

DeLille Cellars

Winemaker Chris Upchurch told me he's never seen anything like the growing season of 2015. "It was very hot and very advanced, with physical maturity arriving very quickly," he said. "We saw dark seeds in the middle of August, beginning with Sauvignon Blanc and Roussanne. The flavors were advancing as fast as the sugars, so the sugars were still fairly reasonable at harvest." The poor spring had put a lid on the eventual yields and made for more concentrated fruit, he added. "In the end, the vintage wasn't terribly extreme, just a couple weeks earlier than usual."



DeLILLE CELLARS

Most of the wines I tasted from DeLille this summer and in recent weeks were whites from '15 and reds from '13. The earlier vintage started off quite hot, noted Upchurch, but conditions cooled off nicely in September. Incidentally, although DeLille has expanded production of its white wines in recent years, mostly by getting more fruit from its top vineyard sources like Boushey, Klipsun and Sagemoor Bacchus, fully 80% of the winery's production is red wine. Fans of this producer's wines should note that the Doyenne name has disappeared as of the 2014 vintage, except for the wine previously labeled Aix, which henceforth will be called DeLille Cellars Doyenne.

From Focus on Washington: Hot Times in the Desert (Nov 2016) by Stephen Tanzer



2015 DeLille Cellars Roussanne 92 pts.

(Entirely from Ciel du Cheval): Pale, bright lemon-yellow. Compelling salty nose offers scents of lemon, honeysuckle, fig and marzipan. Wonderfully fresh and dry, with citrus and quince flavors firmed on the back end with a touch of apricot-pit phenolic firmness. Really lingers with vibrant minerality and a note of Aplets (a candy made in Washington from apples and walnuts).

\$35.00 2017 - 2022



2015 DeLille Cellars White Wine Chaleur Blanc 93+ pts.

(60% new oak; 5,600 cases produced): Bright lemon-yellow. Fully ripe but exhilaratingly sappy aromas of tropical fruits, lemon oil, fig and honeysuckle. Very sexy, complex and smooth on the palate, with expressive flavors of citrus fruits, honey, wild herbs and flowers (Upchurch described the wine as "more Smith-Haut-Lafitte than Domaine de Chevalier in style," which isn't much of a stretch considering its high quality in recent years). Finishes with outstanding subtle length and thrust. The Sauvignon Blanc from Sagemoor, reportedly the oldest planting of this variety in the state, makes up a good percentage of this wine. Incidentally, this is DeLille Cellars' 22nd year of making a white Bordeaux blend in Washington.

\$39.00 2017 - 2022



2015 DeLille Cellars Rosé 91 pts.

(13.1% alcohol; mostly from Boushey vineyard): Bright orange-gold. Sexy blood orange, currant and herbal aromas are complicated by a musky yeasty note. Rich, tactile and savory, conveying an impression of texture without weight. An intriguing note of pomegranate provides lift. This pink wine has the palate presence of a red; mouth tasters will score it even higher than I did.

\$32.00 2016 - 2018



2013 DeLille Cellars Merlot 90 pts.

(From equal parts Red Willow, DuBrul, Klipsun and Upchurch vineyards; aged in 70% new oak): Bright medium red. Aromas of raspberry, mint and spicy oak. A very juicy style, with lovely inner-mouth energy and spice character to its intense red fruit flavors. Not especially complex but not at all an overripe style of Washington Merlot.

\$49.00 **2017 - 2021**



2014 DeLille Cellars Red Wine Metier 92 pts.

(No new oak; this wine was previously called Doyenne Metier Red Wine): Moderately saturated medium red-ruby. Cherry and flowers on the nose, plus some suggestions of exotic fruits. Suave, creamy and complex, offering impressive palate presence to the flavors of purple fruits, violet, tree bark and pungent pepper. The small Cinsault component helped to lower this wine's alcohol level, noted winemaker Chris Upchurch, but it's still a lofty 15.3%. Finishes with very suave tannins, lovely balance and excellent length.

\$48.00 **2016 - 2022**



2013 DeLille Cellars Red Wine Doyenne Aix 93 pts.

(Syrah from Ciel du Cheval and Boushey, plus 41% Cabernet Sauvignon from Chris Upchurch's own vineyard): Bright ruby-red. High-toned aromas of blackberry, clove oil, white pepper, licorice and game. Wonderfully silky and sweet but with terrific acidity giving grip and shape to the middle palate. Very concentrated, juicy wine with a wild suggestion of garrigue and a faintly animal character. Reminded me of something in the Mas de Daumas-Gassac/La Grange des Pères neighborhood. This very successful blend boasts superb fruit and finishes wonderfully sweet and ripely tannic. I'd love to slip this wine into a blind tasting with some cult reds from the Languedoc.

