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GOLD

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Woodinville is all about flavor and freshness. Above, the herb gardens at Willows Lodge are the perfect place for strolling or enjoying a glass of wine. RIGHT Woodinville's dining options are outstanding, including the world-famous Herbfarm, Barking Frog at Willows Lodge and special events at 21 Acres.



A PERFECT WEEKEND WOODINVILLE WASHINGTON

If you're looking to get far, far away, you've got a lot of options. I hear Tasmania is lovely, while Amsterdam has its own charms. But a quick getaway that just makes you feel like you're far away? Those are a little harder to come by. Fortunately, one of them is just up the road. *written by MARGARETT WATERBURY*

Woodinville, Washington, is so close to Seattle that you could conceivably ride your bicycle there, and compact enough that driving its length takes only a few minutes. But spend a few hours relaxing on the patio at **Barking Frog Restaurant** or happily hopping from door to door in the Warehouse district, and the memories of meetings and deliverables and 6 a.m. Pilates

classes start to feel as distant as the surface of the moon. As my husband and I wound our way down into the **Sammamish Valley**, a beautiful, flat-bottomed piece of land just east of Kirkland, the trappings of urban life began to fade away. Zealous guardianship by local agricultural organizations (and King County zoning restric-

tions) has so far ensured that the valley has retained its bucolic character, despite its proximity to the bustling Eastside. Soon, five-lane highways were replaced by winding country roads, dotted with farm stands selling flowers and fresh eggs. But perhaps the most telling sign of Woodinville's approach were the sudden proliferation of winery tasting signs.

There's a lot more to Woodinville than wine, but if you love wine, you'll probably love Woodinville. There are somewhere between 110 and 115 winery tasting rooms in Woodinville, depending on whose count you go by, giving the town the highest density of winery tasting rooms anywhere in the state.

So the top item on the agenda as we entered Woodinville proper was getting our hands on a wine glass. First stop? **Novelty Hill** and **Januik**, a super-contemporary, low-slung concrete structure that houses two different independent wine brands (Novelty Hill and Januik), both made by one of Washington's most respected winemakers, Mike Januik.

It's the kind of place you could spend an entire afternoon. A high-ceilinged tasting room offers a commanding view of the production facility through a full glass wall, while a winding outdoor patio adorned with modern landscaping provides plenty of nooks to wile away the hours with a bottle of Novelty Hill's crisp, herbaceous Sauvignon Blanc and a pizza topped with locally grown ingredients (weekends only). There's even a bocce court, if you're feeling energetic.

But not all tasting experiences in Woodinville are so grand. On the other side of the valley, the **Warehouse District** provides a more modest—but no less delicious—setting for imbibing and exploration. This unassuming collection of industrial buildings houses dozens of up-and-coming wineries, distilleries, breweries, and cideries. None are more than a few minutes' walk from another worthwhile stop, but only **Les Voignes** manages to put beer and wine under a single roof. It's the only combination winery and brewery in the state, and it makes a perfect stop for a mixed crowd of beer lovers and oenophiles. Across the street, **Two Vitners** is famous for its Rhone varietals, including its

award-winning Some Days are Stones Syrah. And just around the corner, **J.P. Trodden Distillery** is cranking out outstanding straight bourbon on a Cognac-style still using only Washington-grown corn and wheat. If they're pouring their single barrel bourbon, don't pass up the chance for a taste—after six years in a barrel it's sweet and soft, with a richness that stands up to anything from down south.

Just up the road is the **Hollywood District**, an area in northern Woodinville that houses some of the highest-profile producers in the area. After refueling at **Purple Café & Wine Bar** (don't miss the spicy shrimp), we headed for **Chateau Ste. Michelle**, the oldest tasting room in the area. It produces more wine each year than all the rest of Washington's wineries put together, and hosts big-name bands like Steve Winwood and Pink Martini for its popular summer concert series, to boot.

There, a brightly enjoyable Riesling flight moved from the famous Eroica Riesling (created in a partnership between Chateau Ste. Michelle and German winemaker Ernst Loosing) to a selection of other single-vineyard pours. Sharing a space with Chateau Ste. Michelle is Col Solare, another partnership-driven venture, this time between Chateau Ste. Michelle and Marchesi Antinori, an Italian winemaker from a family with almost 800 years of history in the industry.

In that same spirit of partnership, we also visited **Long Shadows**, the retirement project of Allen Shoup, the former CEO of Chateau Ste. Michelle. Inspired by the success of Eroica Riesling,

he wondered: what would happen if you built a winery around the concept of international collaboration? At **Long Shadows**, every wine—and there are only seven—is made by collaborating with high-profile winemakers from around the world, including Randy Dunn from Napa Valley's Dunn Vineyards, John Duval of Australia's Penfold's Grange, and Michelle Roland, a French winemaker trained in Bordeaux and considered one of the most influential in the world. It's a vivid illustration of the amazing versatility of Washington grapes.

