

LEGENDS OF STAG HOLLOW

As heard through the grapevine...

(November, 2018) Volume 21.3

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Connecting with Stag Hollow
E-mail: staghollow@staghollow.com
Phone: 503-662-5609
Facebook.com/staghollowwines
www.staghollow.com
Open for public tastings Thanksgiving, and
Memorial Day Weekends

Greetings from the Hollow:

We're celebrating. The 2018 vintage is impressive, it's on the way to be among the finest at Stag Hollow for all our grape varieties. If that's not enough, we're celebrating our 25th harvest at Stag Hollow! We invite you to the festivities at one of six tastings at Stag Hollow's tasting room overlooking the Willamette Valley during the Thanksgiving holiday season:

Weekend before Thanksgiving

(Private tastings--mailing list customers)

Saturday--November 17

Noon to 5 PM

Sunday--November 18*

Noon to 4 PM

Weekend after Thanksgiving

(Public tastings)

Friday & Saturday--November 23 & 24

11 AM to 5 PM

Sunday--November 25

Noon to 4 PM



First Saturday in December

(Private tasting--mailing list customers)

December 1*

Noon to 4 PM

Tastings \$10; Club members free

Tasting fee reimbursed with purchase of \$75 (per person)

**offered for those who prefer smaller gatherings*

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:** 2014 and 2017, a futures purchase.
- **Reserve Pinot Noirs:** 2008 (Library Selection), 2012 and 2017, a futures purchase.
- **Tempranillo:** 2015.
- **New releases:** 2016 Muscat and 2017 Dolcetto Rosato.
- **Additional current releases:** *Field Blend Oregon Special Selection II*, 2014 Dolcetto *D'Yamhill Superiore*, and 2011 *Yamhill Villages Pinot Noir*.

2018—5th consecutive year

We've experienced a string of warm years and bountiful grape crops since 2014 that have grape growers and wine producers smiling. The run of excellent Oregon vintages continues with 2018.

From the wine consumer's perspective, these are wonderful times: a bevy of terrific Oregon wines are available now and more is coming as the 16s and 17s are released. Each of these vintages from 2014 to 2018 has its own climate signatures. All five vintages are warmer than average, yet each vintage does show unique wine flavors. The breadth to which climate is expressed between vintages in Oregon is remarkable; it's what clearly distinguishes grapes grown and wines produced in Oregon from California.

In 2018, Mother Nature unfurled yet another year of climate records for warmth in the northern Willamette Valley. From May through August it was a scorcher. Even though 2018 was the second hottest summer (June-August) on record with temperatures 3+ degrees above normal and had the highest-ever number of days 90 degrees and above, surprisingly temperatures topped the 100-degree mark only once. Undeniably, summers are warming: since 2014 there have been 21, 29, 14, 24, and 31 days at 90 degrees or above for each year respectively; whereas 12 days are normal, thus more than doubling the expected number of days at or above 90-degrees. Hmmm.

We can't close the books on the 2018 vintage without mentioning rainfall. Precipitation was about 20% below average for the water year (October-September). More momentous was the 100+ consecutive days without significant precipitation during the summer that left our vines starving for water as harvest season approached and us wondering if the vintage quality might be compromised.

Despite the hot and dry vintage, we harvested awesome grapes that were impeccably balanced between sugar, acid and flavor development that has given rise to spectacular wines so far. How did that happen? Well, Mother Nature can be generous in convoluted ways. Like last year, our dense planting of grapes slowed grape maturation by the time September arrived under such hot, droughty conditions. Then in mid-September temperatures cooled

and a storm front spawned ~1.5 inches of rain. The rain reinvigorated the vines, as temperatures climbed back into the 70s and 80s. Then, following a 5-day hot spell, temperatures finally cooled again on September 29, which prompted us to begin harvesting Pinot Noir. Temperatures remained in the 60s and low 70s throughout harvest, and stayed mostly dry. As cooler weather prevailed flavors came into perfect balance with sugar and acid development. We finished on October 14, harvesting the last of our Dolcetto.

