



WASHINGTON STATE
THE PERFECT CLIMATE FOR WINE™

Quick Facts

- Washington State ranks second nationally in wine production
- Washington State wineries: 534 today
- Washington State wine grape growers: 350
- The Washington State wine industry contributes more than \$3 billion to the state economy annually
- Full-time equivalent wine-related jobs: 14,000
- Wine-related wages paid: more than \$466.4 million
- Estimated 2004 production has a retail value of more than \$684.9 million
- Leading red varieties: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Cabernet Franc, Sangiovese
- Leading white varieties: Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon, Viognier
- Red to white wine grape ratio: 56% white to 44% red
- Up to 17.4 hours of summer sunlight per day during the growing season
- Annual rainfall — 8 inches (20 cm) in Eastern Washington (the major grape growing region)

Nine American Viticultural Areas (AVA)

Yakima Valley — 1983
 Walla Walla Valley — 1984
 Columbia Valley — 1984
 Puget Sound — 1995
 Red Mountain — 2001
 Columbia Gorge — 2004
 Horse Heaven Hills — 2005
 Wahluke Slope — 2006
 Rattlesnake Hills — 2006

Wine Production Growth

2005 – 7.5m cases	18.0m gals	(68.3m ltrs)
2004 – 7m cases	16.5m gals	(62.9m ltrs)
2003 – 7.3m cases	17.3m gals	(65.5m ltrs)
2002 – 7.5m cases	17.7m gals	(67.3m ltrs)
2001 – 6.5m cases	15.5m gals	(58.5m ltrs)
2000 – 5.9m cases	14m gals	(52.7m ltrs)
1999 – 4.2m cases	10m gals	(38m ltrs)
1998 – 4.6m cases	10.9m gals	(41.5m ltrs)
1997 – 4m cases	9.6m gals	(36.3m ltrs)
1996 – 2.2m cases	5.3m gals	(19.9m ltrs)
1981 – under 1m cases	2m gals	(7.5m ltrs)

Year	#Wineries	Acreage	Harvest (tons)
2007	534	31,000	127,150
2006	460	30,000+	120,000
2005	360	30,000+	116,760
2004	320	30,000	107,000
2003	240	29,000	112,000
2002	200	29,000	115,000
2001	170	29,000	100,000
2000	155	28,000	90,000
1999	160	24,806	65,000
1998	121	20,000	71,000
1997	101	18,900	62,000
1996	90	17,000	34,000
1995	88	14,500	62,000
1994	84	13,100	44,000
1993	80	12,000	62,000
1992	75	11,300	50,000
1991	70	10,500	26,000
1990	64	9,500	38,000
1989	60	9,000	43,000



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The History of Washington Wines

Washington's first wine grapes were planted at Fort Vancouver by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1825. By 1910, wine grapes were grown in most areas of the state, following the path of early settlers. French, German and Italian immigrants pioneered the earliest plantings. Wine historians Ron Irvine and the late Dr. Walter Clore document in their book *The Wine Project* a continuous and connected effort to cultivate wine grapes beginning with those early plantings at Fort Vancouver. Hybrid varieties arrived in nurseries in the Puget Sound region as early as 1854 and by 1860 wine grapes were planted in the Walla Walla Valley.

Large-scale irrigation, fueled by runoff from the melting snowcaps of the Cascade Mountains, arrived in eastern Washington in 1903, unlocking the dormant potential of the rich volcanic soils and the sunny, desert-like climate. Italian and German varietals were planted in the Yakima and Columbia Valleys, and wine grape acreage expanded rapidly in the early part of the 20th century. In 1910, the first annual Columbia River Valley Grape Carnival was held in Kennewick. By 1914 important vineyards had sprung up in the Yakima Valley, most notably the vineyards of W.B. Bridgman of Sunnyside.

The arrival of prohibition in 1920 put a damper on wine grape production, but ironically may have helped spawn early interest in home winemaking. At the end of prohibition the first bonded winery in the Northwest was founded on Puget Sound's Stretch Island. By 1938 there were 42 wineries located throughout the state.

