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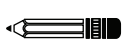
A LIFE THAT TEACHES
ART OCHOA'S LEGACY





THE ROGUE VALLEY

A RELAXED, OLD-SCHOOL WINE
COUNTRY EXPERIENCE

 &  PAM & GARY BAKER

Oregon's Rogue Valley offers plenty of choices for wine lovers with four wine trails, 70 tasting rooms, and 85+ vineyards. There are even wine tasting rooms in downtown Medford, effectively making a "fifth wine trail" available for visitors. Less crowded than Oregon's most famous wine region to the north, the Rogue Valley is quietly attracting wine lovers and wine tourists seeking a more authentic experience.

The Rogue Valley is shaped by the Rogue River, along with its tributaries—the Applegate and Illinois rivers, and Bear Creek. The junction of the Cascade, Siskiyou, and Coastal Mountain ranges also defines it. Planted at elevations of 1,200 to 2,000 feet, the Rogue Valley bears the distinction of having the highest elevation in Oregon for grape growing. Its vineyards usually, if not ironically, grow on the region's rugged hillsides rather than on the valley floor.

Like France's Bordeaux region, the Rogue Valley's warm, dry climate benefits Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Tempranillo, Syrah, and Sauvignon Blanc. However, due to their elevation, some wineries are more suited to cooler climate varieties like Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. The Rogue Valley is home to the greatest concentration of wineries in Southern Oregon.

Lunch at DANCIN

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HISTORY

Like some California wine regions, particularly those in the Sierra Foothills, the start of viticulture and winemaking in Southern Oregon's Rogue Valley has its history intertwined with a gold rush. Winemaking in Oregon began more than 150 years ago when Peter Britt, a Swiss immigrant lured by gold in the Jacksonville area of the Rogue Valley, brought grapevine cuttings from California to start a vineyard in 1852.

By 1890, more than a dozen growers in the Jacksonville area had planted over 100 acres of grapes. However, like other wine regions, Prohibition, which became law four years earlier in Oregon than the rest of America, killed the nascent wine industry.

Grape growing and winemaking in the Rogue Valley were not reestablished until the 1970s. Today, boutique Rogue Valley wineries can be found tucked away along country roads, locally known as wine trails, in the scenic gold country, where they began anew and have thrived for the past 55 years.

THE WINE TRAILS

The Upper Rogue Wine Trail, north of Medford, has just six wineries, its trail snaking through rural communities like Sam's Valley. The Rogue River, a cinematic sweep of water with its famous frothy rapids, runs through the trail. Some of the wineries, including Del Rio Cellars, are located just across the road from the river.

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The Jacksonville Wine District, home to eight wineries, offers an excellent place for a three-day winetasting getaway. Some wineries, such as Remotion, are in Jacksonville, making it convenient for visitors staying overnight in this historic town. The town is very walkable, and the in-town tasting rooms remain open later than other wineries. Most in-town tasting rooms accept walk-ins, but they can get busy on weekends. It's best to call ahead for reservations.

The Jacksonville Wine Trolley offers round-trip transportation to five wineries (any or all) outside of Jacksonville, plus a stop in downtown Jacksonville.

The Applegate Wine Trail begins just west of the community of Ruch and follows the bubbling Applegate River 50 miles north. It offers 16 wineries to choose from. While the Rogue Valley is gorgeous, the Applegate Wine Trail is particularly bucolic with its green meadows, lavender fields, and farm stands. You'll find plenty of Instagram-worthy spots along the Applegate River to breathe in the fresh air and take in the exceptional beauty of this treasured wine region.

The Bear Creek Wine Trail begins just south of Ashland, stretching west to Medford. It is home to 12 wineries. If you start your winetasting journey in the southern part of the Rogue Valley, near Ashland, one of the first wineries you'll encounter on this easily accessible wine trail is Irvine & Roberts Vineyards.

WHERE TO TASTE IN THE UPPER ROGUE WINE TRAIL

DEL RIO VINEYARDS

Del Rio Vineyards sits on Oregon's old stagecoach route, just across the road from the scenic Rogue River. The old Rock Point Stage Hotel, which dates to 1864, now houses the tasting room. This beautifully preserved structure has been partially renovated but retains its vintage architectural details, weathered wood, and original character.

