



VARIETAL FOCUS:

# Tempranillo

Lance Cutler

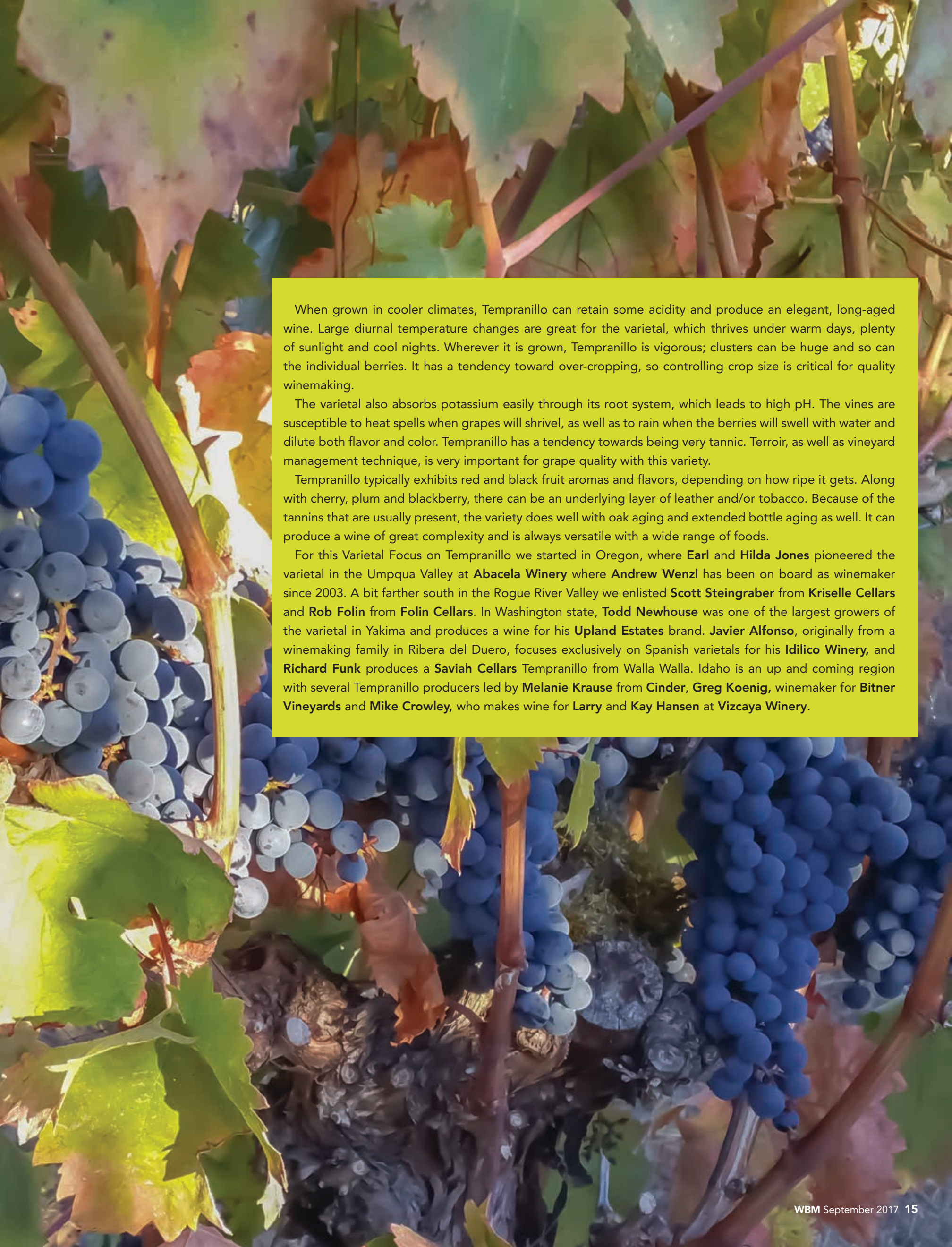
**CERTAIN GRAPES ARE LINKED** inextricably with particular countries. It would be hard to speak of modern winemaking in Argentina without mentioning Malbec in the first sentence. The same holds true of Spain where Tempranillo is the most widely planted red grape. Tempranillo has been grown on the Iberian Peninsula since the time of the Phoenicians. Most notably, it is the primary grape used for red table wines in Rioja, La Mancha and Ribera del Duero, but it pops up all over Spain and Portugal under a series of different names.

The name Tempranillo comes from the Spanish word “temprano,” which means early and refers to the grape’s propensity to ripen early in the grape-growing season. Depending on where it is grown in Spain, it is called Ull de Liebre, Cencibel and Tinta del Pais, among other names. In Portugal the grape is known as Tinta Roriz or Argonez. Historically in Portugal, it has most often been used as a key component for Port blends; but as Portugal expands its red table wine production, it is becoming a popular varietal.

Spain and Portugal represent a staggering 96 percent of the world’s production of Tempranillo, but plantings are spreading around the world like wildfire. In fact, Tempranillo is one of the most rapidly expanding varieties in terms of plantings and production worldwide. It is already the fourth-largest planted varietal in the world and the third most planted red variety, just behind Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Tempranillo can be found in likely places, like Argentina, Australia and the United States, but it is also being planted in Italy, South Africa, Chile and Mexico. There are even plantings of the grape in Turkey, Thailand, Greece, Canada and Myanmar.

Tempranillo has traveled all over the world, most likely brought to the New World by Spanish Conquistadors. **Frederic Bioletti** gets credit for bringing the grape to California in 1905, where it was known as Valdepeñas, but it was planted in hot, dry climates and used primarily as a blending grape. In the 1980s different clones of Tempranillo in California found their way to cooler sites where they thrived. Within another 10 years it was doing well in Oregon and Washington, again taking advantage of cooler growing conditions.

**Lance Cutler** has been a working winemaker in Sonoma County for 35 years. He has been a contributing editor for *Wine Business Monthly* for more than 10 years. His unique perspective on winemaking has led to our Industry Roundtable series and our Varietal Focus series. Lance is also the author of four books, including *The Tequila Lover’s Guide to Mexico*.



When grown in cooler climates, Tempranillo can retain some acidity and produce an elegant, long-aged wine. Large diurnal temperature changes are great for the varietal, which thrives under warm days, plenty of sunlight and cool nights. Wherever it is grown, Tempranillo is vigorous; clusters can be huge and so can the individual berries. It has a tendency toward over-cropping, so controlling crop size is critical for quality winemaking.

The varietal also absorbs potassium easily through its root system, which leads to high pH. The vines are susceptible to heat spells when grapes will shrivel, as well as to rain when the berries will swell with water and dilute both flavor and color. Tempranillo has a tendency towards being very tannic. Terroir, as well as vineyard management technique, is very important for grape quality with this variety.

Tempranillo typically exhibits red and black fruit aromas and flavors, depending on how ripe it gets. Along with cherry, plum and blackberry, there can be an underlying layer of leather and/or tobacco. Because of the tannins that are usually present, the variety does well with oak aging and extended bottle aging as well. It can produce a wine of great complexity and is always versatile with a wide range of foods.

For this Varietal Focus on Tempranillo we started in Oregon, where **Earl and Hilda Jones** pioneered the varietal in the Umpqua Valley at **Abacela Winery** where **Andrew Wenzl** has been on board as winemaker since 2003. A bit farther south in the Rogue River Valley we enlisted **Scott Steingraber** from **Kriselle Cellars** and **Rob Folin** from **Folin Cellars**. In Washington state, **Todd Newhouse** was one of the largest growers of the varietal in Yakima and produces a wine for his **Upland Estates** brand. **Javier Alfonso**, originally from a winemaking family in Ribera del Duero, focuses exclusively on Spanish varietals for his **Idilico Winery**, and **Richard Funk** produces a **Saviah Cellars** Tempranillo from Walla Walla. Idaho is an up and coming region with several Tempranillo producers led by **Melanie Krause** from **Cinder**, **Greg Koenig**, winemaker for **Bitner Vineyards** and **Mike Crowley**, who makes wine for **Larry and Kay Hansen** at **Vizcaya Winery**.

# Washington

The Washington state wine industry is booming and is now the fastest-growing agricultural sector in the state. There are 14 federally recognized AVAs, and almost 99 percent of Washington's grapes are grown east of the Cascade mountain range. This eastern side receives very little rain and benefits from long daylight hours because of the northern latitude. The arid to semi-arid conditions mean irrigation is pretty much a requirement and causes many growers to eschew rootstock in favor of own-rooted vines. In 2011, there were less than 100 acres of Tempranillo planted in Washington. Now, there are more than 250.



STEVE LENZ

# Saviah Cellars

2014 WALLA WALLA VALLEY ESTATE TEMPRANILLO, 14.6% ALC., 151 CASES, \$38

**Richard Funk** studied microbiology at **Montana State University**. He relocated to Walla Walla in 1991 where he developed an interest in the wine industry. A self-taught winemaker, he has also analyzed the soils of Walla Walla extensively, which helps him locate various terroir for his vineyards. In 2000 he established **Saviah Cellars**, producing his first commercial vintage of 300 cases. Today Saviah Cellars produces 22,000 cases.



## According to Funk:

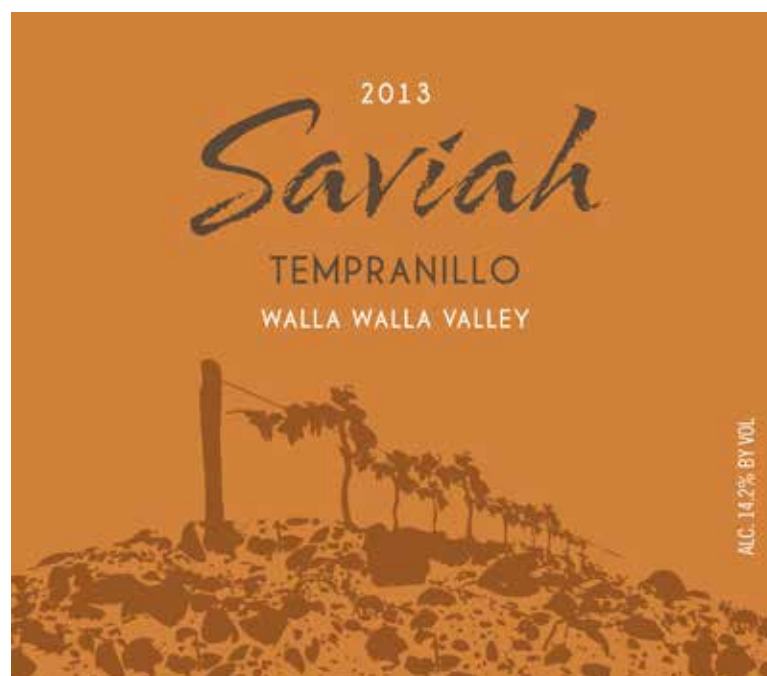
“We are attempting a New World approach focused mainly on restraint with respect for the cobbly soils and unique growing region we call The Rocks District. Our goal is to create a balanced, harmonious wine with true varietal character. We want a wine that is supple and silky with red fruits, and we want to tame the angular tannins from this varietal.

