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81 CLAY ST.

SEATTLE, WA 98121

(425) 303-0201

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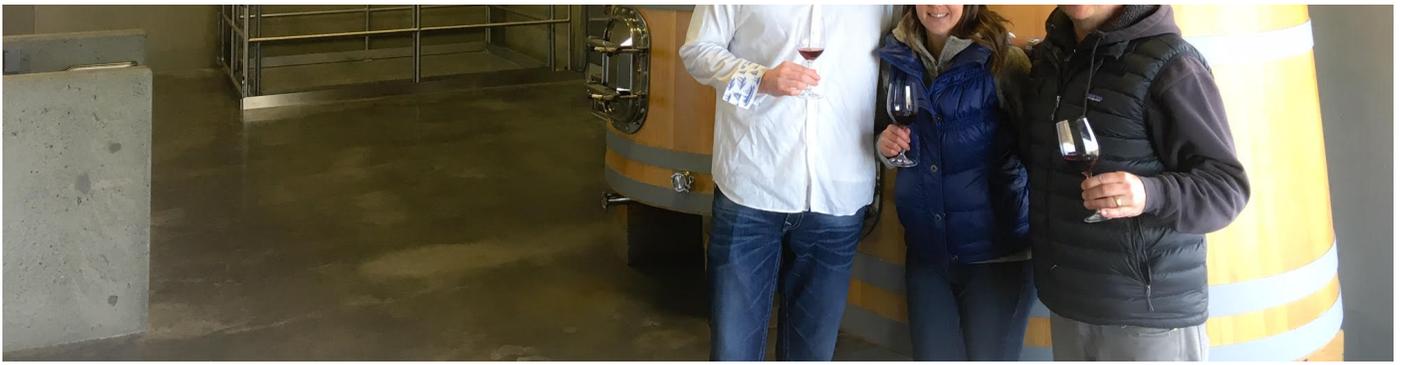
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Washington Wine Blog Top 100 Wines of 2016

December 22, 2016





It was a great honor to taste wines with eminent Vigneron. Christophe Baron and assistant Vigneronne, Elizabeth Bourcier, at Cayuse.

Dear Friends,

I wanted to offer my warmest holiday greetings from Washington Wine Blog. I hope you all are enjoying a wonderful holiday season. 2016 has been a very exciting year here at Washington Wine Blog. I want to wish you all of my deepest thanks for supporting the blog. A lot has happened for me professionally this year. This is my second year the associate editor at International Wine Report, reviewing wines for them primarily from Washington, Oregon and California. This year Washington Wine Blog has two new associate editors, Dr. Stephen Lee and Dr. Jae Hong, who both review Washington red wines. They both add experience and depth to the blog. This year I've had the chance to sample some absolutely incredible domestic wines and interview many people behind those wines. Washington Wine Blog now has amassed over 70 interviews, and that will continue to expand in the new year.

This year I have chosen 100 exceptional domestic wines to comprise my Top 100 for 2016. This year I've attended many wines events and have visited more tasting rooms than ever. Value wines are considered in my Top 100, and there are several incredible well-priced selections that I simply could not leave out. The wines from Washington continue to impress and rise to the top of the list. I have chosen my 2016 Washington Wine Blog Wine of the Year as the 2012 Cayuse 'God Only Knows' Grenche (WWB, 99), a wine that flirts with perfection and is made by the esteemed Vigneron Christophe Baron. Christophe creates an exotic, stony wine here that shows unparalleled range and poise. I highly recommend that you try a bottle of this special wine. Congrats to Christophe Baron and Elizabeth Bourcier for creating this absolute heavyhitter of a wine. Thank you again for your support of Washington Wine Blog. I want to wish you all the absolute best during this holiday season and I hope 2017 brings you all great joy, and beautiful wines in your glass.

Blancs that I have sampled in the past year. The wine is a blend of 52% Sauvignon Blanc Musqué, 32% Sauvignon Blanc, and 16% Semillon that was released nearly a year ago. Today this wine is absolutely gorgeously rounded out, The wine begins with aromatics reminiscent of lemongrass, Meyer lemon, Bartlett pear, white peach and Pazzaz apple. There are dense flavors of Granny Smith apple, starfruit, Meyer lemon oil, peach pit and macadamia nut. Perfect for a warm summer day, the wine is balanced, intense and out of this world delicious right now. This is up there with the best in North America. Drink 2016-2026- **95**

