

LEGENDS OF STAG HOLLOW

As heard through the grapevine...

(November, 2017) Volume 20.2

Contents

Tastings on Three Weekends
Release of 2015 Pinot Noirs
Futures on 2016 Pinot Noirs
New, Recent, and Current Releases
Vintage Chart

Connecting with Stag Hollow
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*Open for public tastings Labor Day,
Thanksgiving, and Memorial Day Weekends*

Greetings from the Hollow:

Jill, Mark, Nyssa, Brix[🍷], and the many friends who help in the tasting room invite you to one of six tastings at Stag Hollow during the Thanksgiving holiday season:

Thanksgiving-Holiday Season Tastings

Weekend before Thanksgiving

(Private tastings--mailing list customers)

Saturday & Sunday*

November 18 & 19*

Noon to 4 PM

**offered for those who prefer smaller gatherings*

Weekend after Thanksgiving

(Public tastings)

November 24 & 25

Friday & Saturday, 11 AM to 5 PM

November 26

Sunday, Noon to 4 PM

First Saturday in December

(Private tasting--mailing list customers)

December 2

Noon to 4 PM

**All
tastings
are
\$10.**

**Tasting fee reimbursed with purchase
of \$75 or more per person**

Map, directions, or other information about Stag Hollow and its wines can be accessed at **Staghollow.com**. At these tasting events, Stag Hollow will offer tastes and purchases of the following:

- **Vendange Sélection Pinot Noirs:** 2002!! (15-year old pinot noir from our Wine Library), 2015, and 2016, a futures purchase.
- **Reserve Pinot Noirs:** 2015 and 2016, a futures purchase.
- **Tempranillo:** 2016, a futures purchase.
- **New release:** 2014 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir.
- **"Holiday Customer Appreciation" Sale:** 2013 Yamhill Carlton Pinot Noir.
- **Additional current releases:** 2012 Field Blend, 2014 Dolcetto D' Yamhill Superiore, and 2015 dry Muscat.

Winemaker's Preamble

This year in western Oregon we experienced one of the most beautiful Octobers in a long time. More than half the month was clear and sunny and the thermometer broke 70 degrees in late October for the first time in more than a decade. Contrast that with October 2016 when precipitation fell on 28 of 31 days.

Spectacular color displays were plentiful this fall. Vineyards in general orchestrated some the most striking visual spectacles, painting checker-boarded splashes of yellows, orange, and reds segmented among different grape varieties. Interspersed with this eye-catching patchwork were parades of color pigments along the river bottomlands and raucous color-shows of big-leaf maples sprinkled all over in the Coast Range.

A humbling and fleeting few weeks of colors capped off a dramatic 2017 vintage, a stunner at Stag Hollow, producing high quality grapes across the board. Our excitement surrounding the potential of the 2017 vintage wines and the fall color extravaganza were enough to distract us from what was a challenging weather journey in 2017. Now, in our November post-harvest season stupor, and with the last wine lots having just finished fermentation on November 10 (dolcetto), it's time to reflect on the unprecedented weather of 2017 in all its record-setting glory.

Before reminiscing on 2017, we have breaking news on corks: we went cork-less for our 2016 red wines recently bottled in September. This is a monumental change at Stag Hollow, involving an agonizing decision, pushed to the edge by a long battle with inconsistent cork quality.

We took a two-pronged strategy to replace cork as our wine-bottle closure. Screw caps were employed to seal the 2016 Stag Hollow Yamhill-Carlton pinot noir, dolcetto, and field blend whereas for the 2016 Reserve, Vendange Sélection, and tempranillo, we tapped into a relatively new cork-like product developed by "Nomacorc," which pronounced quickly sounds like no-more-cork! In 2013, Nomacorc released a plant-based closure called "PlantCork" that is molded from sugar cane polymers to look and feel like a cork. In our lengthy research that led us to PlantCork, we surmised that this product is a milestone moment that will replace natural

cork as a closure, because it is taint-free (no off flavors from 2,4,6-trichloroanisole that occasionally occurs in natural cork), plant-based, recyclable and has a low carbon footprint, and it's compatible with long-aging of wine. At the upcoming tastings, check out our 2016 pinot noirs (futures) bottled with PlantCorc.

