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101 Best Wineries in America

Shining a spotlight everywhere in the U.S. that great wines are being made

June 25, 2014 | 04:36 PM By [Jess Novak](#), Special Contributor



America's 101 Best Wineries 2014

Colman Andrews gives us a sneak peek into The Daily Meal's list of America's 101 Best Wineries

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When we set out to determine the 101 best wineries in the United States, we knew that we had tasked ourselves with an extremely challenging mission. While California remains indisputably the wine capital of the country, in volume as well as overall quality, the number and variety of truly beautiful **wines** being made all over America has grown exponentially in recent years: wine is now produced in all 50 states (though admittedly Alaska's offerings are mostly made from fruits and berries, plus grape juice imported from more temperate climes).

101 Best Wineries in America (Slideshow)

To begin, we determined the criteria to consider when building our list. Should we factor in how wonderful the vineyards themselves are to visit? How beautiful they are, and how pleasurable the dining experience? While the **best wineries to visit** is certainly a subject worth discussing — and one you can expect us to consider more fully in

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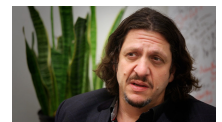
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upcoming months — it's also one we have touched on before, and in truth, while [a beautiful vineyard](#), great restaurant, and fun winery tour can make for the perfect afternoon, stellar wines and great vineyard experiences don't always go hand in hand. So while we may make note of some wineries' spectacular views, the ranking is based purely on the quality of the wines themselves.

The wineries on our list were nominated by experts in the field: the wonderful sommeliers, wine writers, chefs, and restaurateurs who were kind enough to gift us with their opinions about wineries around the country. After their initial nominations, these experts returned to vote on the wines based on the three values we deemed most important: wine quality, consistency, and value. Poring over the voters' results allowed us to shape the final list of wineries you see here.

The first factor we asked our experts to focus on was the quality of individual bottles the wineries produced — particular vintages that stand out as stars in America's wine scene. Next, we requested that they consider the consistency of the winery: some vineyards may have a few bright moments, but can be deeply uneven from year to year. Last, we invited our panelists to assess the wineries' quality-to-price ratio. While we did not weight this last factor as heavily as we did the other two aspects, we felt that value should be considered in our ranking strategy. This accounts in part for the absence from our list of some of the most famous Napa Valley trophy wines, priced at many hundreds of dollars — though it is also worth noting that our panel didn't vote for some of these at all.

In the nomination process, we asked our panel to consider nominating unexpected wineries as they made their initial choices: Along with Napa and Sonoma favorites, we requested that they consider wineries located in other parts of California as well as outside the state and in the Pacific Northwest. It was important to us that our list be as inclusive of the entire country as possible, and as a result, we were able to include some of the less intensely celebrated — but still excellent — winemaking regions in other parts of the country. Producers in Virginia, New York, Texas, Maryland, New Mexico, Michigan, and Pennsylvania all found their way into our top 101.[[slideshow](#)]

Some of our panel's choices buck the stereotype: Red Hook Winery in Brooklyn nestles in downright urban environs, and despite suffering significant damages from Hurricane Sandy, still delivers a wide range of wines across the color spectrum with expressive terroirs. Va La Vineyards in Pennsylvania produces small batches of critically-acclaimed blended wines "chosen by the soil" amongst the surrounding mushroom farms for which the area is largely known. A corner of New Mexico turns out to have the perfect growing conditions for champagne-style grapes. Mind you, that's not to say that the West Coast has anything to worry about; the top of our list is heavily populated by wineries from California (above all) and Oregon and Washington. These include such individualist producers as Calera Wines, northeast of Monterey, which pioneered gravity-flow winery design; Napa's Matthiasson Winery, a classic family-owned establishment whose white blends are beloved by experts and laymen alike; and Woodward Canyon Winery, which garnered the 2014 Washington Wine Winery of the Year award while promoting and exemplifying sustainable business practices.

In short, we've thoroughly plumbed the rich and diverse depths of the American wine landscape, and we are proud of the following list — and of course, grateful to the experts



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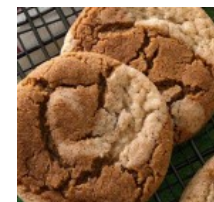
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who aided us in determining which American wineries stood out to them. We're also excited to hear your feedback: did your favorite American winery make the cut? Let us know which winery on our list is your favorite — or if we missed one that you love — by tweeting us [@TheDailyMeal](#) using the hashtag [#101bestwineries](#).

101. King Family Vineyards — Crozet, Virginia



Felicitously positioned in the foothills of the picturesque Blue Ridge Mountains, King Family Vineyards is one of the most popular wedding venues in Virginia. It is also a hard-working vineyard: currently, 28 acres of the 327-acre farm are planted with merlot, viognier, cabernet franc, chardonnay, and petit verdot vines, recently joined by malbec and petit manseng. The rest of the land absorbs throngs of event-goers, tasting room attendees and, from Memorial day to mid-October, spectators who flock here to enjoy free polo matches.

100. Warwick Valley Winery & Distillery — Warwick, New York



This Hudson Valley producer makes several memorable wines. Black Dirt Red, produced from baco noir, a hybrid grape, is one of those smooth reds that pairs with a surprisingly wide array of foods. Harvest Moon, their white blend, is a well-priced, fun, porch-pounder that you can keep chilled in your fridge all summer. Each of their wines is tasty, well-priced, and just fun to drink, which ties in perfectly with the super-friendly atmosphere at their winery. Warm weather always finds their patio filled with people drinking wine and eating food from the onsite café.

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What's This?

Learn more about the World of Wine.

Jess Novak is the Drink Editor of *The Daily Meal*. Follow her on Twitter [@jessthenovak](#)

Thanks to the following experts for their invaluable input and advice:

Matthew Allen

Colman Andrews

Maxine Borcharding

Daniel Boulud

Peter Eastlake

Daniel Grajewski

Nate Hoffa

Daniel Johnnes

Rachael Lowe

Julian Mayor

Catherine Morel

Roger Morris

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