The Future: Tasting and Purchase of 2017 Pinot Noir

At this time last year, we were touting what a terrific vintage 2017 was aiming to be, and it didn't disappoint. Having so much top-quality Pinot Noir to work with from the 2017 vintage led to a conundrum when deciding which barrels of wine should be blended into our *Reserve and Vendange Sélection*. Results from our many blind tastings showed every barrel of wine was solidly among the highest scores in one or more of the tastings. Good problem to have because it indicates extraordinary quality all-around for the 2017 vintage.

The *Reserve and Vendange Sélection* Pinot Noirs were bottled on September 12th, and recently tasted, sequenced over 4 days from November 4 to 7. Both wines showed well, despite being bottled just ~two months ago. They displayed no signs of waning after being open for four days, which indicates long-term aging ahead. The *Vendange Sélection*, 100% Pommard clone, was more approachable, exhibiting slightly more depth than the *Reserve*, a 9-clone blend of 115 (30%), 114 (25%), 777 (25%), 667 (10%), Colmar 538 (5%), and lesser amounts of four additional clones (5%). A modest new barrel regime of tight-grain French oak was employed for the *Reserve and Vendange Sélection*, about 15% and 12% new, respectively, with the balance aged in 1- to 3-year-old French oak barrels. Both wines are engaging and definitely worthy of being in your cellar.

At the upcoming Thanksgiving Holiday Season tastings, we are pairing the 2017 *Vendange Sélection* Pinot Noir with the 2014 *Vendange Sélection*. The 2014 vintage was a hot one, yet it yielded richly textured wines with layered complexity. Now at age four, this wine is just beginning to show our "classic" aged-flavor characteristics that reward those willing to cellar Stag Hollow Pinot Noirs. Also, we are going further back in time, coupling the 2017 *Reserve* with *Reserves* from the 2012 and 2008 vintages. The 2012 vintage was not quite as hot as 2017, but it had more than 100 days without rain before harvest that yielded deeply concentrated Pinot Noirs. Weather conditions for the 2008 vintage were ideal for Pinot Noir: not too hot, not too cold; such vintages rare and tend to produce "classic" Pinot Noir flavors. In comparison, the 2017 *Vendange Sélection* falls between these two wines in depth and concentration, though closer to 2012 than 2008.

Futures offerings of the 2017s are set at prices below wholesale rates. Stag Hollow's futures price for the 2017 *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 2019. The 2008 *Reserve* is priced at \$60.00/btl and \$51.00 in solo or mixed cases, which is an exceptional value for a 10-year old Pinot Noir. The 2012 *Reserve* and 2014 *Vendange Sélection* Pinot Noirs are priced at \$50/btl and \$42.50 in solo or mixed cases.

Tempranillo

Purchase of 2017 Tempranillo futures were available at our 2018 Memorial Day weekend tastings and at our wine club tastings in July and August. We will continue to offer futures pricing of our 2017 Tempranillo at the upcoming Thanksgiving season tastings through January 15, 2019. Because our wine line-up for the upcoming tastings is already quite full, unfortunately we are unable to fit this wine into the tasting.

Notes on the 2017 Tempranillo from our spring 2017 newsletter included:

The harvested grapes were cold soaked and fermented for 21 days under cool temperatures, then transferred to 1- to 6-year-old French, Hungarian, and Oregon oak barrels to age on the yeast lees (cells) for 6 months before being taken off the lees and back into barrels again.

Two thumbs way up for the 2017 Tempranillo, so much so that we may bottle 2017 as "riserva". Our recent tasting notes include: oak and plum aromas and flavors; brawny; and a smooth, long, and complex finish."

