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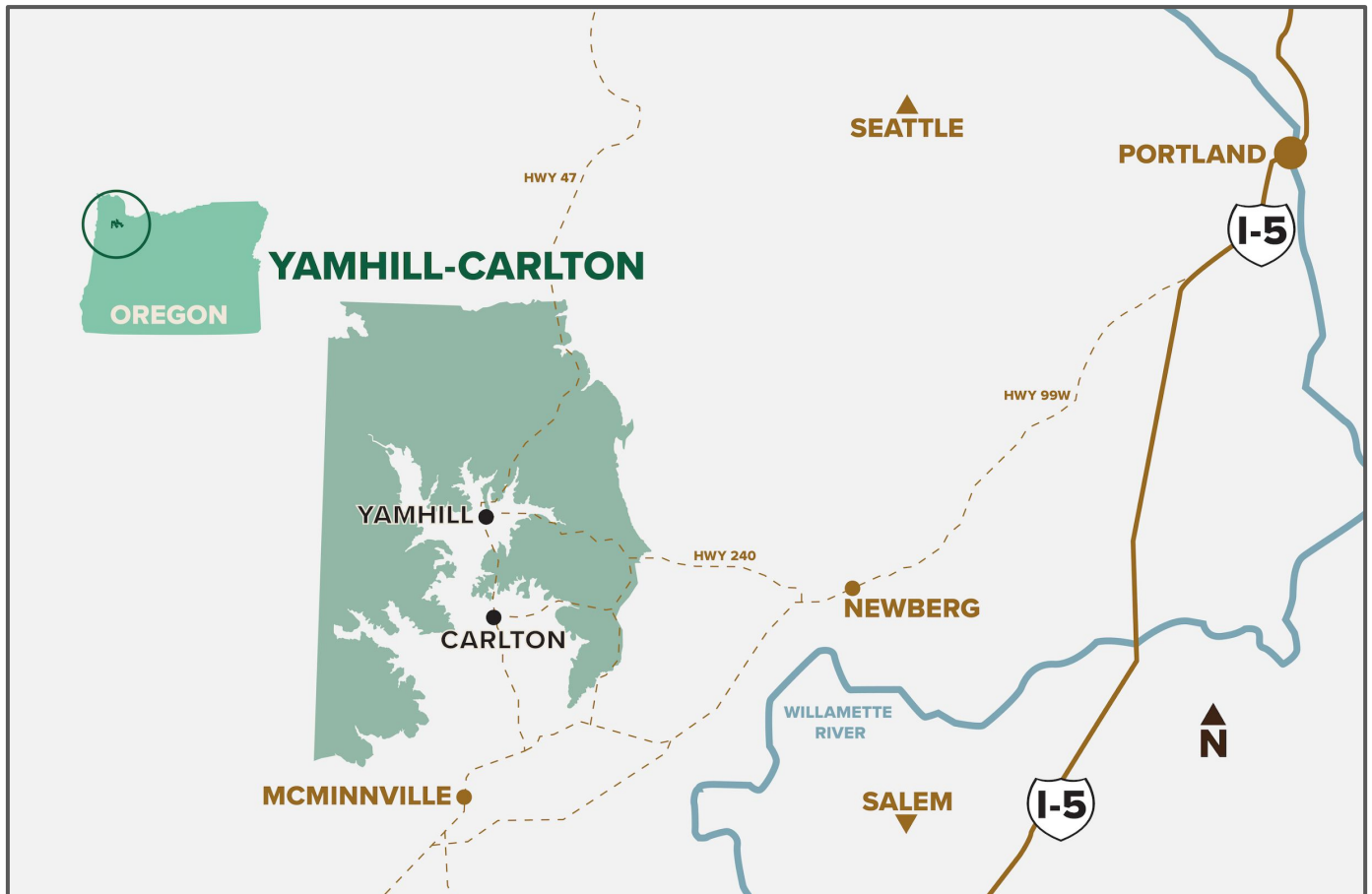
# Yamhill-Carlton AVA

## Press Kit 2025



“Arguably the most beautiful area of the Willamette Valley”

- The Washington Post



Map by Vinbound

Yamhill-Carlton is a nested AVA in Oregon’s Willamette Valley. This horseshoe-shaped region is distinguished by its warmth and its ancient sedimentary soils, creating wines of character with an unmistakable sense of place. Wineries in Yamhill-Carlton are predominantly family owned and operated, producing wines that emphasize quality over quantity. Named for the two hamlets of Yamhill and Carlton, the region has become a destination for wine lovers, collectors, and culinary travelers alike. With its picture-perfect patchwork of vineyards, Yamhill-Carlton produces some of the finest Pinot Noir and Chardonnay in the world.