“This is a special vineyard in what we call The Rocks District. The geology is basalt with very cobbly loam on an alluvial fan 200 feet deep. The vineyard is flat with a slope to the northwest at an elevation of 870 feet. Our vine spacing runs 9x4 feet. We are own-rooted, using Clone 02. We use drip irrigation and are Certified Salmon Safe and sustainable. We are spur-pruned VSP with two buds per spur. We do shoot-thinning and leaf-pulling on the east side. We single out clusters to one cluster per shoot. We will drop green and damaged fruit about 95 percent of the way through veraison, and we remove wings from the clusters. Tonnage runs 3 to 3½ tons per acre.

“We determine when to pick using traditional methods, measuring pH, Brix and TA on berry samples. Phenolic ripeness and the texture of the tannins play a big part. We pay close attention to the texture of the skins and wait for the angular tannins to change to almost a melted dark chocolate sensation.

“Grapes are hand-picked, hand-sorted and destemmed with the rollers set as wide as possible to keep as many whole berries as possible. We add 35 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> at the crusher and then cold soak for 48 hours. We will add 1g/L tartaric acid after cold soak, looking to get 5.7 to 5.8 TA. We use Assmenhausen yeast because it gives us a long, slow fermentation, which allows us to maximize early extraction. We add DAP and Superfood in three separate additions. We ferment in 1.5 ton bins, punching down three times daily and fermenting in the low 80s.

“We press off once the tannin starts to build, often in the 5° to 7° Brix range. Free run and press fractions are kept together and racked to barrel. Once primary fermentation finishes, we inoculate for malolactic. We rack when malolactic is complete and put the wine in French oak barrels and 500-liter puncheons. We use 20 percent new oak and barrel-age for 17 months. We rack three times; once after ML, again for blending and finally for bottling. The wine ages in bottle for 12 months before release.”



PHOTOS BY STEVE LENZ

## Tasting Notes:

**Funk:** The wine opens with a core of red and black cherry fruit with a bit of leather, violet, spice and a savory, saline quality. On the palate, the fruit is complemented by an umami characteristic, soy, porcini mushroom and beef broth. The tannins are silky and supple.

**Alfonso:** I get soy, umami notes with dark cherry and a bit of spice, like nutmeg and cinnamon. I get a bit of vanilla and toast from the barrels, but it is not obtrusive. I also get some dark fruits, like plum and dark cherry. Flavor-wise, I get that dark fruit and spice. It is a very low astringency wine, soft and velvety, not very tannic but with good length. It has a lot of primary fruit. I like it.

**Newhouse:** It is a solid wine. I wouldn't have guessed the alcohol to be that high. It is fruit-forward in both the nose and the palate, but it is not a fruit bomb at all.

**Crowley:** This is really earthy with a big nose of dried fruit and plum that has a nice sweetness to it. It appears to have more age on it than it really has, but overall I like the heaviness and smoothness of it. The bright fruit isn't there, but it still has enough dark fruit character to make for a nice wine.

**Krause:** I found it to be delicious with wonderful berry flavors and powerful fruit aromas. I thought the tannins were really balanced. The finish was big; and while the tannins made their presence felt, they were really smooth. Lovely wine.

**Koenig:** The nose had a typical tobacco and leather nose that was very pretty and led to a fat, rich palate and a long, fine finish. The tannins didn't get in the way. The structure wasn't overwhelming. It was seamless and very pretty.

**Steingraber:** This has red fruit, spice and pepper. It is a nicely balanced wine with good structure. It has medium oak. The tannins are round, and I like the finish.

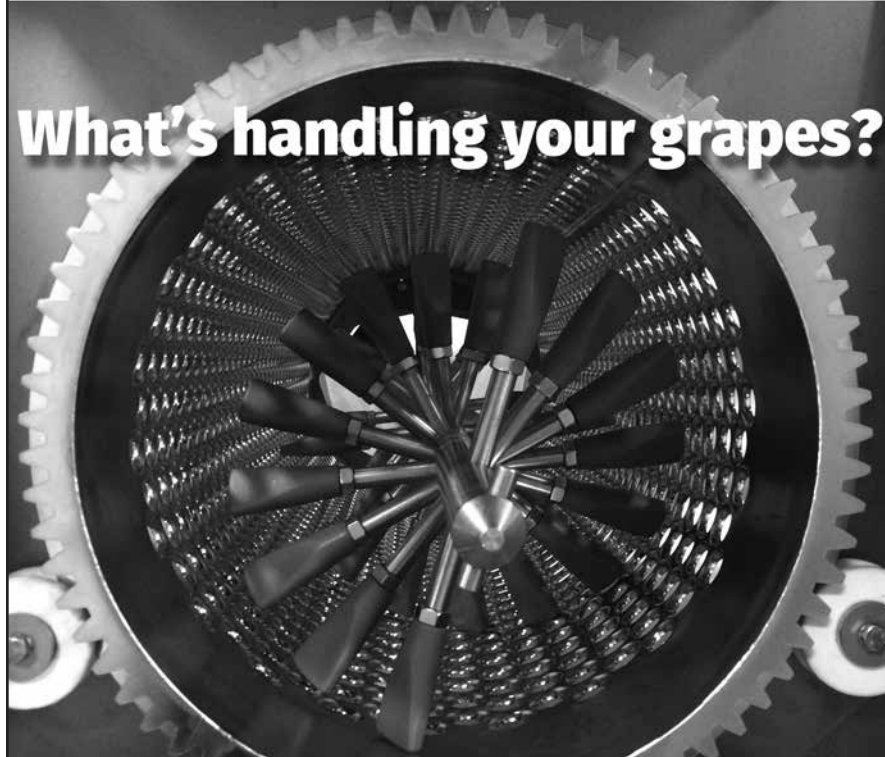
**Wenzl/Jones:** It has red fruit that comes out jammy but is well integrated into the oak program. The finish is good but very different from the other two in this flight. I really enjoyed this, but it wasn't near as tannic or full-bodied as the other two wines. I think it carries some of that sunshine of the 2014 vintage into the bottle. It is fresh and balanced. The progression and length are very nice.

**Folin:** It has nice bright red fruit. I thought this was a very elegant wine. It was lighter in style, but everything was in check from the nose through to the finish. The balance was great, and I liked the wine a lot.

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# Idilico Winery

2013 TEMPRANILLO RESERVA, 14.7% ALC., 142 CASES, \$35

**Javier Alfonso** grew up in the Ribera del Duero region of Spain where his family has owned vineyards for generations. Hard labor in the family vineyards convinced Alfonso to choose other work, so he pursued a degree in mechanical engineering that brought him to the **University of Washington**. Still, winemaking was in his blood, so he and his wife, **Shylah**, started **Pomum Cellars** in 2004. Alfonso realized that Washington had areas very similar to his home region in Spain. In 2009, he started **Idilico Winery**, focusing exclusively on Spanish varietals grown in Washington state.



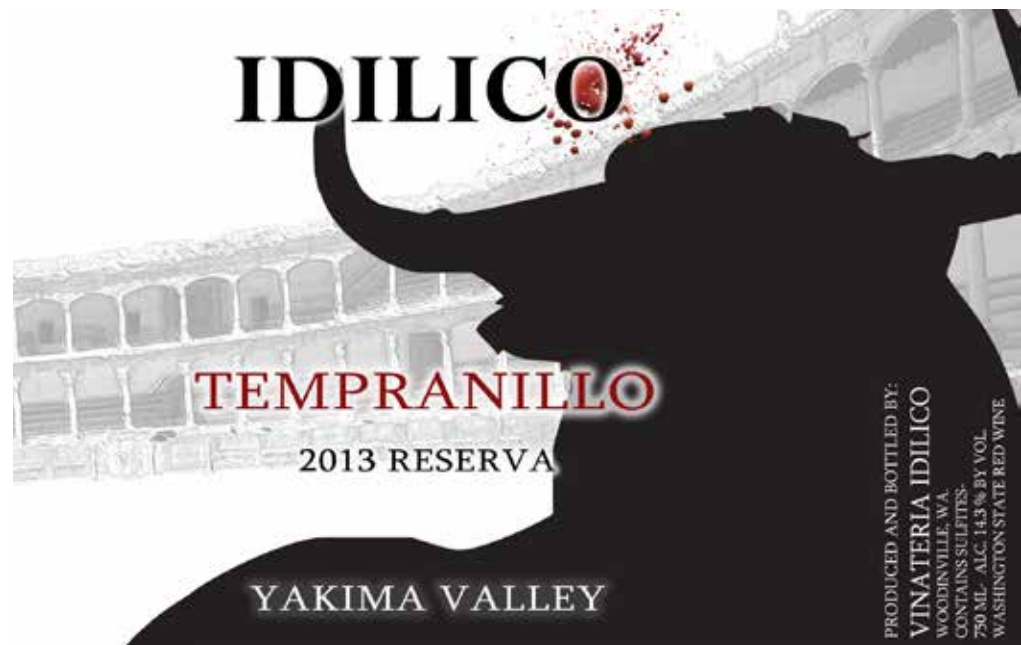
## According to Alfonso:

“I’m not trying to drive any particular style, but we do want to produce a wine that is elegant and balanced with good tannic structure and a bit higher acid to make it age-worthy, as well as a wine that matches well with food. We manage inputs during the growing season to balance primary fruit and secondary components, as well as mid-palate and overall structure.

