

COMPASS WINES

1405 Commercial Avenue • Anacortes WA 98221

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 break down 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 unelected, non-electoral college, autocratic dictator here, so the final decisions are all mine.



As the time progresses, we will continue to 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 2016 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, Sandy, Ally and Brandi

'Washington Wine of the Year' Maison Bleue Metis Red 2013

was \$40.00, now \$14.99

Maison Bleue has been making stunning wines for a few years now, but with the massive price drop on the 2012 version of this wine, many of you just tried it for the first time. That wine is now all sold out, but they offered us the even better 2013 for the same price, so this wine is a total no-brainer for this spot. A stunning value. Bravo!



'Washington Winery of the Year'

Lobo Hills

I always hesitate to give repeat awards like this, as I really like spreading the love around, but Tony Dollar had 6 different wines nominated for this list, one of which, the Sauvignon Blanc was on every score sheet and in a dead heat for Wine of the Year. Of those 6, one was a blend and the others were 5 different varietals. Tony is a quiet force to be reckoned with and folks really need to take note. I am thrilled to have him as a second time winner of this award.



WASHINGTON'S TOP 10 REDS

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

A Maurice

Artist Series McCool

Columbia Valley 2013 \$41.99

Killer fruit profile of damson, cassis and black raspberry, with dark chocolate, mint and cedar notes in this finish. 95 points from Parker never hurts, nor does having one of Anacortes' favorite artists, Anne Martin McCool on the label.

Andrew Will

'Esploso'

Columbia Valley 2013 \$60.99

The first solo wine from Will Camarda, Chris' son, for whom the winery is named and who is taking over winemaking duties. This is an awesome debut for him, incredibly limited and a unanimous choice by the staff. Watch out for this kid!

Damsel Cellars

Columbia Valley

Syrah 2013 \$35.99

Damsel is tiny, not from Walla Walla and not made by a larger than life male winemaker, so you may not have ever heard of the wines, but trust me, you need to know what Mari is doing here. Incredibly well made, just the right amount of funk, and miniscule production. Bingo!

Fidelitas

Quintessence Vineyard

Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 \$60.99

Charlie Hoppes pretty much has his hands in every vineyard on Red Mountain, but this is the first single vineyard wine from this one we have ever seen. He hit this one right on the button. Way more elegance than is typical for Red Mountain fruit. Very limited but well worth the hunt.

Gorman

'Old Scratch' Red Mountain

Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 long gone

This is the second year in a row that the 'Scratch' has made this list but unfortunately, even though we tried to warn people, the national press found it, gave it big numbers and 'poof' it evaporated across the country. Get ready for the 2015 now.

Hightower

Pepperbridge Vineyard

Merlot 2013 \$30.99

Hightower is another master of Red Mountain, so I will admit that a Walla Walla Merlot does seem a bit out of place, but 'holy grape stomp Batman', this wine is awesome! Dark chocolate bars, a touch of herb and firm tannins. Is it possible this was made from Junior Mints? Wow!

Sol Stone

Columbia Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon 2014 \$24.99

We were cold cocked by the simply amazing value of the 2013 version of this wine made from old vine Sagemoor fruit and partially aged in American oak. The follow up 2014 is even better and was darn near close to the 'Wine of the Year' title. Watch these guys really closely!

Solera Bravo

Vermut Del Sol \$24.99

Who knew Washington would have its own, world class red Vermouth? Nacho Bravo (yes, his real name), has crafted an utterly stunning version of this, ever gaining in market share, elixir. Not just for Manhattans anymore, this stuff is fantastic over ice or with soda. Cocktail heaven!

Tempus Cellars

Sagemoor Vineyard

Reserve 2012 \$40.99

This one was a shot out of the blue. Too bad the production was microscopic. Classic Sagemoor fruit with cocoa powder, violets, vanilla cherry bon bons and firm tannins. This tiny Walla Walla winery has not made a whole lot of noise in the past, but I see some big things ahead.

Two Vintners

'Sal' Horse Heaven Hills

Cabernet Sauvignon 2013 \$55.99

Morgan Lee has become a staple on this list for the last few years, but always for his Rhone varietals. This Cabernet breaks that mold in a big way. Pure essence of Cabernet fruit, with cassis, damson and a streak a cedar in the background. Stunning stuff.

All wines subject to prior sale.



TOP 5 WHITES

Washington's top 5 white wines in alphabetical order.

Lobo Hills

Lonesome Spring Vineyard

Sauvignon Blanc 2015 \$22.99

This may be the new benchmark for Washington Sauvignon Blanc. Fermented in a concrete egg, on crushed basalt rock taken from the vineyard. I don't think Tony can make a bad wine, but this may very well be the best wine he has ever made. A unanimous vote getter.

Perennial Vintners

Puget Sound

Melon de Bourgogne 2014 \$17.99

This is Washington's version of Muscadet and what a winner it is. Classic Melon fruit with that fantastic acidity which can only be gained in a cool climate, like the Puget Sound appellation. Perfect oyster wine and it even comes from an island (Bainbridge)!

Ross Andrew

Celilo Vineyard

Pinot Gris 2015 sold out

Usually, the fruit for this wine comes from the Oregon side of the river, but now that the fruit comes from Celilo, down in the Columbia Gorge, we can include it here. I only wish there was more to play with as we could have sold this all day long. Brilliant stuff.

The Ghost of 413

Columbia Valley Riesling 2014 \$8.99

Made from Ancient Lakes fruit, like many of our more famous Rieslings, the value in this is simply astounding. Like biting into a slightly under ripe pineapple that makes your mouth water in anticipation. If you are afraid of Riesling, I dare you to try this and not fall in love.

Thurston Wolfe

Yakima Valley

Albarino 2015 \$17.99

About as rare white grape as is to be found here, Albarino may be the white of the future for the state. Passion Fruit acidity, bright as the sun in Yakima in August and about as refreshing a white as I had all year. I judged this at the Columbia Gorge this year and it totally blew me away.

Our annual "oh crap, the credit card bill just arrived" value wine Bodegas Atalaya 'Laya' 2015 \$8.99

The Almansa region of Spain has churned out some amazing deals over the years, but this may be one of the best. Blackberry syrup with peppercorns, smoke, baking spice and just a whiff of wild game. Perfect for those hearty winter stews and roasts and light on the wallet, like we all need this time of year. A great value to say the least.



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, Two Vintners 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

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, February 3 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, February 25 1:00-5:00

Alberto Brini of Il Conventino

Put this on the calendar now! Alberto has not been here for a little while, but when he does come, we always get a big crowd. Come taste his stunning wines from Montepulciano, which are some of the rock stars of Tuscany and we often have some pretty tasty Italian snacks to try as well! This tasting is free.

Saturday March 25 and Sunday March 26

Taste Washington Seattle

Come visit the ded reckoning booth at Taste Washington and for the second time, there will also be a Soy Copper USA booth as well. We will be there both days, all day long and are also selling copper at the show with special pricing, plus we have both standard and VIP tickets for both days in the shop. We cannot sell these on line, so please give us a call or stop by for details.