## A Horseshoe of Sedimentary Soils

Yamhill-Carlton is a south-facing, horseshoe-shaped viticultural area comprising 58,100 acres, with almost 2,900 acres planted to vineyards. Yamhill-Carlton's unique soil and parent material composition, climate and positioning within the Willamette Valley, led to the establishment of a nesting AVA in 2005. Yamhill-Carlton was one of the first sub-appellations established within the greater Willamette Valley winemaking region.

Yamhill-Carlton is characterized by coarse sedimentary soils formed in the Eocene era, between 50 to 40 million years ago, making it the oldest parent material in the Willamette Valley. The soils were derived from ocean floor sediments, a unique composition that provides moderate water-holding capacity and excellent drainage. This enhances grape ripening and leads to softer tannins and well-balanced acids in the wines.

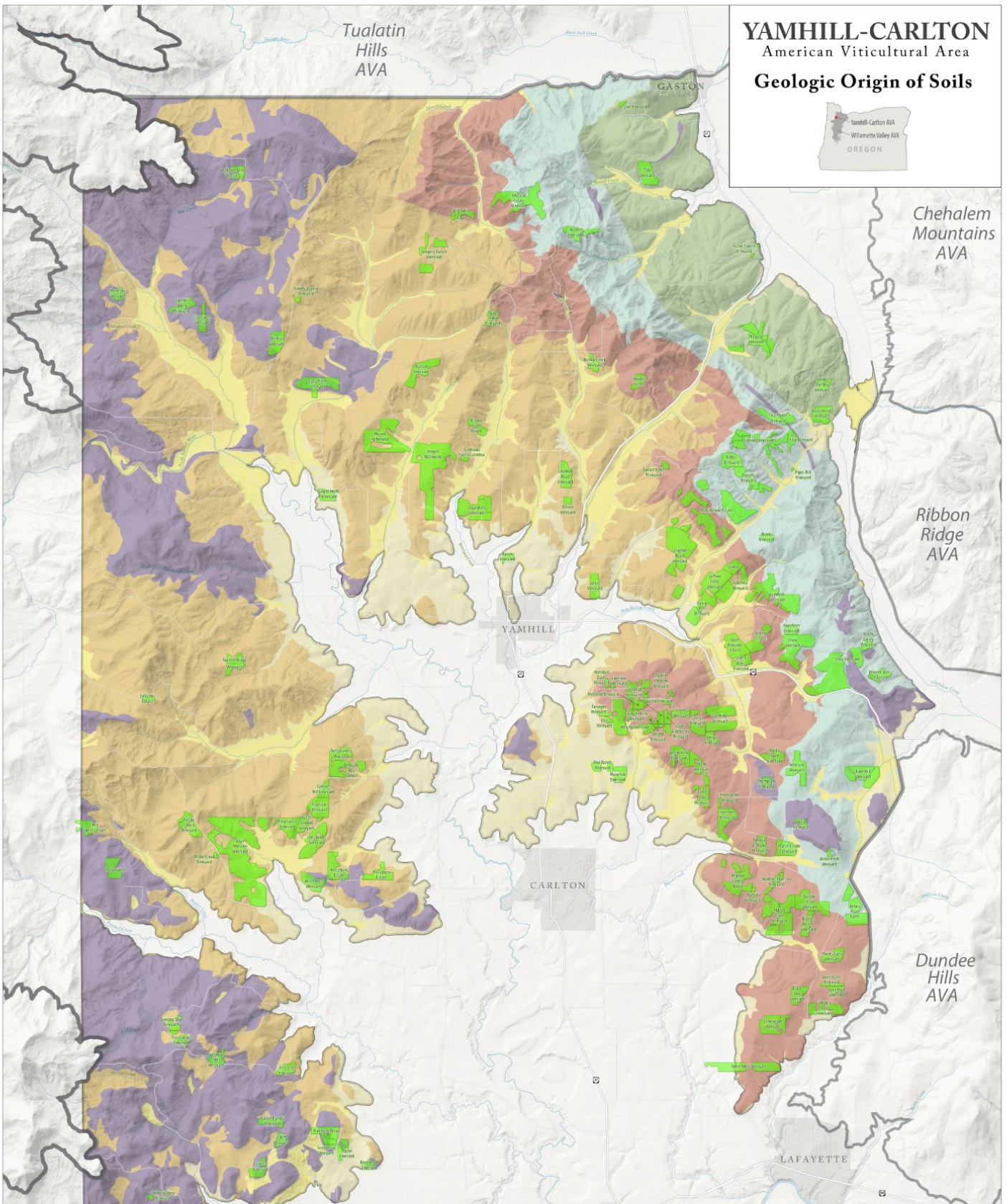
Yamhill-Carlton's borders were drawn according to its own set of distinguishing features, but also due to neighboring changes in climate and geology. To the west is the Coast Range, a higher-elevation area that transitions abruptly into volcanic soils. To the northeast lie Ribbon Ridge and the Chehalem Mountains, both cooler and with different geological compositions. To the south, a lower elevation area is typified by deep soils of Willamette silts. The unique position of Yamhill-Carlton, then, contributes to a wine profile that is distinct from its neighboring AVAs.