“The grapes for this wine come from two distinct vineyards. Dineen sits at an elevation of 1,100 feet, is planted with 4x7 foot spacings on its own rootstock and is irrigated. We use two different clones: FPS Clone 5 (Tinto del Pais), which comes from Ribera del Duero and Clone 11 (Tinta de Toro), which derives from Toro. These clones give us smaller berries, concentrated

flavor and good tannins. Upland Vineyard is at 850 to 1,000 feet, planted to its own roots with Clone 1 and Clone 5. It is also irrigated with 6x9 foot spacings. Both vineyards are farmed traditionally. We usually aim for 4 tons per acre, but that can vary between 3 to 6 tons per acre, depending on vintage.

“We do aggressive pruning and shoot-thinning, and some leaf-pulling on the west side. There is a first green harvest just before veraison and a second or even third later, depending on vintage. This is an early ripening varietal, so we leave a load on the vines as long as possible to slow ripening. Then we will drop any undesirable or ill-positioned fruit to control crop size before picking. This allows us to sort in the vineyard so fruit arrives to the winery usually in pristine condition.



“We taste the fruit to determine when to pick, but the main analytical driver for us is titratable acidity and pH. This varietal and these vineyards tend to show high pH and low acidity, which makes the wine a bit dull and reduces its aging potential. The challenge is catching that key moment as we near harvest, just before the acidity drops and pH rises significantly. We choose not to acidify, so we pick at optimum TA and pH levels regardless of sugar content, usually with a 5.0 to 6.0 TA and pH in the 3.6 to 3.7 range. Brix runs 23.5° to 24.5°.

“We pick blocks separately, starting with the low vigor sections first. We find that with Tempranillo vigor tends to give the wines reduction. Once in the winery, things are straight-forward. We destem the grapes with no rollers, adding 30 to 40 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>. We ferment in 1- to 2-ton bins to dryness (seven to 18 days) at a maximum temperature of 90° F, with two to three punch-downs daily. We use multiple yeasts—Lallemand BM4X4, BM45, ICD-D21 and ICV-D254—and rarely need any nutrients. We press based on flavor and the amount of tannin. Free run and light press fractions are blended and placed in barrels. We build our own malolactic culture, and ML completes quickly.

“We use only French oak for this wine, and the split is one-third once-used, one-third twice-used and one-third neutral 225-liter barriques. The goal is to showcase the fruit from our unique vineyards. We age for 18 months in barrel, racking up to three times every four to six months, depending on reduction issues. Filtering varies with vintage: anywhere from a coarse polish filtration to full sterile. The wine gets 12 months of bottle age before release.”

## Tasting Notes:

**Alfonso:** This wine is not super dark, more of a light crimson color. There is red fruit focus. I get a lot of tart cherry with a bit of Coca-Cola. It has a hint of greenness, fresh herbs, which freshens the aromatics nicely. I get a little cinnamon and nutmeg. On the flavors I get a lot of red fruit, cherry and a bit of strawberry, but not dark fruit. This wine is more tannic, which is something we are looking for. Nice, drying tannins to give the wine a lot of structure and length for the finish.

**Newhouse:** It is more tannic than the Saviah, and it is not as fruit-forward even though there is nice fruit. I get some of that cherry cola in the nose and on the palate. It is perfectly centered between heavy wine and light wine. Seems like it will age very well. It is a little bigger than most Washington Tempranillos I have tasted.

**Funk:** I think he nailed what he was shooting for. I get some floral herb on the nose, along with dark cherry and plum. In the mouth, that cherry spice component comes out with some cocoa nib flavors and a small leather note. Very nice core of dark cherry fruit. The tannins are exactly what he was going for and frankly what I taste in Tempranillo, so varietally, it is spot on. It has a delicious, persistent finish. I think it is great wine.

**Koenig:** This is my favorite of the three. It has a massive, fruit-driven structure with long tannins and tons of black fruit and cherry. It has just gorgeous structure. This is a wine that will last for a long time with beautiful, seamless integration of all the elements.

**Krause:** It has really nice sweet fruit aromas, but I was really taken with a kind of licorice, spice aroma. It has huge tannins that totally coat the mouth, without being astringent. The structure is very pleasant.

**Crowley:** There is a nice, light cherry note. The wine is smooth, with great color. It has a nice balanced spice to it and seems like a good candidate for aging. There is a tannic note that lingers at the end.

**Folin:** There are nice red fruits with good, full mouthfeel and good body. There is some cocoa powder or bittersweet chocolate to it. I thought the oak was nicely balanced, giving the wine a nice, smooth finish.

**Wenzl/Jones:** I think this is on the premium ripeness scale, but I like this wine. I get some tea leaf, ginseng creeping in there. There was ripe fruit permeating the nose. It has a much better acid profile, which is saving the wine. I feel the bigger presence on the palate in terms of tannin, especially mid-palate. I think he has achieved the Reserva style he was going for. The tannins are very fine-grained, and there is a whole medley of spice rack flavors.

**Steingraber:** It has more red fruits. It has medium-plus acid with ample tannins. The oak was medium as well. I get some dryness from the tannins on the finish, but they are not overwhelming, and the finish is very long.

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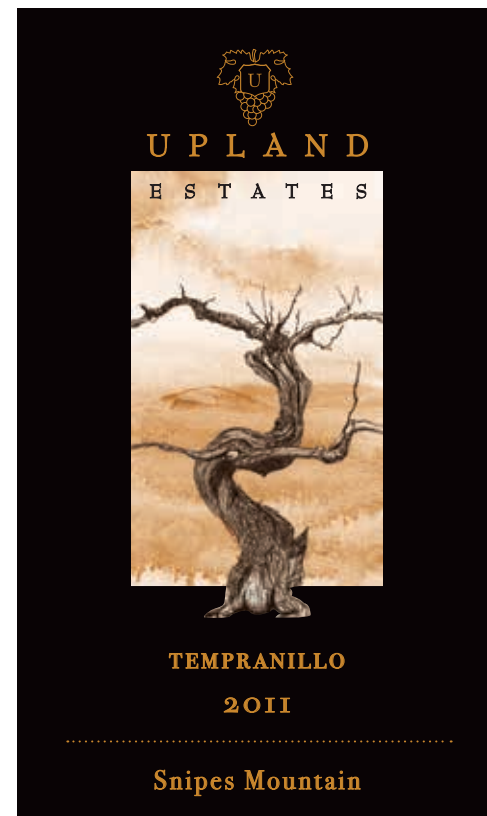
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# Upland Estates

2011 UPLAND ESTATES TEMPRANILLO, 13.7% ALC., 1,000 CASES, \$28



RICHARD DUVAL



**Todd Newhouse's** family has been farming in the Yakima Valley since 1913. His grandfather planted his first grapes on Snipes Mountain in 1968, and in 1972 the family purchased the historic **Upland Vineyard**. Newhouse currently farms more than 1,600 acres of grapes and fruit. He started **Upland Estates** in 2006.

## According to Newhouse:

"We want to make a refined, yet expressive version of Tempranillo as grown on Snipes Mountain. There is usually a minerality, almost citrus-like, to these wines. We would like a wine that you can drink on its own but also goes well with food.

"This vineyard is planted to Iberian selections with four Portuguese varieties, as well as Tempranillo and Monastrell. Our soil is sandy loam with lots of river cobbles with basalt, which tends to radiate heat. It sits at an elevation of 850 to 1,000 feet on a steep south slope, making it a hot site, so the grapes tend to ripen early. We plant these vines in a draw to take advantage of cool night air. Vines are planted 6x9 feet, farmed traditionally and use drip irrigation. They are own-rooted with Clone 01. We shoot-thin and leaf-strip

the east side only but make multiple fruit drop passes. Managing crop size is critical to maintaining Tempranillo quality. The earlier we start veraison, the heavier we leave the crop so we don't have to pick so early. In the end, we average 3.5 to 4.5 tons per acre.

"We check numbers to determine when to harvest but focus more on the tannins. At first they are rough, so we wait for them to soften. In fact, when the grapes are ready, the skins almost seem to melt in your mouth. Grapes are destemmed, but not crushed, because we are looking for whole berries. 50 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> is added, and then the must is stored in a 45° F room for a two-day cold soak. After cold soak, we will adjust the acid as necessary. We inoculate with Syrah yeast and use DAP and Superfood as needed. We punch-down twice daily and like cool fermentations with a maximum temperature of 80° F.

"We inoculate with malolactic at pressing and go into barrel. We use 50 percent neutral French oak barrels and 50 percent new French oak that has stored another wine for four months prior to receiving the Tempranillo. The wine is aged in barrel for 20 months and gets racked six times. We pad-filter to 0.8 microns and bottle-age the wine for 10 months before release."



## Tasting Notes:

**Newhouse:** If I compare these three [Washington] wines, then fruit-wise this wine is right in the middle. I am getting a hint of reductiveness, along with some minerality that I get in the mid-palate to the finish that reminds me of citrus zest. There is some cola; and while there are some notes from the oak, it is restrained.

**Funk:** This is a cool vintage, and it is aging beautifully. I like it a lot. Cherry cola is a core aroma, along with a savory umami characteristic. I get some orange zest, sweet herb, leather and a touch of cocoa. On the finish there is a bare touch of vanilla. Beautiful balance with some refined dusty tannins and a delicious finish.

**Alfonso:** It shows the cool vintage with a light crimson color. It is very pretty wine, the most feminine wine here. Cherry cola with a bit of reduction, which I love, but it blows away with air and transfers to citrus. I get some secondary soy. I get more dark fruit on the flavor, like blackberry, along with hints of chocolate and a tiny bit of vanilla. It is aging beautifully. It is soft and velvety with a long finish.

**Crowley:** This has big, big dark black cherry with a hint of super, dark chocolate. It has silky tannins, making it smooth with layered flavors that linger on the palate. In the end, there is a drying component.

**Krause:** I like the wine. There is a pleasant level of *Brettanomyces* influence that comes through as sandalwood or cedar box spiciness. The texture is nice with some astringency.

**Koenig:** Of all the wines we've tasted, this is the one that reminds me most of Spanish Rioja. It has an Old World nose to me and a beautiful higher component of acid with bright fruit with spice, integrated cherry and a hint of Brett in a good way. It reminds me of wines I taste from Spain.

**Wenzl/Jones:** It has moderate fruit in the red fruit realm and is a bit dusty in the middle. The oak is noticeable but not dominant. It has a little Brett, but it is still drinkable because it comes across as earthiness and leather. The bottle age has softened the tannins, and the acidity seems the lowest of all the wines.