Across the street, **Brian Carter Cellars** has a more casual vibe, yet the wines are no less polished. Winemaker Brian Carter has been making Washington wines since 1980, when there were just 16 wineries in the state. In his 35-year career he's been recognized with dozens of awards, including Winemaker of the Year—twice. Today, he's particularly interested in European-style blends, the only kind of wine he makes under his own label. Balanced and polished, these wines will surprise anybody who thinks Washington wine is synonymous with big, bombastic reds and sweet whites.

After all that tasting, we'd worked up an appetite, so we stopped in at **Barking Frog**, the restaurant associated with **Willows Lodge**. Built in 2000, Willows Lodge is a jewel of a resort in the heart of Woodinville, with luxe rooms boasting in-suite soaking tubs, fireplaces, and private patios. It also shares a parking lot with **The Herbfarm**, Washington's grande dame of fine-dining destinations. The glowing faces at the neigh-

boring tables at **Barking Frog** were the first indication we were in for something special. The provenance-focused Northwest menu is divided into four sections: small plates, from the garden, from the sea, and from the land. Ingredients are sourced locally whenever possible, and the menu—including the outstanding selection of glass pours—changes with every turning of the season.

We opted for the a la carte tasting menu, which gets you four half-portion selections, one from each section. Seafood dishes excelled. Our favorite plate of the night was a luscious king salmon tartar memorably topped with salmon roe, English shelling peas, sea beans, and lime-sorrel sorbet, but a seared scallop over beurre blanc risotto with roasted cherry tomatoes, bacon lardons, green beans, and chanterelles was a close second. Washington wines are the heavy hitter on the wine list, but Wine Director and Restaurant Outlet Manager Cara DeLavallade has amassed an eclectic selection of wines from around the world as well, focusing on selections with freshness and acidity to match the lighter dishes on the menu.

With all the wining and dining, it's easy to forget that the Sammamish Valley is, ultimately, farmland. So the next day, we set out to explore the agricultural side of the community. After a fortifying breakfast (complete with Olympia Roasting coffee) at **The Commons**, a casual and comfy restaurant dishing up elevated comfort food, we headed to **Molbak's**, one of the largest specialty nurseries in the state. Even confirmed plant-kill-



COUNTER-CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT Novelty Hill's tasting room melds old-world style wines with streamlined contemporary architecture. 21 Acres offers a range of food and farm-based programs, cooking classes, workshops, events, and tours within the farm. Shop their year-round Farm Market for the very best seasonal, organic, and GMO-free produce grown by Washington

farmers. They also sell eggs, dairy, grains, jams, sauces, pickles and delicious to-go lunches. When you're tired of wine, Woodinville Whiskey makes bourbon and rye whiskey out of locally grown grain. Compact commercial areas make walking Woodinville's streets a joy. Barking Frog Sous Chef Chris Smith and Executive Chef Bobby Moore.



Woodinville Wine Country.

Where the colors seem richer, the air is fresher,
and everything just tastes better.



Sip wine & unwind in our own wine country



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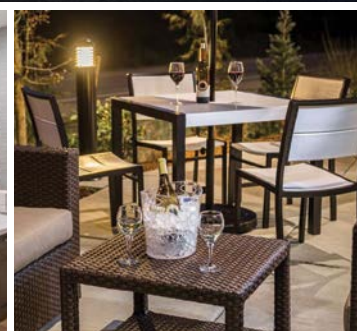
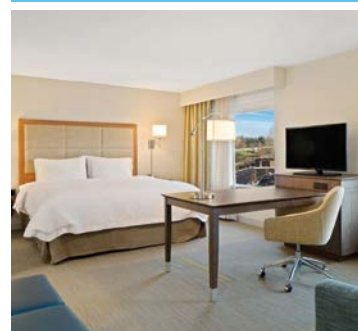


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ENGLISH PEA GNOCCHI

Herbed Potato Gnocchi

10 oz. riced Potato
2 Egg Yolks
1 Whole Egg
1 T chopped Thyme
¼ cup Grana Padana
2 tsp Kosher Salt
¾ cup AP Flour
Kosher Salt to taste

English Pea Pesto

½ cup toasted Walnuts
½ lb Pea shoots
1 cup Snow peas
10 cloves Confit Garlic
2 cups Olive Oil
3 T cold Water
Salt
Lemon Juice

Aged Balsamic Chevre

1 cup Chevre
½ cup Aged Balsamic vinegar
Veggies
Spring onions (thinly sliced)
Sundried Tomatoes

recipe from Purple Cafe and Wine Bar
www.purplecafe.com



Making Gnocchi

Bake potato at 350 until soft throughout. Immediately remove inside of potato and run through a food mill. Let cool for at least 2 hours. Incorporate potato, egg and egg yolk, thyme and grana together in big bowl. Then fold in flour until mixture becomes dough. After the dough has set up after letting sit for one hour, roll into a strip roughly ¾ inch in diameter. Once rolled out, cut across strip every inch.

