

# Forbes

## Why I Picked This Wine: Consumers Weigh In On Wines From Oregon

Cathy Huyghe - Nov. 9, 2016

Each of the entries within the Wednesday Night Wine series is organized around a particular theme. Since the tastings are intentionally populated with non-professional wine tasters, the topics that matter most to consumers tend to rise to the surface.

Sometimes the conversation tends to focus on price, as with Prosecco and Napa Sauvignon Blanc.

Sometimes the prevalent theme is a curiosity about a lesser-known region producing a lesser-known wine, like Sagrantino in Umbria or sparkling wine from Brazil.

With its broad theme of wines from Oregon, this week's tasting was perhaps the most consumer-driven of them all because we recreated the typical purchasing scenario of an everyday shopper in front of a few dozen wines from this category. We displayed the wines (almost 30 of them) in no particular order, and invited tasters (10 of them) to each choose a bottle to open.

This type of tasting makes no claims to scientific rigor, nor is it comprehensive or exhaustive in the wines we tried. This tasting of Oregon wines, in particular, could certainly have been organized differently — Pinot Noirs from the Willamette Valley, for example, or “workhorse wines” that cost less than \$30 — and those themes do encourage further exploration. But because of the wide selection of wines we had available, inviting tasters to choose for themselves provided a unique “fly on the wall” opportunity to listen, first, to why consumers chose what they chose and, second, what they thought of the wine once it was in their glass.

### ISN'T THIS A “NAKED” CHARDONNAY?

**2014 CHARDONNAY ARTHUR FROM DOMAINE DROUHIN OREGON, \$35**

The desire is alive and well for Chardonnay that is unoaked or shows a light touch of oak, or oak that's particularly well-integrated. One taster described the “deliciousness” of this wine as “a feeling as much as a taste,” and “not too fruity, overly sweet, or harsh in any way.” The French influence of this producer raised historical questions and a conversation about the compatibility of Oregon soil to Burgundian-style Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

