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Alder Yarrow

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## Checking in on Idaho



*Alder revisits Idaho wine and has suggestions for its more viable future.*

A little more than ten years ago, an unsolicited case of wine showed up on my doorstep. That wasn't particularly unusual, of course, but the place it came from managed to surprise me at the time.

Those first 12 tastes of Idaho wine proved quite enlightening. They told the story of a wine region early in its development, with a mix of hobbyists and more commercially focused producers all exploring the possibilities of a relatively new terroir.

Last month, I decided it was long past time for me to go check in on the region's development, so I took the short flight up and spent a few days poking around the state's

main wine region as well as tasting as many wines as I could.

I found a region still exploring the possibilities, but definitely one more developed and mature in its winemaking. The wines are now consistently clean and almost always commercially viable, and some of them show real promise, provided the industry has the ambition to push things further.

## **Recent history**

In the mid 1800s, Idaho was criss-crossed by emigrants making their way along the famed Oregon and Mormon Trails. This rugged homeland of the Shoshone tribe was not easy country to pass through, however, which may be why it took several decades before Idaho saw permanent European settlements. The discovery of gold in the 1860s accelerated things, but it took the establishment of the Utah & Northern Railway as well as the Union Pacific Railroad to really drive the creation of the first towns and see the development of the first serious agricultural efforts in the region.

Idaho wine country - looking north-west across the Snake River Valley

That said, shortly after President Abraham Lincoln signed the law establishing Idaho as a distinct territory and nearly 30 years before it was admitted as the 43rd state, the first wine grapevines were planted in Idaho in 1864 by a pair of enterprising Frenchmen, Louis Desol and Robert Schleicher, as well as a German emigré named Jacob Schaefer. Their early efforts met with some limited acclaim, but plantings in the state remained small until they were wiped out altogether by the onset of Prohibition in 1916, when the upright citizens of Idaho enacted a state-level ban on alcohol a full four years before it became a national imperative.

Wine grapes were not planted again in Idaho until 1970, when Dr Stan Clarke and his wife Iris planted grapes in the booming agricultural region of the Snake River Valley. The couple's early efforts would become Ste Chapelle winery, the state's first commercial winery, and still one of its dominant players.

## **Ancient history**

Most of Idaho's population and agriculture is concentrated in the state's south-west corner, in a region known as the Western Snake River Plain, a broad valley between 2,000 and 3,000 feet (610-910 m) of elevation through which the Snake River meanders on its way from Montana to the Pacific. This valley, home to most of Idaho's wine grape

acreage, has been shaped by several major geological events whose combined effects have created a distinctive terroir.

### The Snake River Valley American Viticultural Area

Between 64 and 100 million years ago, the Snake River Plain wasn't a river plain at all, it was oceanfront property, the farthest western coast of North America. That was before the subduction of the Pacific plate squashed and raised the land that became much of what we know today as the west coast of the United States.

Before it was a river valley, the Snake River Valley was also a rift zone, a gap created by faults in the earth's crust driven by the tectonic forces unleashed by the subduction of the Pacific plate. This stretching and tearing of the crust happened to occur over one of the major volcanic hot-spots on the planet, resulting in a significant amount of volcanic activity in the region between 4 and 15 million years ago, depositing layer after layer of basalt in the area which, rather than fill up the valley, simply caused it to sink deeper under the weight of all that new rock.

Then, about 9 million years ago, the Snake River Valley began to fill up with water. By around 4 million years ago, Lake Idaho was the size of Lake Ontario – roughly 200 miles long and 35 miles wide (322 x 56 km) – and more than 1,300 feet (c 400 m) deep.

Over the 6.5 million years of its existence, this lake became a vast catchment of fine sediments hundreds of feet deep. During this time, volcanic activity continued, with superheated vents opening on the bottom of the lake to spew out gas and small amounts of magma.

### The volcanic vent in the midst of Scoria's vineyards

Eventually, melting glaciers would fill Lake Idaho to bursting, and sometime between 2 and 4 million years ago, the lake drained in a torrent, cutting the staggeringly deep Hell's Canyon and providing the course that the modern-day Snake River follows to join with the Columbia River.

