

DeLILLE CELLARS
Doyenne GRAND CIEL

Review by Jeb Dunnuck

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The team at DeLille, lead by longtime Washington wine steward Chris Upchurch, continue to produce and a great lineup of wines. Both the '12 and '13 here are classics, yet I think the nod has to go to the '12s, which have slightly more depth and richness. Nevertheless, these are all high quality and I think the Bordeaux blends are some of the most age-worthy in the state.

2012 DeLille Cellars Grand Ciel

Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: 96

Drink 2020 - 2040

A wine that's rounded out beautifully since I tasted it in barrel, the 2012 Grand Ciel is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon from a great vineyard in one of the top terroirs in Washington: Red Mountain. Sporting a dense, opaque ruby color, it offers rocking notes of blackcurrants, espresso, graphite, and chocolate that continue to change with time in the glass. While there's plenty of oak here, it's nicely integrated, and there's no shortage of fruit or freshness. Full-bodied, layered, plush and beautifully concentrated, it needs 4-5 years of cellaring and will keep for two decades or more.

2012 DeLille Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Four Flags

Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain, Washington, USA

Rating: 96

Drink 2020 - 2037

The limited production 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon Four Flags is an off-the-hook effort. Decadent, layered, unctuous and rich, with classic Cabernet notes of blackcurrants, chocolate, lead pencil, crushed rock and graphite, this awesome 2012 hits the palate with full-bodied richness, no hard edges, a stacked, rich, concentrated mid-palate, and loads of sweet tannin that are almost completely hidden under all of the wine's fruit and texture. Given the wealth of material here, it's already hard to resist, but don't let that fool you, this has the balance, concentration and structure to keep for 2-3 decades. It's a sensational Cabernet from this team that should not be missed.

2012 DeLille Cellars Chaleur Estate

Proprietary Blend Red, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: 95+

Drink 2019 - 2037

The 2012 Chaleur Estate is truly terrific, with classic Cabernet notes of blackcurrants, lead pencil shavings, tobacco, chocolate and damp earth. Almost Bordeaux-like in its structure and focus on the palate, it has nicely integrated acidity, beautiful concentration and plenty of tannic grip that comes through on the finish. While not lacking in texture or concentration, the overall impression here is one of focus, purity and balance, and it won't hit prime time for another 4-7 years. This is a young, beautifully put together Washington State Cabernet Sauvignon that will have 25 years or more of overall longevity.

2013 DeLille Cellars Chaleur Estate Blanc

Proprietary Blend White, Columbia Valley, Washington, USA

Rating: 94

Drink 2015 – 2017

Another stunning white from this team is the 2013 Chaleur Estate Blanc. A blend of 65% Sauvignon Blanc and 35% Semillon that barrel fermented, it sports a light gold color to go with a sweet bouquet of buttered citrus, crushed rock, white flowers and toasted almond. One of the few serious white Bordeaux blends being made in the US, this medium to full-bodied beauty has a core of sweet fruit, integrated acidity, sensational purity and dry, clean finish. While I suspect it will age just fine, I see no reason to delay gratification and would drink bottles over the coming couple of years.

2012 DeLille Cellars D2 Proprietary Red Wine

Proprietary Blend Red, Columbia Valley, Washington, USA

Rating: 93

Drink 2016 – 2032

Functioning as a second wine, the 2012 D2 Proprietary Red Wine checks in as a blend of 50% Merlot, 42% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Cabernet Franc that spent 20 months in 100% new French oak. It's one hell of a second wine and offers up awesome notes of blackcurrants, wood smoke, graphite, chocolate, truffle and damp earth to go with a full-bodied, ripe, layered and still focused and lively profile on the palate. This is a serious wine on all accounts and it has beautifully integrated acidity, moderate, sweet tannin and a great finish. It's easy to appreciate now, but will also have 20 years of overall longevity.