Purchase futures of the 2017 Tempranillo and enjoy significant savings by the case at \$264 (\$22/btl) and 1/2 case at \$141 (\$23.50/btl). Current retail for 2015 and 2016 Stag Hollow Tempranillo is \$30.

Release of 2016 Pinot Noirs (Futures Pick-up)

Our 2016 Stag Hollow *Reserve and Vendange Sélection* Pinot Noirs, bottled in September 2017 and aged one year, are now ready for futures customers to be pick up at the tasting room during the upcoming six tastings. The 2016 *Reserve and Vendange Sélection* will also be available for purchase at \$50/btl and \$42.50/btl at the case price.

New Releases

2016 Muscat

We just sold out of our 2015 dry Muscat and are releasing 2016 dry Muscat at the upcoming Thanksgiving tastings. Dry Muscat is a relatively little-known wine, yet it is one of the most popular wines in our tasting room. Our dry Muscat is a versatile wine blended from Muscat Ottonel and Early Muscat. At 12% alcohol the 2016 has aromas and flavors of orange, lemon, pear, and herbs, and exhibits mineral characteristics on the finish. The Stag Hollow Muscat is currently only available for purchase directly from Stag Hollow at the tasting room or by mail. The 2016 Muscat is priced at \$17.00/btl and \$14.45/btl at case price.

2017 Dolcetto Rosato

Our Dolcetto *Rosato* was first released at the Stag Hollow club tastings in July and August. Bottled in April 2018, our 2017 Dolcetto *Rosato* is a favorite on our table as a starter

wine while puttering in the kitchen preparing meals and with a salad course. At 12% alcohol, the 2017 Dolcetto *Rosato* is full-flavored, with essence of strawberries, floral notes, and hints of all-spice. We believe our 2017 Dolcetto *Rosato* is in-line with rosé flavors made with Grenache and Cinsault grapes. Imagine rosé from southern France in Cote du Rhone. Our *Rosato* is a hearty winter “rosé” wine.

The Stag Hollow Dolcetto *Rosato* is a limited production wine (only 70 cases) and currently is available for purchase directly from Stag Hollow only at the tasting room or by mail. The 2017 Dolcetto *Rosato* is priced at \$17.00/btl and \$14.45/btl at case price.

Annual Ho-Ho-Ho Sale & Wines in Stock

This year our annual Ho-Ho-Ho sale will focus on in-tasting room values displayed near the check-out that will change daily. Notable, we were surprised to discover a few more cases 2012 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir at one of our wine storage areas that will be available, as well as there are a few more cases left of the 2013 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir, which we’ll be selling at a terrific value. More to come, including forgotten bottles from deep in our cellar.

We offer a wide selection of wines to taste at our holiday Stag Hollow tastings, yet this year’s tasting selection is only a small part of the wines available for purchase. Eighteen additional wines are on hand, ranging from 2016 Tempranillo (\$30 btl) and reserve-level Pinot Noirs from 2009 to 2016 priced from \$40-\$50.

Tasting of Current Releases

2014 Dolcetto D’Yamhill Superiore

Our Stag Hollow 2014 Dolcetto *D’Yamhill Superiore* has been among our most popular Dolcettos to date. The ’14 is a hefty Dolcetto, rich-styled, with a long lingering finish. The 2014 *Superiore* is almost gone. If you would like to stock up on this wine for the coming year, time to purchase is now. The 2014 *Superiore* is priced at \$20.40/case (\$24/bottle).

Field Blend Oregon Special Select II

Our *Field Blend Oregon Special Selection II*, a blend of estate-grown 2011 Dolcetto and Pinot Noir and 2009 Syrah sourced from the Applegate Valley in southern Oregon is our current release of *Field Blend*. We cellared this tasty wine for you, and now it is ready to drink at an outstanding value. This Stag Hollow *Field Blend* is priced direct-to-customer at \$13/btl (\$11.05/btl by the case).