Elevation is another important consideration in Yamhill-Carlton. Planted on hillsides and ridges, only vineyards lying between 200 feet and 1,000 feet above sea level can be labeled with the designation. At these elevations, fruit reaches full physiological ripeness, resulting in complex, expressive and ageable Pinot Noir.

Yamhill-Carlton is warmer and receives less precipitation than its neighbors. Significant diurnal temperature shifts in the summer, during the final stretch of the growing season, encourage thick, flavorful skins, and optimal ripeness. The AVA averages around 42" of rainfall per year and Growing Degree Days average approximately 2300 degrees, ideal for premium grape-growing.



# YAMHILL-CARLTON American Viticultural Area Geologic Origin of Soils

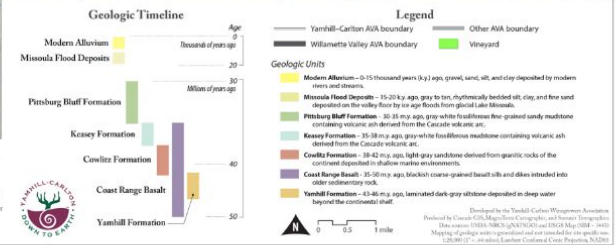


**The Yamhill-Carlton AVA is differentiated by its unique geology, soils, and climate. The area's diverse physical geography is reflected in the complexity and nuance of its award-winning wines.**

**The Geology, Soil, and Climate**  
Over thousands of years, the AVA's geologic formations weathered and combined with decomposing organic material to create soils which reflect the diverse character of its parent rock. Our vineyards are planted on elevated ridge lines with commanding drainage. The cool and maritime climate provides for a long growing season which is crucial for the development of complex aromas and flavors. Severe weather from the Pacific Coast is moderated by the Coast Range which forms a protective "rain shadow."

**The People**  
The AVA is home to veteran wine industry luminaries and inspired young winemakers. Our vineyards are predominantly family-owned operations that emphasize quality over quantity. Our winemakers are artisans who focus on creating wines that reflect a distinct sense of place—local wines that have a powerful global appeal. This community of winemaking neighbors enhances cooperation, interpersonal generosity, and genuine hospitality.

**The Wines**  
The area's unique geology, soils, and climate are reflected in the wines. The Pinot Noir develops dark, ruby colors and broad, silky tannins, with powerful dark fruit aromas complemented by earthy notes like espresso, clove, and dark chocolate. Although complex, Yamhill-Carlton AVA wines consistently gather critical acclaim. Curated by nature, our region produces some of the finest wines in the world.