2012 DeLille Cellars Doyenne Aix

Proprietary Blend, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: 93

Drink 2016 - 2027

Once you move east out of the Southern Rhone Valley and into Provence, you hit the town of Aix-en-Provence, and you have a few producers who utilize Cabernet Sauvignon, Domaine Trevallon being the most notable. DeLille's Doyenne Aix is made in this image and is always a blend of Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2012 Doyenne Aix (60/40 Syrah and Cabernet) is a one of the finest vintages of the cuvee to date and it offers full-bodied, rich, decadent notes of blackcurrants, black raspberries, smoke tobacco, chocolate and roasted-garrigue characteristics. Concentrated, ripe and with solid mid-palate depth, it's also fresh, lively and beautifully balanced. It will be better with short-term cellaring, yet have 15 years of overall longevity.

2012 DeLille Cellars Malbec

Malbec, Yakima Valley, Washington, USA

Rating: 93

Drink 2015 - 2027

Coming all from the Red Willow vineyard in the Yakima Valley, the 2012 Malbec, which I loved from barrel, is another stunner from bottle. Inky purple colored, with deep, rich notes of blackcurrants, blackberry, wood smoke, leather and leafy herbs, it's full-bodied, has terrific ripeness, a big, full, fleshy mid-palate and a great finish. There's a healthy dose of oak here, yet it's nicely integrated, and to my mind, never detracts. This is a gorgeous example of the variety from

Washington and I think it's one of the few examples that would stand up to the best from other top Malbec regions from around the world. It's no doubt impressive today, but it will evolve effortlessly through 2027.

2012 DeLille Cellars Doyenne Métier Proprietary Red Blend

Proprietary Blend Red, Yakima Valley, Washington, USA

Rating: 92

Drink 2015 - 2022

The estate's Southern Rhone-style release, the 2012 Doyenne Métier Proprietary Red Blend is 39% Grenache, 39% Mourvèdre, 20% Syrah and the rest Cinsault. Deep ruby and mostly opaque, it offers up classic black cherries, black raspberries, roasted herbs, pepper and hints of leather to go with a medium to full-bodied, ripe, layered and balanced feel on the palate. Possessing more than a passing resemblance to a quality Chateauneuf du Pape, this is a great Rhone blend from Washington.

2013 DeLille Cellars Doyenne Roussanne

Roussanne White, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: 93

Drink 2015 - 2025

One of the top Rhone whites coming out of Washington, DeLille's 2013 Doyenne Roussanne (100% Roussanne) is straight up terrific. Giving up tons of minerality in its citrus blossom, crushed rock, white currant and white floral-laced bouquet, this beauty is close to full-bodied, rich and textured, yet always stays balanced, fresh and lively. It has a great finish and keeps you coming back to the glass. It's great now, and while this grape can have an unpredictable evolution, I'm sure it will be an interesting and enjoyable effort in a decade or more. Still, as always, the easy and safe bet with these is to drink them in their first 4-5 years.

2012 DeLille Cellars Doyenne Syrah Grand Ciel Vineyard

Syrah, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: 93

Drink 2017 - 2027

A similar purple/ruby, semi-opaque color to the Signature Syrah, the 2012 Doyenne Syrah Grand Ciel Vineyard has more minerality (no doubt due to coming from Red Mountain) to go with lots of blackberry, graphite, pepper and crushed violet notes. Like the Signature Syrah, it shows the vintage nicely with lots of concentration, integrated acidity and a big finish, where the wine's structure becomes more apparent. It will benefit from short-term cellaring and have 10-15 years of overall longevity.

2012 DeLille Cellars Doyenne Syrah Signature

Proprietary Blend Red, Yakima Valley, Washington, USA

Rating: 93

Drink 2016 - 2027

The ruby/purple colored 2012 Doyenne Syrah Signature is a classic Washington State Syrah that does everything right. Giving up vivid notes of salted blackberries, fresh plum, violets and spice, this balanced 2012 has full-bodied richness, nicely integrated acidity and a clean, nicely focused finish. More fresh and lively than the Grand Ciel release, it still has rock-solid concentration and fantastic purity of fruit. Give it another year in bottle and drink it through 2027.