**Folin:** This shows some age with a soft front palate and good round tannins. It has some forest floor quality. It has a medium to long finish.

**Steingraber:** It has leather, along with pepper and spice. The tannins are round and smooth, and the finish is soft. It doesn't linger real long with lower acidity.

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# Idaho

Not far from Boise, Idaho the Snake River winds its way west all the way to the Pacific Ocean. In spite of the dry, arid conditions and the high elevations, the Snake River has become the go-to spot to grow grapes in Idaho. The Snake River provides water for needed irrigation, and the water within its banks cools the heat of summer and tempers the cold of winter, helping to protect the vineyards. Idaho has only 50 acres planted to Tempranillo, but then again it only has 1,300 total acres of vineyard under cultivation. Still, that is enough to supply 52 wineries with wine and drive a thriving local wine business. Perhaps because of a large Basque population in nearby Boise, Tempranillo is a popular variety among the state's winemakers.



CINDER

## Vizcaya Winery

2012 VIZCAYA WINERY 2012 TEMPRANILLO, 13.9% ALC., 100 CASES, \$29

Larry and Kay Hansen grew up on farms. They both worked in the tech industry where they met, but the farming life and an interest in viticulture seduced them into planting **Windy Ridge Estate Vineyard** in 2004. Other Idaho wineries started winning awards with wines produced from their fruit, so in 2011 they decided to make wine of their own, and **Vizcaya Winery** was born. They hired **Mike Crowley** as their winemaker. Crowley had worked as an enologist and assistant winemaker for several Washington state and Idaho wineries, and he had won gold medals with Windy Ridge Tempranillo from his own **Syringa Winery**.



### According to Crowley:

“We are trying to make a medium-bodied Tempranillo that is balanced with just the right amount of acidity. Our vineyard produces Tempranillo that is varietally specific: a little bold with tannin but approachable. We usually have hints of spice and tobacco with some cherry, and we prefer a wine with a little lower alcohol.

“Our vineyard is at 2,770 feet elevation, with well-drained Pipeline silt loam and silty clay loam that sits 3 feet above Caliche with its high calcium content. Rows are planted in 10x6 foot spacings on non-grafted Tempranillo rootstock. We have multiple clones: 1, 2, 3, 5 and 11, which are picked separately. We are non-certified organic, growing nitrogen fixers and composting them into the vineyard. We practice deficit irrigation, using drip irrigation. We shoot-thin mid-summer and drop fruit at 50 percent veraison. Rows run north/south, so we don’t pull leaves on the west side and only slightly pull leaves on the east side. We drastically control crop, yielding about 2 tons per acre.



“We pick on flavor, but keep an eye on numbers and the weather. We look for brown seeds and skins that are not astringent or bitter. We prefer lower alcohols, so we are willing to pick a bit early to preserve acidity. Usually pH is 3.5 to 3.6 at harvest.

“Grapes are destemmed, sorted, crushed and receive 25 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>. We cold soak in a room chilled to 50° F for two to three days. Then we make our acid addition if needed and ferment in 1-ton bins. We use commercial yeast to start fermentations, along with nutrient, keeping clones separate. We punch-down three to four times daily, dropping down to once a day toward the end. Fermentation is carried out at 80° F to 85° F. We usually combine free run and press juice because we press lightly, unless we need more tannin. The wine goes to tank, gets inoculated with malolactic, sits for about one week and then gets racked to barrels.

“After malolactic, we will add SO<sub>2</sub> and top up the barrels. We use a mixture of 10 percent French and 60 percent American oak, along with 30 percent Hungarian. We use 30 to 40 percent new oak, 30 percent second-year and the balance neutral. After six months, we will rack and blend then go back to barrels. We will rack every six months for the 24 months that the wine remains in oak. We give the wine a rough filtration and try to bottle-age it three to four months before release.”

## Tasting Notes:

**Crowley:** The fruit in the nose is nice and refreshing with a hint of tobacco and a hint of vanilla. The wine is inviting with great aromatics. When you taste the wine, there are hints of cherry and blackberry and a touch of tobacco and mocha. The acid is nicely balanced, as is the alcohol with the flavors and tannins. The flavors linger for a long time on the palate; and there is a nice silkiness to the finish.

**Krause:** I like the wine a lot. It is yummy. The aromas have a lovely spice, like vanilla and clove, but there was also a deep base note to the aromas, almost like black olive. The flavor and balance of the wine were very nice. The finish was nice with lively acid. The balance of tannins and alcohol was good. It is very smooth with a sweetness to the fruit character on the finish that I found very attractive.

**Koenig:** The nose had a beautiful tobacco with a bit of leather to it. The most impressive part was this really silky fruit with a lot of Bing cherry and a lot of clove. The acid has a nice balance on the finish, and the tannins don't get in the way at all. There is no astringency. The tannins are soft, and you get this nice sweet cherry fruit finish, carried by acid, which I found very appealing.

**Folin:** I get some dark fruit with a little floral, menthol quality. It has nice body with a good front and middle palate. The dark fruits give way to some Tempranillo earthiness. The finish is smooth with good round tannins.

**Wenzl/Jones:** I get a little more immediate oak, along with a spicy element. There may be a touch of VA. There is some of that herbal, menthol here. I got a pretty strong vanilla hit. The oak is more prominent on the back palate. A bit more tannin coming from the barrel and some char as well. The tannins are managed very well.

**Steingraber:** I certainly get the plum, blackberry notes. There is some earthiness and spicy pepper. The acidity is medium, as well as the oak. Tannins are not sharp but present to give it a bit of length.

**Alfonso:** This has really high tone red fruit on the aromatics with a hint of dusty spice and a hint of soy and a lot of licorice. The taste has a lot of that high tone, bright red fruit. It has good acidity, even more than the Washington wines. It is well made, and I like it. The only negatives for me are that it is a bit too fruity, and the length is a bit compromised.

**Newhouse:** The nose and palate were a bit reductive, and I got a lot of that black licorice to the point of overpowering fruit that might have been there. I got a chalky texture, but it didn't linger.

**Funk:** It is very fruit-forward with a floral, sweet herb spice around a core of bright cherry fruit. The tannins were supple, and I liked the finish. I thought it was clean and refreshing. I think it would be good food wine.

# GW KENT



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## Oregon

WINERY	Abacela	Kriselle Cellars	Folin Cellars
<b>Wine</b>	2013 "Barrel Select" Tempranillo	2013 Tempranillo	2014 Tempranillo
<b>Blend</b>	89% Tempranillo, 5.4% Malbec, 5.4% Tannat, .2% Petit Verdot	89% Tempranillo, 11% Cabernet Sauvignon	100% Tempranillo
<b>Winemaker</b>	<b>Andrew Wenzl</b>	<b>Scott Steingraber</b>	<b>Rob Folin</b>
<b>Style Goals</b>	Craft a cellar-worthy wine with complex layers of fruit, rich extract and ripe tannins fully capable of aging.	Our style is similar to a Spanish Reserva. It is rich and full with round tannin extraction.	A New World wine with the balance of an Old World wine; fruit-centered with depth, concentration and discernable layers that will show over time.
<b>AVA</b>	Umqua Valley, Southern Oregon	Rogue Valley	Rogue Valley
<b>Vineyard</b>	Abacela Estate Vineyard	Buxton Ranch	Folin Estate Vineyards
<b>VINEYARD DATA</b>			
<b>Predominant Geology (Soil Type)</b>	Sedimentary and metamorphic rock; nonpareil loam, Dickerson loam, Philomath-Dixonville Complex and Sutherlin silt loam	Alluvial, river bottom	Silty clay
<b>Elevation</b>	525 to 820 feet	1,300 feet	1,350 feet
<b>Vine Spacing</b>	Mostly 5 feet	4x8 feet and 5x8 feet	4x8 feet
<b>Rootstock</b>	101-14, 4453, 3309C and own-rooted	101-14 and 3309	3309
<b>Exposure</b>	South facing slopes and benchlands	Southeastern	West facing slope, rows north to south
<b>Clones</b>	FPS clones 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 12, 13	Clone 11, Duero, Clone 1	Clones 01 and 03
<b>Irrigation or Dry-farmed</b>	Regulated deficit irrigation	Drip Irrigation	Irrigated
<b>Farming (Organic, Biodynamic, Traditional)</b>	Sustainable	Traditional	Traditional
<b>Production</b>	2.5 to 3 tons/acre	3 to 3.5 tons/acre	Clone 3 is 3 to 4 tons/acre; Clone 1 is 2 tons/acre
<b>Vineyard Practices</b>	Mostly VSP and single Guyot; prune and shoot thin; fruit drop and green thin to control ripeness; focus on leaf thinning and lateral removal; RDI based on soil moisture meters	Drop fruit to desired crop load; pull leaves on the eastern side and assess west side	Clone 3 is spur pruned, Clone 1 is cane pruned; 2 shoots per spur; drop fruit to 1 cluster per spur; leaves pulled on east side after fruit set
<b>WINEMAKING DATA</b>			
<b>When to Pick</b>	Start with berry samples and then cluster sample; analyze Brix, pH and TA; pick based on taste with attention to astringency of tannins	Priority is sensory. Flavor rules. Secondary are pH and acid, then Brix.	Brix and pH used as guidelines, but taste is most important; weather, winery logistics and trucking play important roles
<b>SO<sub>2</sub></b>	50 ppm at crusher, more if bird damage	50 ppm at harvest; 40 ppm after ML	30 ppm at destemmer
<b>Crush Format</b>	Largely destemmed and whole berry	Sort once prior to destemming, then off a shaker table after destemming; no crusher rollers; ferment whole-berry	100% destemmed with as many whole berries as possible
<b>Cold-Soak</b>	2 to 4 days at 50° F	Up to 10 days at 45° F	4 to 7 days at 45° F
<b>Yeast</b>	D254, BRL97, D80, D21, BM45	D254	VRB, BRL97, BM45, Pasteur Red
<b>Fermentation Temperature</b>	84° F to 91° F	80° F maximum	76° F average; 82° F maximum
<b>Fermentation Technique</b>	Punch-down and pump-over 2 to 3 times daily; no delestage, but will press early to avoid overextraction or high tannin loads	Punch-down from 25° to 19° Brix; pump-over 19° to 6° Brix; punch-down 6° Brix until dry	Punch-downs twice daily; one pump-over to get yeast some air
<b>Nutrients</b>	DAP and Superfood after 3 Brix depletion, then small addition at mid-point if necessary	Superfood and DAP distributed in four doses starting at 20° Brix	DAP and Superfood based on YAN; first add after 24 hours, second add at one-third sugar
<b>Acid Addition</b>	0 to 3g/L as needed	Acid adjustments at harvest if needed; minor adjustments later	1 to 2 g/L at destemmer, then 1 g/L after ML
<b>Malolactic</b>	In barrel using built up culture	Introduced in fermentor at 3° Brix, then pressed; ML temperature maintained at 70° F	Inoculate for ML after pressing; finishes in barrel
<b>Racking</b>	Once post ML to remove light lees; second at assemblage; third right before bottling	Four times; first 5 months after barreling down	Once at blending the following summer
<b>Oak Program</b>	92% French, 8% American; 31% new oak	80% American, 20% Hungarian; 35% new	100% French oak; 10% new, 30% one-fill, 60% neutral
<b>Barrel-aging</b>	22 months	20 to 30 months	22 months
<b>Filtration</b>	None	Venticular filter to 0.4 microns	Cross-flow if there any stability concerns
<b>Bottle-aging</b>	12 months	1 year	1 year

