

LEGENDS OF STAG HOLLOW

as heard through the grapevine...

(early November, 2008) Volume 12.1

Contents:

- ... *Open Three Weekends*
- ... *Holiday Wine Tasting*
- ... *Holiday Library Special—don't miss*
- ... *'06s Released & Futures Pick Up*
- ... *Aging Report & Vintage Chart '94-'06*

Our passion: craft distinct, individual wines that reflect the place of origin using best vineyard practices and minimal winemaking intervention.

Secure Shopping at www.staghollow.com

Connecting with Jill Zarnowitz and Mark Huff
at Stag Hollow

E-mail: staghollow@staghollow.com

Phone: 503-662-5609; Fax: 503-662-4581

Greetings from the Hollow,

It's over, finally. The latest harvest and longest political campaign on record is in the books, and it's time to get back some sanity. The recuperative process includes enjoying some good wine, as a new chapter opens in American history.

Just in time is a great line-up of wines at Stag Hollow's Holiday Season openings in November and December. This year we showcase a special tasting to celebrate Stag Hollow's 15th vintage, 1994-2008, and Mark's 25th vintage of winemaking. One of our finest pinot noirs, the **1998 Vendange Sélection**, will be available for tastes at all events.

For those receiving this mailing, you and your guests are invited to a special tasting (non public) on **Saturday or Sunday November 22 and 23** (before Thanksgiving) or on **Saturday, December 6**. At these events we'll pour a unique wine vertical: "The Even Vintages". Some Oregon pinot noir mystics believe that the even-year vintages produce extraordinary wines. Hmmm, that's an intriguing theory; so, why not take a look at Stag Hollow's **Vendange Sélection** from '98, 00, 02, 04, 06 and you can be the judge (vertical tasting fee \$15, reimbursed with purchase of \$50 or more per person).

With the surprisingly good quality '08 vintage finally in barrel, we are ready to greet visitors at our newly remodeled tasting room. Phase II renovation was completed just before last Memorial Day Weekend tastings, nearly doubling the floor space. We punctuated the panoramic view with picture windows and enlivened the setting with wood trim and colors to create a wine

destination that fits the secluded ridge top location.

A map to the **vineyard tasting room** is on the cover page of this newsletter or for more details log-on to www.staghollow.com and click the "Contact Us" button.

If you're unable to visit during the holiday openings, consider navigating to **Staghollow.com** to take advantage of holiday offerings and sales through December 31, 2008.

Open Three Weekends

Stag Hollow is open for the upcoming holidays over a three weekend period at the new **vineyard tasting room**. Doors will be open for tastings:

WEEKEND BEFORE THANKSGIVING

(Private tasting--mailing list customers)

Saturday & Sunday

November 22 & 23

Noon to 4 PM

(Special vertical tasting + current releases: \$15; reimbursed with purchase of \$50 or more per person)

WEEKEND AFTER THANKSGIVING

(Public tasting)

November 28, 29, & 30

Friday, Saturday, & Sunday

11 AM to 5 PM

Tasting fee: \$5/\$10; reimbursed with purchase of \$50 or more per person.

2ND SATURDAY AFTER THANKSGIVING

*(Private tasting--mailing list customers--
Extra holiday shopping; gift mailing available)*

December 6

Saturday

Noon to 4 PM

(Special vertical tasting + current releases: \$15; reimbursed with purchase of \$50 or more per person)

Can't make these dates? Call to make an appointment.

Holiday Tasting

Featured Library Selection

We've heard it from you, our customers, peers in the industry, those attending retrospective tastings, and many more: the Stag Hollow 1998 *Vendange Sélection* is an astounding wine that has aged well. We confess, confidentially, that this wine has been a "house" favorite (and of the 185 cases made little is left). As we uncork the 1998 *Vendange Sélection* pinot noir this holiday season, the vintage and its wines have some stories to be told. (Note: not available for purchase.)

Oregon '98 pinot noirs arrived on the marketplace after three vintages of varying quality among producers, especially the '97s, which were predominately *Bourgogne* or *Village* in character. With the long drought of local wine to crow about, the '98 vintage received merciless pre-release hype. The 1998 vintage did not disappoint, as the wines stood their ground and met expectations—yet over the years some did not age as long as touted. For consumers who enjoy fuller-styled pinot noirs, 1998 was the vintage they had been waiting for since the much heralded 1994s. The 1998 vintage also ushered in a new era in Oregon pinot noirs; the first of nine consecutive vintages that not only yielded remarkable quality, but stimulated world-wide attention and investments in new Oregon vineyards and wine operations.