Volcanic activity continued, and what were once underwater volcanoes now slowly oozed lava out among the drying sediments of the former lake bottom, causing the newly created Snake River periodically to change its course.

Sometime between 14.5 and 17.4 thousand years ago, the massive Lake Bonneville in Utah, also swollen with melting glacier water, burst its banks and sent a biblical torrent of

water north into Idaho and eastern Washington State. Geologists still argue about the relative size of such mega-flooding events. But whether this was the second or third biggest flood in geological history, suffice it to say a wall of water 410 foot (120 m) high moving at 70 miles per hour ploughed north-west from Utah, scouring a channel down through the deep sediments of the Snake River Valley, leaving behind some of its own fine glacial silt and sand to swirl and eddy in the receding waters.

Today the Snake River Valley reflects and benefits from this geological history, with fine sandy soils layered over volcanic layers of scoria, basalt and pumice as well as alluvial gravels. As in eastern Washington's Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (see [America's other Cabernet - Red Mountain](#)) these fine flood sediments contained a high proportion of calcium carbonate which can today be found as a thin hard white crust surrounding alluvial materials (see the photo below) or coating chunks of volcanic rock (as seen in the volcanic vent photo above).

The fine loess and sand of the Snake River Valley showing white bits of limestone-like caliche.

This calcium carbonate content results in fairly alkaline soils and poses something of a challenge when it comes to achieving balanced fruit, especially in the high-desert climate of a region where ripeness comes all too quickly.

## **Current affairs**

By any measure, the Idaho wine industry is still fledgling. According to the most recent national statistics available, it ranked a rather distant 12th in wine production by state in America, having produced 497,000 gallons (1.88 million litres) of wine – less than a third of that produced by the 11th-ranked state of Texas.

Idaho hosts around 1,300 acres (526 ha) of vineyard, but nearly 430 of those acres can be found in the state's largest vineyard, Skyline. The remaining acres are split across 67 vineyards, a few of which support more than a dozen wine producers, but most of which average less than 8 acres (3.2 ha) and support a single producer.

The vast majority of plantings can be found in the Snake River AVA and its much smaller, embedded Eagle Foothills AVA. The state's third AVA, the Lewis-Clark Valley, hosts only 86 acres of vines.

Sixty-five wineries make their home in Idaho, and together they produced 258,000 cases of wine in 2022.

The Skyline vineyard, the state's largest (photo courtesy of the Idaho Wine Commission).

The wine-country culture in Idaho has become something of a local phenomenon in recent years. The main concentration of wineries in the Snake River Valley sit a mere 45 minutes from Boise, the state capital, and a thriving urban winery scene has taken root across the river from downtown in an area known as Garden City. Local support for the wine industry is so strong that most wineries sell almost everything they make through their tasting rooms, wine clubs, and e-commerce websites, each outlet catering to a different audience.

'The average age of our wine club members at the winery is 55', says James Nederend, owner and winemaker at Koenig Vineyards. 'But the average age of our customer in our downtown Boise tasting room is 30. The difference is amazing.'

The state's two largest wine brands, Ste Chapelle and Sawtooth (both owned by the holding company Precept), who together produce more than 50% of all the wine made in Idaho, are more widely distributed both within and outside the state.

## **The growth challenge**

In tasting through nearly 100 Idaho wines from recent vintages in Idaho, I found the quality of winemaking in the state to have clearly and dramatically improved compared with what I tasted a decade ago. Glaring winemaking faults are generally a thing of the past.

'There were some really bad wines back in the day', says Ron Bitner, one of the industry's pioneers and the main author behind the petition that created the Snake River Valley AVA in 2007. 'Now they're getting much better. This new generation of winemakers is doing a pretty good job.'

Bitner, a world-renowned bee biologist, planted Riesling and Chardonnay in 1981, followed by Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot a few years later. In 1996 he hired a young Greg Koenig to be the winemaker for his eponymous winery, one of the first to be established in the state after Ste Chappelle.