	Washington		
WINERY	Idilico Wines	Saviah Cellars	Upland Estates
<b>Wine</b>	2013 Tempranillo Reserva	2014 Walla Walla Estate Tempranillo	2011 Tempranillo
<b>Blend</b>	100% Tempranillo	82% Tempranillo, 12% Syrah, 6% Grenache	100% Tempranillo
<b>Winemaker</b>	<b>Javier Alfonso</b>	<b>Richard Funk</b>	<b>Robert Smasne</b>
<b>Style Goals</b>	Balance primary fruit and secondary components as well as mid-palate and overall structure, with intent to showcase the fruit and vineyards.	A New World approach to Tempranillo focused mainly on restraint for The Rocks District region. The goal was to create a balanced, harmonious wine with true varietal character.	Create a wine that is specific to the place it is grown, but one that is refined and elegant with expressive fruit.
<b>AVA</b>	Yakima Valley	Walla Walla Valley	Snipes Mountain
<b>Vineyard</b>	Dineen and Upland	Funk, Dugger Creek and Watermill Estate	Upland Vineyard
VINEYARD DATA			
<b>Predominant Geology (Soil Type)</b>	Basalt substrate covered by significant sedimentary deposits and wind-blown loess	Freewater, very cobbly loam	Sandy loam, river cobbles with basalt
<b>Elevation</b>	Dineen at 1,100 feet; Upland 850 to 950 feet	870 feet	850 to 1,150 feet
<b>Vine Spacing</b>	Dineen 4x7 feet; Upland 6x9 feet	9x4 feet	6x9 feet
<b>Rootstock</b>	N/A	Own-rooted	Own-rooted
<b>Exposure</b>	South	Flat, with slope to the northwest	South
<b>Clones</b>	Dineen FPS Clone 5 and 11; Upland Clone 1 and 5	Clone 02	Clone 01
<b>Irrigation or Dry-farmed</b>	Irrigated	Drip irrigation	Drip irrigation
<b>Farming (Organic, Biodynamic, Traditional)</b>	Traditional	Certified Salmon Safe; sustainable	Traditional
<b>Production</b>	3 to 6 tons/acre	2.5 to 3.5 tons/acre	3 to 4.5 tons/acre
<b>Vineyard Practices</b>	Aggressive pruning and shoot thinning; some leaf pulling; first green harvest right before veraison; second or even third depending on vintage and yield	Spur-pruned VSP, two buds per spur; shoot thinning with leaf pulling on East side; single out clusters, one cluster per shoot	Shoot thin and leaf strip East side only; multiple fruit dropping passes
WINEMAKING DATA			
<b>When to Pick</b>	Taste is key, and focus on titratable acidity and pH. Pick at good acid/pH levels to avoid acid additions. Brix is of lesser concern.	Measure Brix, pH and TA, but phenolic ripeness and texture of the tannins plays a big role	Fruit maturity and taste of the berries
<b>SO<sub>2</sub></b>	30 to 40 ppm at crusher	35 mg/L at crusher; 40 mg/L post ML; 35 mg/L at bottling	50 ppm at destemmer
<b>Crush Format</b>	Retain best clusters when we green drop so fruit coming in is pristine; destem with no roller; fruit is crushed with must pump	Hand-picked, hand-sorted, destemmed with rollers wide open to keep whole berries	Destem and whole berries
<b>Cold-Soak</b>	None	48 hours	2 days below 45° F
<b>Yeast</b>	Lallemand BM4X4, BM45, ICD-D21, ICV-D254	Assmenhausen	Syrah yeast
<b>Fermentation Temperature</b>	80° F to 90° F	Peak at 80° F	Max of 80° F
<b>Fermentation Technique</b>	Punch-down 2 to 4 times daily	Ferment in 1.5 ton bins with 3 punch-downs daily	Punch-downs twice daily
<b>Nutrients</b>	Typically none	DAP and Superfood, 3 additions	Superfood and DAP as needed
<b>Acid Addition</b>	None, if possible; no more than 0.5 g/L tartaric prior to fermentation	1 g/L after cold soak	Acid as necessary and adjust post cold-settle
<b>Malolactic</b>	4 to 8 weeks in barrel	Inoculated in barrel	In barrel
<b>Racking</b>	Every 4 to 6 months; up to three times	After secondary fermentation, at blending, then at bottling	Six rackings
<b>Oak Program</b>	100% French; 1/3 once-used, 1/3 twice-used, 1/3 neutral 225 L barriques	French; 225L barrels and 500L puncheons; 20% new	100% French; 50% new
<b>Barrel-aging</b>	18 months	17 months	20 months
<b>Filtration</b>	Coarse, 2 micron to full-sterile	Polish filtration	Pad filter to 0.8 microns
<b>Bottle-aging</b>	12 months	12 months	10 months

	Idaho		
WINERY	Cinder Winery	Bitner Vineyards	Vizcaya Winery
<b>Wine</b>	2013 Reserve Tempranillo	2013 Erletxe Tempranillo	2012 Tempranillo
<b>Blend</b>	92% Tempranillo, 4% Syrah, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Mourvedre	100% Tempranillo	100% Tempranillo
<b>Winemaker</b>	<b>Melanie Krause</b>	<b>Greg Koenig</b>	<b>Mike Crowley</b>
<b>Style Goals</b>	A robustly textured wine with intense aromas and flavors that balances fruity and earthy elements.	A wine that represents the vineyard, but also achieves some traditional cigar-box flavorings framed by the fruit of this region.	Make a medium-bodied Tempranillo with nice balance and just the right amount of acidity, with varietal characteristics to stand out.
<b>AVA</b>	Snake River Valley	Snake River Valley	Snake River Valley
<b>Vineyard</b>	Several vineyards	Various estate vineyards	Windy Ridge Estate Vineyard
VINEYARD DATA			
<b>Predominant Geology (Soil Type)</b>	Sandy and silty loam with volcanic and granitic parent materials	Silt/volcanic cinder	Pipeline silt loam, silty clay loam, Caliche and gravelly sand
<b>Elevation</b>	2,100 to 2,700 feet	2,240 feet	2,770 feet
<b>Vine Spacing</b>	8x6 and 10x6 feet	8x6 feet	10x6 feet
<b>Rootstock</b>	Own-rooted	Own-rooted	Non-grafted Tempranillo rootstock
<b>Exposure</b>	Southwest and East	South	Northern
<b>Clones</b>	Clone 01 and 02	Type 2	Clones 1, 2, 3, 5 and 11
<b>Irrigation or Dry-farmed</b>	Drip irrigation	Drip irrigation	Drip irrigation
<b>Farming (Organic, Biodynamic, Traditional)</b>	Conventional	Traditional BMP	Non-certified organic
<b>Production</b>	3.5 to 5 tons/acre	4.1 tons/acre	2 tons/acre
<b>Vineyard Practices</b>	Shoot thin, cluster thin, leaf thin and color thin	Pre-prune, prune, shoot thin, leaf strip, color thin twice; take petiole samples; use irrigation soil probes	Shoot thin mid-summer and fruit drop at 50 percent veraison; slight leaf pull on East side only
WINEMAKING DATA			
<b>When to Pick</b>	Mostly by taste, judging when the tannins have matured past being astringent	Go by color; 24.5° to 25.5° Brix	Test Brix, pH and TA, but weigh physiological data heavier, looking for seeds and stems going brown and focusing on taste
<b>SO<sub>2</sub></b>	30 ppm at destemmer	None until after ML, then 40 ppm	Added at destemmer
<b>Crush Format</b>	Destem; mix crushed and whole berries	Destem fruit; using whole berry with no crushing	Destem and crush while sorting
<b>Cold-Soak</b>	None	Overnight at 45° F	2 to 3 days around 50° F
<b>Yeast</b>	T73, BM45, Clos, BDX, VRB	CH Hansen Merit	Commercial yeast
<b>Fermentation Temperature</b>	70° F to 90° F	82° F maximum	80° F
<b>Fermentation Technique</b>	Punch-down 4 times daily	Punch-down twice daily until 3° Brix	Punch-down 3 to 4 times daily
<b>Nutrients</b>	Go Ferm and Ferm Aid	Go Ferm at start of fermentation; Fermaid K if necessary	Add nutrients with primary yeast and then again during fermentation
<b>Acid Addition</b>	Check at juice stage and post-ML; additions from 0.5g/L to 2g/L	Adjust to 3.7 pH at primary fermentation	Acid additions during cold soak
<b>Malolactic</b>	Inoculate after primary, finish in barrel	ML in settling tank; then to barrel	In barrel
<b>Racking</b>	Once after ML and again before filtration	Once after ML; then after 1 year in barrel	Every 6 months
<b>Oak Program</b>	50% French, 50% American; 20% new	60% American, 40% French; 20% new	French, American and some Hungarian; 30% new
<b>Barrel-aging</b>	18 months	22 months	24 months
<b>Filtration</b>	0.45 microns	Sterile-filtered	Rough filtration
<b>Bottle-aging</b>	3 months	6 months	6 months

## Bitner Vineyards

2013 BITNER VINEYARDS ERLETXE TEMPRANILLO, 14% ALC., 114 CASES, \$35



JACOB KURTZ

**Greg Koenig** grew up in Idaho. He graduated from the **University of Notre Dame** after studying architecture. Returning home, he started winemaking as a hobby, moving into the commercial end with his brother in the mid-1990s when they started **Koenig Distillery and Winery**. In the 20 years since then, Koenig has become one of the most influential winemakers in Idaho, overseeing his own 4,500-case winery while consulting for several other successful wineries, including **Bitner Vineyards**.