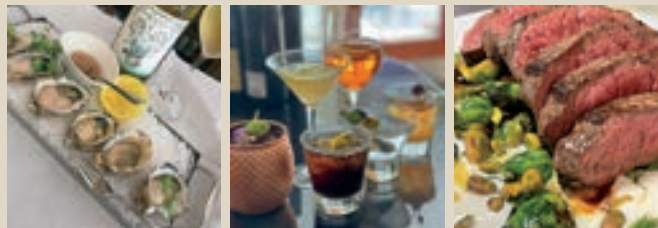
Outside, lush picnic grounds surround the tasting room. Sweeping views of the vineyards and two iconic mountain ranges, the Cascade Range and the Siskiyou Mountains, complete the cinematic backdrop. Still family-owned by Rob and Jolee Wallace, time slows down in this peaceful countryside setting. The winery even features Slow Down Sundays with music and a food truck and is ever popular with the locals.

But Del Rio's wines are just as appealing as the winery setting. The winery is best known for its Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir, but also produces Chardonnay, Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, and others. The 2022 Pinot Noir is lighter in style, the 2023 Pinot Gris is crisp and vibrant, while the 2021 Malbec offers medium intensity violet, red plum, and black cherry aromas. All of the wines we tasted were delightfully fragrant.

Del Rio also offers tasty bites of cheese, dippers, and meats to pair with its wine flights.

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WHERE TO TASTE IN THE JACKSONVILLE WINE TRAIL

RELLIK WINERY

Rellik is more than just a winery. The surrounding property houses an alpaca farm, fruit orchards, and vineyards. The tasting room includes an on-site restaurant and overnight accommodations with three luxury suites. Conveniently, Rellik is one of the stops on the Jacksonville Wine Trolley route.

But it is so much more than that; it's an unpretentious tasting room where locals just like to hang out. On our recent visit, we found groups of friends playing cards and drinking wine, moms and daughters meeting for lunch, and local crafters selling their goods.

Wood floors and a casual, industrial interior define the space. Chandeliers, made from the staves of wine barrels, hang from the wooden ceiling. The covered outdoor patio provides additional seating for warmer weather.

The vibe here is also casual. Guests order food, wine flights, or wine by the glass or bottle at the counter. Among other food choices, the menu features ten different pizzas plus a build-your-own pizza.

The winery produces just 3,500 cases of wine per year but features a wide variety of whites and reds to please any palate. It also offers two beers on tap, estate cider, and non-alcoholic drinks.

The 2024 Viognier offers layers of luscious tropical pineapple and mango on the palate. The 2022 Grenache, a favorite of ours, is very fruit-forward. But the non-vintage Three-Eyed Raven, a blend of Syrah, Petite Verdot, and Tempranillo, proved to be big and bold and a favorite with Rellik wine club members.

WHERE TO TASTE IN THE APPLAGATE WINE TRAIL

QUADY NORTH

Quady North is an organically farmed 100-acre estate vineyard that is Live Certified sustainable for winemaking. Established in 2005 by Herb Quady, the winery specializes in the production of small lots, vineyard select varietals, and Rhone blends. The estate vineyards are affectionately named after the owner's two daughters, Mae and Eevee.

The hilltop, café-style tasting room is intimate and welcoming. It is situated inside the red-painted corner of the large production facility. It offers seating at the bar or at tables, as well as couches tucked neatly in the corner opposite the bar. Outdoor seating is also available.

Featured wines include a flight of five. Our tasting included a 2024 Sauvignon Blanc, a 2023 Rosé of Cabernet Franc, a 2023 "Bomb" Grenache, a 2020 Cabernet Franc, and a 2021 Red Blend of Cabernet Franc and Merlot. The owner's wife is an artist who designs the winery's colorful wine labels.

All wines have distinct terroir-driven characteristics and are eminently food-friendly creations.

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Food Pairing at Irvine & Roberts





OTHER PLACES TO TASTE, EAT, AND STAY

UPPER ROGUE WINE TRAIL

Visiting Cliff Creek Cellars in Gold Hill feels like walking into a friend's backyard for a BBQ and wine. This unpretentious tasting room overlooks estate vineyards from its intimate patio. They craft old-world wines with a new-world twist. Be sure to try the 2018 Super Tuscan, a luscious *San Francisco Chronicle* silver medal winner.

