



Cristom makes savory, energetic pinot noir and chardonnay from four iconic vineyards in Oregon's Eola-Amity Hills.

An Estate Defined by Its Parts: Burgundy lovers Paul and Eileen Gerrie founded Cristom in 1992, setting up a winery on the eastern slopes of the Eola-Amity Hills. Their inspiration was Burgundian producers like Dujac and Leroy, and they hired Steve Doerner away from California to help them get there. They also assembled four remarkable vineyards—Marjorie, Eileen, Jessie and Louise—each representing different exposures, elevations and soil compositions; the vines at all of them are now at least 20 years old and are hitting their stride. Tom Gerrie, the founders' son, who now runs the estate, named a fifth vineyard for his father, Paul; it's in its third leaf.

Vineyard Blends: Cristom's single-vineyard pinot noirs are a force nearly every vintage. In 2014, the Estate Pinot is exceptional as well: Drawn from Cristom's four main vineyards, the wine benefits from both the clonal and vineyard diversity in each, to say nothing of the vineyards' maturity. It is a dramatically savory wine with an umami throughline running like a sinewy cord beneath a dark fruit core. The 2015 Estate Chardonnay, just three barrels from one half-acre, is a weighty, mineral, deeply satisfying white, whose success Doerner attributes to vine age and to a renewed commitment to native yeast fermentation, as well as some additional lees stirring.

The Year of Eileen: Cristom's wine of the year in our tastings came from Eileen, the estate's highest vineyard at 750 feet, named for Paul Gerrie's wife. Planted in 1997, it is by far the latest ripening site on the property, a delay that Doerner feels is exacerbated by its exposure to the wind at the top of the hill, which gusts up to 25 miles per hour most evenings. The 2014 is savory, with scents of bergamot and lavender, the cherry fruit generous and ripe, but what really sets it apart is how it seems to bear the wind's energy in its texture, lean and propulsive. —P.J.C.



DETAILS & TOP WINES

Founded: 1992 • **Winemaker:** Steve Doerner
Viticulturist: Mark Feltz • **Owner:** Tom Gerrie
Acres owned: 105 • **Annual production:** 16,000 cases
Estate grown: 80% • **Location:** Salem, OR
Website: cristomvineyards.com

- 95 2014 Eola-Amity Hills Eileen Vineyard Pinot Noir \$60 (2/17)
- 93 2014 Eola-Amity Hills Estate Pinot Noir \$50 (10/17)
- 91 2015 Eola-Amity Hills Estate Chardonnay \$40 (10/17)

EOLA-AMITY HILLS

DeLille Cellars

With 25 years of experience behind them, the team at DeLille has mastered the art of the Bordeaux-style blend in Washington State.

Bordeaux Inspired, Washington Bred: Winemaker Chris Upchurch founded DeLille Cellars in 1992, partnering with father and son Greg and Charles Lill, and his friend Jay Soloff. They were among the first in Washington to focus on Bordeaux blends, starting with Chaleur, predominantly cabernet, and, two years later, adding D2, meant to mirror the “second” wines of Bordeaux châteaux. In 1995, the team debuted a white Bordeaux blend, Chaleur Blanc. The vineyards they singled out are among the oldest and most venerated in the Columbia Valley, like Sagemoor, Red Willow and Harrison Hill, believed to have the oldest cabernet vines in the valley.

Red Mountain Man: Before their first decade was in the bottle, Upchurch concluded that no place in the state could beat Red Mountain for sheer intensity of fruit expression. He worked with two of the AVA's most famous vineyards, Klipsun and Ciel du Cheval, before planting vines of his own in 2001 at the 15-acre Grand Ciel, followed in 2007 by Upchurch, an 18-acre vineyard. Nearly all of the winery's estate production now comes from Red Mountain.

Left and Right Bank Blends: DeLille also works with syrah, which they blend with cabernet to create Doyenne; in 2014 it's especially lush, the plummy flavors laced with notes of licorice and chocolate. But to get the best snapshot of DeLille, compare their Bordeaux blends from on and off Red Mountain. D2 is mostly merlot, with cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc. It also relies heavily on vineyards outside of Red Mountain (55 percent), including Harrison Hill and Red Willow. These cooler old-vine sites may account for its leafy, cedary scents and nimble, light-toned red fruit. For a more Left Bank style, open the 2013 Four Flags, the winery's newest wine, a Red Mountain cabernet sauvignon from Upchurch, Grand Ciel, Klipsun and Ciel du Cheval. It's a cabernet of exceptional thrust and supple, blue-fruited magnanimity, the tannins so well handled that it's charming—not a word often used to describe Red Mountain wines. —P.J.C.



Jason Gorski & Chris Upchurch



DETAILS & TOP WINES

Founded: 1992 • **Winemakers:** Jason Gorski, Chris Upchurch
Viticulturists: Dick Boushey, Marshall Edwards, Jim Holmes, Todd Newhouse, Mike Sauer, Kent Waliser • **Owners:** Greg Lill, Pat Lill Jorgenson, Jay Soloff, Chris Upchurch • **Acres owned:** 31 • **Annual production:** 25,000 cases • **Estate grown:** 15%
Location: Woodinville, WA • **Website:** delillecellars.com

- 94 2013 Red Mountain Four Flags Cabernet Sauvignon \$69 (12/16)
- 94 2014 Columbia Valley D2 \$48 (8/17)
- 91 2014 Yakima Valley Doyenne \$42 (8/17)

COLUMBIA VALLEY