

# LEGENDS OF STAG HOLLOW

As heard through the grapevine...

(November, 2019) Volume 22.3

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

Greetings from the Hollow: What a vintage! We'll catch up on 2019 shortly. First, we invite you to join us for one of six tastings at Stag Hollow's tasting room overlooking the Willamette Valley during the Thanksgiving holiday season:

### **Weekend before Thanksgiving**

(Private tastings—Club and mailing list customers)

**Saturday--November 23**

**Noon to 5 PM**

**Sunday--November 24\***

**Noon to 4 PM**

### **Weekend after Thanksgiving**

(Public tastings)

**Friday & Saturday--November 29 & 30**

**11 AM to 5 PM**

**Sunday--December 1**

**Noon to 4 PM**



**Saturday December 7\***

**Noon to 4 PM**

(Private tasting—Club and mailing list customers)

**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](http://Staghollow.com). At these tasting events, Stag Hollow will offer tastes and purchases of the following:

### **Wines Featured before & after Thanksgiving Weekend:**

#### **Tasting #1: November 23, 24, & December 7**

- **Futures:** 2018 *Reserve*, *Reserve 777/114*, and *Vendange Sélection (Pommard clone)* Pinot Noirs
- **New Releases:** 2013 *Yamhill Villages* and 2015 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noirs; 2015 *Dolcetto d' Yamhill Superiore*; and 2018 *Dolcetto Rosato*
- **Comparison of Reserve 777/114 Pinot Noirs:** 2014 and 2018
- **20-year-old Cellar Selection:** 1999 Vendange Sélection Pinot Noir
- **Recent Releases:** 2015 *Field Blend* and 2014 *Dolcetto d' Yamhill Superiore*

### **Wines Featured Friday-Sunday after Thanksgiving: Tasting #2: November 29 & 30 & December 1**

- **Futures:** 2018 Tempranillo and 2018 *Reserve, Reserve 777/114, and Vendange Sélection (Pommard clone)* Pinot Noirs
- **New Releases:** 2013 *Yamhill Villages* Pinot Noir and 2015 *Dolcetto d' Yamhill Superiore*
- **Cellar Selection:** 2009 Reserve Pinot Noir
- **Recent Releases:** 2016 dry Muscat; 2014 *Dolcetto d' Yamhill Superiore*; 2015 *Field Blend*, and Oregon Red Blend I

Distinct wine selection between Tasting # 1: November 23 and 24 and December 8 and Tasting #2: November 29 and 30 and December 1. Differences are underlined.

### **2019—Unique, praiseworthy vintage**

If you live in Oregon, perhaps you slept through the most significant event defining the 2019 vintage? Most likely you did because it happened well after our summer's setting sun. June, July, and August—meteorological summer—revealed its warmth in a sneaky way this year. Most perceived 2019 as a cooler Oregon summer, however, that's not quite right. For sure, we didn't experience the hot temperatures endured over the last five summers, which averaged 24 days of 90 degrees or more. Instead, we experienced plenty of summertime days above 80 degrees, seven more days than the long-term average.

Yet, what made 2019 vintage so warm is nighttime temperatures. In July, records were set for high low temperatures when evenings rarely dipped below 60 degrees. Sweaters are commonly worn on summer evenings in the Willamette Valley, but not much this year. A relentless cloud layer trapped warmed daytime air that kept evenings from cooling down as typically happens on clear nights. With this evening warmth, average daily summer temperatures were elevated, rivaling vintages perceived as being much warmer, such as 2017, 2012, 2009, and spot-on for the much-heralded 1998 vintage. As a result, grape vines were much more active at night than usual.

Summertime isn't the full story behind the unusual 2019 vintage. Vine bud-break, which normally occurs the second week of April, was setback about a week by an abnormal stretch of dry, cold weather in early March. This lag in vine growth was short-lived, however, as April and especially

May temperatures shot up far above normal. With a dry spring and summer, our dry-farmed vines were parched by September. Consequently, grape maturation slowed to a crawl, which can be problematic for wine-making if dry conditions persist into harvest.

