

# GHOST HILL CELLARS

## MEDIA KIT

### OUR STORY

Ghost Hill Cellars is a fifth-generation farm, vineyard estate, and unforgettable event destination, sustainably tended by the Bayliss-Bower family (and the ghost of a murdered gold miner) since 1906. Neighboring the vineyards of Ken Wright, Tony Soter, and other Willamette Valley luminaries in the Yamhill-Carlton AVA, the family's highly prized soils produce Pinot Noir of exceptional finesse and longevity, crafted by legendary Oregon winemaker Eric Hamacher. With a spectacular new hospitality center to match the award-winning wines, Ghost Hill Cellars is a family treasure far more enduring than a prospector's lucky break.

---

### FAST FACTS

- **Family-owned and operated farm since 1906** (now on the **fifth generation**)
  - **100% estate grown Pinot Noirs** crafted by **winemaker Eric Hamacher**
    - **1,200 cases** produced annually
    - Available [online](#) and shipped nationwide, with the exception of AR, IA, KS, KY, MD, ME, MS, NH, NJ, OH, PA, SD, TN, UT, VT, and WV
  - Located on the top of **Savannah Ridge (Yamhill-Carlton AVA)**
    - Neighbors both Abbott Claim and Bonnie Jean Vineyards (by **Ken Wright**)
    - Just a few minutes from **Shea Vineyard**
  - **16-acre estate vineyard, all Pinot Noir**
    - Willakenzie series soils on top of marine sediment bedrock
    - 400 feet of elevation
  - **New hospitality center hosts tastings, weddings, private events**
    - Incredible **360-degree views** of Willamette Valley, modern farmhouse vibe
    - Open for tasting Thursday - Sunday 12 pm-5pm and until 9 pm on Friday
  - Named for the **resident ghost of a 19th century gold prospector**
-

---

## OUR HISTORY

Legend has it that in the late 1800s, a gold prospector on his way to sell his bounty in Portland stopped to camp at the top of a wooded hill on what is now known as Savannah Ridge. In the dead of night, a robber attacked and killed him and his horse, stealing away with the gold.

Some say the miner's ghost still wanders the hill in search of his stolen treasure.

Undeterred by legends, brothers Daniel and Samuel Bayliss purchased the property in 1906, built a farmhouse, and began clearing the trees. They planted crops and ran a dairy until Samuel's son (Samuel D.) and his wife bought them out in the 1930s and refocused operations on wheat, hay, clover, peas, and sheep. Their son Mike Bayliss and his wife Drenda raised cattle and hay before pivoting to Pinot Noir in 1999 to keep the farm in the family.

Today, Mike and Drenda live in the original farmhouse built by Samuel and Daniel, and work the 234-acre property with the fifth generation: their son Michael, daughter Bernadette, and son-in-law Cameron Bower. Together the family has built a striking new hospitality and event barn to welcome all generations of wine-loving guests, with the goal of keeping this family farm in the family for the next 120 years.



# GHOST HILL

---

## CELLARS

---

---

## OUR FAMILY

### **Michael Bayliss, Patriarch and Head Farmer**

After more than 78 years on the property, Mike often says he's "never gotten anywhere." In actual fact, he has managed to keep the Bayliss farm sustainable and under family ownership over seven decades. If his father hadn't refused to plant wine grapes in the late 1970s, Mike would have been one of the pioneer Pinot Noir growers in the Willamette Valley. He was finally able to realize his dream in 1999, when, on the eve of his daughter Bernadette's wedding to Cam Bower, he and his new son-in-law hatched plans over drinks in Hong Kong to plant a vineyard in what is now called Savannah Ridge. Today, Mike still manages all farming operations for Ghost Hill Cellars, and handles nearly all the tractor work himself. His portrait appears on every label of Prospector's Reserve Pinot Noir.

### **Drenda Bayliss, Matriarch and Keeper of All Knowledge**

Drenda is the backbone of Ghost Hill Cellars – the only person in the family familiar with every aspect of the business. A city girl who married a lifelong farmer, she has spent the last 57 years working every day to keep it in the family. Drenda knows just about everyone in the Willamette Valley wine industry, and every member of the Ghost Hill Cellars Wine Club. In addition to the club, she manages the winery's shipping and client relationships that stretch back decades. You'll often find her slinging bottles in the tasting room, too.

### **Bernadette Bayliss-Bower, Hospitality Queen and Jill of All Trades**

Bernadette was born and raised on the farm during the beef cattle chapter of its history. The daughter of Mike and Drenda, she is what's called in the farming industry a "boomeranger" – the child who grows up and leaves farming behind, only to return later to take up the family business. She met her future husband Cam teaching children in Guam, and went on to work in schools in China, New Zealand, Singapore, and around the United States. In 2023, she and Cam moved to Willamette Valley to help her family keep the farm going. Bernadette is a people person and master communicator. She handles Ghost Hill's tasting room, hospitality programs, events, and anything else that needs doing.

### **Michael Bayliss the Younger, Mechanical Wizard and Vineyard Czar**

Sometimes referred to as “Bayliss,” Michael is Bernadette’s brother and Mike and Drenda's son. He is Ghost Hill Cellars’ Mr. Fix-It – a certified Ford mechanic and three-tour U.S. Army veteran of the Iraq and Afghanistan campaigns who can repair just about anything. Despite his mechanical prowess, Mike considers himself a farmer first, and prides himself on caring for the family vineyards. You’ll often see him on the tractor or in the vineyard rows, fixing whatever happens to be broken that day.