Bitner vineyards in the foreground with Ste Chapelle vineyards on the opposite hill.

Koenig had just established his own small label in 1995, and would go on to mentor many of the winemakers in the region up until the present day, though he ended up selling his winery to James and Sydney Nederend in 2019.

While Idaho wines are now clean, across the board pH seems to be an issue. The majority of the wines I tasted, and especially the red wines, came across as soft and a little flabby. The highest-scoring wines in this report were characterised by having enough acidity to balance their ripeness.

‘There’s such high potassium content in the soil, that when you let grapes hang long enough to get proper flavours, the more potassium uptake there is in the grape’, says winemaker Jill Hawkins of Fujishin Winery. ‘It’s only gotten worse as things have gotten hotter.’

As you may imagine in this scenario, most Idaho wines will have had tartaric acid additions made to them, though perhaps not to the degree they really should for my palate. White wines that have been cold-stabilised also tend to feel a bit fresher on the palate as cold stabilisation precipitates out potassium bitartrate, lowering the pH slightly. But even most white wines were missing some much-desired vivacity.

Ironically, while the softer profile of the wines may not appeal to my critic’s palate, they may well be just what most Idaho consumers are looking for. Indeed, with most wineries easily selling through their yearly production, Idaho would seem to have built a local industry that is closely matched in both size and style to its customer base.

The real question is whether it will be sustainable at that size or whether growth will be required for some businesses to remain viable. The pandemic accelerated a population boom in Idaho (already one of the fastest-growing states in the country) as many residents of California, Oregon and Washington moved out of expensive urban centres to Idaho’s smaller, less expensive towns and cities.

A view down the rows towards the Snake River at Williamson Vineyards

‘Idaho’s growth is through the roof’, says Meredith Smith, winemaker for Sawtooth and Ste Chapelle. ‘I don’t know how we can possibly catch up with growth.’

The state’s influx of new residents may well end up increasing demand for local wines, but they may also bring a sharper eye towards quality, having come from much more sophisticated and developed wine markets.

At a certain point, either through evolving consumer tastes or out-of-state competition, Idaho wines will have to meet a higher standard for quality. In my opinion, the industry should begin that journey in earnest right now with a focus on better balance, which will undoubtedly be a product of changes in winemaking, viticulture and plant material.

## **The right grapes**

As in many places around the world, it is getting both hotter and colder in Idaho. The 2017 vintage was marred by a deep winter freeze as temperatures dropped to -24.5 °F (-31.4 °C), killing any vine material not insulated by the 12 inches of snow that had already fallen that winter. The 2021 vintage was almost the opposite, with heatwaves beginning in May followed by a series of multiple triple-digit Fahrenheit days during the summer.

A view from SCORIA vineyards towards the Owyhee Mountains

Idaho already has a compressed growing season thanks to its altitude and latitude, with budbreak usually occurring in mid April and most harvests beginning by September. Climate variability can have significant impacts on the vintage, especially when hard freezes arrive in October, which is not uncommon.

Unsurprisingly, producers have been exploring earlier-ripening grape varieties that are also reasonably heat-tolerant, such as Tempranillo which I believe is one of the clear winners in the mix of varieties planted in the state.

Many winemakers I met claimed that one of Idaho's strengths as a wine region was the wide variety of grapes it was able to grow well, but of the nearly 50 grape varieties planted in the state only about 20 of them are being produced by more than five wineries.

With only 45 years of history for its modern wine industry, I believe Idaho needs to be exploring and experimenting far more than it has been, especially given its strong base of direct-to-consumer customers who would presumably be very willing to purchase small quantities of more experimental wines.

I'd love to see the region plant more Vermentino, Blaufränkisch, Barbera and Grenache. And someone should try out Mencía, Godello, Trebbiano, Touriga Nacional, Tinta Barroca, Nero d'Avola, Falanghina, Viura or even Grignolino. Farming should be adjusted to preserve more acidity, through canopy management, moisture management, adjustment of crop loads and picking dates.

