

# COMPASS WINES

1405 Commercial Avenue • Anacortes WA 98221

[www.compasswines.com](http://www.compasswines.com)

## Happy New Year!

Every year at this time, we here at Washington Wine Central, up in little 'ol Anacortes look back over the last year to reflect on the 10 Washington reds and 5 whites that blew us away. This is our own, extremely subjective, biased and politically incorrect assessment of what we have tasted over the last year. Unlike the other guys, we don't do it blind, we don't require wines to be submitted and we do wait until the whole year is over (seriously, a 'wines of the year' list that is written in August?). In fact, many of these wines are not even available for us to sell anymore, so blatant sales expectations are not part of the picture either. We pick those wines that really spoke to us, our customers and maybe they sold well, maybe they didn't. There are a couple of ground rules: none of our own wines are allowed, i.e.; No BBQ or ded reckoning or any other custom bottling done for us. We only will pick one wine per winery. But if there are multiple wines nominated by the staff, the winery is in the running for 'Winery of the Year'. Two obvious choices that would probably be on this list every year have been grandfathered into the de-facto 'Compass Wines Hall of Fame' to make room for everybody else; Leonetti and Quilceda Creek, so they will not ever appear on here again, unless some monumental thing happens like the first 101 point wine or the first winery to get a perfect score on every wine they make. If a winemaker makes wines for multiple labels, they are looked at as a hired gun and the wines are all open for this process. We won't try to breakdown the source of the juice or who blended it or who punched it down. The winery takes 'ownership' not the winemaker(s). And finally, even though all the staff participates in the process of picking the wines, I am the autocratic dictator here, so the final decisions are all mine.

As the year progresses, we will be moving this newsletter to a more digital format, so please get your email to us. You can sign up for the email list on the website, or just send it to us and we can do it for you. We don't want you to miss any upcoming news from us.

We had a fabulous 2015 and hope all of you did as well! Keep your fingers crossed that winter isn't too bad, and remember that spring is just around the corner, along with all those great, new releases that come with it! Now to our awards!

*Doug, Will, Laura, Mickey, Ally and Brandi*

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### Washington Wine of the Year Coach House Cellars Garage Red \$12.99

What a breath of fresh air this wine is! From tiny Coach House Cellars in Bellingham comes this scrumptious, Bordeaux style blend of mostly Sheridan Vineyard fruit, which just did not make the cut for their varietal wines. Add in the great price and the classy, understated package and you have a home run that we just cannot keep in stock. A unanimous staff pick. Bravo!

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### Washington Winemaker of the Year Chris Gorman

This is a new one for me, but this is my sand box so I can break the rules. We had multiple wineries with multiple nominations for this list, but Chris made 5 different wines that got votes, from three different brands: Gorman, Ashan and Force Majeure, so he gets the nod for stud of the year. If he keeps this up, we may have to bar him from future competitions. To make it even more significant, he was nominated for wines using three different grapes. Great job Chris!

# WASHINGTON'S TOP 10 REDS

*Washington's top 10 red wines of the year in alphabetical order*

## **Betz Family Winery**

### **Columbia Valley 'Clos du Betz' 2012 \$61.99**

Bob Betz is one of the grand masters of the state, and it is always hard to pick a favorite amongst his releases. However, this year, the 'Clos du Betz' takes the prize. Toasted coconut, chocolate and black cherry abound in this brilliant example of a Bordeaux style blend.

## **Bontzu**

### **Walla Walla Valley 'GSM' 2013 \$25.99**

A newcomer to us and the rest of the wine world, but look out, we have a budding star on our hands. Every wine we tasted from this Walla Walla rookie was delicious and this one only just edged out the Malbec to make this list. A winery to watch in a big way.

## **Force Majeure**

### **Red Mountain 'Collaboration Series V' 2012 \$90.99**

Force Majeure is in the process of moving over from the system of using Washington wine makers, to using their own, so this may be the swan song for this wine as we know it, but damn, what a stunner. Chris Gorman may have crafted my favorite Red Mountain Cab of all time.