After that revelation, how about a wine-nursery-rhyme:

Rub a dub dub,
Three people in a wine club,
And who do you think they be?
The grape-maker, the wine-maker
And the tasting-maker,
They hailed out more members,
Twas enough to make all contenders.

So, from here on those who have purchased wine from Stag Hollow directly in the last 5 years will automatically qualify to be in Stag Hollow's wine club, if we have your contact information (mailing address or email). The club's tenets: No wines will be shipped to club members unless wine has been pre-ordered, and members will have exclusive access to special wine discounts, invites to private events, and more. It's that simple; however, expect the club's marketing to be modest.

2017—It's One for the Record Books

2017 can be summed up as a year of peculiar weather. In our May newsletter, you may recall we were grouching about the extremely wet winter and spring. Precipitation rose to about 155% above average through mid-May. Then, everything changed. May kicked off five consecutive months of above average temperatures, underscored by a scorching June-July-August, the second hottest three-month period going back 80 years. Come September, Mother Nature had some fire left in her, unleashing a scorching first half of the month: the hottest ever, by a lot, including temperatures exceeding 100 degrees.

In retrospect, we (including the grapes) endured 79 days at and over 80 degrees (third highest on record—2015 has the most); 24 days at and over 90 degrees (second highest—tied with 2009), of which 70% happened in August and September (bizarre); and three heat waves that reached 100 or more degrees (exceptional).

Wait, there is more. Back to the rain. September welcomed two significant rain storms, which reinvigorated our drought-stressed vines, yet drove the precipitation total for the water year (October-September) to over 50 inches (~15 inches above average), 4th wettest water year on record).

Strange year, indeed. Hardly a textbook vintage for crafting high quality pinot noirs. Yet, after all that, 2017 was a spectacular vintage for Stag Hollow wines. With our dense planting of grapes being exposed to the persistent droughty condition, competition between vines for water and nutrients was fierce forcing maturation to slow to a near stand-still in September until the rains came. The

delay in maturation turned into a stroke of good luck. We let pinot noir hang until cooler weather prevailed when flavors were in balance with sugar development. We harvested pinot noir October 4-8, very late for such a hot vintage. So far, 2017 is pointing towards a magnificent vintage.

The Future: Tasting and Purchase of 2016s

The 2016 vintage (as did 2017) continued a streak of warm to hot years that started in 2012, peaking in 2015, and continued to be hot. In 2016, temperatures started to heat up early, especially in February and April, triggering a very early vine bud-break and accelerated shoot growth rates that were challenging to keep pace with while managing the vineyard. Relatively mild conditions prevailed from May to early August, about average. A late season heat wave ensued through the end of August soaring temperatures into the 90s and 100s for 12 of 16 days. Like the late season heat wave in 2017, grape maturation slowed down, again to our advantage. We harvested our pinot noir grapes substantially later than most warm-site vineyards, taking advantage of September's cooler temperatures and some welcome rain. In the end, we had perfect ripening conditions for pinot noir and tempranillo, harvesting from September 15 to 17 and on September 28, respectively.

2016 Reserve and Vendange Sélection Pinot Noirs

As the 2016 pinot noir wines aged in barrels, it became readily apparent a predicament was emerging. Data from our many blind tastings showed that nearly all barrels of pinot noir were scoring so high that wine from every barrel could be a contender for our *Reserve* or *Vendange Sélection* bottlings. A good problem to have, but it is still a problem that had to be resolved because our *Yamhill-Carlton* pinot noir needed at least half of our pinot noir production from the vintage. Collectively, the 2016s showed the highest quality that we can recall of any vintage. In sum, all indicators point towards 2016 being a superb vintage with long aging potential.