The first commercial-scale plantings began in the 1960s. Efforts of the earliest producers, predecessors to today's Columbia Winery and Chateau Ste. Michelle, attracted the attention of wine historian Leon Adams. Adams introduced

pioneering enologist Andre Tchelistcheff to Chateau Ste. Michelle. It was Tchelistcheff who helped guide Chateau Ste. Michelle's early efforts and mentored modern winemaking in Washington. The resulting rapid expansion of the industry in the mid-1970s is now rivaled by continued steady growth and the quest for quality in the production of premium wine.

The trend started by a few home winemakers and visionary farmers has become a respected and influential \$3 billion industry which supports 14,000 jobs. Shipments of Washington wine go to all 50 states and more than 40 countries globally. Washington ranks second nationally for premium wine production and more than 31,000 acres are planted to vinifera grapes.

Significant developments in Washington State include the formation of the Washington Wine Commission in 1987, a unified marketing and trade association. In 1999, the Commission established the Washington Wine Quality Alliance (WWQA) to spearhead development of industry standards in winemaking and labeling. Washington is the first state in the nation to define standards for "reserve" wines.

Washington's wine future is limitless. As consumers discover the quality of Washington wines, demand continues to grow nationally and internationally. New acreage and new varietals are being planted and new wineries are opening at a remarkable pace. Washington State is recognized as a premium viticultural region around the world.



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2007

127,150 tons harvested

Washington's 2007 harvest was nearly ideal. With long hot days and short, cool nights, Washington vintners are enthusiastic about the small berry size and concentrated fruit flavors with balanced acids.

2006

121,500 tons harvested

Abundant spring rains prepared the soil for one of the warmest summers in the last 10 years resulting in early sugar accumulation and maturation. Cooler temperatures during the fall ripening period produced good acidity and allowed for long hang time for red varieties. Color development in the reds was exceptional; and overall, this harvest created terrific quality across the board.

2005

116,760 tons harvested

Warm summer months, cool autumn temperatures and a mild winter yielded a record wine grape harvest. A warm Indian Summer led to prolonged hang-time which resulted in deep, concentrated flavors. Red and white production maintained an equal 50/50 ratio and winemakers statewide reported small grape clusters with intense color, balance and ripe flavors.

2004

107,000 tons harvested

A hot growing season followed by a cool fall created a longer harvest, resulting in Washington wines with full, rich flavors. Despite winter damage to vines in certain areas across the state, the overall size of 2004 crop estimates were offset by an increase in bearing vineyard acres coming into production. Winemakers across the state reported small berry size with concentrated, quality fruit. Harvest began in some areas unusually early in August as a result of the warm growing season and early maturing fruit. The cool fall extended hang time with final berries picked in early November.

2003

115,000 tons harvested

Washington winemakers and wine grape growers felt the 2003 vintage was among the best in history, particularly for red wine varieties. Hot weather hit late in the growing season, nudging the fruit to reach flavor and structural ripeness. Grape harvest began on September 2nd in the state's warmest sites, Red Mountain and the Walla Walla Valley. Cool weather moved in on September 10th allowing extra hang time and flavor development, which extended harvest through late October.

2002

109,750 tons harvested

Quality sums up the 2002 grape harvest. Lower yields per acre resulted in richer fruit flavors. The growing season began cool, then warm temperatures put the crop ahead of schedule in some areas. Harvest began as early as September 9th, but as cool weather hit in late September activity slowed down. Winemakers welcomed cool temperatures allowing fruit to mature and intensify flavors. The majority of the state's wine grapes were harvested by mid-October.

2001

100,000 tons harvested

Syrah particularly stood out in a superior vintage. Summer temperatures reached much warmer highs, which resulted in riper fruit and boosted harvest start dates by about 10 days earlier than expected. Winemakers described white wine varieties as outstanding with lots of floral and fruit characteristics. In addition, red wine grape varieties came in with softer tannins and bigger, more dominant flavors making them more approachable than in years past.

2000

90,000 tons harvested

With seasonal and regional variations, this year was anything but typical. Hang time was ideal, allowing grape flavor maturity to catch up with the sugar accumulation. The result is an unprecedented quantity of dark, concentrated red wines and fresh, balanced whites. This was the first year that more red varieties were harvested in Washington than white.

