



HOT SPOTS, COOL DRINKS

Take a nightlife tour of the **hottest spots in D.C.'s Penn Quarter**. Plenty of wines by the glass and designer cocktails to be found, and stops include IndeBleu and Zola. 7 to 11 p.m. Friday; meet at Posh Restaurant & Supper Club, 730 11th St. NW. Tickets are \$15. 202-686-5990.

SCOTT GREENBERG *Vine Guy*

SOUTHERN OREGON

An up-and-coming destination for wine connoisseurs

PART ONE: Rogue Valley

Southern Oregon is having a wine identity crisis. In fact, the winemakers there even (jokingly) call themselves the “fly-over region”—since they’re the appellation everyone flies over on their way from San Francisco to Portland. Although the area is well-known among adventure seekers (whitewater rafting, hiking, fishing, etc.), it’s slowly emerging as a destination for the wine traveler.

And if you’re not familiar with the specific wines that southern Oregon is known for — don’t fret. The winemakers of the region and the tourist boards are working quickly and cooperatively to promote the bounty of the region, including tourism, arts (Shakespeare Festival, music festivals), agriculture, and, of course, food and wine. The vibrancy, enthusiasm and dedication to all methods “green” clearly dem-

onstrate that the entire wine and tourism industry in this young appellation is poised to reign.

My advice to you: Go now before the word gets out!

As a wine region, the Rogue Valley, perched along the southernmost part of the state, is made up of several mountain ranges and valleys that are blessed with

fertile soils of varied composition and geological formations resulting in warm days and cool nights. These conditions allow the fearless second-and-third-career wine pioneers to experiment with a veritable United Nations of grapes. More than 22 known varieties are being grown throughout the region, including viognier, riesling, chardonnay, gewürztraminer, syrah, grenache, cabernet franc, cabernet sauvignon, merlot and malbec.

With all of these choices, making a decision on which varieties in southern Oregon to fall in love with is a bit like drinking from the proverbial fire hose — but after a “grueling” week of tasting and spitting, I’ve narrowed the list down to my favorites.

Please note that many of the wines in this two-part series are made in very limited quantity and are not easy to find in our area, although they are available through the winery’s Web site, or ask your local wine shop to hunt them down for you. A better alternative, given the sheer beauty of the region and friendliness of the locals, is to get out to southern Oregon and explore the region firsthand (oregonwine.org). Retail prices are approximate, and all this week’s selections are from the Rogue Valley.

2006 Agate Ridge Roussanne/Marsanne Blend (64/36 percent) (\$24)

Pretty nose of apricot and nectarine followed by full, lush flavors of pear, peach and apple, all nicely balanced with just a touch of honey on the lengthy finish.

2006 Daisy Creek Viognier (\$20)

Lovely floral nose of acacia and passion fruit. Great mouthfeel of fresh fruit, including salmon-berry and mango. Bright flavors of grapefruit and pineapple provide a crisp finish.

2006 Cowhorn Vineyard Viognier (\$20)

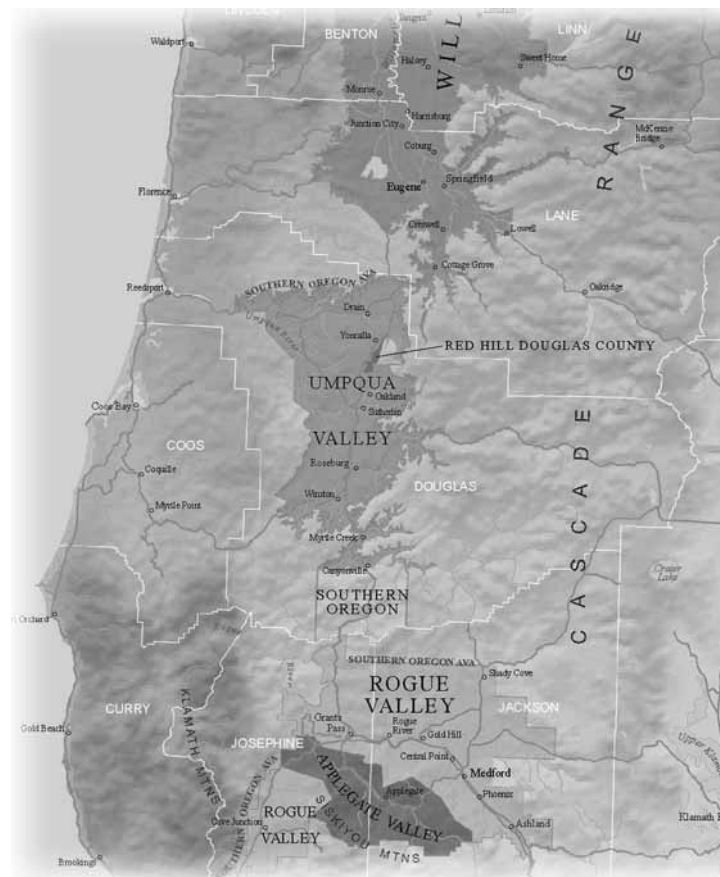
This vineyard operation is 100 percent bio-dynamic, including the cow horns that are used in the composting process to provide natural fertilizer in the vineyard. Floral notes of honeysuckle and tropical fruits are present on the nose, while flavors of mango, papaya and pear dance on the palate. Tangy notes of lime lend a refreshing touch to the finish.

2003 Foris Winery Maple Ranch Pinot Noir (\$20)

Hunt this \$20 pinot down, folks! Rich aromas of dark plums, cherry, cola and arise rise like perfume out of the glass. Silky flavors of red raspberries, cherries, vanilla and spices glide over the tongue, where they meet up with notes of coffee on the smooth finish.

2005 RoxyAnn Winery Claret (\$26)

A blend of three traditional Bordeaux red varieties (merlot, cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc), this wine sings with great balance. Tannins and acidity are well integrated with flavors of dark plums, black cherries with hints of tobacco and vanilla on the pleasant finish.



2003 Weisinger’s of Ashland Petite Pompadour Red Blend (\$28)

Another lovely Bordeaux-style blend, including cabernet franc, merlot, cabernet sauvignon and malbec, features notes of blackberries, cassis, tobacco and plums up front and hints of smoky cedar on the medium-bodied finish.

2005 Paschal Winery Civita di Bagmoregio Red Wine Blend (\$35)

A delightful blend of tempranillo, sangiovese, dolcetto and syrah that comes together to produce a lovely wine featuring flavors of cherries, red plums and pomegranates. The lush, soft finish has just a whisper of spice to keep your tongue engaged.

2004 Del Rio Vineyard Syrah, Rogue Valley (\$35)

Southern Oregon has a way with Rhone varieties, and this syrah

shows why. Deep, rich flavors of dark plums, cherries and cedar are kept in check by firm tannins and abundant acidity. Classic touches of pepper, spice and chocolate meld together on the lengthy finish.

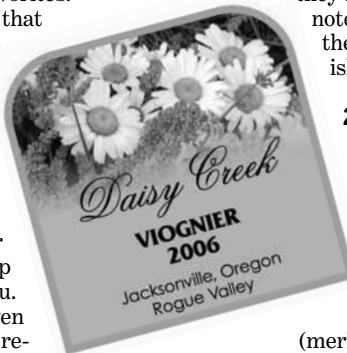
NEXT WEEK: The hidden treasures of Applegate Valley.



Do you have a favorite bottle of wine? E-mail me at scott@vineguy.com.



Courtesy photos



THE VIRGINIA WINE FESTIVAL®
September 15 & 16
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sip indulge treat
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Taste Artisan Wines
from 60 Award-Winning Virginia Wineries