



AN OVERVIEW

As with most stories that are told about a winery, the tale usually begins with “Our Story”, which sometimes is a tease before the wines are even mentioned. In the case of [Ghost Hill Cellars](#), a 5th generation Century Farm with a resident Ghost, although there is a compelling yarn to be spun (which we’ll get to in due time), we believe that’s how novel it might be to begin where the beginning *should* be: With The Wines! And boy, we have a wine story to tell.

At Ghost Hill – whose 234 rolling acres sits in the center of the Northern Willamette Valley, where Pinot Noir is the thing – Pinot Noir *truly* is *the thing*. If one is fortunate to, for instance, taste its 2008 Bayliss-Bower Pinot Noir (GHC’s second release), one will get a clue as to what Ghost Hill’s 16-acre vineyard – planted in 1999 – stands for. Because it’s a predictor of what Ghost Hill’s terroir is capable of; and how it manifests in the glass: dark fruit, cinnamon aromas, and long, fine-grained tannins.

That is the thread that runs through Ghost Hill’s Pinot Noirs. It’s in the 2011 and it’s there in the ‘12s – both in the Bayliss-Bower and the Prospector’s Reserve. Excellent fruit quality, mouth-filling and indicative – due to those soft tannins that linger on the top of the palate --that there *will be* long life for these wines.

THE WINES

Ghost Hill Cellars produces just over 1,000 cases a year of wines that are now made by long time winemaker **Eric Hamacher, at the historic “Ponzi Estate Winery” established in 1970 in Beaverton**, just minutes outside of Portland. The wines – 100 percent estate Pinot Noir -- in GHC’s portfolio, are a **Pinot Noir Blanc** and a **Pinot Noir Rosé**, a Pinot Noir labeled with the **Bayliss-Bower** single-vineyard designation, and a **Prospector’s Reserve Pinot Noir**.

Ghost Hill – the hill – and Bayliss-Bower Vineyard - are part of a larger outcropping of land, **Savannah Ridge**. GHC was the first in Oregon to put this designation on its wines.

Tasting Notes & Tech Sheets are available upon request

More info available on our website: <http://www.ghosthillcellars.com/Wines/Our-Wines>

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THE VINEYARD

Standing above the Ghost Hill **Bayliss-Bower Vineyard** on Savannah Ridge outside the village of Carlton – in the **Yamhill-Carlton District AVA** – one actually has a 360-degree view of most of the Willamette Valley's AVAs. The Eola Hills are to the south, the Chehalem Mountains are to the north. Look east and one can see the Red Hills of Dundee, while to the west is the Oregon Coast Range. Immediate neighbors are Abbott Claim and Bonnie Jean, vineyards used by renowned vintner **Ken Wright**; Monk's Gate and Carlton Cellars. Some of the fruit from GHC's vineyard is purchased by highly regarded winemaker **Eric Hamacher** for his own brand, as well as David O'Reilly for Owen Roe, and Jerry Owens for Lady Hill Winery.

Research by **Jim Gullo**, wine writer and research historian reveals that in pioneer times, their land lay just to the west of the 640-acre parcel claimed by James Scott (DLC 2115), who was born in either Kentucky or Illinois in 1815 and came to Oregon with wife Margarette A. Payne in 1845. In the 1850 census of Yamhill County, they occupied house number 18. They would have eleven children and Scott would nearly see his 84th birthday before passing away in 1899. A year before his death, Scott had the first business dealings with the Laughlin family, which in succeeding generations would acquire a great deal of the property that had originally been awarded to Scott."

Mike Bayliss, who is the fourth generation to farm the land here, tells of the time that Ken Wright – standing on the Ghost Hill property before the vineyard was planted, with his arms crossed and allegedly inquired, "Do you want to sell it?" and "How much do you want for it?" To which Bayliss, without hesitation replied, "No!"

With the 2015 harvest, GHC's vineyard, at 400-feet above sea level – Bayliss-Bower – will be 16 years old. The soils on the ranch – sedimentary Willakenzie series, which was once an ancient ocean bottom – have been farmed by the same Bayliss family since 1906. Oats and wheat still predominate but wine grapes have become an obsession for Mike Bayliss.

"It's still farming, but now we have to make decisions about clones," says Bayliss, referring to the 115, 114, 777, Pommard and Wadenswil Pinot Noir clones on his vineyard. "It's more complex growing grapes and much much work." While 16 acres of grapes are planted, there is potential for 90 more, which may include Chardonnay.

THE LEGEND OF GHOST HILL

In the late 1800s, Oregon was in the midst of a gold rush. A miner was traveling to Portland with his hard-earned poke of gold and decided to camp for the night at the top of what is now known as Ghost Hill. During the night, someone sneaked into his camp, killed the miner and his horse, and stole his gold. To this day, the miner is said to wander the hill looking for his stolen gold.

The Bayliss' have been stewards of this corner of the Willamette Valley for more than a century. In 1906, brothers Daniel and Samuel Bayliss purchased the Donation Land Claim of James and Edna Green. The family started clearing the trees and brush and started farming the land. The farm was converted to a dairy operation in the 1920s. Samuel Bayliss took milk into Portland to sell on a Stern Wheeler steamboat.

Samuel's son, Samuel D. and his wife Barbara Bayliss purchased the farm in the 1930s, from Daniel and Samuel Bayliss, they moved to raising wheat, hay, clover, peas and sheep. As their son Mike and daughter-in-law Drenda became more involved in the farm, they moved to raising hay and beef cattle in the '70s and '80s. A 16-acre vineyard was planted in '99. The fourth and fifth generations of the Bayliss family continue to work and live on the farm today. Mike and Drenda live in the original farmhouse built by Daniel and Samuel. Mike, Drenda, their son Michael, their daughter Bernadette and son-in-law, Cameron Bower are working together to make the vineyard a success and preserve the farm for future generations.

