

Oregon wines



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Although winemaking dates back to 1840's, in Oregon, commercial production began in 1960's (Hall). Having a relatively short history of 50 years, today, Oregon is the third largest wine producer state of United States. As of 2009, the state hosts to 453 wineries which are mostly small and family-owned (Wine Communications Group). History of the Oregon Wine Industry The first grape plantation in the region was made by horticulturist Henderson Luelling, in Willamette Valley by 1847. By the 1850's Peter Britt started growing wine grapes in his Valley View Vineyard, today's Applegate Valley.

According to the census; in 1860, wine production was 11, 800 litres (2, 600 gallons) in Oregon (Hall). By the 1880's, Edward and John von Pessls planted Zinfandel, Riesling, and an unknown variety of Sauvignon in southern Oregon. At the same times in the north, in Willamette Valley, Ernest Reuter has been growing Klevner wines which brought him a gold medal at St. Louis World's Fair of 1904 (Hall). The wine industry in Oregon closed down in 1919 because of the Prohibition. It revived by the late 1930's as a fruit wine-based producer region. At that time there were only two producers, Louis Herbold and Adolph Doener growing grapes.

Oregon's wine industry was also damaged by the success of California winemakers (Hall). The rebirth of Oregon wines dates back to 1961, when Richard Sommer founded Hill Crest Vineyard near Roseburg. Although the production was based on Riesling, he also planted some Gewurztraminer, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Cabernet Sauvignon. In 1965, David Lett, the owner of Eyrie Vineyard, planted his first Pinot Noir near Convallis and after 1966, continued the production at Willamette Valley in the Dundee hills. This

was the beginning of the era of Pinot Noir which Oregon is nowadays famous for (Hall).

By the 1970's many winemakers immigrated to Oregon from California. Some of them were David and Ginny Adelsheim, Dick Erath, Dick and Nancy Ponzi, Jerry and Ann Preston, Pat and Joe Campbell, Susan and Bill Sokol Blosser and Myron Redford. However, David Lett was the one who placed Oregon on the world's wine map. In 1980, 1975 Eyrie Vineyard's South Block Reserve Pinot Noir came second in the grand tasting of wines sponsored by the French Gault Millau guide and this called the attention of press to Oregon as a wine producer state (Hall).

In 1990, Oregon was hosted to 70 wineries and 320 growers in 5, 682 acres vineyard. In the early 1990s, Oregon wine industry got into the danger of Phylloxera infestation which was prevented quickly by the use of resistant rootstocks. Some beneficial laws for winemakers were enacted by the Oregon Legislature in 1995. For instance, direct in-state shipment from wineries to customers and in-store tasting were legalized (Chemeketa Community College).

In 2000, the number of wineries had increased to 135 and 500 growers had been engaged in grapery in 10, 500 acres vineyard. In the 2000's producers have began giving importance to "green" wine production in Oregon (Chemeketa Community College). An Oregon non-profit organization, Low Input Viticulture and Enology, Inc. , has been certifying wineries for meeting certain environmental standards (Low Input Viticulture and Enology, Inc.) In

2005, there were 314 wineries and 519 vineyards in Oregon (Chemeketa Community College).