

Northwest Wine: Cabernet Sauvignon thrives in Washington

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It can now be argued that Washington state's signature wine is Cabernet Sauvignon, the grape that attracts wine lovers from all corners of the globe to Napa Valley and France's Bordeaux region.

Cab, known as "King Cab" to winemakers, is Washington's most planted, most expensive and most famous variety. It is the grape that made wineries such as Leonetti Cellar, Quilceda Creek and Woodward Canyon famous.

Last fall, winemakers crushed more than 64,000 tons of Cab, by far the most of any wine grape variety grown in Washington. Acclaim from critics and consumers continues to generate headlines for regions such as Walla Walla, Red Mountain and the expansive Horse Heaven Hills.

The Bordeaux variety thrives in the Columbia Valley's heat, sunshine and cool nights, a climate that helps the grapes preserve natural acidity and allows them to benefit from hang time that often extends deliciously well into October.

Here are several examples of Cab produced in Washington that earned gold medals this spring in either Cascadia International Wine Competition or Washington State Wine Competition. Ask for them at your favorite wine merchant or contact the winery directly.

[Abeja Winery](#) 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley, \$52: The Harrisons set the bar for wine-country B&Bs in the Pacific Northwest when they created Abeja in 2002 along Mill Creek Road in Walla Walla. Their goal to produce world-class Cab continues to be realized, first by John Abbott and now by the husband/wife winemaking team Daniel and Amy Alvarez-Wampfler. Their flagship Cab from Destiny Ridge, Kiona's Heart of the Hill and a trio of historic Sagemoor sites shows off aromas of sweet herbs and spices, then black cherry and blackberry fruit. Flavors range from black cherry, blackberry and blueberry, ending with a dollop of dark chocolate amid well-managed tannins.