2011 Yamhill Villages Pinot Noir

From the International Wine Report:

The 2011 'Yamhill Villages' Pinot Noir is a translucent colored wine which was held back by the winery owners as the coolness of the vintage required time for the flavors to fully amalgamate. The wine is currently displaying aromatics reminiscent of red currant, rose petals, red cherry, guava puree and hints of forest floor. There are flavors of red fruits, Mandarin orange rind and spice box. This is a round and silky, showing wonderful balance and lovely feminine quality

and has the potential to age nicely over the next decade. (Best 2017-2026) -90 pts.

The 2011 *Yamhill Villages* is priced at \$16/btl and \$13.60/btl at case price.

Forthcoming Wines

In spring 2019, we’re on track to release four new Stag Hollow wines: 2015 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir, Field Blend, and Dolcetto *D’Yamhill Superiore* and 2017 Tempranillo *Riserva*. In addition, at the 2019 Memorial Weekend tastings we’ll be pouring barrel samples and selling futures of the 2018 Tempranillo, an excellent vintage for this variety.

Winemaker’s Corner

Corks

Last year at this time we announced that our 2016 red wines were sealed without corks, using screw caps for the Stag Hollow *Yamhill-Carlton* Pinot Noir, Dolcetto, and Field Blend and for the *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* Pinot Noirs and Tempranillo we selected an innovative plant-based closure molded from sugar cane polymers called PlantCorc. The 2016 wines bottled with PlantCorc are developing nicely such that we decided to seal all 2017 wines with PlantCorc.

The plan, if the new closures work for us, is to completely phase out cork for our red wines. After 23 years of nothing but corks, this is a radical departure. We’ll miss corks; they are synonymous with wine, yet times are changing. Souring reliable cork quality within the U.S. has become too chancy, especially for small purchasers. The occasional “taint” characteristic found in corks that cause wines to lose fruit flavors in early stages and produce musty flavors and aromas later, has become worse in the last 10 years. With the new sugar-cane polymer corks as a viable alternative to plastic corks, we’re all in! Meanwhile, screw caps, an excellent choice for sealing wine that needs no further aging, may not meet our needs for long-term aging of wine.

Of note, if you encounter a Stag Hollow wine with cork taint we will replace your wine from our inventory or provide a fitting replacement.

Stag Hollow Wine Club

In July and August, we hosted our first wine club events. Members automatically qualified to belong to our wine club by purchasing \$100 or more of wine from Stag Hollow directly in the last 2 years. If this criterion was met and we have your contact information (mailing address or email) and recorded your purchases, then you should have received an invite to the first club events. Assembling these data to produce a club membership required merging information from various sources and resulted some names unintentionally being left off the club membership list. Our apologies if you did not receive a club event invite last June. If so, please let us know. Sustaining club membership simply entails purchasing \$100 of Stag Hollow wine every year.

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, pre-release of limited production wines, invites to private events, 20% discounts on all wines, and more.

Purple Café

For our Seattle area customers, you now can enjoy the 2014 Stag Hollow "Purple Café Selection" Pinot Noir at the (astounding) Purple Café wine bars in downtown Seattle, Bellevue, and Woodinville, as well as the seven additional high-quality restaurants created by the Heavy Restaurant Group <http://www.heavyrestaurantgroup.com>.

Stag Hollow Website

Long overdue, we are completely remodeling our website, staghollow.com. We are working with the Parson's + Co in Seattle to update our content and web presence for today's look and to fit web content into smaller screens (i.e., phones) to improve browsing capabilities. We hope to have the upgrade on-line around Thanksgiving.

Chile and Argentina

Mark is headed to Chile and Argentina to co-teach a month-long wine studies course this January through Linfield College. Two years ago, a Linfield professor contacted Mark, who has an adjunct faculty position at the College in Biology and Environmental Studies, about developing a wine and grape growing course focused on climate change and adapting to climate in key growing regions of South America, Chile and Argentina.