Disease pressure is generally sufficiently low that far more producers should also be working towards organic certification. At the moment, only 12 of the state's 1,300 acres are farmed organically, though a handful more are farmed according to Oregon's LIVE sustainability protocols.

Idaho wine shows honest potential. Its producers just need to avoid the trap of complacency and push through to the next level of quality.

The following 92 tasting notes are presented in alphabetical order by producer (sur)name but you can change this.

Select sorting option ▼

### **3 Horse Ranch, Vivacious 2021 Eagle Foothills**

*A blend of Viognier and Roussanne grown at 2,900 ft (884 m). 835 cases produced. pH 3.4.*

Smells of sweet oak, poached pears and peach nectar. The slightly bittersweet flavour of oak pervades flavours of peach, pear and white flowers. Softer acidity than I would like and too much oak influence. (AY)

13.8%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$31 RRP

15

### **3 Horse Ranch Syrah 2020 Eagle Foothills**

*Grown at an elevation of 2,900 ft (884 m). 181 cases produced. TA 5.5 g/l, pH 3.63.*

Smells of blackberry and blueberry fruit. Flavours of blueberry and blackberry are nestled into a bed of velvety tannins. Decent acidity, though more would be nice. There's a hint of flintiness in the finish. (AY)



14.6%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$45 RRP

16

## **3100 Cellars, Pool & Drop Sawtooth Vineyard** **Gewurztraminer 2022 Snake River Valley**

*24 months' ageing on the lees. Closed with a crown cap. 8 g/l dosage. 110 cases produced.*

Light-to-medium gold with aggressive bubbles. Pleasant aromas of freshly cut apples and orange peel. Crisp flavours of apple and orange peel have an odd, faint boiled-vegetable quality that is slightly off-putting. Dry, without any obvious sweetness. (AY)

12.9%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$35 RRP

13

## **Bitner, Reserve Old Vine Chardonnay 2019 Snake** **River Valley**

*This is the final vintage made from the remaining six rows of vines planted in 1981. Grown at 2,690 ft (820 m) of elevation. Harvested by hand. 112 cases produced. Certified sustainable (LIVE), Salmon Safe, and Bee-Friendly Farming.*

Aromas of lemon curd and vanilla with a hint of sweet oak. Flavours of sweet lemon curd and vanilla mix with oak and a touch of orange peel. There's a honeyed character to this wine, with some distinct sweetness on the palate that suggests residual sugar. Softer acidity here, with a hint of heat in the finish. (AY)

13.4%

Drink

2021

-

2025

\$33 RRP

15.5

## **Bitner, Old Vines Riesling Dry 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Grown at 2,690 ft (820 m) of elevation. 95 cases produced.*

Pale yellow-gold. Smells of fuel oil and citrus pith with a hint of pine sap. Flavours of Asian pear and white flowers mix with a hint of pine sap and dried herbs. The flavours here are so nice but, sadly, the wine has extremely low acidity, making for a very flabby, almost syrupy texture in the mouth. The crispness you want from a dry Riesling is entirely missing. (AY)

13.4%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$36 RRP

14

## **Bitner, Reserve Old Vine Chardonnay 2012 Snake River Valley**

Smells of cooked vegetables and lemon curd. Flavours of butterscotch and lemon curd mix with a touch of cooked vegetables. Softer acidity but still has some vibrancy. (AY)

13.2%

Drink

2014

-

2018

14

## **Bitner, High Desert 2022 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 35% Riesling, 33% Chardonnay, and 32% Viognier grown at 2,690 ft (820 m) of elevation. 128 cases produced.*

Palest gold to near colourless. Aromas of Asian pear and white peaches. Moderately sweet flavours of Asian pear, peach and white flowers don't have enough acidity to make them dynamic, so they fall a little flat on the palate. (AY)

12.5%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$22 RRP

14.5

## **Bitner, Old Vine Syrah 2020 Snake River Valley**

*Grown at 2,690 ft (820 m) of elevation. 266 cases produced. Certified Bee-Friendly Farming.*