Then, on September 7<sup>th</sup>, the vintage took a curious right turn. Rain arrived, persisting on and off for two weeks, totaling about 2 ¼ inches. Although somewhat early and a bit more than everyone wished, rain in September isn't that unfamiliar. Thankfully, the rains woke up the vines to help finish maturing the grapes, albeit slowly.

Slowly, indeed! Typically, September temperatures reach 80 degrees and above (historical average daily high for September 3-8 is 80 degrees), and even 90s, as occurred this year on September 5<sup>th</sup>. But on September 7<sup>th</sup>, temperatures dropped precipitously and stayed unseasonably cool for the next 6 weeks! After September 14<sup>th</sup>, temperatures never exceeded 75 degrees. In total the month ended with seven days hanging in the 60s and 50s. Burrrr... Even so, September 23 through October 15 remained essentially dry, setting up the most enjoyable weather conditions that we've experienced during harvest in 30 years. Fall colors were stunning.

With below normal temperatures in September, our red grape varieties dallied into harvest, eventually reaching flavor maturity in the beginning of October. The delay worked to our advantage: we avoided harvesting grapes in early to mid-September when temperatures typically are warmer, which can dull the development of complex flavor profiles. Ultimately, Mother Nature provided tasty, physiologically mature grapes with balanced acidity at much lower sugar levels than normal, averaging around 22.2 to 22.8 Brix for Pinot Noir and Tempranillo.

Tastings of the juice as yeasts transformed it into wine, showed pronounced depth of flavors and the vats were tantalizingly aromatic. All indicators point to a medium-bodied, classic "old-world" style of Pinot Noir unfolding for the 2019 vintage. Only time will tell; until then, we have great expectations for the 2019 vintage.

### ***Tasting and Purchase of 2018 Futures: A "Grand Reserve" Vintage***

#### **2018 Pinot Noirs**

We've experienced a series of warm years since 2014, resulting in a succession of terrific wines. Now comes the 2018 wines from yet another warm vintage. The wines from this vintage are impressive. When tasting these wines to determine our final blends for bottling, we were amazed by the vintage's consistent high-quality, among all barrels.

Bottled in September, we just tasted the 2018s for the first time in mid-November. Wines from this vintage are surprisingly approachable now, yet they have substantial structure and layered complexity to age for a long time. We believe the 2018s will age gracefully to the prominence of

some of our more cherished vintages: 1998, 2002, and 2005. In other words, 2018 is a vintage not to miss!

We made all three of our reserve-level Pinot Noirs in the 2018 vintage: *Reserve*, *Vendange Sélection*, and the rarely made *Reserve 777/114*. Our 777-114 clonal blend, last made from the touted 2014 vintage, is only produced in vintages when these two clones express flavors and qualities distinct enough for us to declare a separate bottling. Previous vintages of the *777/114 Reserve* include 2009, 2008, 2005, and 2004. To celebrate, we are pairing the 2018 *Reserve 777/114* Pinot Noir with its sibling from the 2014 vintage during Tasting #1 on November 23, 24, and December 7.

Purchasing "futures" of our reserve-level wines is a wise way to acquire high quality pinot noir at approachable a price. Our "futures" offerings have been priced at or below wholesale rates for more than 20 years. Stag Hollow's futures price for the 2018 *Reserve*, *Reserve 777/114*, and *Vendange Sélection* Pinot Noirs is \$198 @ 1/2 case (\$33/btl) and \$360 @ full case (\$30/btl). The wines will be released November 2020. The 2014 *Reserve 777/114* is available at \$50/btl (\$42.50/btl in solo or mixed cases).

