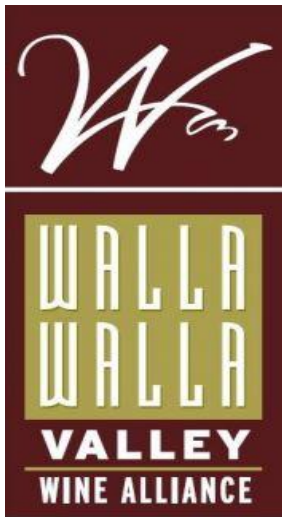


Spotlight on the Walla Walla Valley



While Oregon is known for Pinot Noir from its Willamette Valley, other areas are proving that they too can create great wine. Two of the up and coming AVAs (American Viticulture Area) in the Pacific Northwest are Umpqua and Walla Walla.

The Walla Walla Valley AVA is located in northeast Oregon and southeast Washington. The climate in this area provides long hot summers with short cool nights, almost ideal for growing grapes. The most popular varieties of wine in the Walla Walla AVA are Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Merlot.

Prior to Prohibition, the first grapes in this area were planted by Italian immigrants in the 1850s. Nearly 100 years later, Blue Mountain Vineyards became the first post-Prohibition winery in this region. In 1984, the Walla Walla Valley was incorporated into Oregon's AVAs. In the last 20 years, the area has grown exceptionally – in 1990 there were six wineries, now there are more than 100.

It is estimated that two-thirds of the vineyards in the Walla Walla Valley AVA are on the Oregon side. On the other hand, the majority of the wineries are located in Washington. In 2011 only eight of the roughly 120 wineries were on the Oregon side of the AVA: Castillo de Feliciano Vineyard & Winery, Don Carlo Vineyards, Spofford Station Vineyards, Stella Fino, Tero Estates, Watermill Winery and Zerba Cellars.

Watermill Winery gets its name from the historic Watermill Building in Milton-Freewater. In 2001, Earl and Lorraine Brown planted their first vineyard, the Anna Marie Vineyard. They now have three others - McClellan Estate, Watermill Estate and Dugger Creek, where they grow 12 varieties of grapes: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah, Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Tempranillo, Mourvedre, Sangiovese, Barbera, Nebbiolo and Grenache. The winery was established in 2005 by three generations of the Brown family. The Watermill Winery is certified sustainable by Oregon LIVE (Low Input Viticulture & Enology) and by Salmon Safe, and it is a member of Walla Walla Valley VINEA, the winegrowers' sustainable trust. The Brown family also runs the Blue Mountain Cider Company and an apple processing plant.



Watermill Building in Milton-Freewater