Smells of blackberries and black cherries. Flavours of blackberry and black-cherry fruit are juicy and bright with very good acidity. Restrained oak is very well integrated and lightly grippy tannins add texture. Notes of liquorice root and citrus peel linger in the finish. Very good. (AY)

14%

Drink

2025

-

2026

\$40 RRP

16.5

## **Bitner, Terrosa 2019 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 50% Petit Verdot and 50% Syrah grown at 2,570 ft (783 m) of elevation. 193 cases produced. Certified sustainable (LIVE), Salmon Safe, and Bee-Friendly Farming. Very dark garnet. Smells of blackberry jam and black-cherry compote tinged with sweet oak. Flavours of blackberry and black cherry are wrapped in a plush, fleecy robe of tannins and kept fresh by decent acidity. Notes of sweet oak linger in the finish and, while the wood is reasonably well integrated, I'd love a bit less of it. (AY)*

14%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$38 RRP

15.5

## **Bitner, Terrosa Reserve 2017 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 30% Cabernet Sauvignon, 25% Petit Verdot, 25% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc grown at 2,690 ft (820 m) of elevation. Freeze damage during the winter dramatically reduced yields by 80% or more. Only 177 cases produced (cf 1,000 normally). Certified sustainable (LIVE), Salmon-Safe and Bee-Friendly Farming.*

Inky garnet. Smells of black cherry and plum, lavender and dried herbs. Muscular tannins wrap around a juicy core of black-cherry and plum flavours shot through with lavender and other aromatic herbs. Oak lingers in the finish. The tannins are fine-grained, but definitely flex their muscles to tighten around the palate as very good acidity keeps things fresh and bright through a long finish. Just now reaching a good point for drinkability, I think, and will age fairly well for the next few years. Lovely. (AY)

14%

Drink

2024

-

2032

\$75 RRP

16.5

## **Bitner, Vineyard Select KP Martin Vineyards Cabernet Franc 2019 Snake River Valley**

*Grown at 2,570 ft (783 m) of elevation. 46 cases produced.*

Smells of carob, black cherry and sawdust. Sweet oak flavours pervade notes of plum and cherry as fine-grained, mouth-drying tannins linger in the finish with the aroma of sweet oak. Too much wood here. Decent acidity. (AY)

14%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$99 RRP

15.5

## **Bitner, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2019 Snake River Valley**

*Vineyards planted in 1999 at 2,570 ft (783 m) of elevation. 125 cases produced. Certified sustainable (LIVE), Salmon Safe, and Bee-Friendly Farming.*

Smells of cherry cough syrup and oak. A wave of sweet oak flavour washes over cherry compote and blackberry as muscular tannins coat the mouth and stiffen, even as they parch the moisture off the palate. Too much oak, and too ripe. Flirting on the edge of raisined. (AY)

14%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$50 RRP

13

## **Bitner, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2004 Snake River Valley**

Light-to-medium ruby with blood and brick at the rim. Smells of mulling spices, red-apple skin and green-olive tapenade. Bright and juicy flavours of red-apple skin, cedar, cooked strawberry and dried herbs mix with faintly fleecy tannins. Decent acidity. Just a bit tired. (AY)

14%  
Drink  
2007  
-  
2019  
14.5

## **Bitner, Vineyard Select Doc Ollie Block Barbera 2018 Snake River Valley**

*Grown at 2,650 ft (808 m) of elevation. 66 cases produced.*

Smells of plum and cherry with a hint of citrus peel. Flavours of plum, plum skin and mulberry mix with citrus peel as lightly gauzy tannins wrap around the core of fruit and stiffen over time. Notes of citrus peel linger in the finish. Decent acidity and well-integrated oak. Hints of dried herbs in the finish. (AY)

14.1%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2029  
\$65 RRP  
16

## **Bitner, Mi Tierra Reserve 2014 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 67% Syrah and 33% Petit Verdot. Grown at 2,690 ft (820 m) of elevation. Aged for 32 months in new French oak. 78 cases produced. Certified sustainable (LIVE), Salmon Safe, and Bee-Friendly Farming.*