Developed by the Yamhill-Carlton Winegrowers Association  
Produced by Cascade GIS, Map, Data, Consulting, and Design. Image Credits:  
Data source: Oregon State University and USGS. Map of geologic units is reproduced and modified for this specific use.  
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## Fifty Million Years in The Making

A series of geological events taking place over the last 50 million years resulted in the unique parent material of what is now Yamhill-Carlton. However, the process that resulted in the oldest mother rock in the Willamette Valley started much earlier than that, more than 200 million years ago, with the subduction of the San Juan de Fuca Plate under the continental plate. As the Juan de Fuca Plate scraped against the Pacific coastline, an ongoing pillowing effect created an accumulation of sediments and ancient sands.

Fifteen million years ago, before the formation of the Cascade Mountain Range, the violently active Blue Mountains to the east continuously poured lava west. The unhindered volcanic activity covered the existing sand with lava, cooling to basalt. The Missoula Floods, a final geological play with more than forty acts, deposited layers of silt in the low-lying valley areas of the Yamhill-Carlton region over ten thousand years ago.

The major geological events of the volcanic Blue Mountains and the Juan de Fuca Plate come to life in older vineyards, where vines' root systems engage with the parent material, reaching deep beyond the soil that developed on top of marine sediments. When vines are deeply rooted (at 30 to 35 feet), the identity of place becomes apparent. The sedimentary soil series of Yamhill-Carlton are millions of years older than the soil series in the surrounding areas, an asset that was discovered in the mid-1990s.

The influence of geology has the greatest impact on the wines from Yamhill-Carlton, especially Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Unlike other varieties, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are transparent grapes, blank canvases that show a direct connection to the place where they're grown.

### Yamhill-Carlton Timeline

**50 to 40 million years ago:** Creation of Yamhill-Carlton's parent material

**1891:** Incorporation of the town of Yamhill

**1899:** Incorporation of the town of Carlton

**1936:** The two small farming communities of Yamhill and Carlton come together

**1974:** First two vineyards planted in what would become Yamhill-Carlton AVA

**1991:** First vintage at Shea Vineyard, the largest vineyard in Yamhill-Carlton, which quickly became the poster child for the region's potential

**1991:** Burgundy native Bernard Lacroute purchases the 420-acre site that would become WillaKenzie Estate, in the first example of foreign investment in the region

**1994:** Ken Wright Cellars moves to Carlton from McMinnville, moving closer to Shea Vineyard and other sites that would greatly influence the positive perception of the region

**1994:** Wines made from Yamhill-Carlton fruit are the top-scoring wines from Oregon in Wine Spectator, bringing attention to the region's potential

**Mid-1990s:** Yamhill-Carlton experiences significant expansion as more winemakers discover the ideal combination of the region's geology and climate

**1995:** Willamette Valley winemakers meet for the first time to collaborate on the forming of nested AVAs within the larger region

**2004:** Yamhill-Carlton awarded AVA status, one of the first six nested AVAs within the Willamette Valley

## A Down to Earth Winemaking Community

Yamhill-Carlton is home to 63 wineries and 127 vineyards, mostly family owned and operated. “Down to Earth” is the AVA’s motto, a nod to the region’s unique sedimentary soils and to the unassuming nature of its winemakers and grape growers. A collaborative spirit prevails among winemakers in Yamhill-Carlton, whose generosity and unassuming nature contribute to a regional commitment to quality and excellence.

Against a backdrop of rolling pasture and forestland, the first two vineyards in Yamhill-Carlton were planted in 1974, at Elk Cove Estate and Wahle Vineyards. These pioneers joined Yamhill-Carlton farmers and ranchers descended from early Oregon Trail pioneers, drawn to this pastoral corner of the northern Willamette Valley rich with opportunity. Those first vineyards paved the way for wineries that have shaped the identity of the Yamhill-Carlton region, one that is collegial and forward-thinking.

The region is named for the small hamlets of Yamhill and Carlton, two dynamic communities surrounded on three sides by hillside vineyards. Carlton, with its charming main street lined with tasting rooms, cafés and shops, has become the unofficial hub of Yamhill-Carlton and an important destination in the Willamette Valley.



