

## Yamhill-Carlton District FAQ

### **When was the Yamhill-Carlton District AVA created?**

AVA status was granted in 2004, though first allowed on a label for the 2003 vintage.

### **Why was the Yamhill-Carlton District AVA created?**

At more than 3 million acres, the breadth of the Willamette Valley AVA encompasses many diverse soil types, parent material, and climatic influences. As a result the wines had diverse profiles as well. New AVAs were established after identifying growing regions within the Willamette Valley that had distinct, consistent, identifiable traits.

Historically the villages of Yamhill and Carlton, just 3 miles apart, were closely connected through the timber trade, and somewhat self-contained. There is also a unique nexus of sedimentary soils and a “rain shadow” afforded by Oregon’s coast range mountains – contributing to wines distinct from neighboring AVAs in a number of important ways.

### **Where is the AVA located?**

The AVA is approximately 35 miles, or about a 70-minute drive, southwest of Portland, Oregon. It lies west of both the Ribbon Ridge AVA and Dundee Hills AVA, and to the north of McMinnville AVA.

### **What characteristics do the wines of the AVA share? How are they different from surrounding AVAs?**

These are plummy, black-fruited Pinot Noirs with notes of blackberry and black cherries, framed by minerality reminiscent of pipe tobacco, espresso, clove and dark chocolate, and accented by scents of rose, violet, lavender and forest floor.

A Yamhill-Carlton Pinot is typically lower in acidity, deeper in color, and higher in tannin than that of a Dundee Hills or a Ribbon Ridge wine. The wines have some of the darkest color of all Willamette Valley Pinot Noirs.

### **What does your motto “Down to Earth” mean?**

The motto describes the unassuming nature and cooperative spirit of the people who have lived in this valley since the 1850s, combined with our belief that the qualities in our wines are dictated by the mineral elements we see in our marine sedimentary soils.

### **How many acres are under vine in the AVA?**

As of 2007, there were 1200 acres planted, comprised of about 60 different vineyards and vinified by more than 20 estate wineries.

**What kinds of soils predominate in this AVA?**

The hillsides here are comprised of siltstone, sandstone, and sand, and their parent material is 35-45 million-year old seabed from the Eocene and Oligocene epochs. These strata are further subdivided as Yamhill, Spencer, and Keasey series soils.

**Why does the AVA have an elevation requirement?**

Soils on the valley floor, like much of the Willamette, are far too fertile, clay-laden, and wet for premium wine grapes. Therefore the AVA is an upside-down horseshoe of hillsides between 200 and 1000 feet in elevation, surrounding a valley better suited to grass seed, berry, wheat, and corn production. Frost is also a limiting factor on the valley floor.

**Why is this a good place to grow grapes?**

The Coast Range Mountains provide some shelter from the rains of the Pacific at critical times in the growing season. The shallow marine sediments of the AVA encourage early ripening of wine grapes. Significant shifts in temperature between summer days and nights encourage thick, flavorful skins, and ripeness with sufficient balancing acidity.