### **According to Koenig:**

“We want to achieve an aromatic balance coaxed from the grapes. Tempranillo traditionally yields tobacco notes, along with red fruit. We would like to keep those herbal, tobacco notes in control while emphasizing more of the red fruit side.

“All of our grapes come from estate vineyards. One block is head-pruned on a steep hillside, and it presents some canopy issues. The other block is VSP. Elevation for our site is 2,240 feet, and we are

planted on silt and volcanic cinder. Vines are spaced 8x6 feet on their own roots with Clone 2. We farm traditionally and use drip irrigation.

“Tempranillo is an early ripening variety, and yield is always an issue. We find that heat, especially with any burning of the skins, intensifies the herbal, tobacco notes while diminishing the fruit character. The vines are still young, so we are learning our way. We think it is critical to control the canopy. We pre-prune, prune, shoot-thin, leaf-strip and color-thin twice. We petiole sample and use irrigation soil probes to monitor moisture in the soil. We get large bunches, and the tonnage is 4 tons per acre.

“We determine when to pick mostly by flavor. We like brown, crunchy seeds and prefer that the skins have no green flavors. We would like to get even more tannin, and we try for more hang time because we think that gives us better flavors and fruit development. Typically, we are picking between 24.5° and 25.5° Brix.

“When the grapes come into the winery, we destem but do not crush. We use no SO<sub>2</sub> until after malolactic. They get an overnight cold soak,



and we add acid to adjust to 3.7 pH. The next day we will inoculate with **Chr. Hansen** Merit yeast. We use Go Ferm at the start of fermentation and Fermaid K if necessary. We do manual punch-downs twice per day in 1-ton fermenters until we reach 3° Brix. Fermentation temperatures run 82° to 85° F. We press out at 3° to 4° Brix to retain as much fruitiness as possible.

“Both free-run and press juice get racked to a tank. We inoculate for malolactic, which is carried out in tank and usually completes by

December. Post-ML we add 40 ppm SO<sub>2</sub>. Then the wine gets racked to barrels. We use 60 percent American and 40 percent French barrels with 20 percent new. The balance of the barrels is two to three years old, again to maintain fruit character in the wine. We rack after one year in barrel and then again to bottle. The wine is sterile-filtered and gets six months bottle age before release.”

### Tasting Notes:



**Koenig:** The wine has the hallmark tobacco and leather, but it is integrated together with some nice cherry fruit and a little plum. The flavors are well-integrated. The finish has some nice tannins and some length to it, probably more due to tannin complexity than acid. The overall length is nice, and it is not astringent. I'd like it to have a bit more fruit on the mid-palate, but overall it has a nice texture.

**Crowley:** I like the nose. It has a smooth, spicy characteristic that is very inviting. It has some nice dark cherry, maybe even some blackberry hints to the flavors, with a little leather and mocha. I like the mouthfeel. It was heavier than the first two, and it had some tannins so it should age nicely. It has a nice layered finish with flavors that linger with you.

**Krause:** The wine is very nice. Most of the aromas are on the spicy side. What I really loved about the wine was the texture and how rich it was and powerful. It has a nice, even evolution. It is a big, rich wine, maybe the biggest of the three in this flight, but not in an astringent way. The fruit wasn't dominant, but the intensity of the spice and the generosity of the texture carried it completely. It is delicious just the way it is.

**Steingraber:** I get dark fruits with spice, earth and peppery characteristics. I also get a bit of caramel and vanilla barrel notes. The tannins were sound and round, not harsh. It had a nice finish to it with medium acidity. I liked it very much.

**Wenzl/Jones:** It opened up with a pronounced vanilla bean, leading into a brown curry spice. It has strawberry fruit, approaching that jammy preserve quality, but I think it is dominated by oak. The fruit is there, but it is behind the screen of oak. For me, it was a bit flabby, flat on the palate with not quite enough acidity.

**Folin:** Dark fruits with white pepper spiciness. I get some salty, briny notes, probably from the pH. It was kind of balanced by the oak that was used, which might be darker and smokier. The oak tannins are helping with the lower acidity, but overall I like it. It is a big wine and hopefully will evolve.

**Funk:** This is the most savory wine we've had. I would not describe it as a fruity wine. There is some olive tapenade, pepper, herb, dark fruit on the nose. I found the tannins to be riper than the Vizcaya. I wonder if it grows in basalt because it has that saline character I associate with that. Overall, I liked it a lot. My palate is bent toward savory wines, and this wine is savory.

**Alfonso:** I agree that this is very savory. I also get character I associate with basalt, a sort of funk, soy, some balsamic and citrus. It is very well balanced, and I find it alluring. I like the style, but find it a bit soft with less concentration on the palate and a fairly short finish.

**Newhouse:** This is not fruit-forward. I get some cola but not cherry cola. There is some mild spice. I liked it.

# Cinder

2013 RESERVE TEMPRANILLO, 13.5% ALC., 180 CASES, \$45

**Melanie Krause** grew up in Boise, Idaho and went to college at **Washington State University**, where she graduated with degrees in biology and Spanish. She got a job at **Stimson Lane** as a vineyard tech and parlayed that into an enologist position at **Chateau Ste. Michelle's Canoe Ridge Estate Winery**, eventually becoming assistant winemaker for Chateau Ste. Michelle. She moved back to Boise to start **Cinder** in 2007.



## According to Krause:

“We are trying to produce a robustly textured wine with intense aromas and flavors, balancing fruity and earthy elements. We are most concerned with texture and sensation. We want Tempranillo character to come through in a graceful, seamless way from start to finish.

“In Idaho, Tempranillo can be difficult. Sometimes it has harsh tannins, and at other times it is not tannic enough. We just haven't been working with it long enough to make conclusions. To deal with this tannin issue and the general vigor of the variety, we choose to use several different blocks and hone in on vineyard practices.

“We get Tempranillo from four different vineyards. All of them are conventionally farmed and practice deficit irrigation. Soils are sandy loam and silty loam with volcanic and granitic parent materials. Elevations vary between 2,100 and 2,700 feet. Vines are planted in either 8x6 foot or 10x6 foot configurations. They are own-rooted, using Clone 1 or Clone 2. We run VSP on the morning side and leaf-thin to open up the vines but prefer sprawl on the afternoon side for dappled sunlight. We try to leave a heavy crop until the berries are pea-size. We will shoot-thin, cluster-thin to reduce crop and color-thin. Yields range from 2.5 to 6 tons per acre with big differences between clones and sites. I observe lower yields in Clone 1 than in Clone 2.

# CINDER



“We pick by taste, judging when the tannins have matured. We look for the seeds and skins to lose astringency and not taste chalky. Grapes come to the winery where they are destemmed. Half of them go through the crusher; the other half remain whole berries. We will check TA and pH and make our first acid addition, trying to hit about 80 percent of the total addition needed. (A final addition will be made after malolactic.) We wait 24 hours and then inoculate with yeast. We use T73, BM45, BDX, VRB and Clos to give added variety and complexity in the different lots. The wine is fermented in 1- and 2-ton bins, and punched down three to four times daily, with an extra punch-down if the fermentation heats up. We try not to exceed 85° F. We will pump-over with a Venturi if the wine smells reduced.

“We press around 3° to 5° Brix, depending on tannin levels, and then go to barrel. We will keep press wine separate until our first blend when we usually combine the press and free run. We inoculate for malolactic in barrel. Once malolactic is completed, we rack to tank, make our acid addition as necessary and return to barrel, where the wine will sit for 18 to 20 months. We have a 50/50 split of French and American barrels. About 20 percent of the barrels are new, 20 percent are one year old, 20 percent are two years old, and the balance is neutral. The wine is racked, then sterile-filtered and receives three to four months in bottle before release.

## Tasting Notes:

**Krause:** I like what I am tasting; it seems to fit our goals of aromatics and even texture. The aromas are perfumed and followed by red fruit. I like the smoothness of this. The acids on the finish are nice. The tannins are present by not punching you in the face. I like the way they feel in the mouth.

**Crowley:** The wine has a nice balance between the acidity, flavors and alcohol level. It has bright, dark fruit characteristics. It is not over-oaked. There is a lot of fruit here.

**Koenig:** The wine is beautifully seamless in its integration. It has the typical Tempranillo nose with a little tobacco and a little cherry, but it is not overwhelming, which shows great skill in managing the fruit. What I like best about it is that the tannin structure is well-integrated. The acid and tannins work really well together.

**Wenzl/Jones:** It opens with a very pretty nose, very clean. This has beautiful fruit, but the oak starts to come through with time in the glass. I recognize it as Tempranillo with some savory hints. It has sweet fruit with a salty element in the finish that I like. The tannins are very soft with medium acid.

**Steingraber:** It is lighter in style than the Oregon wines, with more red fruit character, along with some cedar. The oak is medium or less with very soft tannins—not aggressive at all.

**Folin:** It started out with some herbal notes that moved into spiciness. It is a lighter style with bright red fruits throughout the whole palate. The tannins are soft and not overpowering with good acid balance. It is good, drinkable wine.

**Newhouse:** This tastes a bit oxidized to me, which hides whatever fruit might be in there.

**Alfonso:** Aromatically, it is challenging for me. There are hints of oxidation but what bothers me more are some sweaty, saline aromatics. They do blow off. On the palate, you get more dark fruit. I think it has the strongest finish of the flight. It has a good mid-palate and good length. There are more oak tannins, but they are well-integrated.

**Funk:** It is a riper style, and I get a cedar, floral combo on the nose with some dill. There is dark plum fruit with supple tannins and good length. The finish was balanced, but there is something that pokes out in the aroma that I don't see in other Tempranillos.