Photos: Carolyn Wells-Kramer

Hospitality and excellence are at the heart of the tasting experience in Yamhill-Carlton. Wineries welcome visitors for wine tastings in intimate settings; many of the smaller wineries in the region offer tastings in the winemaker’s own home. Many tasting rooms in Yamhill-Carlton are family and dog-friendly, and a growing number of wineries boast electric vehicle charging stations. In the summer, visitors enjoy wines on outdoor patios overlooking vineyards and forestland, and in the winter, many tasting rooms are warmed with cozy fireplaces. An increasing number of tasting rooms offer food pairings and à la carte menus, while others encourage picnics.

A growing number of restaurants and wine country accommodations add allure to Yamhill-Carlton, where visitors find plenty to see, taste and experience.

## Wines of Character and Global Distinction

There are three main varieties grown in Yamhill-Carlton: Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Gris. Smaller plantings of Gamay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Franc, Pinot Blanc, Dolcetto, and other varieties are also farmed. The region produces red, white, rosé, and sparkling wines.

Grapes grown in Yamhill-Carlton's ancient sedimentary soils are lower in acid than wines made from grapes grown in basaltic or wind-blown soils. In general, wines made from these grapes have a firm tannic backbone and age beautifully. Wines from Yamhill-Carlton are texturally driven and have distinct aromatic flavors: in Pinot Noir, coffee, cocoa, anise, cedar, and tobacco are common aromas, and in Chardonnay, minerality and floral notes are common.

Perhaps more than any other variety, Pinot Noir has an incredible propensity for expressing the place in which it is grown. Pinot Noir wines produced in Yamhill-Carlton receive consistent domestic and global acclaim; a growing number of Chardonnay wines made in the AVA are earning equally high praise.

### What's New in Yamhill-Carlton

**Regional stays:** Beautiful places to stay abound in Yamhill-Carlton, including B&Bs, rental homes, and loft apartments in downtown Carlton. Some recommendations include the silo suites at Abbey Road Farm, Carlton Lofts, Quandary Guest Houses, La Bastide Bed & Breakfast, The Gaard House, Inn The Ground, and Yamhill Vineyards Bed & Breakfast.

**Sparkling wines:** A growing number of wineries in Yamhill-Carlton are adding sparkling wines to their lineups. From *méthode champenoise* to *méthode ancestrale*, winemakers are finding great success with sparkling wines made from Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier, Sauvignon Blanc, and other varieties.

**New varieties:** While Pinot Noir and Chardonnay remain the most planted varieties in the region, vineyards throughout Yamhill-Carlton are seeing more plantings of Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Dolcetto, Albariño, Marquette, and many others. The region's Chardonnays are garnering international attention.

**The Carlton hub:** The small hamlet of Carlton is home to more than a dozen wineries, as well as restaurants and places to stay. Restaurants in the region include The Horse Radish, Cuvée, Carlton Corners, Martha's Tacos, and Larson House Pizzeria.

**Boutique wineries:** Yamhill-Carlton is home to many wineries producing fewer than 1,000 cases per year. Boutique wineries like Atticus Wine, Sylvanus Estate and Stag Hollow Wines offer personal tasting experiences, often around the winemaker's kitchen table.



## Yamhill-Carlton AVA Fact Sheet

<b>Location:</b>	Willamette Valley, Oregon
<b>Planted acres:</b>	2,846 acres
<b>Geology:</b>	Silt-loam marine sedimentary soils
<b>Climate:</b>	Cool-summer Mediterranean
<b>Elevation:</b>	Vines planted at 200 to 1,000 feet above sea level
<b>Wineries:</b>	63
<b>Vineyards:</b>	127
<b>Primary grapes:</b>	Pinot Noir Chardonnay Pinot Gris
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://yamhillcarlton.org">yamhillcarlton.org</a>
<b>Images:</b>	Images with credit can be found <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Social media:</b>	Instagram: <a href="https://www.instagram.com/yamhillcarlton">@yamhillcarlton</a> Facebook: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/YamhillCarltonWine">@YamhillCarltonWine</a>