At Stag Hollow, 2016 was the vintage of the pommard clone. Not only did we make our traditional *Vendange Sélection*, which is made almost exclusively with the pommard clone, 2016 is the first vintage that pommard is the dominant clone in our pinot noir *Reserve* at 65%; Dijon clones 777 and 114 wines were used to complete that blend. Both bottlings saw a good kiss of oak: about 20% of the aging time was in new oak and about 35% in 1-year old barrels.

Our last tasting of these wines spanned 4 days from November 2-5. The first day, both wines were somewhat tight from being recently bottled in late September. They tended to open up more as each day passed. Given this, we'll aerate these wines before each of the upcoming tastings so you can better judge their true potential.

Futures offerings of the 2016s are set at prices below wholesale rates. Stag Hollow's futures price for the

2016 *Reserve and Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs is \$192 @ 1/2 case (\$32.00/btl) and \$348 @ full case (\$29.00/btl), and will be released November, 2018.

2016 Tempranillo

For those who missed tasting our 2016 estate-grown tempranillo and futures offering at the Memorial Day holiday events last May, you will have a final opportunity at the upcoming tastings in November and December. Our 2016 vintage tempranillo has all the tell-tale signs of becoming a classic tempranillo, showing depth, complexity, and aging potential. Because 2016 was an early-harvest vintage, we picked tempranillo early, though after pinot noir, on September 28th at 24 Brix. Timing was perfect; it's a superb wine. Purchase prices of futures are by case and six-bottle lots at \$264/case (\$22/bottle) and \$141/1/2 case (\$23.50/bottle). Released May 2018.

All futures prices are available through January 14, 2018.

Release of 2015 Pinot Noirs (Futures Pick-up)

2015 was the warmest year in Oregon since recordkeeping began in 1895, topping the warmest year on record, 1934. Temperatures in every season in 2015 were well above average, especially the summer season, exceeding 2009, the previous warmest summer. And let's not forget that 2015 will be memorialized as the year when a new climate creature appeared on earth named "The "Blob," a huge area of warm water in the north Pacific Ocean linked to this enduring heat wave.

What kind of wines should we expect from such a warm vintage? The wines should be big, plush, and approachable early. You got it in Oregon pinot noirs from 2015. The tricky part, from a vintner's perspective for a vintage this warm, is to keep flavors in balance making sure that a wine's potential alcohol does not take over and that depth, complexity, and age-worthiness are retained, avoiding massive singular fruit bombs (think pinot noirs made in an unnamed state to the south).

Based on our experience of growing and fermenting grapes from our local area for 30 years, we decided to retain a grape crop larger than usual. Our thinking in doing this was to delay harvest to at least mid-September when the weather is likely cooler and more amenable to pinot noir. The larger crop spread out the sugar production to more grape clusters to avoid early sugar-spiking and thus allowed sufficient time for complex flavor compounds develop.

We're pleased to report that this strategy worked! Stag Hollow's 2015 vintage wines are exceptional. For fans of Stag Hollow vintages like 2003, 2006, and 2009, the 2015 vintage is your year. Through our experience, however, we believe the wines in 2015 are even a notch up in quality above any previous hot-temperature vintage.

The 2015 Stag Hollow *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs, bottled in September 2016 and then aged one

year, are now ready to be picked up for futures customers at the tasting room during the upcoming six tastings. During the holiday tastings, we'll be pouring tastes of the 2015 *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* and they will be available for purchase at \$50/btl and \$42.50/btl at the case price.

