality, resulting in strong vintages year after year. While its focus is on Chardonnay, Riesling, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, the region also produces a wide range of other spectacular whites and reds.

Winemakers from all over the world have chosen to establish themselves in Washington, where they can create wines reflecting this region's unique characteristics. Their hand-crafted wines are receiving wide acclaim from critics regionally, nationally and internationally for their

consistently high quality. Many of them have received scores of 90 and above from the major wine media. Overall this is a higher percentage than other leading wine regions.

As the state's fourth largest fruit crop, the Washington wine industry is an important contributor to the long term preservation of Washington agriculture. The industry is committed to sustainable agricultural practices and conservation of water resources.

Washington's wine industry generates more than \$3 billion to the state economy. It employs more than 14,000, directly and indirectly, with projections to add nearly 2,000 more jobs by 2006. In terms of tax revenues accrued to the state and federal government, wine grapes are among the highest tax generators of any agricultural crops. Furthermore, Washington wine tourism attracts nearly two million visitors annually contributing to the positive growth of local and regional economies.

Washington State - the perfect climate for wine = ideal growing conditions, quality wines, business innovation, lifestyle, and social responsibility. All are key elements of this world-class wine industry.

Average hours of summer sunlight: 17.4 hours per day, about 2 hours more than California's prime growing region

Annual rainfall : Eight inches (20.32 cm) in Eastern Washington (the major grape growing region) 48 inches (121.92 cm) in Western Washington

The Perfect Climate

Our ideal viticultural landscape, award-winning wines, spirit of innovation, business lifestyle and social responsibility make Washington state the perfect climate for wine. Washington's varied climates and rich, volcanic soils combine with long summer days and northern latitudes to create prime growing regions across the state.



Washington state shares the same latitude as the famed Burgundy and Bordeaux wine regions of France. The state's geographic make-up includes a variety of microclimates for wine grapes to thrive. Washington's major grape region is further defined by six major American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) □ Yakima Valley, Walla Wally Valley, Columbia Valley, Puget Sound, Red Mountain and Columbia Gorge. Each region defines a unique climate, soil and physical features that distinguish it from surrounding areas.

Washington state's northerly latitude provides an average of two more hours of sunlight during the prime growing season than California. Washington's 17.4 hours of daily sunlight and warm days allow the grapes ripen fully while cool nights keep fruit acids high, creating rich, flavorful, well-balanced wines. Primarily grown on their own root stocks, Washington state vines produce grapes of consistent quality, resulting in strong vintages year after year.

The vast majority of Washington's wine grapes are grown east of the Cascade Mountain range, providing an ideal dry, sunny climate for growing world-class wine grapes. Eastern Washington's arid, calcareous, and sandy soils pass on mineral notes, depth, and softness that set Washington wines apart from other regions. The mild climate on the Western side of the state is perfect for growing classic noble grape varieties and fruit, as well as some hard-to-find grape varieties. Western Washington is drier and sunnier than many classic wine grape growing regions in Europe, and rarely suffers from prolonged freezes in the winter.