Kriselle Cellars, at the trail's most northern point, is a stunning facility with a spacious patio overlooking the Rogue River and acres of vineyards. Be sure to try the 2022 D'Tani, a blend of four wines rich with flavors and named for the nearby "Rock Above."

JACKSONVILLE WINE TRAIL

The Daisy Creek tasting room, on the Jacksonville Wine Trail, offers an exquisite atmosphere with full vineyard views and a year-round tasting schedule. People like its Rhone-style Syrah and Viognier, but nearly all the single-vintage varietals have won medals at a variety of Oregon wine competitions over the past ten years.

The Remotion tasting room is located in a well-preserved 1880s brick house in downtown Jacksonville and stays open later than most tasting rooms. In addition to the tasting room, the winery offers three luxurious suites on the property called the Orth Suites. The flagship wine is the 2020 Barbera, a varietal not commonly produced in the Rogue Valley.

DANCIN Vineyards, technically on both the Jacksonville Wine Trail and the Bear Creek Wine Trail, is a must-stop for lunch: the tasting room and restaurant perch atop a hill overlooking the estate vineyards. The restaurant sits alongside a pristine koi pond and garden. Known for its artisan pizzas, DANCIN attracts locals and visitors. This is a good opportunity to pair a wine flight with a mouthwatering lunch.

APPLEGATE VALLEY WINE TRAIL

Troon Vineyard, a Demeter Biodynamic and Regenerative Organic Gold Certified winery and farm, features a spacious indoor wine tasting room with an elegant setting for comfortable seated wine tasting and plentiful outdoor seating on the lawn and patio. The 2022 Roussanne, the 2023 Rosé blend, and the 2023 Mourvèdre are delightfully delicious, but guests like the flagship estate 2022 Syrah the most.

Lindsay Lodge is both the place to stay and to eat in Applegate Valley. The lodge is a stunning seven-room boutique hotel built alongside the gently flowing Applegate River. The rooms are spacious, and rustic, built with logs of great pine, fir, and redwood. Each room includes a balcony overlooking the river and the Historic Pioneer Bridge. The restaurant, beloved by locals and visitors, features a full bar, indoor seating, and a spacious patio overlooking the river.