## **Golden Ridge**

### **Walla Walla Valley Merlot 2012 \$29.99**

We have been fans of this small and unassuming winery since day one for their Cabernet, but this is the first example of Merlot we have seen from them and it is a real eye opener. Not only is it the best Merlot I had all year, but the price is about half of what it could be. A major bargain.

## **Gorman**

### **'Old Scratch' Red Mountain**

### **Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 \$28.99**

Finding a great Cabernet in Washington has gotten pretty easy to do and Chris Gorman has made his fair share. However, finding a wine of this quality, from this rock star of a winemaker for this price, is something new. One of the surprise new wines of the year.

## **Latta Wines**

### **Snipes Mountain, Upland Vineyard Grenache 2011 \$39.99**

Neck and neck with Two Vintners for the best Grenache I have ever tasted from Washington, Andrew Latta is quickly becoming a force to be reckoned with in this state. Gorgeous fruit, impeccable acidity and serious stuff. His Malbec and Roussane were also in the running.

## **Owen Roe**

### **Dubrul Vineyard**

### **Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 \$75.99**

Owen Roe is a name that has been famous in the PNW for years, but since the focus has moved to Washington recently, the Yakima portfolio just keeps getting better. The Yakima Valley Red was also nominated, but this one takes the prize. Fabulous Cabernet here.

## **Terra Blanca**

### **'Arch Terrace'**

### **Red Mountain Syrah 2010 \$14.99**

I judged this at the Pacific Northwest Invitational Wine Competition with a bunch of other wine pros, and our panel was convinced that this was one of the big name Syrahs from the 'Rocks' in Walla Walla. Lots of exotic game, coffee, smoke and deep berry. A fantastic value.

## **Two Vintners**

### **Boushey Vineyard**

### **Grenache 2013 \$30.99**

Morgan Lee just seems to get better and better with each release. The future for Grenache in Washington is huge, and this is a perfect example of why. Likely my favorite example of this grape ever made in this state. Stunning stuff! One of four 2V wines nominated.

## **Woodinville Wine Cellars**

### **'Reserve' Cabernet Sauvignon 2012 \$50.99**

Sean Boyd does not make this wine every year, so when he does, one needs to take notice. Full of power and muscle, it also does it with layers of dark chocolate, cassis and fine grained tannins. It has been nicknamed 'the Eagle Eater' for the third time for good reason. Who needs Napa?

# TOP 5 WHITES

*Washington's top 5 white wines in alphabetical order*

## Ashan

### **Barrel Fermented Columbia Valley Chardonnay 2014 \$21.99**

Chris Gorman is on a roll with the Ashan brand and as a result, this was our top selling domestic Chardonnay of 2015. Just enough oak to keep the Napa crowd happy, with enough acidity to keep the wine geeks in line. A fantastic value as well.

### **Chinook Yakima Valley Semillon 2013 \$17.99**

Kay and Clay from Chinook have been making some of the most compelling and consistent whites in Washington for 30 years now and even though this wine is no longer called 'Topaz', it still harkens back to the 'old days'. Honey, beeswax, melon and pear, with lemon peel acidity.

## Jones of Washington

### **Ancient Lakes Pinot Gris 2014 \$13.99**

As of late, I have preferred many Washington Pinot Gris to the much more famous versions from Oregon, and here is a classic example. Bright fruit with notes of the tropics and citrus with bracing acidity to finish it off. Delicious stuff.

## Lobo Hills

### **Roth Rock Farm, Yakima Valley Chenin Blanc 2014 \$22.99**

What was once one of Washington's signature whites (back in the early 1980's) is making a comeback in a big way, and white wine master Tony Dollar has hit the nail on the head with this one. Rich and silky with lots of natural acidity. A real treat, even if hardly any was made.

### **Thurston Wolfe Washington State 'PGV' 2014 \$14.99**

When Wade and Becky came out with this Pinot Gris / Viognier blend a few years back, it was a bit of a novelty. However, it has become one of the textbook examples of what forward thinking in terms of blends can achieve. Simply fabulous with seafood. We cannot keep it in stock.

