

TIME

Willamette Valley, Oregon The next Napa



The wine world let out a collective gasp in 2021 when Champagne house Bollinger made its first acquisition outside of France: not some place in Napa or Sonoma, but Ponzi Vineyards, which set the standard for Oregon winemaking back in the 1970s. The Willamette Valley had really, *really* made it, but for those in the know, the ascendance of the pinot noir powerhouse in Portland's backyard seemed almost inevitable. In the past two decades, the number of wineries in the state's first American Viticultural Area (AVA) has grown from 135 to more than 700 today, which has translated to a near constant flood of new labels (such as Iterum Wines), new lodging (the nine-room bed and breakfast **The Ground**, opening in 2023), new tasting rooms (of note is Montinore Estate and its sister brand Landlines Winery's biodynamic tasting room), and new missions (Corollary is becoming the valley's first sparkling-only estate this year).

In July, the eight-suite **Tributary Hotel** changed the game when it opened in a more-than-a-century-old former hardware store in downtown McMinnville, with celebrated chef Matthew Lightner—formerly of New York City's two-Michelin-starred Atera—at the helm of its restaurant, *ōkta*. Sourced heavily from Lightner's nearby farm, the micro-seasonal tasting menu might include hazelnut tofu, cedar-smoked caviar, or aged and cured Pacific rockfish, depending on what's freshest.

Also leading the charge to transform the area is winemaker Remy Drabkin. When she's not busy turning out award-winning old-world Italian varietals like dolcetto and lagrein at Remy Wines, Drabkin is fighting for industry inclusivity with her organization Wine Country Pride, which hosted the world's first queer wine festival here last June. And, oh yeah, did we mention that in November she was elected the first female mayor in McMinnville's 140-year history?