New Release-2014 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir

Our *Yamhill-Carlton* pinot noir is the most broadly distributed Stag Hollow wine found in wine retail locations and in restaurants. We traditionally release this wine to our newsletter customers before it becomes available on the retail market (first choice at our most popular wine). At the Thanksgiving holiday tastings, we are releasing the 2014 vintage. This comes quickly on the heels of the 2013 *Yamhill-Carlton* pinot noir released at our 2017 Memorial weekend tastings. We held back the 2013 and 2014 *Yamhill-Carltons*, releasing in 2017 because both wines needed additional bottle aging to blossom. The 2014 Stag Hollow *Yamhill Carlton* pinot noir is showing the depth of flavors (black cherry emphasis), velvety texture, and a long finish that we covet in this wine. Because this new wine is currently sold only at our tasting room, we can offer a special pre-release price of \$23/btl (reg. \$25) and \$19.55/btl at case price.

Current Releases

Annual Ho-Ho-Ho Sale

Our 2013 *Yamhill-Carlton* pinot noir was originally selected to be our reserve from 2013, the best wine from the vintage. With the 2013s being a lighter style vintage analogous to a Burgundy style of the 80's we decided to bottle the reserve as *Yamhill-Carlton*. Our 2013 is a small-production wine and sold only through our tasting room. We are offering the *Yamhill-Carlton* at a special holiday price of \$20/btl (reg. @ \$25) and \$17.00/btl at case price (Ho-Ho-Ho).

2015 Muscat

Our 2015 dry muscat been has our most popular wine at Stag Hollow over the last few months. Everyone is buying a few bottles or case lots. One taste and we think you'll know why. This versatile blend of muscat ottonel and early muscat is a refreshing 11.8% alcohol while retaining concentrated, perfumed aromas and flavors of orange, citrus, and pears. The 2015 muscat is priced at \$16.00/btl and \$13.60/btl at case price.

2014 Dolcetto D'Yamhill Superiore

Last spring, we released our new Stag Hollow 2014 Dolcetto D'Yamhill *Superiore* (e.g., our highest quality designation). The '14 is a hefty dolcetto, akin to our rich-styled 2006 and 2009 dolcetto, with a finish that goes on and on. 2014 is an extraordinary vintage for dolcetto. Not to miss. The 2014 *Superiore* is priced at \$24/btl (\$20.40 case price).

2012 Field Blend

The 2012 vintage *Field Blend* ranks among the best of the Field Blends ever produced. It's a co-fermentation blend of primarily pinot noir, dolcetto, tempranillo, and

chardonnay. This is an impressive *Field Blend* for those who seek a bigger styled red blend at a steal of a price. This wine has all the characteristics of the impressive 2012 vintage, concentrated, full-bodied, and complex. Also available for purchase (not poured) is our *Field Blend Oregon Special Selection II*, a blend of grapes from the 2011 and 2009 vintages. Both Stag Hollow *Field Blends* are priced direct-to-customer at \$13/btl (\$11.05/btl in mixed cases lots) and a special 25% off (\$9.75/btl) in solo cases.

Holiday Entertaining

We produce some excellent value-wines that fit the budget for holiday entertaining at the office, family gatherings, and among friends. In addition to our competitively priced *Field Blends*, try our 2010 and 2011 *Yamhill Villages* pinot noirs. Case lots of these wines offer a high quality alternative to bargain-priced wines found at wine shops and grocery stores during the holidays. Tastes of the *Yamhill Villages* will be available upon request at the upcoming Holiday tastings. Retailing at \$15/bottle, the 2010 and 2011 *Yamhill Villages* are on sale by the case lot priced for the holidays at \$10.50/btl = \$126/cs (30% off)

Special Holiday Gift Giving

From our Library, we have a good supply of the 2008 and 2009 *Reserve* pinot noirs priced at exceptional values for aged wines. The 2008 *Reserve*, which continues to be offered from Seattle's top wine bar, the Purple Café, is priced at \$60.00/btl and \$51.00 in solo or mixed cases. Our 2009 *Reserve* is on sale at \$35/btl (reg. \$40) and \$29.75/btl in solo or mixed cases.

For the holidays, we also are offering a special three-bottle Library gift pack from the 2004 vintage of one *777/114*, one *Reserve*, and one *Vendange Selection* priced at \$195 (no further discounts). In 2004, our pinot noirs were big-styled and concentrated, owing to tiny yields of less than 1 ton per acre. Awesome wines; awesome gift.

