



## Closer than France and Better than Napa: Yamhill County, OR

By: Julie Blakley | June 23 2010  
Posted in Portland

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*Editor's note: This is part one of a three-part series on Portland-area wine country. Julie Blakley will look at the Columbia Gorge and Willamette Valley in upcoming articles.*

While Napa Valley is still viewed as the Holy Grail of wine destinations for the majority of American wine lovers, the Oregon wine country has been growing in both popularity and prominence in the last decade or so.



Photo: Hawks View Cellars

Don't get me wrong: I've been wine tasting in Napa many times, and there's no denying that some of the most fantastic fermented grape juice in the world is produced there.

However, given the state of today's **less-than-ideal economy**, married with the typically **astronomical price tags dangling from Napa bottles, tastings and hotels**, visiting the Northwest to get your vineyard (and vino) fix is an **economical and convenient way to do a wine tasting vacation**.

So what gets me hot for Oregon wine? Well, as a big lover of pinot noirs (a temperamental grape that grows well in Oregon's cooler temperatures), the proximity of these vineyards to my home certainly do it for me.

### Oregon's Famous Pinots

I'm not the only one who loves Oregon's pinots—**many industry big dogs have pegged the Beaver State as one of the premier pinot noir-producing areas in the world**. In fact, research, experimentation and a terrain comparable to French Burgundy vineyards has meant that Oregon wineries have been able to produce award-winning pinot noirs that are considered the closest America has come to the true French Burgundy wines.

The Willamette Valley—**Oregon's leading wine region**—holds two-thirds of the state's wineries and vineyards, with upwards of 200 wineries calling the region home—many of which are located in **Yamhill County, less than an hour from Portland**.

Add to this the fact that you can typically score quality bottles of wines featuring all of the noble grapes (and then some), including pinot gris, pinot blanc, chardonnay, riesling, sauvignon blanc, cabernet, merlot and syrah for much less coin than their Napa counterparts, and you've got a lot of good reasons for an afternoon, weekend or weeklong vacation of wine tasting in the Willamette Valley.

Here are a couple of Yamhill Wineries you can visit this summer:

#### Hawks View Cellars

Hawks View Cellar (appropriately named for its stunning five-peak view) is a relative newcomer on the

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scene, but is quickly making a huge splash with their finely crafted wines, comfortable tasting room, spectacular views and proximity to Portland.

<http://www.hawksviewcellars.com/>

### Anderson Family Winery

Cliff and Alison of Andersen Family Winery provide an excellent chardonnay and pinot at their tasting room. Their winery is perched on a rocky hill with a commanding view of the valley and is definitely worth a visit. Cliff uses wood barrels from France to age his wines.

<http://www.dundeehills.org/anderson.htm>

### Ponzi Vineyards

With a Beaverton address, this winery is one of the closest and most convenient to the Portland Metro area. However, it's their award winning pinot noir and their summer Sundays events, which feature Ponzi wine, live music, bocce ball and plenty of fresh summer air that have endeared them to my heart.

<http://www.ponziwines.com/>

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