International Wine Report

Dr. Owen Bargreen, Washington Wine Blog (<http://www.washingtonwineblog.com/>), and senior wine reviewer of Oregon and Washington for the International Wine Report (<http://www.internationalwinereport.com/>) has been posting reviews of our red wines (Dolcetto, Tempranillo, and Pinot Noir) from 2011 through 2015. It's rewarding to connect with a reviewer that understands old-world wine making, in which wines need time to develop their true potential. All wines range from 90 to 94 points.

Vintage Chart Update

Our 2016 Pinot Noirs have been added to the chart. In the past year, we have tasted every wine on the chart, except the 1994. The thought of this seems daunting; even so, we are pleased to report that all of the wines tasted are aging well. The most significant change between last year and this year's chart is 2014 and 2015. The vintages flipped. The 2014s, which were tight last year at this time, are now coming alive with layered complex flavors and are much showier, but still restrained enough that you should wait one more year to begin opening the 2014 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve*. You can start pulling corks annually for the 2014 *Reserve 777/114*, which is in the early stage of "ready-to-drink." On the other hand, the 2015 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve* has retreated into a new closed-in aging phase, probably due to the tannin levels in this vintage that were hidden early on by big fruit flavors that have withdrawn. Please wait on these wines; we'll provide and update at this time next year.

Mark's favorite Stag Hollow wines this year were the 1999, 2002, and 2005 *Vendange Sélection*. These wines were tasted during a tasting for 11 sommeliers at Stag Hollow in August when we hosted an every 3-year retrospective of Stag Hollow Pinot Noirs from 1996 to 2014 vintages. That was fun!

Again, if you are cellaring 2008 and 2009 Pinot Noirs, it's time to start pulling corks. We continue to enjoy bottles of the 2011 *Vendange Sélection* and 2010 and 2011 *Reserve* Pinot Noirs. Please note, even though the 2010 *Vendange Sélection* is tasting well right now and should age for many more years, it has been removed from the vintage chart because of inconsistent cork quality (bummer; consequently, we have been drinking a lot of this wine and most are delicious, yet occasional cork taint issues occur—let us know if you have problems). As I write, we have a 2012 *Reserve* open—it's terrific and will do well for the upcoming holidays.

2018 Vintage Chart--Pinot Noir 1994-2016

Vintage	Wine	Drink Range	[plateau]
1994	Celebré	now & beyond	—still going
1998	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now & beyond	(delicious)
1999	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now & beyond	(delicious)
2000	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now & beyond	
2001	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now & beyond	
2002	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now & beyond	
2004	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now	
2005	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now to 2024	
2006	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now to 2019	
2011	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now to 2021	
2012	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	now to 2022	
2014	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	2019 to 2025	
2015	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	2021 to 2028	
2016	<i>Vendange Sélect.</i>	2020 to 2026	
2000	<i>Reserve</i>	now	
2001	<i>Reserve</i>	now & beyond	
2002	<i>Reserve</i>	now	
2004	<i>Reserve</i>	now	
2005	<i>Reserve</i>	now	
2006	<i>Reserve</i>	now	
2008	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2023	
2009	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2021	
2010	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2021	
2011	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2023	
2012	<i>Reserve</i>	now to 2024	
2014	<i>Reserve</i>	2019 to 2025	
2015	<i>Reserve</i>	2020 to 2026	
2016	<i>Reserve</i>	2020 to 2028	
2004	<i>Reserve-777/114</i>	now	
2005	<i>Reserve-777/114</i>	now	
2008	<i>Reserve 777/114</i>	now to 2020	
2009	<i>Reserve 777/114</i>	now to 2019	
2014	<i>Reserve 777/114</i>	2018 to 2024	
2011	<i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2019	
2012	<i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2020	
2013	<i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2021	[2018-21]
2014	<i>Yamhill-Carlton</i>	now to 2026	[2019-24]

[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 Brix)