Wines in Stock

While we offer a wide selection of wines to taste at our holiday Stag Hollow tastings, that selection is only part of what we have in our inventory available for purchase. These include the current release of tempranillo (2015 at \$30 btl) and *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs from 2010 to 2014 priced from \$40-\$50.

Forthcoming Wines

In spring 2018, we'll be releasing two new wines: 2016 Muscat and 2016 tempranillo. In addition, we'll be pouring barrel samples and selling futures of the 2017 tempranillo (it's astounding!).

Vintage Chart Update

Our 2015 pinot noirs have been added to the chart. The 2014s, a vintage that was so showy in its youth, have been evolving slowly and are somewhat tight at this point. Consequently, we moved the 2014 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve* pinot noirs back a year in the "drink range" to start consuming at the 5th year when more expansive flavors should be on board. If you are cellaring 2008 and 2009 pinot noirs, it's time to start pulling corks, especially with the holidays approaching. We've been enjoying (many) bottles of the 2011 *Vendange Sélection* pinot

noir; it's a wonderful bottle with dinner and for those moments where a 13% alcohol pinot fits. At harvest gatherings during October, we had a chance to reacquaint ourselves with some older Stag Hollow bottlings. They were tasting well and quite satisfying. Particularly noteworthy were the 2001 and 2002 *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* pinot noirs. The 2001 *Vendange Sélection* pinot noir seemed massive, and could last forever. All the 2005s continue to be among our very favorites. Our recommendations for the holidays have a similar ring to last year: any of our 2004s and 2005s, if you have any; 2008s and 2009s; 2011 *Vendange Sélection*; and any of the 2012 pinot noirs.

2017 Vintage Chart--Pinot Noir 1994-2015

Vintage Wine	Drink Range [plateau]
1994 Celebré	now & beyond—still going
1998 Vendange Sélect.	now & beyond (delicious)
1999 Vendange Sélect.	now & beyond (delicious)
2000 Vendange Sélect.	now
2001 Vendange Sélect.	now & <u>beyond</u>
2002 Vendange Sélect.	now
2004 Vendange Sélect.	now
2005 Vendange Sélect.	now to <u>2019</u>
2006 Vendange Sélect.	now to <u>2018</u> [2010-17]
2010 Vendange Sélect.	2017 to 2025 [evolving slowly]
2011 Vendange Sélect.	now to 2021
2012 Vendange Sélect.	now to 2022
2014 Vendange Sélect.	<u>2019</u> to 2025
2015 Vendange Sélect.	<u>2019</u> to 2026
2000 Reserve	now
2001 Reserve	now & <u>beyond</u>
2002 Reserve	now
2004 Reserve	now
2005 Reserve	now
2006 Reserve	now
2008 Reserve	now to <u>2022</u>
2009 Reserve	now to <u>2020</u>
2010 Reserve	now to <u>2020</u>
2011 Reserve	now to <u>2022</u>
2012 Reserve	2017 to 2022
2014 Reserve	<u>2019</u> to 2025
2015 Reserve	<u>2019</u> to 2026
2004 Reserve-777/114	now
2005 Reserve-777/114	now
2008 Reserve 777/114	now to <u>2020</u>
2009 Reserve 777/114	now to 2019
2014 Reserve 777/114	<u>2018</u> to <u>2022</u>
2008 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2018 [2011-16]
2009 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2017 [2014-16]
2011 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2017 [2014-16]
2012 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2020 [2015-17]
2013 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2021 [2018-21]
2014 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2024 [2019-22]

[Underlining signifies change since the previous Vintage Chart. Now refers to drinking well now. **Plateau [] refers to the most satisfying time period (in our opinion) to consume the wine.** Production of "Reserve" designation began in 2000. Wines that should have been consumed by now are not listed]

Cheers, Jill and Mark (and Brax)