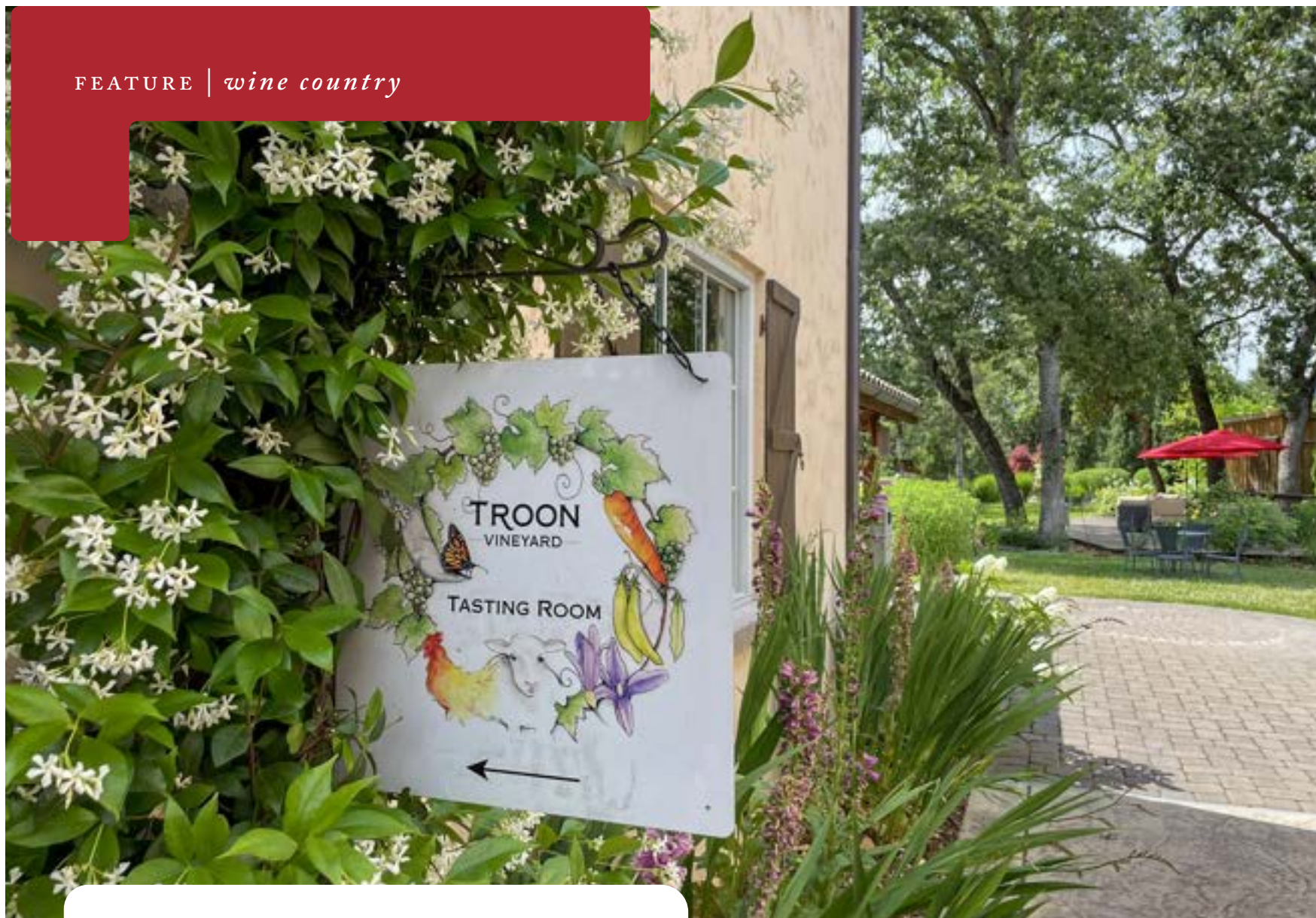
BEAR CREEK WINE TRAIL

With lots of exposed reclaimed timber beams, multicolored wine bottle lighting, and fieldstone walls, the tasting room at Padigan Wines is comfortably rustic and offers seating around wine barrel tables. Although the 2020 Sauvignon Blanc won a gold medal at the latest Oregon wine competition, the 2022 Tempranillo should not be overlooked.

MEDFORD

Known as the "Heart of the Rogue," Medford provides a convenient home base for wine tasting. Compass by Margaritaville, one of Medford's newest hotels, offers a 111-room, family-friendly sanctuary in the Rogue Valley.

Pond at DANCIN



WHERE TO TASTE IN THE BEAR CREEK WINE TRAIL

IRVINE & ROBERTS

One of our favorite wineries on the Bear Creek Wine Trail is Irvine & Roberts. Whether you sit inside the spacious tasting room or on the expansive patio during warmer weather, you'll enjoy sweeping views of the vineyards and surrounding mountains.

The winery specializes in Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, and all wines are estate-grown. But the winery also produces a lovely Pinot Meunier and Rosé of Pinot Noir. Doug and Dionne Irvine founded the winery on a desire to make magic from this special site. The winemaker, Brian Gruber, likes to tell the Irvine's story through the wines, and the magic does indeed shine through.

The tasting room features three different options for wine tasting: the classic flight of four wines, the Winemaker's Choice Flight of three reserve wines, and a flight of three sparkling wines. But the newest option on the menu is the curated pairing of four small bites designed to enhance the flavors and textures of each wine, which costs an additional \$40.

Our pairing consisted of summer succotash bruschetta topped with strawberries, tomatoes, and greens paired with 2024 Rosé of Pinot Noir, brioche topped with lemon ricotta and greens paired with the 2023 Estate Chardonnay, a Bing Cherry and Casilla compote on Manchego paired with the 2022 Elevation Pinot Noir, and the lamb meat balls made with Middle Eastern spices, a Pinot Noir glaze, served on a bed of olive oil with herbs and paired with the 2022 Discovery Pinot Noir.

AN AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE

Whether you wander just one trail or explore all four, the Rogue Valley promises an experience that lingers long after the last sip. Here, tasting isn't rushed—it's a chance to pause, savor, and experience an authentic wine tasting experience that the Rogue Valley does so well. And once you've discovered this quietly extraordinary corner of Oregon, chances are, you'll find yourself drawn back—again and again.

