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Enso Urban Winery

# WINE TASTING HAS NEVER BEEN EASIER Portland's Urban Wineries

by Mattie John Bamman

Step through the garage door at Enso Urban Winery, past the hand-painted sign from the building's 100-year past—Storage Rates, Parking 35 cents—and enter the industrial-chic wine lounge. A chalkboard lists 17 house wines by the glass. Well-heeled Portlanders sit on couches and bar stools casually sipping happy hour bubbles and pinot noir. It soon becomes clear, this is a wine bar, and they make their own wines.

In 2011, Enso Urban Winery was the first winery in Portland to embrace a wine-bar atmosphere. "The idea came from a trip to Paris," says winemaker Ryan Sharp. "I got on a train by myself into the Loire Valley, and then I walked 20 miles and visited three wineries. What I loved about them... they were village wineries." With Enso, Sharp created a



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Portland winery, a place for wine-loving locals and travelers to connect.

Wine has never been more accessible thanks to urban wineries, where the wine is made within the city limits. Visiting urban wineries, you connect not only with local culture but also winemaking. Most urban winemakers make wine just steps from their tasting bars, and, during the fall grape harvest, the SE Wine Collective lets you join in.

"Each Friday during harvest, we invite people to visit, drink wine and view the grape harvest and winemaking process in action," says winemaker Kate Monroe. Depending on the stage of harvest, you can chomp the Collective's pinot noir grapes or taste juice straight from its press.

Monroe makes wine for her Division

Winemaking Company label alongside nine other urban wineries at SE Wine Collective. The Collective is also home to the swank Tasting Bar, and, for those wanting to taste wines by several urban wineries all in one place, this is the spot.

Among Portland's urban wineries, the trend to take the stiffness out of wine can be traced to Hip Chicks do Wine. Opened in 2001, it is the oldest urban winery currently operating, and, from the get-go, winemakers Laurie Lewis and Renee Neely have promoted the "drink what you like" philosophy. "Often, people come in and, as though they have to apologize, whisper, I only like bubbly or I only like sweet wine," says Laurie. "I make wine for them. We don't judge."

## Visiting urban wineries, you connect not only with local culture but also winemaking.

While many Portland urban wineries provide a hip, casual atmosphere, there's no joking around about quality. Standout wines include the quintessential Oregon pinot noirs by Vincent Wine Company and Boedecker Cellars, and, for those who love big reds, try Helioterra Wines' 2012 Mourvèdre or Clay Pigeon's 2012 Syrah.

Indeed, at the end of a day of urban wine tasting, there's no better place to be than Clay Pigeon Winery. It touts a large patio with bocce ball courts and the excellent Cyril's Restaurant, a progressive American kitchen serving internationally inspired

food. Head chef Sasha Davies worked as a cheese monger in New York City for years, and she offers dishes driven by Oregon produce. The autumnal Chicken Diane is a warming dish of white-wine-braised chicken thighs and parsley root with roast potatoes, chanterelle mushrooms and crème fresh.

Focusing on pinot noir and syrah, Clay Pigeon winemaker Michael Claypool gets true enjoyment out of sharing new flavors with restaurant customers. For him, that's what wine is all about. "I used to be a wine geek into esoteric wines," he says, "but now I see wine as just a way to get people together."

### Finding Portland's Wineries

- >> **Enso Urban Winery & Wine Lounge**, 1416 SE Stark St.; [ensowinery.com](http://ensowinery.com)
- >> **SE Wine Collective**, 2425 SE 35th Place; [sewinecollective.com](http://sewinecollective.com)
- >> **Division Winemaking Company** (at the SE Wine Collective); [divisionwinemakingcompany.com](http://divisionwinemakingcompany.com)
- >> **Vincent Wine Company** (at the SE Wine Collective); [vincentwinecompany.com](http://vincentwinecompany.com)
- >> **Helioterra Winery** (at the SE Wine Collective); [helioterrawines.com](http://helioterrawines.com)
- >> **Hip Chicks do Wine**, 4510 SE 23rd Ave; [hipchicksdowine.com](http://hipchicksdowine.com)
- >> **Boedecker Cellars**, 2621 NW 30th Ave.; [boedeckerwines.com](http://boedeckerwines.com)
- >> **Clay Pigeon Winery & Cyril's Restaurant**, 815 SE Oak St.; [claypigeonwinery.com](http://claypigeonwinery.com), [cyrilspdx.com](http://cyrilspdx.com)



Clay Pigeon Winery

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