#### **2018 Tempranillo**

Vintage 2018 was excellent for Tempranillo. Our 2018 offers the consistent depth and complexity found in all our previous Tempranillo vintages from 2014 through 2017. Futures offerings of 2018 Tempranillo were available at our 2018 Memorial Day weekend tastings and Wine Club tastings over Labor Day Weekend. We are offering final tastings for futures purchase of 2018 Tempranillo during Tasting #2 after Thanksgiving on November 29 and 30 and December 1. Futures pricing for the 2018 Tempranillo by the case is \$264 (\$22/btl) and ½ case at \$144 (\$24.00/btl). We will continue to provide futures pricing of our 2018 Tempranillo through January 15, 2020. Current retail price for the 2015, 2016, and 2017 Stag Hollow Tempranillo is \$30.

#### **Release of 2017 Pinot Noirs (Futures Pick-up)**

Our 2017 Stag Hollow *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* Pinot Noirs, bottled in September 2018 and aged one additional year, are now ready for futures customers to pick up at the tasting room during the upcoming six tastings. The 2017 *Reserve* and *Vendange Sélection* also will be available for purchase at \$50/btl and \$42.50/btl at the case price. We will pour these wines again at a Stag Hollow tasting event, perhaps in 2021 or 2022, after additional bottling aging.

#### **New Releases**

#### **2018 Dolcetto Rosato**

Our new 2018 Dolcetto *Rosato* made its debut at the festival *Italy in the Valley* in August and during Stag Hollow's Wine Club tastings over Labor Day Weekend. The 2018 compared to our (sold-out) 2017 *Rosato*, had longer grape

skin contact. With that, the 2018 *Rosato* is far more richly colored than most “rosé” styled wines. Our 2018 Dolcetto *Rosato* is full-flavored and prominently shows the essence of strawberries with a lingering finish. Considering its depth, our Dolcetto *Rosato* clearly fits as an alternate-styled “rosé” wine. Unlike light-styled summer sippers, our *Rosato*’s heartier character matches well with our cool and temperate climate for eight months of the year in the Pacific Northwest. Our 2018 Dolcetto *Rosato* is available for purchase directly from Stag Hollow only at the tasting room or by mail and is on sale during the holiday season (November through December) at \$14.00/btl, \$3.00 off the regular price, \$17.00/btl, and \$11.90/btl by the case.

### **2013 Yamhill Villages and 2015 Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noirs**

Here’s a Stag Hollow wine, the 2013 *Yamhill Villages* Pinot Noir, that we waited six years before its unveiling. Yes, no wine before its time as the saying goes. Being highly extracted, the 2013 *Yamhill Villages* was tight in its youth, more so than any Stag Hollow Pinot Noir that we can recall; because of this, the 2013 required extraordinary patience. The wait was worth it and we are gratified with the outcome. Our 2013 *Yamhill Villages* is a medium-bodied Pinot Noir that exhibits plenty of complexity combined with the enticing flavors of a well-aged Pinot Noir. Our *Villages* designation corresponds to a village wine denoting a specific commune or place; for our wine it’s Yamhill! As you would expect of a village designated wine, our *Yamhill Villages* is sold at an everyday price. The 2013 *Yamhill Villages* Pinot Noir is available for purchase directly from Stag Hollow only at the tasting room or by mail at \$15.00/btl and is on sale at 20% off by the solo case lot at \$144 (\$12.00/btl by the case).

There is a Latin phrase “omne trium perfectum,” everything that comes in threes is perfect. For some unknown reason, the vintage sequence of Stag Hollow wines has been adhering to the rule of threes for bolder-styled Pinot Noirs. Fans of our *Yamhill-Carlton* Pinot Noirs from the 2003, 2006, 2009, and 2012 vintages, will once again be pleased with our latest *Yamhill-Carlton* Pinot Noir in the *trium* sequence, the 2015. Like all of our wines from the very warm 2015 vintage, the *Yamhill-Carlton* shows huge, bold fruit character. For devotees of the threes, your time has finally come to collect a few cases of the next wine in the sequence, as we await the 2018 *Yamhill-Carlton* Pinot Noir from one of the warmest vintages on record. *Trium perfectum!* The 2015 *Yamhill-Carlton* is priced at \$25/btl and \$21.25/btl in mixed and solo cases (see Tasting #1).