Inky, opaque garnet. Aromas of cocoa powder, new oak and dark fruits. Sweetish flavours of black cherry, blackberry and black plum sit somewhat heavy on the palate, wrapped in thick, fleecy tannins. Not enough acidity. The oak is relatively well integrated, however. Seemingly overly heavy bottle that I was unable to weigh. (AY)

14.5%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$175 RRP

15

## **Bitner, Mi Tierra Barrel Select 2016 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 67% Syrah and 33% Petit Verdot grown at 2,690 ft (820 m) of elevation. 65 cases produced. Certified sustainable (LIVE), Salmon Safe, and Bee-Friendly Farming.*

Very dark garnet. Smells of blackberry and oak. Flavours of blackberry, black cherry and sweet oak are wrapped in a muscular skein of tannins that stiffen over time as well as drying out the mouth. Good acidity keeps things relatively fresh, but there's just too much wood at work here. (AY)

14.5%

Drink

2026

-

2029

\$125 RRP

15

## **Bitner, Menopause Merlot 2018 Snake River Valley**

*Grown at 2,570 ft (783 m) of elevation, Lanae Ridge vineyard. 139 cases produced.*  
Medium-to-dark garnet with some coffee highlights. Smells of sweet, candied cherries and plum jam. Plummy, sweet cherry-fruit flavours mix with sweet oak. Simple and a bit candied. Soft acidity, barely perceptible tannins. (AY)

14%

Drink

2020

-

2023

\$38 RRP

13

## **Cinder Chardonnay 2022 Snake River Valley**

*Fermented in a combination of black locust barrels, oak barrels and stainless-steel tanks. 20% went through malolactic conversion. 550 cases produced.*

Light yellow-gold. Aromas of lemon sherbet. Silky flavours of candied lemon, oak and a light vegetal quality end up slightly bitter on the palate. (AY)

13.2%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$26 RRP

14

## **Cinder, Rosé Syrah 2023 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of fruit from Sawtooth and Williamson vineyards. Hand-picked, direct to press with 30 minutes of skin contact, and then fermented in stainless-steel tanks for about 14 days. 500 cases produced. TA 6.3 g/l, pH 3.5.*

Bright pale ruby. Smells of cherries and raspberries. Flavours of berries mix with dried herbs and a touch of citrus peel. Decent acidity and a light tannic grip but, overall, a bit blocky and awkward. (AY)



13.4%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2026  
\$23 RRP  
14.5

## **Cinder, Rosé Cinsault 2023 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of fruit from Sawtooth and Williamson vineyards. Hand-picked, direct to press and then fermented in stainless steel for about 14 days. 250 cases produced. TA 5.8 g/l, pH 3.42.*

Light baby-pink. Smells of strawberry and watermelon rind. Crisp and lean flavours of watermelon, sour cherry and wet chalkboard have a nice mineral grip and decent acidity. Zippy and bright, even cheery. (AY)

13.3%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2026  
\$23 RRP  
16

## **Cinder Syrah 2021 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of fruit from Sawtooth and Williamson vineyards. Fermented in one-ton bins, with four punchdowns per day. Aged in 18% new American oak. 780 cases made.*

Very dark garnet with purple highlights. Smells of blackberry jam, tapenade and oak. Muscular tannins wrap around flavours of blackberry, oak, a hint of black-olive juice and dried herbs. Sweet oak dominates the finish. Decent acidity, but just too much wood. Seemingly overly heavy bottle that I was unable to weigh. (AY)

14.5%  
Drink  
2024

-  
2028  
\$40 RRP  
15

## **Clearwater Canyon, Lochsa Umiker Estate Vineyard Chardonnay 2023 Lewis-Clark Valley**

*A blend of 88% Chardonnay, 6% Riesling, 4% Viognier, 2% Muscat Canelli. 224 cases made.*