What made the '98 vintage stand out was its unique set of weather conditions, which are summarized here from earlier writings. In April, a frost killed many of the tender primary buds just as they were unfolding. With primary buds mostly gone, the secondary shoots took over, which typically produce small, less-fruitful grape clusters that ripen unevenly throughout the vineyard. In effect, Mother Nature had naturally reduced the crop to about 1 ton/acre, thus concentrating the flavors (note that the 2004 vintage also had a small crop, ~1-ton/acre, resulting from cool, rainy weather while the grape flowers were pollinating). Easily forgotten from the 1998 vintage is that the spring was very wet, record-setting for the period January through May. Despite that, quite warm and dry conditions prevailed from mid July through September, with

many days in the high 80s and 90s and almost 2 months without measurable precipitation.

After two harvest sweeps from September 25 to 30 selecting just the ripest clusters, we went for broke and picked with a flurry on October 1. The last pinot noir cluster came off at 5 p.m. and by 7 p.m. the rain started; it poured nearly an inch, ending the drought.

At its release in fall 2000, the 1998 Stag Hollow *Vendange Sélection* was huge in structure, depth, and length of palate, and was by no means ready to consume. Even so, it was evident that this was a special wine by its complexity, intensity, and length of palate. All the wine needed was time, perhaps 5 or more years, and patience, an attribute fading from our fast-paced culture.

Ten Years After™, the *Vendange Sélection* has mellowed considerably by shedding its brawny character, yet retains its central black cherry theme, with layers of complexity and nuances of nutmeg, cinnamon, and ginger.

For those who have held onto your '98 *Vendange Sélection*, the holiday tasting is a unique opportunity to gauge and discuss when to consume.

As for the 2000, 2002, 2004, and 2006 *Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs in the vertical tasting with the '98, they each have their own stories but that will have to wait.....

'06 Field Blend

Field Blend, Stag Hollow's version of an everyday hearty country wine, is currently available from the '06 vintage. Our *Field Blend* is usually released springtime, about 18 months after harvest, and in time for the Memorial Day Weekend tastings. This wine is sold directly to consumers and is not available in retail stores. Time has passed since it was released last May and *Field Blend* fans have been steadily chipping away at the '06 inventory. For those who visit Stag Hollow once a year at Thanksgiving time, here's the inventory report on this proprietary blend of primarily dolcetto, leMBERger, and pinot noir from a warm vintage: about 90 cases remain of this big, big wine. Always an extraordinary value, the 2006 *Field Blend* is \$12.95/btl and \$10.36/btl at case price.

At this price, it's easy be a *locavore* (consume local food), which encourages sustainable local economies by buying locally grown and produced products. Of note, the 2007 *Field Blend* has been

bottled and will be available for purchase and pick up by around April 15, 2009.

Dolcetto

Stag Hollow's '06 dolcetto, arguably our best effort to date with this *Italian* varietal, is almost sold out, with ~25 cases remaining. Stag Hollow crafts one of the few estate-grown dolcetto wines in Oregon. Like the *Field Blend*, our dolcetto is usually first released Memorial Day Weekend. If you have not visited Stag Hollow since last Thanksgiving or have not purchased this wine since its retail release in Portland and Seattle markets a few months ago, time is quickly running out. A hearty red, our dolcetto is modestly priced at \$18.95/btl and \$16.11/btl in mixed or solo case. The next vintage of dolcetto will be the 2008 but likely won't be available for another year or more.

Muscat – New!

It's a new wine for Stag Hollow: 100% muscat--in a dry *Alsatian*-style. Our 2006 muscat is a blend of early muscat and muscat ottonel with just a hint of residual sugar to brighten the fruit. A terrific wine for holiday cheer and entertaining guests, the Stag Hollow muscat is great for sipping with hors d'oeuvres, as well as, matching the breadth of flavors found on holiday dinner tables. What wine can do the hard work of complementing chutneys, gravies and glazes, stuffing, yams, mashed potatoes, drumsticks, mushrooms, and spices galore: sage, ginger, nutmeg. Okay, okay, we'll give you a hint, it's not chardonnay. The 2006 muscat is priced at \$16.95/btl and \$14.41/btl at the mixed or solo case price.

2006 Pinot Noirs—New Releases

Last year at this time we praised the 2006 vintage; since then, we see no reason to waver from that notion. Also at that time, we wrote that the 2006 vintage was unique by Oregon standards, in that good yields (large clusters & berries) were matched by excellent ripeness and flavor development (the latter typically has been associated with low yielding, droughty Oregon vintages). While the '06 vintage wines made from ultra-ripe grapes are unlikely candidates for long-term bottle-aging, the wines are delicious for near-term drinking. Yes, the alcohols for the '06s slipped up there to 14.5% and beyond; yet, interestingly, the fruit, structure, and power of these wines are balanced such that the perception of soprano-level alcohol is not evident.

