Oregon’s Willamette Valley Welcomes Two New Nested Appellations

The winemaking state of Oregon now boasts 21 unique American Viticultural Areas (AVAs)

PORTLAND, Ore. (PRWEB) June 24, 2020 -- With the recent addition of Tualatin Hills and the Laurelwood District AVAs, the state of Oregon is now home to 21 federally recognized winegrowing regions. The regions, called American Viticultural Areas (AVAs), offer unique winemaking conditions thanks to a combination of widely varied physical geology and climate.

Both areas are situated in the northern Willamette Valley and were granted approval on June 3rd. Local wineries had petitioned the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) years earlier for the additions to the wine country map, citing distinctive features like soil type and elevation, which in turn lead to distinctive wines. They join fellow Oregon AVAs including Eola-Amity Hills, Umqua Valley and The Rocks Districts of Milton-Freewater and more, adding to the state’s eclectic winegrowing landscape. The expansive Willamette Valley now totals ten AVAs.

Tualatin Hills is the larger of the two new zones, composed of 144,000 acres encompassing the northern hills of Tualatin River watershed, minutes west of Portland, Oregon’s most populous city. The elevation of the AVA ranges from 200 to 1,000 feet, set in a temperate rain shadow cast by the nearby Coast Range. It’s the northernmost AVA in the Willamette Valley and includes the towns of Helvetia, North Plains and Forest Grove and is bordered to the south by Gaston.

With its 21 AVAs ranging from the Willamette Valley south to the Rogue Valley and spanning 600 miles east to the Snake River Valley bordering Idaho, Oregon's list of AVAs is second only to California's (which has a total of 107). Reflecting the ever-growing wine industry at large, the U.S. now has 248 AVAs from coast to coast.

Sally Murdoch, communications manager for the Oregon Wine Board said, “Oregon has almost 12% of the AVAs in the country, yet we produce only about 1.5% of the nation’s wine.” She added. “With two new AVAs, this is great recognition for our almost 800 wineries and our state’s clearly differentiated regions, underscoring that Oregon truly is unique in the global landscape.”

Leading the charge for recognition was Alfredo Apolloni of Apolloni Vineyards, along with Mike Kuenz of David Hill Vineyard and Winery and Rudy Marchesi of Montinore Estate. Producers note the elegant style of Pinot noir made in this distinctive stretch of land, often showing blackberry, cherry and spice notes. All told, 40 wineries and vineyards are located in the Tualatin Hills AVA, including Patton Valley Vineyard and Elk Cove Vineyards.

“It’s terrific to spotlight such a singular spot of the Oregon wine country map,” says Apolloni. “With an incredible diurnal shift and grape-friendly soils, it’s no wonder some of Oregon’s first wineries settled here. We can’t wait to further the story of the Tualatin Hills through expressive wines beyond Pinot noir.”

The Laurelwood District AVA is smaller at 33,600 acres, and is situated on the northeast facing flank of the Chehalem Mountains, near Beaverton and Sherwood. The Laurelwood District extends throughout the northeastern reaches of the Chehalem Mountains, where the topography reaches more than 1,600 feet above sea level. The name refers to the prevalent soil type that defines the wines from this area. Unlike other Oregon
AVAs, this AVA is defined by a unique soil type that is predominantly found in this part of the Willamette Valley. Here, Laurelwood soils dominate; this windblown loess soil type was brought in by the Missoula Floods thousands of years ago.

Spearheading the call for the nested appellation was one of the state’s most established winemaking families, the Ponizis. Second-generation proprietors Maria and Luisa Ponzi teamed up with Kevin Johnson and Beth Klingner of Dion Vineyard in requesting federal approval. Ponzi Vineyards joins 29 other producers and 70 vineyards operating within the new appellation, including Cooper Mountain Vineyards and Hawks View Winery.

Luisa Ponzi says the process has taken more than a decade. “We’re thrilled to be able to officially advertise the unique qualities at play due to our soil in our very specific pocket within the Willamette Valley,” the winemaker says. “Consumers are more and more interested in the origin story of their goods and wine has always told that story. With the addition of the Laurelwood District, wine drinkers will become aware of why and how what’s bottled from this area stands out.”

The two newest AVAs are the toast of both the industry and consumers who look to celebrate Oregon’s one-of-a-kind appellations and the “sense of place” in a wine’s flavor and makeup. Wineries and vineyards within these designations, on July 6 2020, can market their work as such, whether it be on the wine label itself or in other branding narratives.

About the Oregon Wine Board
The Oregon Wine Board is a semi-independent Oregon state agency managing marketing, research and education initiatives that support and advance the Oregon wine and wine grape industry. OWB works on behalf of all Oregon wineries and independent growers throughout the state’s diverse winegrowing regions. Visit oregonwine.org for more.

About the Willamette Valley Wineries Association

The WVWA is a nonprofit industry association dedicated to achieving recognition for Oregon’s acclaimed Willamette Valley as a premium Pinot noir–producing region. The WVWA has more than 230 members representing wineries, tasting rooms and vineyards throughout the Willamette Valley. Memorial Weekend in the Wine Country and Wine Country Thanksgiving are the two oldest WVWA–sponsored touring events in Oregon. Visit www.willamettewines.com for more info.

List of wineries and vineyards in the Laurelwood District AVA:

A Blooming Hill Vineyard and Winery
Alloro Estate Vineyard
Anne Amie Twelve Oaks Estate Benjamin Vineyard
Anne Amie Twelve Oaks Estate Boisseau Vineyard
Anne Amie Twelve Oaks Estate Louise Vineyard
Anne Amie Twelve Oaks Estate Marilyn Vineyard
Anne Amie Twelve Oaks Estate Robert Vineyard
Anne Amie Twelve Oaks Estate Justin Grand Vineyard
Arbre Vert Vineyard
Archer Vineyard

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Chehalem Crossing Family Estate Vineyards
Cloudrest Vineyard
Cooper Mountain Vineyards Johnson School Vineyard
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Manuela Vineyard
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Wineries and Vineyards in the Tualatin Hills AVA:
Aggravation Hill Vineyard
Apolloni Vineyards
Bednarik

Bramblett Vineyards
Cancilla Cellars
Carpenter Creek Farms Vineyard
Cherry Grove
Cochran Vineyard
Courting Hill
Covey Ridge
David Hill Vineyards
Eagles Nest Reserve
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Willamette Valley Vineyards – Meadowview
Windearth Vineyard
Wirtz Vineyard
Contact Information
Sally Murdoch
Oregon Wine Board
http://www.oregonwine.org
+1 503-735-5943

Emily Petterson
Willamette Valley Wineries Association
http://https://willamettewines.com/
503-550-8161

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