



ADVENTURES THROUGH WOODINVILLE WINE COUNTRY

BY JENNIFER MATTHEWSON / FOOD, WINE, AND SPIRITS, TRAVEL BITES / JUNE 11, 2019



Even after two decades in the Pacific Northwest, I still had the idea that Woodinville wine country was a far off place in the distance somewhere on Seattle's Eastside. Across the bridges, past Mercer Island, over Kirkland and Kenmore, beyond Bothell. In a galaxy far, far away.

But it's closer than you think.

Only a half hour outside of Seattle proper, it's surprising just how much it feels like a destination, too. In fact, the Washington wine industry has grown exponentially within the confines of the Woodinville city limits, inviting visitors to taste wines created both locally and **from regions around Eastern Washington**. With an ever-expanding list of over 120 wineries, distilleries, and breweries pouring their latest productions, the Seattle suburb has blossomed into a bustling stop for drink lovers, each tasting room cozied up to another, from the Redwood Golf Center to the Woodinville Sports Field.



Dana Jackson and Jackie Sturm at Novelty Hill-Januik, Woodinville, WA. [dailyblender.com]

“The wines and winemakers here in Woodinville are as diverse as our guests, fearless and fearsome, ranging from traditional to natural and biodynamic,” says Dana Jackson, general manager of Novelty Hill-Januik.

“ Woodinville is transformative. Urban yet sophisticated. Unpretentious and chill. We’re going beyond creating wine experiences: we are transforming a guest’s relationship with wine. Our goal is for visitors to walk away feeling more informed about wine after hanging out with us. ”

Get Away For The Day

As the area has grown, so has the interest of wine lovers from around the country and beyond. Recently, [new shuttle service](#) was launched from downtown Seattle to provide a more efficient visitor experience to Woodinville. From now through September 29, guests can catch the Woodinville Wine Express Friday through Sunday from Piers 66 and 91 and select downtown stops, with roundtrip dropoffs in the heart of Woodinville. Once you’ve arrived in Woodinville, the new Cellar Hopper shuttle offers hop-on, hop-off transportation between twenty locations along the winery corridor.

“We understand that transportation can be a big barrier for people wanting to visit Woodinville, and because of that we are so thrilled to offer these new shuttles to the public,” said Sandra Lee, executive director of the Woodinville Wine Country Association, in a press release.

For a more detailed adventure through the area, you can book yourself a [Woodinville Wine Pass](#), which provides a guided itinerary and four pre-planned winery stops.

Stay For A Weekend (Or More)

If you’re looking to make your visit to Woodinville more of a vacation, you’ll find plenty of [bed and breakfasts](#) as well as traditional chain hotels in the area. The pièce de résistance accommodation, however, is Willows Lodge, centrally located amongst the tasting rooms. The hotel, built to offer a luxury hotel experience within the comfort of a log cabin, has garnered rave reviews since its September 2000 opening and is home to award-winning restaurants, The Barking Frog and The Herbfarm. A destination for weddings, retreats, and visiting performers of the Chateau Ste. Michelle concert series, Willows Lodge features an in-house spa, an outdoor soaking tub, a fireside bar, and local artwork both in and around the hotel property.

As a guest of the hotel during my visit to Woodinville wine country, I had a chance to enjoy both dinner and breakfast at The Barking Frog, and explore the grounds with marketing director Rhanda Rosselot. Check out the video below to take a tour.



Snag yourself a few wines at Chateau Ste. Michelle, Woodinville, Washington [dailyblender.com]



The restored firehouse at the center of Woodinville wine country. [dailyblender.com]



A selection of great pours at DeLille Cellars, Woodinville, Washington. [dailyblender.com]



Wine and cheese and fruit at Patterson Cellars, Woodinville, Washington. [dailyblender.com]

When Exploring Woodinville:

- 1. Don't miss a meal at Heritage Restaurant.** Heritage is unassuming but it's poised to become a destination itself. I was so captivated by chef Breanna Beike and the dishes she delivered that I'm returning for a second visit later this month.
- 2. Look for the peacock!** Chateau Ste. Michelle has a peacock roaming the grounds, and if you're lucky enough, it might just cross your path during your visit.
- 3. Try it all.** Not only was I impressed by the feel of Woodinville, I truly enjoyed getting to know the wines and winemakers I met in the area. The joy of food and wine are the individual stories that make each experience unique, and the variety of purveyors and pours makes Woodinville a real hidden gem. My favorite wines along the way included the 2018 Novelty Hill-Januik Spring Run and the 2016 Chateau Ste. Michelle Cold Creek Vineyard Riesling.

~Jennifer Matthewson

Photos: Jennifer Matthewson / Daily Blender

***This visit to Woodinville was part of a media familiarization tour of the area. Many thanks to the folks at Woodinville Wine Country Association for hosting the tour.*