1999

65,000 tons harvested

Extended hang time during a very warm and dry September allowed for a crop with perfectly balanced levels of natural acid and rich, ripe flavors. Overall yield was down due to thinning of vines during the long, cool summer.

1998

71,000 tons harvested

Early predictions peg this as the year when Washington State vineyards hit the top of the charts for both size and quality. Full, even ripening yielded balanced sugars and acids, while increased acreage bumped up the total harvest.

1997

62,000 tons harvested

Growers were delighted with this year's rebound. This vintage yielded almost twice the fruit as the previous harvest. Mild temperatures meant even ripening.

1996

34,000 tons harvested

An unusually harsh winter severely reduced the crop. Red varieties were affected most, but a mild spring and a hot summer nurtured good quality grapes.

1995

62,000 tons harvested

Moderate weather extended the growing season and resulted in an optimal harvest of excellent quality.

1994

44,000 tons harvested

A cool spring followed by a hot mid-summer led to an early harvest and lower crop levels than the previous year. Winemakers were enthusiastic about the quality of both red and white wines because of the concentrated flavors and intense varietal character of the fruit.

1993

62,000 tons harvested

A warm finish to an unusually cool summer pushed the fruit to full ripeness. Mild winters the previous years and maturing of several new vineyards combined to yield a record crop. Winemakers were excited most about white varieties, comparing them to the benchmark quality of 1983 and 1989.

1992

50,000 tons harvested

The crop averaged just over 4 tons per acre and the grapes hung heavy and ripe in the early fall, with excellent color and low to moderate tannins thanks to a gentle winter, mild spring and very warm summer.

1991

26,000 tons harvested

Severe winter storms gave way to a cool, wet spring, a dry summer and a warm harvest season. The result was dramatically reduced vineyard yields, and one of the state's best years for white wines with solid acid levels and full flavors.

1990

38,000 tons harvested

Red wines proved especially fine after a growing season vineyard managers dream of bud break in mid-April, bloom the second week in June and harvest the first week of September.

1989

43,000 tons harvested

Critics called this Washington's best vintage of the 1980s, especially for reds. A winter freeze thinned vines a bit, reducing the size and number of grape clusters. The moderate growing season allowed slow and complete ripening of the fruit.

1988

46,000 tons harvested

Consistently warmer days followed a gentle, dry winter, bringing crop levels up and producing well-balanced sugars and acids. Red wines were particularly rich and supple.



Washington Reds

Cabernet Sauvignon

Cabernet Sauvignon grows magnificently in Washington and ages well. The heady fruity character of this complex grape develops slowly. In its youth, the wine appears more subtle and restrained than Washington Merlots. Its character can emerge as black currants, cherry, berry, chocolate, leather, mint, herbs, bell pepper or any combination of these flavors. Cabernet Sauvignon pairs well with intensely flavored meats and bone-in steaks. Also try rich mushroom sauces and vegetables and meats marinated and grilled.

Merlot

Washington Merlot is redolent of cherry and other berries. It tends to be more full-bodied, moderately tannic and slightly higher in alcohol than its Bordeaux cousins and higher in acidity than Californian Merlot. Traditionally used in blends, Merlot gained popularity as a stand-alone wine in the early 1970s and captured center stage in Washington in 1976 — its first commercial release. Washington Merlot is known for its sweet cherry, berry flavors and complex aromas including mint, cigar box and sweet spices like nutmeg and cardamom. Try Merlot with mild, lean meats (i.e., grilled chicken, beef tenderloin, prime rib) and recipes with sun-dried tomatoes and pesto.

Syrah

Introduced to Washington in 1988, Syrah is one of the Rhone varieties sparking interest in Washington. Washington soils and climate allow for Syrah to thrive. A spicy, rich, complex varietal, Syrah grapes turn into big, dark, intensely concentrated wines with aromas and flavors of blackberries, black currants, roasted coffee and leather. Try Syrah with veal and lamb shanks, roasted game meats, goat cheeses and caramelized onions.