### **2015 Dolcetto d’Yamhill Superiore**

Our new release of 2015 Dolcetto *d’Yamhill Superiore* resembles the heartier-styled ones skillfully crafted from *Dolcetto di Dogliani*, a wine region designated in Italy’s Piedmont considerably south of Barolo that specializes almost exclusively in Dolcetto. Our Dolcetto from the very warm 2015 is full-bodied in style. Early on, our 2015 Dolcetto exhibited considerable tannins, which sometimes happens with this tannin-rich variety; those tannins have

mellowed considerably with three years of bottle aging and have added complexity to the wine. At the six upcoming tastings, we are pairing the 2015 with the 2014 Dolcetto *d’Yamhill Superiore*. This is an intriguing comparison of vintages: the bold and complex richness of 2015 versus the smooth, rich fruit that lingers on the palate found in the 2014. Both the 2014 and 2015 Dolcetto *d’Yamhill Superiores* are priced at \$24/btl and \$20.40/btl in a case.

## **Winemaker’s Corner**

### **Bottles and Corks**

Beginning with the 2017 vintage, we are testing a new bottle for our wines. Finding a bottle that meets our desire for a lighter carbon footprint (minimal glass per bottle), is sturdy, stacks neatly on to wine racks, and has a nice look and feel has been a challenge. Thick, heavy-weight bottles merely meant to impress by heft, frequently used for reserve-level wines, isn’t our style. Thicker bottles can weigh-in at two pounds, adding an extra five tons of glass for every 1000 cases moved and shipped globally.

Our new wine bottle is a modest upgrade in weight, 90 grams heavier than the wine bottle from our previous four vintages. Having a more refined, yet sleek feel, we are already seeing the benefit of increased sturdiness by reduced breakage of bottles during processing. We hope you like it.

In September, we bottled our third vintage with the plant-based closure molded from sugar cane polymers called PlantCorc. We anticipate this innovative, alternative cork will resolve the issues we’ve experienced with poor quality corks and occasional cork taint that has beleaguered not only us but wineries around the world for decades.

Sometimes a Stag Hollow wine bottled with corks will have a wine stain running up the cork. Having opened and tasted hundreds and hundreds of bottles of our wine, this visual blemish rarely affects the wine. This is caused by a machine that compresses our corks too firmly before inserting them into the bottle and the corks do not expand completely back to its normal size when bottles are placed upside down in a box for storage and shipping. We couldn’t fix the mechanical issue, but fortunately we were able to resolve it by using the PlantCorc closure beginning with the 2016 vintage.

### **Stag Hollow Wine Club**

We hosted our second annual wine club event over Labor Day weekend, framed by Mark running in the Oregon Wine ½ marathon the morning between the two tastings. We hope all who automatically qualified to belong to our wine club (purchasing \$100 or more of wine from Stag Hollow directly in the last calendar year) received an invite. If not, please let us know. Not surprising, assembling and tracking data to identify club membership in our current sales software turned out to be more challenging than we anticipated. Apologies to those that we missed placing on the invite list to the Club event.

### **Purple Reigns in Seattle**

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

The wines served in these restaurants include the 2014 Stag Hollow “Purple Café Selection” Pinot Noir and 2014 Stag Hollow Yamhill-Carlton Pinot Noir; the 2016 Stag Hollow “Purple Café Selection” Pinot Noir should be arriving in wine bars and restaurants in January. The 2016 Stag Hollow Tempranillo is featured at the Restaurant Group’s newest wine bar, Claret, which is combined with a new Italian restaurant and wine shop called Fiasco.

