

# Eugene Wine Cellars



## Willamette Valley, Oregon

The Willamette Valley, Oregon's leading wine region has two-thirds of the state's wineries and vineyards and is home to more than 200 wineries. It has been recognized as one of the premier Pinot noir producing areas in the world.

The Willamette Valley is a huge and varied appellation that includes six sub-appellations; Chehalem Mountains, Dundee Hills, Eola-Amity Hills, McMinnville, Ribbon Ridge, and Yamhill Carlton.

Buffered from Pacific storms on the west by the Coast Range, the valley follows the Willamette River north to south for more than a hundred miles from the Columbia River near Portland to just south of Eugene. To the east, the Cascade Ranges draws the boundary between the Willamette Valley's misty, cool climate and the drier, more extreme climate of eastern Oregon.

At its widest point, this long, broad valley spans sixty miles. Overall, the climate boasts a long, gentle growing season – warm summers with cool evenings; bursts of Indian summer often shortened by maritime rains; wet, mild winters; and long, often rainy springs. In ideal years the maritime climate provides the best conditions possible for growing the cool-climate grape varieties Oregon is best known for – Pinot Noir. In lesser years, fall rains can be tricky and malicious, causing reactions among winemakers ranging from minor hair pulling to outright despair. In this matter the Willamette Valley compares favorably with the Burgundy and Alsace regions of France. And, like it or not, the often finicky Willamette Valley climate is the promised land for Pinot Noir in America. Wineries also produce Pinot gris, Pinot blanc, Chardonnay, Melon, Riesling, Gewurztraminer, sparkling wine, Sauvignon Blanc, and some Cabernet, Merlot and Syrah.

The Willamette Valley wineries are a popular tourist destination with many bed & breakfasts, motels and fine restaurants available. An additional advantage for the wine tourist is the proximity of the wineries to Portland. From Portland, tourists can visit the Willamette Valley winery of their choice in anywhere from 45 minutes to two hours.