

GRAB BAG

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UNCORKED RAMBLINGS

Puffin hones its pinot pedigree

By **STEVE SINKLER**
FOR EO MEDIA GROUP

The calendar has turned to October, the temperatures are cooler and the leaves are falling. All signs point to the same conclusion: Fall is here.

In wineries across the Pacific Northwest, the 2016 harvest is mostly complete, and grapes that were on the vine not long ago are now safely in oak barrels or stainless steel tanks.

At Puffin wines, things aren't any different. All of the fruit has been picked, and fermentation has begun. The wines smell great, and we're expecting 2016 to be another stellar vintage. I look forward to pouring those wines for you in a few months (or years). Until then, we'll have to continue enjoying the Puffin wines we made during the past couple of years.

Our Puffin chardonnay 2015 is a perfect white wine for fall. This isn't your typical chardonnay, as it combines tropical flavors of mango and papaya with notes of hazelnut. This slightly creamy wine reminds me of a white burgundy, which is typically 100 percent chardonnay. Enjoy this wine with grilled chicken and roasted root vegetables or creamy cheese ravioli.

For those of you who prefer something red in your glass, Puffin has several delicious options for you this fall, starting with our Puffin pinot noir 2013. This elegant pinot was the result of a challenging growing season, but it con-



PHOTO BY NANCY MCCARTHY
Steven Sinkler displays one of The Wine Shack's own Puffin wines.

tinues to amaze me. Silky smooth, this pinot noir has smoky earth flavors combined with dark fruit to more closely resemble a Burgundy Premier Cru than a Willamette Valley wine. Puffin pinot noir is a perfect companion to roast turkey, game, salmon, pork roast or portabella.

The newest release in our portfolio is a Puffin red blend (non-vintage). Released in late September, winemaker John Derthick has combined Walla Walla syrah, merlot and malbec with Dundee Hills pinot noir to create a delicious fruit-forward wine. This easy drinking red wine offers robust flavors of red cherry and raspberry that beg for grilled burgers, pizza or pasta with marinara sauce. We only made 100 cases of this red blend, and based on customer response so far, we should've made a lot more.

2013 was the first vintage of Puffin cabernet sauvignon, and it's been a smash! This delicious single-vineyard Walla Walla cabernet sauvignon has been popular with customers. Packed with big red fruit flavors with slight notes of black tea, this wine's mouthfeel has softened a bit since it was first released, but it's still big enough to let you know it has a Walla Walla pedigree. This wine goes nicely with roast beef, rib-eye or just a cool evening. We are coming to the end of the 2013 vintage, but our 2014 Puffin cabernet sauvignon should be ready for release later this fall.

So, as the weather changes and the temperatures drop, Puffin has a lineup of wines that are perfect for fall. This fall, you'll get a couple of opportunities to taste this entire lineup. Based on customer feedback, I plan to pour the Puffin lineup during our Saturday wine tastings a bit more often than in the past. You can find The Wine Shack's Saturday tasting room schedule on our website, www.thewineshack.wine, our Facebook page "Cannon Beach Wine Shack" or in our Cannon Beach Gazette advertisement.

We look forward to seeing you at The Shack. Please remember to drink responsibly.

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Steve Sinkler is the owner of Puffin Wines and The Wine Shack in Cannon Beach.

He writes a monthly column about wine in the Cannon Beach Gazette.

COLUMBIA BAR

Big O's Hot Toddy

By **RYAN HUME**

During a recent spate of rain, I was able to take shelter at the Olney Saloon, known colloquially as the Big O, and probably the best country bar on the North Coast. A few things had changed since I last came in.

Eight years after being purchased, owners Shawrron and Dale Searls continue to make improvements, including putting on a new metal roof and finishing off a bricked patio area.

Decked out with antlers, saw-blades and a collection of license plates from places near and far, expect even more warm wood paneling in the future, which Dale Searls mills himself and installs on the weekends.

Known for accommodating a slew of colorful regulars at any given time, I was surprised to find the bar, and a heaping basket of peanuts, all to myself, which gave me ample opportunity to chat up owner

Shawrron Searls and bartender Martha Stephens.

Martha warmed my gullet with a classic Hot Toddy on a chilly afternoon and spoke kindly of her time tossing booze and draining kegs behind the bar in Olney.

While it's always a good idea to tip your bartender, consider that the stakes are raised at such an eccentric establishment. Stephens has been tipped with fresh salmon, chanterelle mushrooms and even a mounted boar's head, which currently hangs in her bathroom at home. That's got to count for more than 20 percent.

Ingredients

1.5 ounces Maker's Mark, Jameson,

or other whiskey
2 slices lemon
1 slice lime
2 shakes ground cinnamon
1 shake ground nutmeg
1 heavy tablespoon honey
Hot water

Directions

Inside a stemmed coffee cup, muddle the lemon slices with the lime, cinnamon, nutmeg and honey. Once aromatic, add your whiskey of choice and top off the glass with hot water.



—Recipe courtesy of Martha Stephens, bartender at the Olney Saloon, Olney, Oregon

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