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# Oregon

Oregon is Pinot Noir country, everyone knows that. Well, not so fast: things are very different in Southern Oregon. Southern Oregon has nearly 6,000 acres of vineyard and more than 120 wineries. The Mediterranean-like climate is much warmer than the cool Willamette Valley to the north. Hot, dry summer days and cool nights work very well with dozens of varieties, especially Tempranillo. Oregon has more than 400 acres planted to Tempranillo. In the United States, only California, with 1,000 acres, has more.

# Kriselle Cellars

2013 KRISSELLE CELLARS TEMPRANILLO, 14.6% ALC., 466 CASES, \$35

**Scott Steingraber** was a civil engineer who built bridges before he got into the wine business—he was senior project manager for the 5,400-foot Tacoma Narrows Bridge. When he finished that project, he moved to his wife’s family’s 200-acre property near Medford, Oregon, called **Buxton Ranch**. The Buxtons started planting 25 acres of vineyard, and soon Steingraber was making wine for his **Kriselle Cellars** winery. He was also one of the founders of the **Oregon Tempranillo Alliance**.

green to woody. We want grape flavors to move from herbal to cherry and plum fruit. This change occurs very quickly and requires daily monitoring as we near harvest.

“We pick into half-ton bins at first light, usually finishing by 8:30 in the morning so the grapes arrive to the winery cold. We keep the clones separate and further separate various sections in the vineyard. Grapes are sorted and then get destemmed with no crushing. The grapes go to another



## According to Steingraber:

“We are looking to make a rich, bold wine without sharp tannins. We want the typical characteristics of cherry and plum, along with leather and tobacco that are associated with Tempranillo, to shine through. We want the wine to roll evenly from start to finish without harshness from the tannins. Our style is similar to Spanish Reserva with two years in oak and another year, at minimum, in bottle.

“Our vineyard is planted on what used to be the banks of the Rogue River. The slopes of our vineyard are comprised of well-drained alluvial soils. The Tempranillo is planted toward the bottoms of those slopes where we experience the largest diurnal change in temperature, as well as regular afternoon winds to mix up the air for warm afternoons. Elevation is 1,300 feet, and the vines are planted at either 4x8 foot or 5x8 foot spacings. Clone 1 and Clone 11 are planted primarily onto 101-14 rootstock while our Duero clone is planted to 3309, which gives a lower yield. We are traditionally farmed and use drip irrigation, moving to deficit irrigation later in the growing season. We drop fruit, shooting for 3.5 to 4 tons per acre. We will pull leaves on the east side but only pull leaves on the west side when the vintage is not too hot. At time of harvest we are usually 3.5 tons per acre.

“We start sampling in mid-August. Our first priority is sensory, with pH and acidity secondary, then Brix. Flavor rules. We want the seeds to go from

shaker table for a second sorting. We add 50 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> and cold soak for seven to 10 days at 45° F, hoping to extract tannins from the skins, but not too much from the seeds. We make the first acid adjustment during cold soak then again post-malolactic.

“We ferment in 2-ton open-top fermenters fitted with cooling jackets. We inoculate with D254 and use Superfood, along with DAP, adding it four times starting at 20° Brix. Temperatures are kept at a maximum of 80° F. We punch-down two to three times until 19° Brix then switch to pump-overs to introduce oxygen until 6° Brix and go back to punch-downs until we press. We taste the fermenting wine, watching for the tannin levels and will usually press before dryness around 0° to 1° Brix.

“We inoculate for malolactic around 2° to 3° Brix. We press to tank, deciding by taste how much press juice to include. The wine settles in tank for three to four days, waiting for primary fermentation to finish before going to barrel. Barrels are kept at 70° F until malolactic finishes, usually in four months. We’ll adjust acid after malolactic.

“The wine gets racked four times, with the first racking around five months after barreling down. We use 80 percent American barrels with 25 to 35 percent new. The other 20 percent of barrels are older Hungarian barrels. The wine ages in oak 20 to 30 months, depending on oak integration. We use a ventricular filter to 4 microns. We bottle-age for one year before release.”

## Tasting Notes:

**Steingraber:** First, I get cherry and plum. I also get a bit of leather and a sweet vanilla note. The finish is long and smooth without sharpness. The acidity is balanced with the wine. There is a bit of oak influence that balances the wine, but it is not overwhelming.

**Folin:** I get some dried herbs on the nose. There is good balance through the whole wine. There is good acid. Tannins are apparent, but not overwhelming. There is good palate weight, especially for the 2013 vintage. It carries through from start to finish in a good way.

**Wenzl/Jones:** There is cherry and an earthy component of wet stone, along with some leather. There is some subtle savory character of dried herb. Tannins are wrapped up and well integrated with medium acidity. It is very fresh with a good entry and mid-palate savoriness and then finishes clean. It is a very balanced wine with a nice juicy element on the finish.

**Crowley:** I like the nose. It has an earthy spice that is really nice, but I get a lot of caramel and vanilla with some black cherry. It seems a little warm to me. It is a little edgy and a bit drying in the mouth, but I don't find it overly tannic at all.

**Krause:** I found the aromas a little delicate. Mostly with spice and a bit of green olive. There are some sharp tannins that dried my mouth out a little bit, but a few years would probably soften that up. It was a bit astringent on the finish because there is an aggressive edge to the tannins.

**Koenig:** I found the nose spicy with smoke and tobacco in a pleasant way. The mid-palate gave way to Bing cherry and a silky texture. The finish wasn't as long as I thought it would be. It might be a bit tannic, but it remained pleasant and well-rounded.

**Alfonso:** I enjoy this wine a lot. It is definitely a riper style. I get a lot of dark fruit, roasted coffee and some hints of soy that bring it back to the Tempranillo camp. There is great concentration and flavor intensity with lots of dark fruit. It has good acidity. It is tannic, but well-balanced and should age well.

**Funk:** Really nice wine in a riper style with a deep berry nose, baking spice and some ripe blackberry and plum. There is a hint of leather. Definitely a full-bodied wine. It is nicely structured with big velvety tannins and good overall balance.

**Newhouse:** It is well-balanced with mild, dark fruit. I picked up some vanilla. It was my favorite of the flight. I like this wine a lot.

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The Revolutionaries Behind Wine's Visionaries

# Folin Cellars

2014 ESTATE TEMPRANILLO, 14.4% ALC., 250 CASES, \$32

**Rob Folin's** parents farmed avocados in California before moving to Oregon. They started planting their vineyard in 2001. Folin took a wine appreciation class at **Chemeketa Community College** and caught the wine bug. He finagled an intern job at **Domaine Serene** the year they moved into their new state-of-the-art facility. For six years he learned by doing and asking tons of questions. When he left in 2007, he was ready to run the family winery.

## According to Folin:

"I am trying to make a New World wine with Old World balance. While vintage differences are important, I want to have a consistent style year-to-year. I want the Tempranillo to be fruit-centered with depth and concentration and discernible layers of complexity that will show over time. We want a wine that is both drinkable and age-worthy.

"Our vineyard sits between 1,350 and 1,400 feet in elevation. Soil is silty clay, and vine spacing is 4x8 feet. We used 3309 rootstock because it worked better in our clay soil. We have Clone 01 and 03. Clone 03 is spur-pruned, but we have to cane-prune Clone 01, or we get no crop. We are farmed traditionally and use irrigation.

"We look for vine balance and health, using more water early to push energy to the fruit. Post-fruit set we will drop fruit to one cluster per shoot and decrease water but still try to maintain vine balance. We also pull leaves on the east side to get more morning light and to make it easier for our pickers at harvest. Yields run 3 to 4 tons per acre on Clone 03 and 2 tons per acre on Clone 01.

"To determine when to pick, we use cluster samples, which we crush and let settle in a cup. We want color to deepen, and we watch the taste progression, which goes from watermelon to strawberry, then to cherry and finally blackberry. That's what we look for. We know most of the acid will be gone, but we try to keep Brix in check and usually pick around 24° to 25° Brix.

"Grapes are picked to 1½-ton bins early in the morning. Clusters pass through a sorting line to the destemmer without rollers so we end up with whole berries. We add 30 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> and dry ice and move the bins into a room kept at 45° F for four to seven days of cold soak. We do not punch-down. As soon as we detect the start of fermentation, we warm the must up to 70° F and add yeast, using various types for added complexity and to hedge bets. We will also check pH and add acid to bring it down below 4.0. Nutrients are used, depending on YAN.

"We punch-down twice a day and usually do one pump-over around 18° Brix to get the yeast some air and make sure everything is mixed. Fermentation maxes at 82° F and averages 76° F. We press at dryness or when the cap sinks. Because we press lightly, both free-run and press juice are blended together. The wine goes back to fermenters, gets inoculated for malolactic and finishes primary fermentation. From there it goes to 100 percent French oak barrels. We use 10 percent new, 30 percent one-fill and 60 percent neutral. When ML finishes, we add SO<sub>2</sub>, make an acid adjustment if necessary and leave things alone other than topping up and monitoring SO<sub>2</sub> and TA.

"We rack in June or July to determine our blend and do no other rackings until ready to bottle. We age the wine in oak for 22 months. We will cross-flow sterile-filter if we have any issues. The wine gets one year of bottle age before release."



## Tasting Notes:

**Folin:** There is some dried berry on the nose along with darker fruits. There is a little smokiness. The fruit is balanced with the earthiness of Tempranillo. The acid is a little lower than the Kriselle. The tannins are nice and round. It is smooth and balanced, and that is what I was after.

**Wenzl/Jones:** I got a pronounced dusty plum element. It is definitely in the darker fruit realm, moving to blackberry and black cherry with fine-grained tannins that are a bit drying on the palate. The oak is well-managed. There is a pronounced floral quality on the aftertaste, possibly lavender. It is nice, soft and full in the mouth and then fades with those same aromatics and taste as described.

**Steingraber:** I get plum, blackberry fruit and a bit of earthiness later on. I really like the acid that lends a freshness. It has a nice long finish.

**Koenig:** This seems well-integrated and very seamless. The nose, the mid-palate and the finish all seem to belong to the same wine. There is a bit of tobacco, along with some nice black fruit, which continues into the mid-palate, along with nice cherry and plum. There is a long finish with long, fine tannins. It is an elegant wine.

**Crowley:** The nose has hints of clove and mint with a bit of raspberry. I like the flavor. It is smooth with a silkiness to it. Toward the end I got hit with more of a drying sensation that tended to last through the finish, but overall I think it is nice wine.

