

Wine & Spirits | 27th Annual BUYING GUIDE

SPECIAL ISSUE

WINTER 2013

Willamette Valley



Adam Campbell

Founded: 1974
Winemaker: Adam Campbell
Viticulturist: Travis Watson
Acres owned: 250
Annual production: 40,000 cases
Estate grown: 75%
Owners: The Campbell family
Known for: Generous, finely made pinots from the Willamette Valley.
Location: Gaston, OR
Website: elkcove.com

Elk Cove

ELK COVE WINERY IN GASTON has been the proud labor of the Campbell family since 1974, making it one of the oldest family wineries in the state. The Campbells now own some 250 acres of vineyards, ranging across a wide swath of Willamette Valley geography.

Adam Campbell, son of founders Pat and Joe, runs the winery and attributes at least some of its recent success to greater control of its vineyard sources. In addition to managing or owning several older vineyards, he has been purchasing new and existing vineyard land at a rate of about 20 acres a year for the past decade, bolstering the estate fruit component of their total production to nearly 80 percent, compared with 50 percent a decade ago. The additional acres and viticultural control add up to some of the most reliable appellation wines in the valley, generous wines for a generous price (their pinot gris is around \$20; the pinot noir in the vicinity of \$27).

In both his reds and whites, Campbell has been known to flirt with rounder styles (in blind tastings, the fruit ripeness has brought to mind the Russian River Valley). But the two cool vintages in a row, 2010 and 2011, girdled that fullness of flavor into something firmer, more concentrated and no less delicious. Such was the case with their 2010 Willamette Pinot Noir, a wine with richness to spare, reined in by a tight-laced, brisk acidity.

Their top-scoring wine this year was from Clay Court, a vineyard purchased in 2009, on Parrot Mountain, in the Chehalem Mountain AVA. That purchase, in effect, closed the “soil circle” for Campbell—he finally had a substantial site with Jory soils to complement his vineyards planted on Willakenzie series soils (Mt. Richmond, La Boheme and Roosevelt) and on Laurelwood series (Five Mountain and Windhill). The 2010, their first release, is a dark-fruited beauty, with plenty of fruit-tannin ripeness, and a cool-weather energy that enlivens the palate. —P.J.C.



Wine & Spirits[®]
MAGAZINE

2013
WINERY
OF THE YEAR

TOP-SCORING WINES

- 93 '10 Willamette Valley Clay Court Pinot Noir \$48 (2/13)
- 92 '10 Willamette Valley Pinot Noir \$29 (2/13)
- 92 '12 Willamette Valley Pinot Gris \$19 (8/13)

Best Wines
of the year