### **Washington Wine Blog/International Wine Report**

If you are seeking reviews of Stag Hollow wines, we recommend checking out the Washington Wine Blog (<http://www.washingtonwineblog.com/>) run by Dr. Owen Bargreen. Owen also is senior wine reviewer for Oregon and Washington in the International Wine Report (<http://www.internationalwinereport.com/>). Washington Wine Blog has reviews of our red wines (Dolcetto, Tempranillo, and Pinot Noir) from 2011 through 2016 and has a “winemaker” profile interview of Mark.

### **Vintage Chart Update**

Our 2017 Pinot Noirs and the 2015 *Yamhill-Carlton* Pinot Noir have been added to the chart. The 2017s are still youthful and are challenging to judge when to consume at this point. We should have a better sense of their aging projections by this time next year. Those who have 2014 *Reserve* and *Reserve 777-114* in your cellar, especially if you have an untouched case or ½ case, time is right to begin opening one or two of these wines per year going forward. We recommend waiting an additional year before opening bottles of the 2014 *Vendange Sélection*. Last year at this time we advised to hold back on opening the 2015 *Vendange Sélection* and *Reserve*; we continue to recommend pausing for another year.

All of the wines that are 2006 or older are enjoyable if you have any in your cellar. We recommend opening these wines near term to ensure they are consumed while they are showing well. Of note, this is the last year the 2006s will be on the chart; if you are holding onto the 2006 *Vendange Sélection* or *Reserve*, consider consuming soon.

Mark’s favorite Stag Hollow sleeper wine this year is the 2010 *Reserve*. From a cooler vintage, this wine has blossomed nicely; it has alluring depth for a medium bodied Pinot.

We hope you select a few Stag Hollow wines for the upcoming holiday festivities and look forward hearing about the Stag Hollow wines you’ve tasted over the last year.

### **2019 Vintage Chart--Pinot Noir 1994-2017**

<u>Vintage Wine</u>	<u>Drink Range [plateau]</u>
1994 Celebré	now & beyond—still going
1998 Vendange Sélect.	now & beyond (delicious)
1999 Vendange Sélect.	now & beyond (delicious)
2000 Vendange Sélect.	now & beyond
2001 Vendange Sélect.	now & beyond
2002 Vendange Sélect.	now & beyond
2004 Vendange Sélect.	now
2005 Vendange Sélect.	now to 2024
2006 Vendange Sélect.	<u>now</u>
2011 Vendange Sélect.	now to 2021
2012 Vendange Sélect.	now to <u>2024</u>
2014 Vendange Sélect.	<u>2021 to 2027</u>
2015 Vendange Sélect.	2021 to 2028
2016 Vendange Sélect.	2020 to 2026
2017 Vendange Sélect.	<u>2022 to 2028</u>
2000 Reserve	now
2001 Reserve	now & beyond
2002 Reserve	now
2004 Reserve	now
2005 Reserve	now
2006 Reserve	now
2008 Reserve	now to 2023
2009 Reserve	now to <u>2022</u>
2010 Reserve	<u>now</u>
2011 Reserve	now to 2023
2012 Reserve	now to 2024
2014 Reserve	<u>now to 2026</u>
2015 Reserve	2020 to 2026
2016 Reserve	2020 to 2028
2017 Reserve	<u>2022 to 2028</u>
2004 Reserve-777/114	now
2005 Reserve-777/114	now
2008 Reserve 777/114	now to <u>2022</u>
2009 Reserve 777/114	now to <u>2020</u>
2014 Reserve 777/114	<u>now</u> to 2024
2011 Yamhill-Carlton	<u>now</u>
2012 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2020
2013 Yamhill-Carlton	<u>now</u>
2014 Yamhill-Carlton	now to 2026 [2019-24]
2015 Yamhill-Carlton	<u>now to 2026</u>

[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 & Casper)*