**Krause:** I find the aromas very agreeable with warm berry fruit and some almond in there. The wine is big with lots of tannins that provide good texture. There is a tiny hint of astringency, but it doesn't take away from my enjoyment of the wine.

**Funk:** This is a bit more savory than the others in this flight. There is a kind of floral, cedar, leather complexity on the nose. It is a little wild if you will. That was all around a core of dark, plum fruit and a little blackberry. The tannins were a little firm.

**Newhouse:** This is the least approachable wine for me. There is some rubbery or Band-Aid character to it, almost briny. I'm not fond of this.

**Alfonso:** It has high-tone red fruit. It is a bit briny and cidery, like apple cider. I get a hint of lavender and a hint of soap. It seems to be in that natural style without a lot of oak and a few more layers of intrigue. The flavors are nice, and the structure is there, but aromatically, it is a bit hard to approach.

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# Abacela Winery

2013 BARREL SELECT TEMPRANILLO, 14.2% ALC., 747 CASES, \$33

**Earl and Hilda Jones** were scientists without winemaking experience when they decided to make a change in their lives. He had years of scientific research experience and wanted something that involved research and would challenge him forever. They decided to challenge themselves by trying to produce Tempranillo that could compete with the great wines of Spain.

They planted their first grapes in Southern Oregon in 1995; and after 22 years, they are one of the foremost producers of Tempranillo in the New World. **Andrew Wenzl** has been on board as winemaker since 2003 and has spent so much time with Jones that they finish each other's sentences. It may be dedication or obsession, but either way their **Abacela Winery** is successfully championing Tempranillo as a varietal.



JOHN VALLS

## According to Wenzl/Jones:

"We use seven different clones to craft a cellar-worthy wine with complex layers of fruit, rich extract and ripe tannins that are fully capable of aging. This barrel select is done in a ripe style with darker fruit profiles that make for a drinkable wine, but one that will age well.

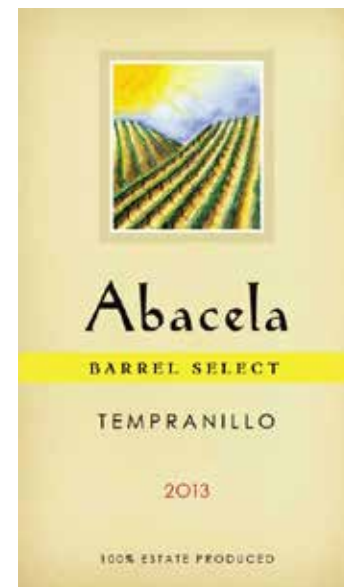
"Currently, we have 27 acres of Tempranillo planted to six clones (down from the original nine). Our soils are comprised of sedimentary and metamorphic rock: cobbled rock, weathered sandstone and siltstone, sand, silty loam and clay. Elevations run from 526 feet to 816 feet, and we have south-facing slopes and bench lands. We selected rootstocks by matching them to our soils, so we have mainly 4453, 101-14, 3309C and about 5 percent own-rooted. Our current FPS clones include 1, 2, 3, 11, 12 and 13. Vine spacings are mostly 5 feet.

"We use soil moisture meters and check leaf water potential. We water heavily to develop full canopy and then use regulated deficit irrigation (50 to 35 percent) to help reduce berry size. We prune, shoot-thin, fruit-drop and green-thin to achieve the crop load and synchronicity of ripeness desired. We focus on leaf-pulling and lateral removal. We experiment with canopy manipulation, which we find can have profound effects. We use compost created with elephant dung (from our neighbors at **Wildlife Safari**) and grape pomace, which we apply in strips along the vine rows. Yields run between 2.5 and 3 tons per acre although occasionally we get 4-plus tons per acre.

"Ultimately, any picking decision is based on taste, although we do monitor Brix, pH and TA. To harvest we pay strict attention to the astringency of the tannins. We chew the berries, spit the pulp and then chew the skins and seeds. We wait for the flavors to move to the darker fruit profiles, and for the skins and tannins to soften.

"Grapes are hand-picked into half-ton bins early in the morning with our pickers hand-sorting as we go. They are usually destemmed and kept as whole berries. We add 50 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> at the destemmer, more if there is bird damage. We cold soak for two to four days in a cold room and will make acid additions as needed during that cold soak. We move the bins to the fermentation room and generally inoculate with one of our five preferred yeasts. We will use nutrients as needed. We perform punch-downs and gentle irrigation-type pump-overs, depending on the style of wine. Fermentation temperatures vary between 84° F and 91° F.

"We taste to assess tannins to determine when to press but need to pay attention because sugar can mask the tannins. When we press, the free-run juice is usually dry, but the press juice has some residual sugar. We keep them separate until fermentation finishes and then usually blend them back together. We use a delayed malolactic fermentation by putting the barrels into a cold cellar. We use a special stir bar to introduce O<sub>2</sub> in the barrel through non-tees stirring for structure building and color stabilization. Then we will warm up the cellar, add our malolactic culture and finish up malolactic. After malolactic, we will do a rack and return to the barrels, adding SO<sub>2</sub> and making a final acid adjustment if necessary. Our barrels are 92 percent French oak with 36-month seasoning of staves, and 31 percent of the barrels are new. The wine is aged 22 months and racked three times: once post-ML, again at assemblage and a third time right before bottling. We do not filter the wine, and it receives one year of bottle age before release."



## Tasting Notes:

**Wenzl/Jones:** There is black cherry morphing into blackberry in the nose. There is some dusty plum as well. There is full-bodied expression on the palate with a strong entry. The tannins are present and will benefit with more bottle age. There is a spice component and some oak present, but it is well-integrated. There is just a hint of smoked meat to give it an extra layer of complexity. It finishes with a nice sweet fruit note even though it is a dry wine.

**Folin:** I get blackberries and dustiness. It was pushed to full ripeness but picked before any raisin or prune character. The palate is lighter up front and then picks up steam as the acids and tannins make it a little grittier, but bottle age will let it become a big, solid wine.

**Steingraber:** The oak is medium to medium-low with plum and blackberry fruit along with some dusty character. I like that description of sweet fruit because the fruit shows very nicely. I also get a bit of pepperiness on the finish as well.

**Krause:** This has really warm, spicy aromas. The thing that really makes an impression is how gigantic the texture is. It is so big and full and tannic. It is a rich, nice wine, but I recommend aging it for a while.

**Koenig:** It has a lot of beautiful cherry and mint and spice aromas and flavors. It has great texture, a beautiful long structure that just carries it forever. It is great now, but I wonder what it will be like in five to 10 years.

**Crowley:** I like the nose with its nice little sweet note to it. I even get a hint of brown sugar. There is Bing cherry, with a bit of spice and nice layers of complexity. It definitely has a drying component to it, but that should smooth out with age.

**Newhouse:** This is tannic with chalky mouthfeel. It is one of the more powerful Tempranillos of the day. I wouldn't describe it as fruit-forward, but there is some dark fruit with cigar box and leather. It has a long, powerful finish.

**Alfonso:** This wine is more modern in style. It has more noticeable oak tones in the aromatics with dark roasted coffee and dark chocolate. Seems to me like French oak. It is well-integrated, not disjointed. There is very dark fruit on the palate, and a wall of tannins follows. It is probably the most age-worthy wine of the flight. I think it is going to good places.

**Funk:** I loved this wine. It is built to last with nice ripe blackberry and dark cherry, along with spice box and dark cocoa nib. The tannins were pronounced but done well. I'd like to re-visit this wine in three to five years.

**Tempranillo** is an easy variety to love. It is capable of producing sumptuous wines full of red and black fruit aromas and flavors, along with complex notes of leather and tobacco. It handles oak well, even American oak, which can sometimes overpower other varieties. It goes well with many foods and is perfectly happy laid down in a cellar, quietly developing a full, rich palate of complex flavors, provided you have the patience to wait.

For grape growers, Tempranillo provides some great challenges, but they are not deal breakers. Tempranillo is not just vigorous; it can go crazy. Pruning, shoot-thinning and dropping crop are essential to making quality Tempranillo. Giant bunches and huge grapes present some issues, but leaf-pulling and controlled, timely irrigation can mitigate some of the downside.

For winemakers, Tempranillo production boils down to three main concerns: the acid drops out like crazy, the pH is through the roof and there can be enough tannin to dry out your mouth like a desert wind storm. Planting Tempranillo in the right spot and on the right soils, keeping the yield at a manageable level and working to control berry size is work winemakers must insist upon. Once into the winery, controlling pH and taming tannins are the main chores. Picking grapes as soon as you get flavor development can help with acidity, but it is more than likely additions will be necessary. Co-fermenting with other high acid varieties might also do the trick.

Controlling tannins is another issue. Working with whole berries seems to lessen extraction of harsher tannins from chewed up skins and seeds. Cold soaks are believed to extract rounder tannins from the skins. Fermenting at lower temperatures and then monitoring tannin build-up to determine when to press can also lessen the astringency of the tannins. Using less new oak and giving the wine plenty of time in both barrel and bottle, before release, all contribute to softer tannins. These are all things for winemakers to decide, experiment with and come to their own conclusions. Tempranillo presents these challenges to the winemaker, and it is solving the challenges that makes winemaking fun.

Based on this Varietal Focus, Tempranillo intensely reflects where it is grown. Each of the three wines from our selected regions had a lot in common with its neighbors while each region was distinctive from the others. The Idaho wines had the least amount of tannin and were the lightest in color, but still displayed classic varietal flavors and aromas. The Washington wines were bigger and more full-bodied than the Idaho wines. They had plenty of tannin, but it was carried well by the wine. The wines from Oregon displayed the most tannin. They also had loads of extracted varietal flavors, along with the signature leather notes. Each region represented the varietal in good ways, which allows consumers to choose a style that best suits them.

Whether we are aware of it or not, Tempranillo will likely be the next big thing. It is already the fourth most-planted grape variety in the world, and plantings keep increasing steadily. It grows well in a multitude of soils and weather conditions, produces solid yields and is capable of producing marvelous wines. Based on this varietal focus, Tempranillo reflects terroir as well as any other varietal. Surely, that is the mark of a great varietal and one of the key factors in making a wine interesting to both winemakers and consumers. **WBM**