TASTED IN BARREL

2012 DeLille Cellars Harrison Hill

Proprietary Blend, Snipes Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: (94-96)

Drink 2014 - 2029

The 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon Harrison Hill continues to show the quality of this unique site. Beautiful all around, with fabulous purity of fruit and a layered, seamless character, it exhibits notions of crème de cassis, lead pencil shavings, tobacco leaf and edgy minerality. Full-bodied and slightly more fruit-driven than previous vintages (prior vintages showed a slightly more feral/wild character at this point), it will drink reasonably well on release, yet have 15 years of prime drinking.

2013 DeLille Cellars Grand Ciel

Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: (94-96)

Drink 2020 – 2038

The top release from the estate, DeLille's 2013 Grand Ciel is 100% Cabernet Sauvignon that comes all from the Grand Ciel vineyard. Seeing 100% new oak, it's a much more burly style of wine, and where the Harrison Hill is more Margaux, this is certainly more Pauillac. It offers lots of chocolaty dark fruits, cassis, smoked herbs and licorice to go with a full-bodied, beautifully layered, concentrated, yet still fresh and lively feel on the palate. It will need a decade to hit maturity and keep for another 15 years or more beyond that.

2013 DeLille Cellars Harrison Hill

Proprietary Blend, Snipes Mountain, Washington, USA

Rating: (94-97)

Drink 2016 - 2036

Reminding me of a top flight Margaux with its pretty perfume of tobacco leaf, lead pencil shavings, spring flowers and sweet red and black fruit, the 2013 Harrison Hill is beautifully full-bodied, has no hard edges, fine tannin and a great finish. This is always one of the more unique releases from DeLille and from bottle, it normally shows a more wild, almost gamy quality. However, both the 2012 and the 2013 possess a more refined, pretty and elegant style. This is a beauty to drink anytime over the coming decade or more.

2013 DeLille Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon Four Flags

Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain, Washington, USA

Rating: (92-95)

Drink 2018 - 2033

A wine that may match its 2012 counterpart, the 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Four Flags offers sensational notes of cassis, lead pencil, tobacco and spicy oak to go with a full-bodied, elegant and layered feel on the palate. It shows the slightly more focused, fresh style of the vintage, has fine tannin and enough depth and richness to have 15-20 years of longevity.

2013 DeLille Cellars D2 Proprietary Red Wine

Proprietary Blend Red, Columbia Valley, Washington, USA

Rating: (90-92)

Drink 2016 - 2026

DeLille's 2013 D2 Proprietary Red Wine is 54% Merlot, with the balance Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. It has lots of spice, dried flower and savory herb qualities mixed with sweet cassis and kirsch-like fruit. Medium to full-bodied, balanced, supple and slightly forward, drink it on release and over the following decade.

2013 DeLille Cellars Doyenne Aix

Proprietary Blend Red, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: (90-92)

Drink 2016 - 2033

The Provencal-styled blend, the 2013 Doyenne Aix is the same blend as the '12 (60/40 Syrah Cabernet) and gives up lots of dark fruits, crushed herbs, lead pencil shaving and ground pepper characteristics in a concentrated, rich, medium to full-bodied package. There's lots to love here and it will have 15-20 years of longevity.

UPCHURCH VINEYARD

2012 Upchurch Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Upchurch Vineyard

Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: 96

Drink 2017 - 2032

Another sensational Cabernet from Chris Upchurch, the 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon Upchurch Vineyard has flat-out great aromatics of crème de cassis, licorice, graphite, crushed rock and toasted bread. This gives way to a full-bodied, elegant, seamless 2012 that has no hard edges, perfect balance and a blockbuster finish. While the Red Mountain tannin and structure are both present here, the polish, balance and purity are exceptional. It offers ample pleasure today, but will evolve for two decades.

2013 Upchurch Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon Upchurch Vineyard

Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain AVA, Washington, USA

Rating: (94-97)

Drink 2018 - 2033

Incorporating 9% Merlot, the 2013 Cabernet Sauvignon Upchurch Vineyard is another sensational Cabernet from Chris Upchurch and, certainly, is up with the best of the vintage. Inky colored, it offers ample notes of cassis, graphite, licorice, violets and crushed rock to go with a full-bodied, structured and tannic feel on the palate. While no lightweight, it still comes across as a relatively civilized expression of Red Mountain and I love the quality of the tannin. Short-term cellaring should be the name of the game here, and it will see its 20th birthday in fine form.