



WINE COUNTRY

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MORE THAN 100 WINERIES AWAIT VISITORS TO WALLA WALLA: THE CAPITAL OF WASHINGTON WINE COUNTRY

(WALLA WALLA, Wash.)—There's a distinct difference between simply going wine tasting or going to a winery, and actually visiting wine country. And when it comes to Washington's wine country, one destination clearly stands apart from the competition: Walla Walla.

A unique combination of climate, character, charm and culture help shape Walla Walla wine country, and result in an experience that is far greater than the sum of its individual parts. From charming tasting rooms to extravagant winemaker dinners, visitors have ample opportunities to immerse themselves in the Walla Walla wine country experience.

The history of Walla Walla wine country, which many trace commercially to the founding of Leonetti Cellar in 1977, actually dates back to some of the area's earliest settlers. Specifically to the 1840s, when the area's first grapes were planted by French fur trappers living in nearby Frenchtown. Around the same time, early Italian immigrants brought with them to Walla Walla their tradition of winemaking, and they planted wine grapes and began making homemade wine. Vines with these origins still exist in the Valley today.

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Wine country—Page 2

But it wasn't until the founding of Leonetti Cellar in 1977, followed by Woodward Canyon in 1981 and L'Ecole in 1983, that the true roots of Walla Walla's wine country were established. With official recognition by the American Viticultural Association in 1984, the Walla Walla Valley AVA was official and the region's wine country wheels were set in motion. By 1990 the number of wineries had grown to six, and by 2001 there were 30. Today, more than 100 wineries call the Walla Walla Valley home along with more than 1,800 acres of grapes.

The Walla Walla Valley's climate creates optimal growing conditions, and combined with the fertile soils allow growers to control and manipulate many of the growing conditions. Coincidentally, the Valley's location at latitude 46° straddles the same line that passes between the Burgundy and Bordeaux regions of France, perhaps one of the reasons why Walla Walla's first wine growers—French fur traders—achieved early success that ultimately led to the Valley's reputation as the capital of Washington wine country.

About Tourism Walla Walla

As the voice for all sectors of tourism and hospitality in the Walla Walla Valley, Tourism Walla Walla is committed to being a representative, industry-driven organization. Through cooperation, experience and industry insight, Tourism Walla Walla is dedicated to providing leadership and direction, making tourism and hospitality one of the leading and most viably sustainable industries in the Valley. For more information visit www.wallawalla.org.