

the daily sip™

by bottlenotes

Wine of the Week



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An Oregon producer that goes against the grain.



Every wine region has one: That winemaker who goes the extra mile to defy convention and produce wines that are different from everything else in the immediate surroundings. Maybe it's the person who makes a great Nebbiolo in Napa. Or a Merlot in Marlborough. Or a Sauvignon Blanc in Sicily.

We were recently introduced to an Oregon winery that doesn't produce a drop of Pinot Noir. [The Grande Dalles](#) instead makes a Riesling called Leroy's Finest; a Sangiovese-based blend called Gampo; a Tempranillo-based blend called Home Place; and a Bordeaux-style red called Longchamp. We tried the first three, and were most impressed by the power and ripeness of the Home Place 2008 (\$60), but we found the Riesling (\$30) steely and refreshing and the Gampo to be a solid American twist on the classic Tuscan variety. For doing things just a little bit differently, The Grande Dalles is our Wine of the Week.

In truth, though, the winery isn't *that* far out of bounds because it's not in a prime Pinot area. The vineyard sits east of Portland, in the warmer [Columbia Valley](#) appellation that stretches down from Washington. Oregon's Pinot producers are mostly south of Portland, in a completely different region and climate.

However, The Grande Dalles is still a contrarian in the massive Columbia Valley, producing unique, small-batch wines--which is a bit of a bummer since only small quantities are available. (There'd be more, but the vineyard's crop was decimated by birds in 2008.) At the very least, just use The Grande Dalles as inspiration to seek out other wines that diverge from the regional norm.

What's the most unorthodox wine or variety that's taken you by surprise? Share your story below.

Tags: [grande dalles](#), [columbia valley](#)