## Yamhill-Carlton AVA Winery Members

ABBAY ROAD FARM	ELK COVE VINEYARDS	PHEASANT HILL VINEYARD
ABBOTT CLAIM	ET FILLE WINES	PIKE ROAD WINES
AMATERRA WINES	FAIRSING VINEYARD	R. STUART & CO. WINERY
ANNE AMIE VINEYARDS	GHOST HILL CELLARS	RÉSONANCE WINES
ASILDA WINES	GRAN MORAINE	ROOTS WINE COMPANY
ATTICUS WINE	J.L. KIFF VINEYARD	SAFFRON FIELDS VINEYARD
BEACON HILL VINEYARD & WINERY	JOYFUL NOISE WINE	SCHÖNETAL CELLARS
BELLE PENTE WINERY	KEN WRIGHT CELLARS	SHEA WINE CELLARS
BIG TABLE FARM	KRAMER VINEYARDS	SIMONI FAMILY VINEYARDS
BLACK DOG VINEYARD	KRISTOF FARMS	SOLÉNA ESTATE
BOEDECKER CELLARS	LA RANDONNÉE WINES	SOKOL BLOSSER WINERY
CARLTON HILL VINEYARD	LANDLINES ESTATES	SOTER VINEYARDS
CAROLINE VINEYARD	LAUREL RIDGE WINERY	STAG HOLLOW WINES
CHRIS JAMES CELLARS	LEMELSON VINEYARDS	SYLVANUS ESTATE
DIVISION WINEMAKING CO.	MARSHALL DAVIS WINE	TENDRIL WINE CELLARS
DOMAINE VERDANT	MONKSGATE VINEYARD & WINES	THE FOUR GRACES
DOMINIO IV WINES	NICOLAS-JAY	WAHLE CELLARS
EIEIO & COMPANY	NORTH VALLEY VINEYARDS	WILLAKENZIE ESTATE
	PENNER-ASH WINE CELLARS	

## Yamhill-Carlton AVA Vineyard Members

Abbey Road Farm	Guglielmelli Vineyards	Quandary Vineyards
Abbott Claim Vineyard	Haven Vineyards	Résonance Vineyard
Anne Amie Vineyards	Hirschy Vineyard	Rivenwood Vineyard
Atticus Vineyard	J.L. Kiff Vineyard	Rocky Noel Vineyard
Bayliss-Bower Vineyard	Johnson Vineyard	Roots Vineyard
Beacon Hill Vineyard	Jolis Monts Vineyard	Rose Knoll Vineyard
Belle Pente Vineyard	Kalita Vineyard	Saffron Fields Vineyard
Big Table Farm	Kramer Vineyards	Savoya Vineyard
Bishop Creek Vineyard	Kristof Farms	Shallow-Blue-Sea Vineyard
Bishop Scott Ranch	Laughlin Road Vineyard	Shea Vineyards
Black Dog Vineyard	Lonely Llama Vineyard	Simoni Family Vineyards
Bonnie Jean Vineyard	Marsh Estate Vineyards	Sisu Vineyard
Carlton Hill Vineyard	Marshall Davis Vineyard	Soléna Estate Vineyard
Caroline Vineyard	Matteri Vineyards	Stag Hollow Vineyard
Cassin Family Vineyard	Maverick Vineyard	Stermer Vineyard
Coats and Whitney Vineyard	McCrone Vineyard	Stubb's Vineyard
Contrada Santa Caterina	Mineral Springs Ranch	Sylvanus Estate Vineyard
Deux Vert Vineyard	MonksGate Vineyard	Tanager Vineyard
Doe Ridge Vineyard	Mount Richmond Vineyard	Tidalstar Vineyard
Elk Cove Estate	Nash Vineyards	Timbale & Thyme Vineyard
Fairsing Vineyard	Neigut Vineyard	Tres Colline Vineyards
Finn Hill Vineyard	North Valley Vineyards	TSAI Vineyard
Fir Crest Vineyard	Old Wagon Road Vineyard	Two Mules Vineyards
FoxyRock Vineyards	Orchard View Vineyards	Wayward Oak Estate
Goodrich Road Vineyard	Penner-Ash Estate	WillaKenzie Estate
Gran Moraine Estate	Pheasant Hill Vineyard	Yamhill Vineyards
Greyhorse Vineyard	Purple Chicken Vineyard	Yates-Conwill Vineyard