

# *the* Unicorn Review

## It's time to start collecting more Oregon wines

Patrick Comiskey · Jul 23, 2025

Wine for wine, Oregon Pinot Noir is more ageable than any in California. Oregon's colder winters, late springs, warm, rain-free summers and cool fall temperatures all serve to restrain fruit ripeness levels, giving the wines more tension, a lower pH, higher acidity, a leaner fruit profile, and a tighter structural weave. Of course, a lighter-skinned Pinot won't usually have the tannin payload or the aging window of, say, a California Cabernet, but in both Chardonnays and Pinot Noir, as well as its dry, racy, unsung Riesling—you'll be impressed by the liveliness and integrity of Oregon wines as they age.

A lot of the OGs of Oregon's wine industry—producers like Cristom, Bethel Heights, Adelsheim, Ponzi, Cameron, Domaine Drouhin, King Estate and the region's first, The Eyrie—could easily make this list. All have a track record and cellar legacies that can be measured in decades. But in their picking decisions, their cellar practices, their attention to everything from reduction to release dates, the wineries below have a deliberate commitment to their wines' aging potential; and as we'll see, in many cases that commitment has its roots in the Old World.

### Walter Scott

Ken Pahlow and Erica Landon were young when they started **Walter Scott Wines** in Amity, Oregon (the name draws together the names of two of Pahlow's deceased relatives, a grandfather and nephew). But they'd packed in a lot of experience leading up to that point. Erica served as one of Portland's most esteemed sommeliers where, in several restaurants, she amassed enviable Oregon verticals. Ken studied winemaking and then brand development in important Oregon cellars, notably St. Innocent, Patricia Green, and later Evening Land Vineyards, where he was shoulder-to-shoulder with Dominique Lafon and other Burgundian eminences.

They now make 16 single-vineyard wines. Their Chardonnays are made in a reductive, Burgundian style with a fierce savory character, and are among the most age-worthy of anyone's in Oregon. Meanwhile their Pinot Noirs are routinely thrilling, usually bolstered by some measure of whole cluster fermentations, with expressive midpalate textures that deepen and become more refined with cellar time.