\$42.00 **2017 - 2023**



2013 DeLille Cellars Red Wine D2 93 pts.

Ruby-red. Complex, perfumed aroma of blueberry, licorice and cocoa powder. Plush, sweet and deep; this round, seamless, fruit-driven blend boasts terrific immediate appeal. There's a hint of intriguing salinity here but not quite the umami richness of the outstanding 2012 example, even if this wine possesses riper fruit. Velvety and delicious right now and long and lush on the aftertaste.

\$48.00 **2016 - 2025**



2013 DeLille Cellars Red Wine Harrison Hill 92+ pts.

Medium-deep red. Sexy, claret-like herbal complexity to the perfumed aromas of redcurrant, strawberry, lavender, rose petal, tobacco and licorice. Fat, suave and subtly sweet, with wonderfully fine-grained blue and red fruit and savory mineral flavors complicated by truffle and hints of dried flowers and light pyrazines. In a rather Old World style, and long on personality. Finishes ripe and persistent, with dusty, firm-edged tannins. Very distinctive and very smooth.

\$90.00 **2017 - 2027**



2013 DeLille Cellars Red Wine Chaleur Estate 93 pts.

Bright medium ruby. Sexy, nuanced scents of currant, black raspberry, cocoa powder, licorice and graphite. Wonderfully silky, plush and chocolatey, hinting at an almost porty ripeness; seems considerably riper than the 2012 version. Long hang time here brought outstanding density and richness. Finishes with big, ripe, noble tannins and outstanding length. This beauty will be approachable early.

\$80.00 **2017 - 2025**



2013 DeLille Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Shaw 91 pts.

(From ten-year-old vines planted on rocky soil; 75% new oak): Bright medium ruby. Aromas of blackberry, black pepper and bitter chocolate. Densely packed, sweet and rich; an almost California-like bomb of dark berries and chocolate. Finishes ripely complex and long, but without the complexity of the best red wines from this producer.

\$65.00 **2017 - 2022**



2013 DeLille Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Grand Ciel 94 pts.

Ruby-red. Very pure, vibrant scents of blueberry, cassis and cedary oak. Densely packed, pliant and savory, conveying a restrained sweetness to the flavors of currant and spices. An outstanding example of this bottling, with a touch of pyrazine lift contributing to its impression of lift. Plush and very long, finishing with harmonious noble tannins. This wine conveys an impression of through and even ripening and has the balance and structure for graceful aging.

\$160.00 **2017 - 2027**



2013 DeLille Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Four Flags 93 pts.

(Made with fruit from Grand Ciel, Ciel du Cheval, Upchurch and Klipsun vineyards; 70% new oak): Deep ruby-red. Aromas of cassis, licorice and crushed rock, plus a very ripe suggestion of plum brandy that winemaker Chris Upchurch says is from the Klipsun fruit. Wonderfully dense, fine-grained and broad, combining Latour-like saline, gravel and graphite notes with the vibrant blueberry and mineral aspect of Ciel du Cheval. Seriously structured, sharply focused, very pure wine with lovely floral lift and elegance. Finishes with sweet tannins and outstanding breadth.

\$69.00 **2018 - 2025**



2013 DeLille Cellars Syrah Doyenne Signature 92 pts.

(Upchurch did not vinify this wine with whole clusters in 2013, noting that the stems were riper in both 2015 and 2011): Bright medium ruby. Aromas of spiced plum and wild herbs showed a livelier note of raspberry with air. Suave and seamless on the palate, offering sexy, slightly high-toned flavors of raspberry and more exotic red apricot (from the Viognier?), plus a note of pastry dough. Boasts compelling sweetness and fine-grained texture. Finishes ripely tannic, smooth and long.

\$46.00 **2016 - 2022**



2013 DeLille Cellars Syrah Grand Ciel Doyenne Grand Ciel Vineyard 92 pts.

(14.6% alcohol; from Entav clone 383, which winemaker Upchurch says is ideal for Red Mountain): Bright, saturated red-ruby. Liqueur-like blackberry, blueberry, lavender and pepper on the nose. Plush, broad and sweet on entry, showing strong spicy oak lift to the red and dark berry and pepper flavors. Riper than the 2012 but without quite the energy or perfume of that wine. Possesses a firm tannic spine to support aging, but this Syrah needs time in bottle to become more pliant.

\$69.00 **2018 - 2025**



2013 DeLille Cellars Malbec Red Willow 90 pts.

(Half of this fruit went through an extended maceration lasting six to eight weeks; 50% new oak): Bright ruby-red. Highly aromatic scents of blackberry, blueberry, licorice and black pepper. A captivating, penetrating fruit bomb lifted by a strong violet note. The new oak component is a bit intrusive but this juicy Malbec delivers lovely clarity to its dark fruit flavors--not to mention considerable early appeal.

\$49.00 **2016 - 2021**