



# COMPASS WINES



*The vast selection at Compass Wines in Anacortes includes a hefty Washington wine section*

## BEST PLACE to BUY WINE

*A brick-and-mortar or online retail operation with a commitment to showcasing Washington wine*

### Compass Wines

**> THAT THIS YEAR'S WINNER** for Best Place to Buy Wine is a full 80 miles north of Seattle speaks to just how impressive and unique Compass Wines is among Washington wine retailers. After more than two decades in the wine and hospitality trade, Doug Charles launched Compass Wines in Anacortes in 2001 with a pair of partners, one of whom (Will Parks) is still involved in the business. The Compass location (*Anacortes, 1405 Commercial Ave.; 360.293.6500; compasswines.com*) is perfectly situated to lure the long lines of cars that flow toward the Anacortes ferry terminal, bound for the San Juan Islands or other destinations. From very early on, Compass developed a special reputation among Washington wine lovers, based on three main attributes. First, breadth of selection. At any given moment, Compass typically has thousands of different wines available for purchase. Second, Charles' skill as a curator. Compass quickly became known for offering wines from rare, under-the-radar, difficult-to-find producers, boutique wineries that would only sell their wines directly through their tasting rooms and through Compass. "The purpose was to have the cool stuff that others didn't," says Charles. "Otherwise, why on earth would someone come all the way up here to buy wine?" The final item that cemented Compass Wines' reputation was Charles' willingness to cellar wines for years before offering them for sale. In a trade where cash flow is king, stashing away inventory is practically unheard of, but it offers Compass customers the chance to access wines that are at their peak.