



## NAKED MOUNTAIN HOSTS FALL OPEN HOUSE

One of the top local wineries, **Naked Mountain** in Markham, Va., opens its doors this weekend from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Current release wines, light fare and fall foliage views will be available. A German folk band will entertain from noon to 4 p.m. Sunday.

## CINDY AND SCOTT GREENBERG

Vine Gal and Vine Guy

# White wines of Washington state

**The Examiner's Vine Gal  
and Vine Guy taste varietals  
made from the paler grape**

**A** couple of weeks ago, we admitted that we were guilty of turning a blind eye to the wine trade of Washington state until just a few years ago. Definitely shame on us, because when we compared Washington's wine industry to its more famous European counterparts, we were surprised to learn that they had a few things in common.

For example, Washington's wine country is situated on just about the same latitude (46 degrees north) as some of the great French wine regions of Bordeaux and Burgundy. And just like European wine-growing regions, Washington has been blessed with a plethora of prime wine grape-growing areas, particularly in the valleys and on the hillsides on the east side of the Cascade Mountain range.

The majestic Cascade Mountains cut a swath through the state from the north to the south, effectively dividing the state into two distinctive regions. The more mild and lush lands lie to the west of the range and the more arid and volcanic rich soils lie to its east. Interestingly, only one of the state's nine American Viticultural Areas lies to the west side of the range: the Puget Sound AVA, where only 1 percent of the state's wine grapes are grown. In this cool viticultural climate, the grapes take a much longer time to ripen, producing wines with concentrated flavors.

The arid climate on the other side of the range, combined with the long daylight hours of the growing season and careful irrigation control,

make the lands of eastern Washington state prime for white wine grapes. The cool autumn temperatures help the grapes reach full maturity, resulting in wines that possess intense aromatics, complex fruit flavors and crisp acidity.

Here are our favorite Washington state whites. Retail prices are approximate.

**HE SAID**

I enjoy just a touch of sweetness in my white wines; therefore, I have a tendency to gravitate toward off-dry whites. While not sweet enough to call a dessert wine, this style of wine is versatile and works well with food or on its own.

**2005 Covey Run Riesling,  
Columbia Valley (\$9)**

This off-dry wine has a lovely bouquet of green apples, nectarines and honeysuckle. The abundant acidity keeps the fresh fruit flavors of apples and peaches refreshing and the sweetness in check all the way through the medium finish. Pair this with Asian cuisine.

**2005 Hogue Riesling,  
Columbia Valley (\$9)**

A pretty nose of orange blossoms and apricot that complements additional flavors of peaches and nectarines. The subtly sweet underpinnings are built on a slightly creamy body, but there is enough acidity to keep it light on the tongue. A great match for sushi.

**2005 Covey Run Gewürztraminer,  
Columbia Valley (\$9)**

Refreshing notes of lemon zest and nectarines on the nose with

hints of ripe white peaches and lychee nuts on the off-dry finish. Again, the hint of sweetness and crisp acidity would pair well with Thai food.

**2005 Three Rivers Biscuit Ridge  
Vineyard Late Harvest Gewürztraminer,  
Walla Walla Valley (\$18 for half bottle)**

Rich, intense flavors of honeysuckle, passion fruit and mango make this a dessert wine in search of a pineapple upside-down cake.

**SHE SAID**

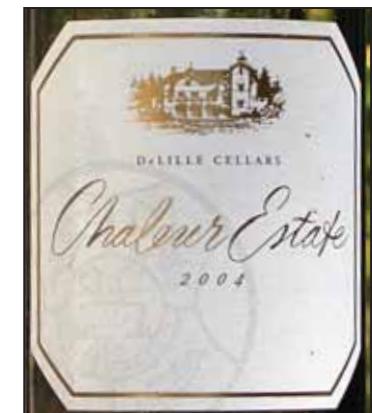
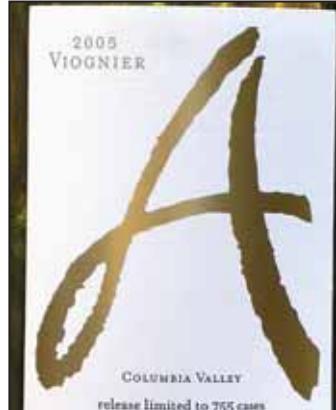
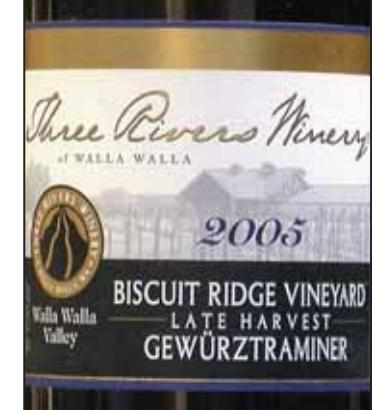
I like my white wines on the drier side, with floral and fruit characteristics. I'm looking for a white wine that's not afraid of roast chicken or grilled fish. And just as important as the style of the wine is the temperature. Be sure not to serve your white wine too cold. Take it out of the refrigerator about 15 to 20 minutes before serving to achieve that just-right temperature.

**2005 Thurston Wolfe "PGV,"  
Washington (\$15)**

PGV refers to the blend of pinot gris (70 percent) and viognier (30 percent). Floral scents give way to flavors of orange rind and peaches. Tropical fruits sneak in on the crisp, tight finish. A good wine to complement seafood pasta.

**2005 Alexandria Nicole Sauvignon  
Blanc, Destiny Ridge Vineyard, Horse  
Haven Hills (\$25)**

A refreshing wine with plenty of grapefruit on the nose and palate.



Photos by Sam Greenberg/For The Examiner

Hints of green melon slide in on the just slightly sweet/ripe finish. A refreshing match with shellfish.

**2004 DeLille Cellars Chaleur Estate  
Blanc, Columbia Valley (\$35)**

A full-bodied white wine you can actually drink into the winter months, it is a blend of 79 percent sauvignon blanc and 21 percent semillon. Wonderful flavors of pear, melon and white fig dominate the front of the palate while interesting notes of warm butterscotch and vanilla glide through on the crisp, dry finish. A powerful white wine that would compliment roast chicken.

**2005 Alexandria Nicole Viognier,  
Columbia Valley (\$20)**

One of the best domestic

*Do you have a favorite wine from Washington state? E-mail me at scott@vineguy.com.*