Futures Pick Up

For those who purchased futures of the 2006 *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs, the

wines are available for pick up at any of the holiday season tastings. Contact us if you need to make arrangements for a different pick up time, or have the wine shipped.

Yamhill-Carlton

Last spring, Stag Hollow released its 2006 *Yamhill-Carlton* pinot noir--a very good value in Oregon pinot noir. In the 2006 vintage, Stag Hollow had far too much wine of "reserve" quality, which is a good problem to have, as opposed to not enough. Given the vintage quality and the surprisingly high volume, we had far more potential *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* wines than our current markets could sustain. Seeking new markets for "reserve" wines that would be sustainable from a volume perspective for perhaps just one vintage didn't make sense. Instead, we reallocated a substantial volume of wine targeted for the *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* into the production of *Yamhill-Carlton*. Wait a second, Huff—that was confidential information. Okay, I take it all back and simply state: priced at \$24.95/btl and \$21.20/btl at the mixed or solo case price, a very good value is hiding behind the *Yamhill-Carlton* label.

Vendange Sélection and Reserve

The '06 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve* are being released for the first time at the upcoming holiday tastings. Both wines are expressive of the vintage: big, full-bodied, and a long finish, and still very young wines. The *Reserve* fruit is a collage of plum, raspberry, and blackberry, with hints of lavender, and some tannin yet to shed, whereas, the *Vendange Sélection*, like a coy cat changes in the glass, darting in and out of cherry fruit with notes of vanilla, then restrained, showing enough to be intriguing, especially the appealing white pepper notes and hints of winter spices. Both are keepers.

The '06 *Reserve* is priced at \$39.95/btl and \$33.95/btl at the mixed or solo case price. As part of our 15th anniversary celebration, and only at the private tastings on November 22 and 23 and December 6, the '06 *Vendange Sélection* is on special at 25% off for \$26.96/btl by the case or mixed case.

15th Anniversary Special
2006 Vendange Sélection
25%-off if purchased in mixed or full case**
(=\$26.96/btl)
****Not available at public tastings Nov. 28-30****

Note the 2006 is the last *Vendange Sélection* until the '08 vintage. In 2007, our oldest block of

Pommard and Colmar 538 pinot noir clones, which go into the *Vendange Sélection*, ripened much later than the reserve clones. The 2007 grapes never quite achieved our quality standards to produce a 2007 *Vendange Sélection* pinot noir.

2005 Reserve in stock

A gold medal winner from the 2008 Northwest Wine Summit and a finalist, qualifying to be poured at the 2008 Portland Indie Wine Festival, the '05 *Reserve* is an artful blend of 10 pinot noir clones that shows excellent balance between structure and berry flavors. Sandwiched between the huge vintages of 2004 and 2006, we often find the purity of fruit in our 2005 pinot noirs a gratifying diversion from its powerfully built siblings. Tasting notes on *Saveur* magazine's website include the following:

Stag Hollow. 2005 Yamhill-Carlton District Reserve Pinot Noir. This pinot's big, fruity nose paves the way for a palate of ripe fruit, including currants and cherry, but the fruit remains subtle, creating balance with a bit of luxury. Should age well over the next year and beyond (www.saveur.com)

The 2005 *Reserve* is priced at \$39.95/btl and \$33.95 at mixed or solo case price. Good value relative to the bevy of wines of comparable quality starting at \$50 and up.

The 2005 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve 777-114* pinot noirs are sold out at Stag Hollow. Even so, these wines are available in a few retail markets. If interested, please call Stag Hollow to assist with finding retail locations.

Don't Miss Futures of 2007 Pinot Noir Memorial Day Weekend 2009

Bottled on September 23rd and 24th this year, the 2007 pinot noirs have been tasted weekly since mid-October to gauge their development. After a recent tasting, Jill and Mark concluded that they are not ready, consistently too closed-in. Even though it is too soon after bottling to showcase the '07 *Reserve* at the Thanksgiving Holiday tasting, the potential of this wine is superb. All grapes in our '07 reserve were harvested either before the rains or after the first modest rainstorm and achieved excellent ripeness (some blocks were up to 24.3 Brix).

The 2007 vintage will be branded as a rainy one, and rightfully so; yet, we believe that consumers are in for a treat when you taste our '07 *Reserve*. Please join us at our 2009 Memorial Day Weekend Tastings for futures offerings of this wine, as well as the release of the 2007 *Field Blend*.