Palest gold. Smells of wet chalkboard and lemon oil. Faintly sweet flavours of white flowers and lemon curd have a nice stony quality to them. Silky texture and just slightly less acidity than I would like. Notes of oak and bitter citrus linger in the finish. Generally, a pretty successful wine. (AY)

13.8%  
Drink  
2024

-  
2026  
\$22 RRP  
16

## **Clearwater Canyon, Umiker Estate Reserve 2021 Lewis-Clark Valley**

*A blend of 37% Merlot, 34% Petit Verdot, 26% Cabernet Franc, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon. 243 cases produced.*

Aromas of sweet plum and cherry. Flavours of plum and cherry have a bright chopped-herb freshness and very good acidity. Lightly grippy tannins are fine-grained and supple. Well balanced and pretty. (AY)

14.7%  
Drink  
2024

-

2029  
\$42 RRP  
16.5

## **Clearwater Canyon, Umiker Estate Vineyard Syrah 2021 Lewis-Clark Valley**

*Contains 2% Petit Verdot. 240 cases produced.*

Dark garnet. Aromas of bloody meat, black olive and a hint of barnyard. Leathery tannins wrap around a core of meaty, barnyardy chocolate and dark-fruit flavours that are slightly salty. Some *Brettanomyces* here, it appears. Decent acidity. Packaged in an overly heavy bottle I was unable to weigh. (AY)

14.8%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$32 RRP

13

## **Coiled - Leslie Preston, Sawtooth Vineyard Block 17 Riesling Dry 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Closed with a screwcap. 186 cases produced. TA 6.7 g/l, pH 3.3, RS 2 g/l.*

Aromas of white flowers, orange peel and Asian pears. Flavours of mandarin-orange zest, Asian pear and citrus pith have a nice bright crispness to them and very good acidity. Textbook clean and dry. (AY)

13.4%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$22 RRP

16.5

## **Coiled - Leslie Preston, Sidewinder Syrah 2022 Snake River Valley**

*Fermented in open-top fermenters. Spends 17 months in 35% new French oak barrels. Closed with a screwcap. 182 cases produced. TA 5.7 g/l, pH 4.*

Dark garnet with purple highlights. Aromas of brown sugar, tapenade and dark berries. Faintly meaty blueberry and blackberry flavours feel a little flat on the palate as muscular tannins wrap around the fruit. Well-integrated oak but, without more acidity, the whole package sits somewhat limply on the palate. (AY)

14%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$34 RRP

13

## **Colter's Creek Sangiovese 2021 Lewis-Clark Valley**

*150 cases produced.*

Light-to-medium ruby. Smells of sweet cherry and oak. Flavours of cherry, leather and raspberry have a nice silky texture and bright acidity. Sweet oak integrates relatively well, and fine-grained tannins stay supple and slippery through a long finish. Pretty, if slightly woodier than I would like. (AY)

14.5%

Drink

2024

-

2028

\$26 RRP

16

## **Colter's Creek, Renegade 2021 Lewis-Clark Valley**

*A blend of 40% Mourvèdre, 30% Syrah, and 30% Grenache. 300 cases produced.*

Smells of slightly meaty strawberry and blueberry fruit. Juicy flavours of strawberry and blackberry have a light tannic grip and a high-toned quality. Missing a bit in the mid palate. Very good acidity. (AY)

15%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$28 RRP

15.5

## **Cuesta Sol, Estate Reserve Barbera 2020 Snake River Valley**

*Grown at an elevation of 2,900 ft (884 m). Aged for one year in American oak. 24 cases produced.*

Smells of boysenberry, lavender and mulling spices. Black cherry and boysenberry flavours are wrapped in a muscular skein of tannins as hints of orange peel and leather linger in the finish with a carob note. Decent acidity. A bit too much wood for my taste. (AY)

15.2%

Drink

2024

-

2028

\$60 RRP

15.5

## **Cuesta Sol Syrah 2021 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 86% Syrah, 13% Mourvèdre, 1% Cabernet Franc grown at 2,900 ft (884 m) of elevation. Aged for two years in new American oak. 23 cases produced.*

