

## Northern Valley Tour

By Dixie Huey

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Our recommended tours of the Willamette Valley begin with the northern section of the valley, which begins just south of Portland between Forest Grove and Hillsboro, and continues south to Newberg and Yamhill. It contains two important American Viticultural Areas, or sub-appellations recognized for their distinct characteristics.

The Chehalem Mountains AVA, established in 2006, is the most northerly appellation in the Willamette. Dick Erath was the first to plant here — in 1968 — and was soon followed by other pioneers such as Nancy Ponzi and David Adelsheim. Today, this nearly 70,000-acre region has 1,600 acres under vine, and is home to over 150 vineyards and 30 wineries. The elevation ranges broadly, from 200 feet to the Willamette's highest point, Bald Peak, at 1633 feet. This variation creates a number of microclimates, so ripening and harvest dates can vary significantly.

In addition to having microclimates, the Northern Willamette Valley is known for having an array of soil types. According to Barbara Gross, director of marketing for Cooper Mountain Vineyards and president of North Willamette Vintners, "What makes the north valley distinctive is our soil diversity. Scattered amongst the North Willamette Valley, you will find Laurelwood, Jory, loess, and some Saum. Due to this diversity within varietals, there exist varied taste profiles, allowing the notion of 'terroir' to thrive."

Ribbon Ridge, which gained official recognition as an AVA in 2005, is a five-square-mile uniform uplift contained within the northwest part of the Chehalem Mountain AVA. The surrounding mountains provide protection and result in a slightly warmer and drier climate than found in neighboring regions. The younger, finer silt-clay loam soils found in Ribbon Ridge are well-drained and offer lower fertility, which is ideal for growing high-quality grapes. Harry-Petersen-Nedry was the first to plant in Ribbon Ridge at his Ridgecrest Vineyard in 1980. Five years later, Yamhill Valley Vineyards made the first wines, and today, there are some 20 vineyards and five wineries.

### Five to try

Adelsheim Vineyard: 16800 NE Calkins Lane, Newberg. Open 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. May 23 and 24, Contact: (503) 538-3652.

Chehalem Winery: 31190 NE Veritas Lane, Newberg, Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 23-25, Contact: (503) 537-9150,

Lange Estate Winery & Vineyards: 13830 NE Buena Vista Drive, Dundee. Open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. May 23 and 24, Contact: (503) 538-6476.

PATRICIA GREEN CELLARS: 15225 NE North Valley Road, Newberg. Open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 23-25. Contact: (503) 554-0821

Ponzi Vineyards: 14665 SW Winery Lane, Beaverton. Open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Contact: (503) 628.1227