Vintage Chart '94-'06

2008 Stag Hollow Pinot Noir Vintage Chart

Vintage Wine	Drink Range [plateau]
1994 <i>Celebré</i>	now to 2009 & beyond?
1995 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now
1998 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now to 2010 [2006-7]
1999 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now
2000 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now to 2010 [2005-8]
2001 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	hold/now to 2011 [08-9]
2002 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now to 2011 [2008-9]
2004 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	2010 to 2014 [2010-12]
2005 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	2009 to 2013 [2009-10]
2006 <i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	2009 to 2013 [2010-11]
2000 <i>Reserve</i>	now to 2009 [2005-7]
2001 <i>Reserve</i>	now to 2011 [2007-9]
2002 <i>Reserve</i>	now to 2010 [2007-8]
2004 <i>Reserve</i>	2009 to 2014 [20010-12]
2005 <i>Reserve</i>	hold/now to 2012 [08-10]
2006 <i>Reserve</i>	2009 to 2012 [10-11]
2004 <i>Reserve-777/114</i>	now to 2011 [2007-9]
2005 <i>Reserve-777/114</i>	now to 2011 [2008-9]
2003 <i>Cuvée</i>	now thru 2009 [2007]
2002 <i>Yamhill County</i>	now
2003 <i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now
2004 <i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2010 [2009]
2005 <i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2009 [2008]
2005 <i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2011 [2009-10]

[Underlining signifies change since the previous Vintage Chart. Hold/now refers to drinking well now, while enhanced development in bottle is likely. Plateau refers to the most satisfying time period (in our opinion) to consume the wine. Production of the *Reserve* designation began in 2000.]

Cellar notes

All wines held up well over the last year, so we have not tinkered much with the vintage chart. The 1994 *Celebré* pinot noir tastes great; it easily could hold its own for several more years. We poured a couple hundred tastes of the 2000 *Reserve* at the recent *Three Rivers Land Trust* fund raiser, matched with venison prepared by the *Joel Palmer House Restaurant* (Dayton, OR); a fabulous pairing. '01 and '02 *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* taste great! We highly recommend any of these four wines for holiday dinners. The 2000 and 2001 *Cuvée* wines were removed from the 2008 Vintage Chart; their time has come. Taking them off the list is our strongest indication that they should be consumed over the next year.

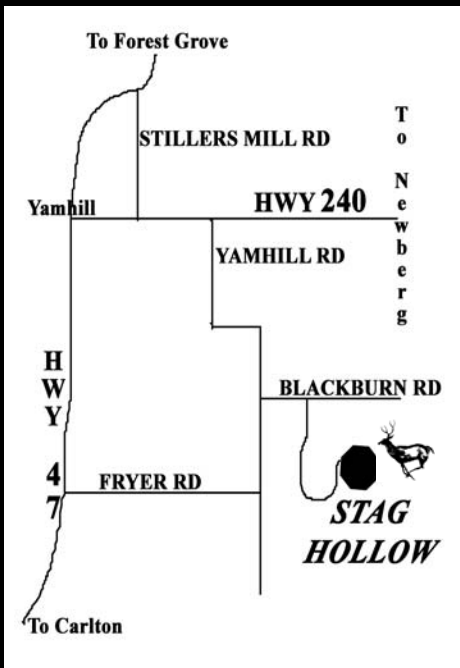
Finally, a reminder tip (reprinted from an earlier newsletter): **in winter, please allow sufficient time for Stag Hollow red wines to warm to room temperature before serving—highly structured wines will remain closed at cool temperatures.**

We look forward to seeing you at the weekend tastings around Thanksgiving and Memorial Day.

Cheers, Jill & Mark

STAG HOLLOW

2008 Holiday Season Wine Tastings



TASTING & SALES: '05 & '06 Stag Hollow Pinot Noirs
Special Vertical Tasting of '98, '00, '02, '04, & '06 Vendange Selection
(November 22, 23, & December 6 only)*

Specials and terrific prices (and yes, Field Blend is in stock)

Case price discounts 15 - 20% Off; ½ case discounts too

Dolcetto and dry Alsace-styled Muscat (new release)

FULL-BODIED ARTISTICALLY CRAFTED WINES

Saturday & Sunday Nov. 22 & 23, Saturday, Dec. 6 at Noon – 4 PM (\$15)*

Friday, Saturday, Sunday November 28, 29, & 30 at 11 AM – 5 PM

Tasting (\$5/\$10) & Sales

Fresh Breads, Cheeses, Appetizers, & Fine Chocolate!

See inside for tasting details

503-662-5609--www.staghollow.com

Stag Hollow
7930 Blackburn Road
Yamhill, OR 97148