

## Eugene Wine Cellars

“We were the first,” says tasting room manager Beverly Biehl of becoming an urban winery. Since Eugene Wine Cellars opened its doors in 1999 it has been a family affair. Biehl’s brother Bruce Biehl, who also develops and manages vineyards through his company AREA Inc., had the initial vision for the Whiteaker winery and tasting room. “He’d been to Europe and liked how there were wineries stuck in the middle of cities,” Beverly Biehl says.

The Biehls also opened a wine bar — the B-Squared Bistro — in Crescent Village and founded the b2 and Recess labels, which focus on pinot noir and pinot gris. Beverly Biehl says they make wine onsite and do “custom crushes” at Eugene Wine Cellars, so people can bring in their own grapes for pressing.

Eugene Wine Cellars is tucked into a cluster of Madison Street libation peddlers with Wandering Goat Coffee Co. across the street and Oakshire Brewing next door. There is an open-air patio with picnic tables where food trucks frequent and an intimate tasting room with Tuscan-yellow walls and a hodgepodge of furniture. “When people come in here, they find it cozier,” Biehl says. “It’s not so loud and big.”

*Eugene Wine Cellars is open 4 to 8 pm Thursday through Sunday, or by appointment, at 255 Madison St. For more info, call 342-2600 or visit [eugenewinecellars.com](http://eugenewinecellars.com).*

## Capitello Wines

On Charnelton, the once indigo Lord Leebrick Theater now stands as the sunny yellow home to Capitello Wines, complete with rustic barn doors and windows, patio seating and a parking lot available after 5 pm (no easy feat downtown).

“When I first moved here, it was like, ‘Where is downtown?’” says Jennifer Walsh, who runs Capitello with husband Ray Walsh, a former winemaker for King Estate. Now, she says, “there’s a new heartbeat here.”

Originally what Jennifer Walsh calls a “winery without walls,” Capitello Wines took over the building in 2012 — their first brick-and-mortar space — choosing the city over the country to cut down on commute time with their two children and because of its proximity to the Hult, the Hilton and restaurants. “We get a lot of pre- and post-Hult traffic,” she says. “We can offer more convenience and artisan wines.”

Jennifer Walsh says Capitello is a standout urban wine location because, in addition to pinot noir, they produce sparkling wines and a sauvignon blanc — a special varietal from New Zealand, Ray Walsh’s home country. Besides wine, Capitello has a warm ambiance. Inside are high-top tables beneath the original soaring old-beam ceiling and a sculptural slatted bar — both beautiful visions in wood.

*Capitello Wines is open noon to 8 pm Wednesday through Saturday at 540 Charnelton St. For more info, call 520-3092 or visit [capitellowines.com](http://capitellowines.com).*



## Oregon Wine Lab

Within a two-block radius of Oregon Wine Lab on Lincoln and 5th, there’s Capitello Wines to the southeast, The Beanery to the east, Keystone Café to the west and the CiderHouse at WildCraft Cider Works due north.

“It brings the product to the market rather than bringing the market to the product,” says Mark Nicholl, owner of Oregon Wine Lab, of the location. “There’s a certain amount of environmental friendliness to it.”

Nicholl explains that there are two aspects of the lab that make it a distinct wine stop. “I run it like a collective tasting room for wineries that don’t have their own tasting room,” he says, adding that the focus is on small-batch releases from William Rose Wines — Nicholl’s label — as well as wines from Spire Mountain Cellars, La Chouette, Three Acres and Bodner Wine Co. “You’re not going to find most of these wines in the Safeway shop.”

Oregon Wine Lab is also the only urban tasting room open seven days a week. The lab is a frequent stop on downtown’s First Friday ArtWalk, currently showing the bright large-format oil landscapes of Abbas Darabi on the white walls of its minimalist two-story space. The centerpiece is a long slab of maple from Urban Lumber Company topping the wine bar, which Nicholl himself built from wine-barrel slats.

Nicholl says they are expanding the courtyard, tripling the seating capacity outside and allowing more room for food carts, which he soon hopes to have on site seven days a week.

*Oregon Wine Lab is open noon to 8 pm Monday through Thursday and Saturdays, noon to 10 pm Fridays and noon to 6 pm Sundays at 488 Lincoln St. For more info, call (458)201-7413 or visit [oregonwinelab.com](http://oregonwinelab.com).*

## Noble Estate Winery

In addition to tasting rooms on Gimpl Hill Road and in Yachats, in 2012 Noble Estate opened a tasting room in the Westside Warehouse District off West 11th because it outgrew its other space. Noble’s marketing manager Amy Shadell says they chose the warehouse district because it was still close to the Noble vineyard, while bringing a presence to the city, making it accessible to more casual vino enthusiasts.

“Wine is not just a snobby thing,” Shadell says. “It’s for everyone.”

It’s as easily accessible by bike as it is by car, Shadell adds. “You can actually bike from one end of the Urban Wine Circuit to here,” she says, pointing to the Fern Ridge bike path nearby.

The space is expansive — they make and store wine on site — with a large tasting room filled with dozens of wooden tables and chairs and an event space in back. While more industrial, the tasting room and outdoor seating area overlook a wild grassy field, bringing a more country feel to the district.

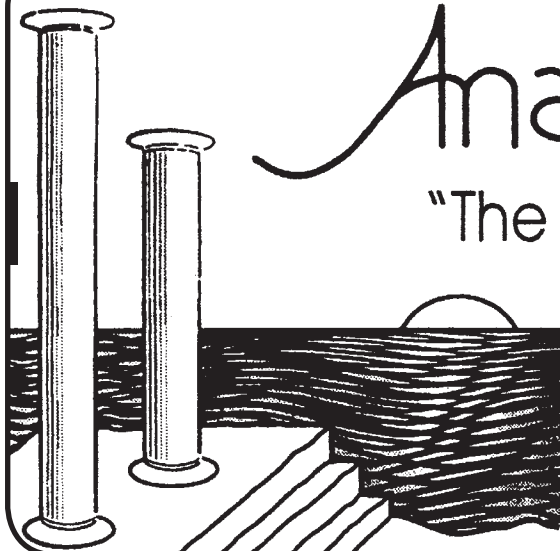
Shadell says that a unique aspect of Noble Estates is its large wine list including pinot, chardonnay, cabernet, viognier, merlot, malbec, riesling and muscat. “We do a huge range of wines — 15 to 20 wines,” she says. “We work really hard to make award-winning wines that appeal to lots of palates.” Shadell adds that owner and winemaker Mark Jurasevich is “prone to improv tours” of the space.

*Noble Estate Winery’s urban tasting room is open 5 to 10 pm Fridays and Saturdays at 560 Commercial St. For more info, call 954-9870 or visit [nobleestatewinery.com](http://nobleestatewinery.com).*

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