### **Cameron Bower, Business Guy and Wine Lover**

Bernadette’s husband Cam has always had a passion for wine, with strong influences from winemaker friends in Australia and New Zealand. He met his future wife Bernadette in Guam, where he was working as an energy engineer. When the opportunity came to enter the wine business with Bernadette and her parents in 1999, Cam leaped at the opportunity. He brings to Ghost Hill Cellars 35 years of experience in international business, which he now deploys helping grow the winery into a sustainable operation for many more generations to come.



*Eric Hamacher, Drenda Bayliss, and Michael Bayliss*

---

---

## OUR TASTING ROOM

In April 2024, the family unveiled a striking new tasting room and hospitality center perched at the very top of the ridge, with incredible **360-degree views** of the surrounding countryside. Retractable glass doors, outdoor firepits, and multiple seating areas create a variety of inviting and comfortable spaces for wine tastings, weddings, and special events of all kinds.

In this modern farmhouse setting, guests are welcomed like family for tastings **Thursday through Sunday from 12 pm-5 pm, and until 9 pm on Fridays**. The family has dedicated specific rooms and planned settings for **special events and weddings** throughout the year, through partial or full buyouts of the facility. Event clients can pick the exact view angle they want for their celebration, and trust the family to help bring their unique vision to life.

As with everything else at Ghost Hill Cellars, the Bayliss-Bower family played an active role in this new venture. They developed the vision for the architecture and layout, they shaped the new tables from slabs of black walnut, and they created a bar for the Founder's Room from the floor beneath the altar in the nearby Trappist Abbey chapel. (Hopefully, this will keep the ghost away; his hill is just across the road from the new tasting room.)

The original Ghost Hill Cellars tasting room, hand-built by Mike and Michael, was modeled to resemble a prospector's shack as a nod to the ghostly history. Like the new tasting room bar, the sliding barn door and windows of the shack were also sourced from the Trappist Abbey. Today, this quirky little building has become Drenda's She Shed, though guests sometimes still enjoy a selfie or two in front.

---

## OUR WINES

Ghost Hill produces four 100% estate-grown Pinot Noirs: Pinot Noir Blanc (made with no skin contact), Pinot Noir Rosé, Bayliss-Bower Vineyard Pinot Noir, and Prospector's Reserve Pinot Noir (made from the oldest vines of the estate). Critics regularly score this lineup 90-94 points.

Total annual production is approximately 1,200 cases, and the winery ships nationwide, except AR, IA, KS, KY, MD, ME, MS, NH, NJ, OH, PA, SD, TN, UT, VT and WV.

---

---

## OUR VINEYARD

The Bayliss-Bower Vineyard is part of the family's 234-acre section of land in the Yamhill-Carlton District, just outside the village of Carlton. These bucolic rolling hills are composed of Willakenzie series soils with marine sediment bedrock – ideal terrain for the propagation of Pinot Noir. When Ken Wright visited the property to advise Mike Bayliss on its vineyard potential, Ken asked, “How much do you want for it?” Mike explained the point of the vineyards was to keep the land in the family, so Ken bought the property right next door instead.

Standing at the top of the vineyard hill brings a 360-degree view of most of the Willamette Valley's AVAs. The Eola Hills are to the south; the Chehalem Mountains to the north. East are the Red Hills of Dundee, while the Oregon Coast Range rises to the west. The property's immediate neighbors are Abbott Claim and Bonnie Jean, two Pinot Noir sites prized by renowned vintner Ken Wright for decades. (The 2012 Ken Wright Cellars Abbott Claim Pinot Noir was the first Oregon wine to be named Number One Wine in the World by *Wine Enthusiast* magazine.) The acclaimed Shea Vineyard is just a few minutes north.

Mike Bayliss planted the first wine grape vines here in 1999 when his daughter and son-in-law pitched in to transform the farm. Currently, all 16 acres of vineyard are planted to Pinot Noir of the Pommard, Wadenswil, and Dijon clones 114, 115, 777. The Bayliss-Bower estate vineyard provides 100% of the fruit needed for the Ghost Hill Cellars portfolio of wines. The family sells the remaining grapes – approximately two-thirds of each year's harvest – to others in need of exceptional Pinot Noir grapes, including Eric Hamacher for his own winery brand.

---



---

## OUR WINEMAKER

### Eric Hamacher

Eric Hamacher, one of Oregon's most respected and sought-after winemakers, took over Ghost Hill winemaking from Rebecca Pittock-Shouldis with the 2015 harvest. Eric hews to traditional winemaking techniques of wild yeast fermentation, gentle, gravity-powered handling, and minimal intervention. He believes, **"The best wines are still made by resisting the temptation to do something."**

Growing up in the Carmel area of California, he first discovered great wine – specifically, Burgundy – working in restaurants as a student. Studies in biochemistry soon led to wine chemistry (enology), and he ultimately earned a degree in viticulture and enology from UC Davis in 1988. His time at esteemed wineries such as Mondavi, Chalone, and Etude deepened his expertise and experience, but also made him realize that his heart was in Oregon. He found his way to the Northwest in pursuit of creating the perfect Pinot Noir, and has to date worked more than 40 vintages at numerous wineries around the world.

Eric founded Hamacher Wines in 1995 and has proved an uncompromising commitment to quality. He has earned a reputation as a masterful blender of expressive and balanced Pinot Noir and his wines are made with great care and passion, emphasizing depth of character, balance and consistency with every vintage. He and his wife, Luisa Ponzi, live on a forty-acre farm with their kids and an ever-increasing menagerie of farm animals.

---