Making the Pesto

Place all the ingredients in a food processor, except for the olive oil, and pulse until a paste forms. Keep the food processor running on full speed and drizzle in the olive oil. Season with salt and lemon juice to taste.

Making Balsamic Chevre

Combine both ingredients in a mixing bowl until the vinegar is completely incorporated into the chevre. Then run cheese mixture through a chinois, or a fine strainer, to create a smooth creamy texture.

The Process

In a pot of boiling water, drop gnocchi in slowly and let simmer until gnocchi floats to the top, indicating it is done. Once the gnocchi is done blanching, pull it out and dry. In a sauté pan, add one tablespoon oil and heat until oil starts to shimmer. When oil is hot, add gnocchi, stirring gently until it gains a golden brown color. After gnocchi browns, add in sundried tomatoes and spring onions, and saute in pan until vegetables start sweating. After sweating veggies, turn heat to pan completely off. Once heat is off, add pesto and stir. Tasting at the end, add salt, pepper, or lemon juice to taste.

Ready to Plate!

Pour all contents into dish. Then add a couple dabs of balsamic chevre, and garnish with micro greens. Enjoy.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
The Herbfarm takes advantage of the Sammamish Valley's fertile soil and lush climate. Purple Café dishes up elevated comfort food designed to pair perfectly with wine or craft beer. Rooms at Willows Lodge all feature in-suite fireplaces and reclaimed materials. 21 Acres, a nonprofit organization dedicated to agricultural education, regularly hosts chef-driven dinners, cooking classes, and other events.

ers will enjoy a wander through these enormous greenhouses, including a huge selection of houseplants, flowers, shrubs, trees, herbs, and other sundry greenery, as well as an astonishing array of home goods. Despite my best efforts, I walked out with a couple of succulents, as well as a keen desire to install an enormous self-standing FAT BOY hammock in my back yard as soon as finances allow.

Just down the road, **21 Acres** is a nonprofit organization on (yes) 21 acres of prime farmland that's dedicated to educating Washington's next generation of farmers and supporting local agricultural businesses. Walking through the active teaching farm is a fascinating way to spend a morning. We saw a group of elementary school-aged children mesmerized by busy honeybees streaming from a collection of brightly-colored hives, then strolled through a permaculture food forest lush with red currants, cane berries, and fruit trees. An onsite market offers a wide selection of Washington-grown treats, from pickles and jams to jewel-like dried beans from the Palouse and locally grown flours. 21 Acres also regularly hosts special events, including pop-up dinners and cooking classes, with a full calendar available on their website.

Our weekend at an end, we hopped back onto I-5. Woodinville receded in the rear-view mirror, but a trunk full of wine—plus a buttery rhubarb crumble bar from 21 Acres' onsite farmer's market—meant we could keep the good feelings going at least a little while longer.

Now, if only I could take the recipe for that salmon tartare with me, too.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- Many Warehouse District tasting rooms are only open on the weekends.
- Most winery tasting rooms are happy to accommodate walk-ins, but planning ahead can be smart at high-profile spots like Col Fondo and Long Shadows.
- There's no shame in spitting, especially if you're planning to visit more than a handful of wineries.

WHERE TO STAY

For luxury and pampering, **Willows Lodge** is your best bet, www.willowslodge.com This gorgeous contemporary property is built with reclaimed lumber and eco-friendly materials, and features incredible landscaping (don't miss the sculptural cedar snag in the at the entry), an on-site spa, and world-class dining. It also shares a parking lot with The Herbfarm, Washington's legendary fine-dining establishment, and even has two suites decorated in the Herbfarm style.

If you're interested in doing some deep digging in The Warehouse District, the brand-new **Hampton Inn & Suites** www.hamptonwoodinville.com is walking distance to the action. The rooms are spacious and comfortable and there's a salt-water pool perfect for a quick refresh after an afternoon of indulgence. Plus, it has to be the only Hampton Inn in the world with four winery tasting rooms literally across the parking lot.

MORE AREA INFO

Get more information about Woodinville Wine Country: www.woodinvillewinecountry.com www.visitwoodinville.org



Barking Frog's extensive and eclectic wine list runs the gamut from crowd-pleasing Washington cabs to hard-to-find lots from small French producer Chateau Ste. Michelle, Washington's largest wine producer, and a haven for Riesling-lovers.