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**Our annual "oh crap, the credit card bill just arrived" value wine**

### **Tria Syrah Terre Siciliane 2014 \$8.99**

We have been on a roll lately with some mind blowing values from Sicily and this is why. One of our importer buddies has stumbled upon a group of wines of such high quality and great price that we are just working our way through them. They are such astounding bargains, that breaking some of our own rules is no biggie. Fat and fleshy, with spice notes, a hint of flowers and lip smacking acidity. Hard to believe it is this price, so we grabbed a bunch before he changed his mind. Load up on this one while you can.



# WINE CLUBS

## Welcome to the world of wine clubs.

We have several different clubs for all your hassle free wine buying. We will select your wines and either ship them to you, put them in your locker, or have them ready for pickup at the store. And best of all, by being a club member, all featured wines come to you at a minimum of 10% off our everyday price.

## New Washington 'Hot List' Wine Club

Our new Washington 'hot list' wine club will provide the lucky recipient with two bottles of wine per month, of the newest, hottest and tiniest production wines in the state. We are lucky to be in a position to taste and actually have the opportunity to buy many of the ultra limited production wines made out there that often are only available at the winery (or through us). In many cases, we are talking about production levels in the range of less than 50 cases total. The price will vary each month, with the average bottle being in the \$30-\$40 range, and always discounted well below our usual price. If you want the newest and the hottest properties, and those hyper limited production wines that others just dream about, then this club is for you.

## Washington Wine of the Month Club

One bottle, or one each of Washington State red and white wine per month, or 4 reds, 2 for drinking now and 2 to lay in the cellar.

**\$14.99 single**

**\$28.99 for one red and one white  
\$99.99 for 4 bottles**

## Unlimited Club

You decide what you would like, or let us decide! Would you like Grand Cru Burgundy every month? California Cult wines? How about a case of cider or sake every few weeks? Give us a budget and some parameters to shoot for and we will do the rest. Some restrictions apply. **Mkt/month**

## Rare Washington Club

With every release, you will get the following wines: Leonetti, Quilceda Creek, Woodward Canyon Old Vines, Doubleback, Reynvaan, Rotie, Upchurch, Andrew Will Ciel du Cheval, Sleight of Hand Archimage, Betz Syrahs, Corliss and Walla Walla Vintners Select.

**This club is currently sold out, but we do have some limited 'provisional' memberships available. Please contact us for details.**

## Washington's New Classics Wine Club

With the 'Rare Washington Wine Club' all filled up now, we continue to be bombarded with calls for a new club, loaded with a bunch of the new wine stars in the state. We will set aside any amount you would like of each of the following wines upon release.

We bill your credit card as the wine arrives, and either ship the wine, or keep it in the store for pickup. All of these wines are released periodically throughout the year, but we will not hit you with more than two in a given month.

You will get the following wines: **Cadence, Fidelitas Optu, Sheridan L'Orage, Mark Ryan Dead Horse, Rulo Syrah, Gorman Evil Twin, JM Tre Fancuili, Woodinville Wine Cellars Indomitable, Golden Ridge, Hightower Red Mountain Reserve, Lawrelin Cabernet, Avennia Justine.**

**Mkt/month**



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1405 Commercial Ave  
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## Store Hours

Monday - Thursday 10 - 6  
Friday 10 - 7  
Saturday 10 - 6  
Sunday 11 - 5

Contact us 360.293.6500  
compasswines.com

Send your e-mail address to:  
doug@compasswines.com

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, February 5 from 5:00-8:00**

### **Our annual pre-Super Bowl Junk Food and fine wine Tailgate Party**

In recent years, this now famous event was even featured on KOMO TV in Seattle for our memorable pairing of BBQ Red and Skittles. How do we follow that up? Only time will tell. Typically about half a dozen great wines and classic tail gate party junk food to pair with them. Some memorable pairings from the past have been Bollinger Champagne and Twinkies, Silver Oak and Ho-Ho's and 1975 Chateau Rieussec with McDonald's Apple Pie. This one is \$25 per person to pay for all the scrumptious food. Reservations highly suggested.

**Saturday April 2 and Sunday April 3**

### **Taste Washington Seattle**

Come visit the ded reckoning both at Taste Washington and for the first time, there will also be a Soy Turkiye Copper both as well. We will be there both days, all day long and are also selling both standard and VIP tickets in the shop. We cannot sell these on line, so please give us a call or stop by for details.