Cabernet Franc

Long considered primarily a blending grape, Cabernet Franc has recently captured attention of Washington's winemakers, who are exploring the grape's unique varietal characteristics. A hardy grape, Cabernet Franc is used primarily for the sturdy core and firm tannins it adds to softer wines. On its own, Cabernet Franc offers delicious spicy notes with mellow coffee and intense blueberry fruit. Try Cabernet Franc with a variety of foods — cheese and dark dried fruits like cherries and figs.

Other Reds

Lemberger (Blue Franc), Malbec, Sangiovese, Pinot Noir, Zinfandel



Washington Whites

Chardonnay

Chardonnay is Washington's most widely planted white grape. While Chardonnay is noted in many other regions as a rich and powerful wine, Washington Chardonnays are often distinctively crisp and delicate with notes of fresh apples. Oak is often used with a lighter touch, showing off the varietal's character. Some wineries use malolactic fermentation to add rich vanilla and buttery nuances. Serve Chardonnay with grilled white meats, pork tenderloin, chicken, fresh crab, shrimp and cream sauces.

Riesling

Riesling is one of the original grape varieties growing in Washington and tends to be floral in the nose, with intense apricot, peach and apple flavors. Occasionally "noble rot" (*botrytis cinerea*) works its magic on Riesling, concentrating sugars and flavors to produce a late-harvest wine. Many Washington Rieslings are vinted in a dry to slightly off-dry style to accompany a variety of foods. Try Riesling with hot spicy foods, oysters, fresh fruit and Asian foods.

Sauvignon Blanc

Sauvignon Blanc is popular for its distinctive character and can be described as fruity with a touch of herbaceousness and lively acidity. Styles range from slightly tart to tangy pineapple with a little oak. Sauvignon Blanc is a very versatile white wine that pairs well with seafood, white meats (grilled or baked) and raw vegetables.

Gewürztraminer

Gewürztraminer is successful in Washington due to its ability to hold through the cold winters. This grape offers spice, tropical fruit flavors with zesty aromas. Previously made only in off-dry, or slightly sweet style, Gewürztraminer is also produced in a dry to retain the variety's rich aromatics and pairs well with a variety of foods — fruit (peaches and apricots), Asian foods highlighting ginger, chilled fresh cracked crab.

Semillon

Washington's Semillon is most often enjoyed young, but ages beautifully into rich, honeyed, nutty wines. Semillon flavors include crisp citrus, melon, fig, fresh pears and vanilla. Try Washington Semillon with oysters, quiche and other simple foods.

Other Whites

Aligoté, Chenin Blanc, Madeleine Angevine, Müller Thurgau, Muscat Canelli, Pinot Gris, Viognier



Washington's American Viticultural Areas (AVAs)

Washington State's northerly latitude allows for an average of 17.4 hours of sunlight during the summer growing season: two hours more than California's prime growing regions. This extra daylight allows grapes to ripen fully and cool nights allow the fruit's natural acids to remain high, creating richly flavored and well-balanced wines. Washington State has nine major American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) as recognized and defined by the U.S. Treasury Department. An AVA has unique climate, soil and physical features, which distinguish it from surrounding areas. Washington's nine AVAs are listed below, in order of the year they were founded.

Yakima Valley

- Established 1983
- More than 11,000 vineyard acres
- More than 50 wineries

Columbia Gorge

- Established 2004
- More than 350 vineyard acres
- 15 wineries

Walla Walla Valley

- Established 1984
- More than 1,200 vineyard acres
- Nearly 75 wineries

Horse Heaven Hills

- Established 2005
- 6,040 vineyard acres
- 4 wineries

Columbia Valley

- Established 1984
- More than 16,600 vineyard acres
- More than 100 wineries
- The Red Mountain, Yakima Valley, Walla Walla, Horse Heaven Hills and Wahluke Slope appellations lie within its borders

Wahluke Slope

- Established 2006
- 5,200 vineyard acres
- 3 wineries

Puget Sound

- Established 1995
- 80 vineyard acres
- More than 100 wineries

Rattlesnake Hills

- Established 2006
- 1,500 vineyard acres
- 17 wineries

Red Mountain

- Established 2001
- More than 710 vineyard acres
- 12 wineries

Additional Winery Locations

Columbia Cascade region

- 33 wineries

Spokane

- 12 wineries

Pullman

- 2 wineries



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