23) **2014 DeLille Chaleur Estate Blanc** (\$38.00)- Year after year DeLille crafts one of the best, if not the best, Bordeaux style White out of Washington State. Composed of 75% Sav Blanc and 25% Semillon. The wine was aged in oak, 70% new for 5-6 months. Beautiful nose of starfruit, lemon rind and baked apple. Rich mouthfeel with vanilla, pear, red delicious apple, starfruit and a 30 second long finish. This is very bit outstanding and up there with the 2008 Chaleur Estate Blanc as the best Chaleur Estate Blancs I've ever tried. Drink 2015-2022. -**95**

24) **2013 Cayuse 'Impulsivo' Tempranillo** (\$75.00)- One of my favorite wines of this tasting at Cayuse was the gorgeous 2013 'Impulsivo' Tempranillo which is the best of its kind in Washington. The 2013 'Impulsivo' is made from Tempranillo that is sourced from the En Chamberlin Vineyard. The wine begins intense with aromas of wet stone, blackberry cobbler, Umami, and red raspberry with forest floor. There are vibrant flavors of blackberry, smoked meats, Umami and crushed gravel with green olive and a saline streak. This has incredible minerality and balance. I can see this heavyhitter of a wine pairing exceptionally well with a range of foods. Drink 2016-2028- **95**

25) **2013 Alpha Omega 'Reserve' Chardonnay** (\$95.00)- Alpha Omega have crafted an absolute heavyhitter of a wine here. Even more impressive than their regular Chardonnay bottling, the 'Reserve' Chardonnay wine starts with aromatics of roasted hazelnuts, unripe pear, pineapple, and creme brûlée. There are dense flavors of peach pit, mango, golden delicious apple and poached pear. Gorgeous wine here that lingers on the tongue and shows a Chablis like minerality. Balanced, expressive and intense Chardonnay that is best served a little warmer than average, for the full range of fruit to show through. Drink 2016-2026- **95**

26) **2014 Robert Biale 'Varozza Vineyard' Zinfandel** (\$50.00)- The Varozza family has been farming on this site since 1913. This seamless wine opens with

express itself, as it is aromatically reticent at first, the wine gradually yields deep aromas reminiscent of rose petals, tar, pipe tobacco, coffee grounds and blueberry compote. There are rich flavors of black plum, creosote, black olive, and spicebox. This wine is pretty Tannic and intense right now with lovely viscosity and mouthfeel. Despite the highly alcohol content, there is a seamless quality to this impressive release. This dense treat needs another year to fully integrate. It represents another stellar Machete bottling by Orin Swift, following up the highly impressive 2013 bottling. Drink 2017-2025- **93**

41) 2013 Long Shadows 'Pedestal' Red Wine (\$75.00)- Michel Rolland, Pomerol vintner and consultant to many of the world's top wineries, produces this fantastic Merlot wine. Comprised of 75% Merlot with the remainder Malbec and Petite Verdot, this is the smallest portion of Merlot ever used for the wine. The Merlot has aromas of black cherry, black olive and anise. There are rich and dense flavors of Turkish coffee, anise, black cherry and graphite. Absolutely intense and outstanding effort, with an herbaceous character. These guys are absolutely on top of their game, as this is one to sip and savor. . . in at least a year. Drink 2017-2030- **95**

42) 2012 Domaine Serene 'Monogram' Pinot Noir (\$275.00)- This absolute heavyhitter of a wine utilizes 75% new oak (aged for 17 months) and is chosen from the winemaker Erik Kramer's finest Pinot Noir barrels. The wine opens with intense aromatics of red cherry, herbs de Provence, red raspberry, black truffle and black pepper. The gorgeous aromatics continue to bring you back to the glass. As the wine slowly evolves in the glass this leads to dense flavors of red cherry, red raspberry, cran-pomegranate and crimini mushroom compote. The Pinot Noir has a minute-long finish. The texture and mouthfeel of this wine borders ethereal. There is a seamless quality to this wine that showcases the fruit and balance of the 2012 vintage. Hats off to Kramer and his winemaking team for creating this incredible new release wine that is the finest that I have sampled from this amazing vintage. Drink 2016-2033- **96**

43) 2013 Alpha Omega 'Beckstoffer Georges III' Cabernet (\$130.00)- This impressive Cabernet wine begins with rich aromatics of blackberry jam, coffee grounds, creme de cassis and anise with eucalyptus. There are layered flavors of creme de cassis, dark chocolate, anise, Turkish coffee and black olive. This Cab shows absolutely gorgeous range, depth and intensify here. The plush mouthfeel shows through. This is impossible to resist right now but will prove to be even better in another year. Drink 2017-2040- **95**