MICHAEL BAYLISS

Mike Bayliss, 70, is the fourth generation of Baylisses to farm the land in the Northern Willamette Valley of Oregon; and he and his wife live in the same farmhouse he grew up in. Although he has been a wine grape grower since 1999, there are still oats and wheat being grown on the 234-acre property, which are sold to other entities. But as far as winegrowing goes, Mike insists, "It's still farming."

"I'm happy working the ground," he says. "I've farmed all my life. I'm not a salesman, but obviously we have to sell wine. But I'd rather be on my tractor because preserving the land is why I got into growing grapes in the first place."

On the surface, Mike Bayliss seems to be a hard-scrabble farmer and individual. He does speak his mind, however. "I couldn't be untrue," he explains. And "I'd rather be 'putzing' around the world. That would be better than selling wine."

DRENDA BAYLISS

Drenda Bayliss, 66, is the pragmatist behind Ghost Hill Cellars. She says she's "the person behind the curtain." Meaning: She's the practical one in the family and "puts everything in perspective." But her primary role is to help her husband Mike "Save the farm". They've been married since 1967, and eventually she saw a pathway to actually preserving the farm that has been in the Bayliss family for 109 years: Plant a vineyard, sell the grapes; and eventually make wine themselves.

"It's Mike's family. He made the place," Drenda Bayliss begins. "Mike changed my life by introducing me to the country and the farm. To me, it's (winegrowing) all about saving the farm and keeping it in the family, and on Bayliss Road (address was officially named by the county).

"We're too small a family to farm all of this land. It just barely pays the bills. But making wine and growing grapes has enabled us to stay here and keep our roots."

Drenda grew up a city girl, having been brought up in a military family and living in such metropolises as Los Angeles and Oakland. However, amazingly, she was born in McMinnville, in the Willamette Valley.

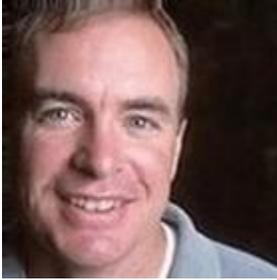
So, she thinks of herself as being "the devil's advocate" when it comes to the family business. "I'm always coming up with another view and putting it into perspective. I try really to keep the business grounded."

But she says, their son Michael, and their daughter Bernadette and son-in-law, Cameron Bower (the latter of who lends his name to the vineyard), "we do this together. Our goal is to keep it in the family, so we can keep it for their kids."

In fact, Drenda believes Bernadette's and Cameron's 10-year-old son Brody, will someday take over. "He's already saying he wants to be the winemaker." Delaney, their 12 years old daughter claims to want to take over social media for the winery, and who knows what else.

ERIC HAMACHER

The Winemaker



Eric Hamacher has become one of Oregon's most respected and sought-after wine producers. Hamacher takes a very traditional approach to wine production, exercising minimal intervention and handling, wild fermentation yeasts, and gravity blending and bottling. "My attempt is to sculpt consistently complete wines through close management of the vineyards and careful blending at the winery. I believe the best wines are still made by resisting the temptation to do something. Good grapes with gentle and minimal handling describe my winemaking philosophy."

Eric Hamacher was born in and raised around Carmel California. His youthful work in the restaurants of the area introduced him to great wine, specifically Burgundy. Although Hamacher never intended to enter the winemaking business, he was drawn from studies in biochemistry to wine chemistry (enology). After earning a degree in viticulture and enology at UC Davis in 1988, Hamacher set forth to gain extensive winemaking knowledge and to date, has worked more than **35 vintages** at numerous wineries around the world. After producing wine for esteemed wineries such as **Mondavi, Chalone and Etude**, he realized his heart was in Oregon and followed pursuit to travel north and create the perfect Pinot Noir.

Eric founded Hamacher Wines in 1995 and has since proved an uncompromising commitment to quality. He has established a reputation for being a masterful blender of expressive and balanced Pinot Noir and his wines are made with great care and passion, striving for depth of character, balance and consistency with every vintage.

Hamacher is also Co-Founder of the **Carlton Winemakers Studio** which opened in 2002, along with his wife, Luisa Ponzi and partners Ned and Kirsten Lumpkin of Lazy River Vineyard. Eric and Luisa are currently planting their own vineyard together in the Chehalem Mountain AVA, where they are raising their children: daughter Mia, son Nico and twin sons Carlo and Matteo. He and Luisa live on a forty acre farm with their kids and an ever increasing menagerie of farm animals.

Eric is taking over winemaking duties at Ghost Hill Cellars effective the 2015 vintage. Rebecca Pittock-Shouldis was the previous winemaker, and produced their wines from 2008 until 2013.

THE TASTING ROOM

Mike Bayliss and son, Michael hand-built the recently opened small tasting room that sits on the property. They installed a sliding barn door and reclaimed windows from the Trappist Abbey Church that's not far away. The structure is modeled to resemble a prospector's shack (see "The Legend of Ghost Hill" above).



The Ghost Hill Cellars' tasting room is open **Friday, Saturday and Sunday (from March until Thanksgiving) 12 pm - 5 pm**. Tasting appointments are requested during the week for parties of 4 or more. Contact 503.852.7347, or email mikeanddrenda@ghosthillcellars.com. Tours are not offered, nor are the facilities available for weddings, picnics or parties; or RV parking.

WHERE TO FIND GHOST HILL CELLARS WINES

Ghost Hills Cellars' wines are distributed in Oregon, Phoenix, New York City, Calgary, Can., and Atlanta. They are also available via their website from their [online store](#).