

# 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 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 2018 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 which come with it! Now to our awards!

*Doug, Will, Laura, Sandy, Shelly, Chris and Theodore (from afar)*

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### WASHINGTON WINE OF THE YEAR

**Lawrelin Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2005**  
**\$46.99**

Yes, that vintage is correct, 2005 is the current release and what a wine it is. Stunning complexity, supple tannins, crisp with mouth-watering acid and a finish that only comes from age in the bottle. Kendall Mix is not a household name but this wine needs to be on any serious Cabernet lover's radar. Brilliant stuff.

### WASHINGTON WINERY OF THE YEAR

**Hightower Cellars**

I have been selling Tim and Kelly's wines since the very first vintage, in the late 1990's, before this shop was even here. They make this list just about every year, and had three wines nominated this time, so it is a no-brainer to put them to the head of the class for 2018. Bravo to one of the pioneers of Red Mountain and master of Merlot!



# WASHINGTON'S TOP 10 REDS

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

## **Cedergreen**

### **Columbia Valley Gamay Noir 2016**

**\$20.99**

Maybe the most elegant and stylish version of this grape I have ever tasted from a winery on this side of the Atlantic. Bright and lively raspberry and tarragon, with a kiss of mint. Not every red wine needs to be massive and tannic and this is a brilliant example of one that is not.

## **Doubleback**

### **Walla Walla Cabernet Sauvignon 2015**

**(sold out)**

With winemaker Josh McDaniels at the helm, the Bledsoe ship has been firing off the long bombs year after year and this may be the finest wine yet released. I only wish we had more. It is now completely sold out.

## **Hightower**

### **Red Mountain Merlot 2014**

**\$30.99**

The 2013 version of this wine was on this list last year and the Walla Walla version of Hightower Merlot the year before. They also had two other wines nominated this year as well. Merlot is their claim to fame, but do not forget the Cabernet, Reserve and Rose as well.

## **In Sheep's Clothing**

### **Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon 2016**

**\$18.99**

We saw a bunch of amazing value Washington State Cabernets this year and two of them are on this list, from different appellations. This Columbia Valley gem was new to us this year and we expect great things from them going forward.

## **Pasek Cellars**

### **'Call Me a Cab'**

### **Walla Walla Cabernet Sauvignon 2015**

**\$17.99**

Walla Walla Cabernet of this quality just does not exist at this price, and to see it coming from a winery known for Cranberry and Blackberry fruit wines, makes it a real surprise, but in a good way. I don't know if this wine could ever be duplicated at this price. A slam dunk.

## **Passing Time**

### **Horse Heaven Hills Cabernet Sauvignon 2015**

**\$81.99**

We have two former NFL QB's in this state with wineries, and both are on this list, using fruit from different parts of the state. This was a remarkable vintage for the HHH appellation and this wine is a perfect example. Gorgeous wine and extremely limited

## **Pollard**

### **Yakima Valley Cabernet Franc 2016**

**(sold out)**

The debut Cab Franc from this new vineyard and producer closely tied to Andrew Will. From arguably my favorite spot in the state for Cab Franc, Zillah, this wine was like a three way love child of the Loire, the Right Bank and Two Blondes Vineyard. Killer stuff, but long gone.

## **Schooler Nolan**

### **Horse Heaven Hills Red 2016**

**\$14.99**

The remarkable Cabernet from these guys was almost on this list, and deservedly so, but we only take one wine per producer and this one edged it out by a nose due to the stupid good price. Take note of this winery, we certainly are. A ridiculous value.

## **Sleight of Hand**

### **Psychedelic Syrah Walla Walla 2015**

**\$59.99**

Trey Busch has names for his wines which sometimes are hard to get a handle on, but this one does have a nose like an Iron Butterfly concert in 1968, with loads of game, that 'funk' from the Rocks and the gorgeous fruit to back it up. Very little of this vintage left.

## **Two Vintners**

### **'Some Days are Stones'**

### **Walla Walla Syrah 2015 \$29.99**

Two Walla Walla Syrahs from 2015 on this list. See a trend here? All wild yeast fermentation on fruit from the Rocks, ends up making a wine with very European overtones, not unlike the great wines from Cote Rotie and Hermitage, for a fraction of the price.





# TOP 5 WHITES

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

## **Elentone Columbia Valley Brut 2013 \$40.99**

Champagne quality bubbles from mostly Chelan area fruit, crafted in tiny amounts by a guy who learned the trade in the U.K. What is not to love about this new project?

## **Lobo Hills Yakima Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2017 \$17.99**

Every year it seems, Tony Dollar is on this list for one of his whites and every time, it is a different wine. Think this guy knows how to make killer white wine? Another stunner.

## **Palencia Ancient Lakes Albarino 2017 \$15.99**

The rate that Albarino has started to appear on this list in the last few years is an indication that we have fully endorsed this grape as Washington's next great white grape. A beautiful example.

## **Simpatico Fanatic White 2017 \$18.99**

You guessed it, another Albarino. Driven by lime, lemon zest, green papaya and with that mouth-watering finish which only natural acid can bring. Scrumptious stuff.

## **Tranche Pape Blanc 2015 \$25.99**

White Rhone blends are not the most sought after wines nor are they easy to sell. However, for pure drinking pleasure, this wine is hard to beat. A great Chardonnay replacement.

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**Our annual  
“oh crap, the credit card bill just arrived”  
value wines**

## **Vina Hermina ‘Herminia’ Rioja 2015 \$8.99**

One of the greatest producers of Rioja has an entry level Tempranillo which will knock your socks off. Raspberry, pie cherries, fresh herbs and just a hint of mint. Stunning value, but we only have 28 cases.

## **Duc De Valmer Blanc de Blancs Brut \$7.99**

I know this is not bubbly season in the traditional sense, but this insane value just has to be shouted about from the tree tops. As a ‘vin du France’ but bottled in Burgundy, it has none of the pretense or price of the more expensive appellations, and is cheap enough to make a sparkler your new daily drinker.

**All wines subject to prior sale.**



# 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, Owen Roe Red Willow Red, 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. You will get the following wines: **Cadence, Fidelitas Optu, Sheridan L’Orange, Mark Ryan Dead Horse, Two Vintners Syrah, Gorman Evil Twin, JM Tre Fanculi, Sightglass Cabernet, Lobo Hills Left Bank, Lonesome Springs, Hightower Red Mountain Reserve, Lawrelin Cabernet, Avennia Justine.**

**Mkt/month**

### **The Burgundy of the Month Club**

In this club, you can pick either red or white, or let us mix it up for you (this is how I would do it). Every month, we will pick a fantastic wine for you to try. As is true of all of our clubs, there is no fee to join and the discount you get on the club wine applies to that same wine every time you come back for more, until we are sold out. The price per month on this one will vary, but typically it will be in the \$30-\$50 range per month. Pre-pay for a year and pay an even \$450.

# COMPASS WINES

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

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

**Friday, February 1 from 4:00-7:00**

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.

### **Taste Washington Seattle**

**Saturday, March 30 and Sunday, March 31**

Come visit the ded.reckoning booth at Taste Washington and check out what is going on at all the other wineries in the state. As always, lots of great food and wine to be had. Tickets are only available on-line this year, so plan ahead. We do not have them for sale this year.