Dark garnet with purple highlights. Smells of freshly sawn wood and blackberry fruit. In the mouth, the oak is much better integrated, with flavours of blackberry and blueberry as well as the sweet, almost nutty note of oak. Tannins are supple and fine-grained. Definitely more wood influence here than I would like. Decent acidity. (AY)

15.4%

Drink

2024

-

2028

\$50 RRP

15

## **Dunning Tempranillo 2022 Snake River Valley**

*50 cases made.*

Dark garnet with purple highlights. Smells of black cherry, plum and black tea. Flavours of black cherry, black tea and plum have a light, sandpapery tannic texture and a hint of liquorice bitterness. Softer acidity than I would like. The tannins stiffen and gain muscle through the finish. (AY)

12.5%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$38 RRP

15

## **Famici Vermentino 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Grapes were destemmed and lightly crushed, then spent three days on the skins before pressing and fermentation. 95 cases produced. TA 6.2 g/l, pH 3.5.*

Pale gold. Smells of pears and white flowers. Faintly sweet flavours of pear and poached

pear mix with vanilla and white flowers. Very good acidity and a faint chalky texture round out the package. A hint of a vegetal note emerges in the finish. Otherwise, a very fine example. (AY)

13.2%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$32 RRP

16

## **Famici, Vineyard Blend 2021 Snake River Valley**

*A field blend of Petit Verdot, Merlot, Malbec and Cabernet Sauvignon co-fermented. Barrel-aged in 50% new French oak for 20 months, then aged in bottle for one year before release, currently planned for November 2024. 48 cases produced. TA 6 g/l, pH 3.7.*

Aromas of sweet oak and dark fruits. Flavours of black cherry and blueberry have a faint sweetness to them as lightly grippy tannins wrap around the core of fruit. Decent acidity. The oak stands out less on the palate but emerges in the finish. (AY)

15.3%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$65 RRP

15.5

## **Fujishin Viognier 2022 Snake River Valley**

*Fermented and aged in stainless steel. Closed with a screwcap. 116 cases produced. Near colourless with a hint of greenish gold. Smells of sweet oak, peaches and white flowers. Flavours of citrus pith, white flowers and white peaches mix with the faint bitterness of oak, which lingers in the finish. Decent acidity. (AY)*

14.9%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2026  
\$28 RRP  
15.5

## **Fujishin, Reserve Viognier 2022 Snake River Valley**

*Aged for six months in 100% new French oak. Closed with a screwcap. 175 cases produced.*

Palest gold, near colourless. Smells of nutty lemon and peach nectar. Flavours of toasted oak integrate pretty nicely with white peach and lemon, all with a nice, bright acidity and good balance. I just wish for less wood. (AY)

14.2%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2026  
\$28 RRP  
15.5

## **Fujishin, GSM 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Spent 22 months in 30% new American oak. 284 cases produced.*

Smells of strawberry jam, boysenberries and plum skin. Flavours of strawberries, plum skin and blackberries have a nice, bouncy brightness thanks to very good acidity. Lightly grippy tannins flex their muscles as the wine finishes with hints of oak and dried herbs. Very well balanced, with no real hint of how high-octane it is. (AY)

15.4%  
Drink  
2025  
-  
2028



\$38 RRP

16.5

## **Fujishin Petit Verdot 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Spent 22 months in 30% new French oak. 128 cases produced.*

Aromas of blueberry and a hint of snuffed candle. Fleecy tannins surround flavours of blueberry and blackberry with a hint of darker earth beneath. Dried herbs linger in the finish with the drying quality of the tannins. Decent acidity. Comes in an extremely heavy bottle that I was unable to weigh. (AY)

15.5%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$38 RRP

15

## **Fujishin, Windseeker Vineyard Syrah 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Spends 22 months in 40% new French oak. 154 cases produced.*

Smells of sweet blackberry and blueberry fruit. Juicy flavours of blackberry and blueberry are shot through with a hint of sweet oak, as very good acidity keeps things fresh and bright. Lightly grippy tannins. Very good. (AY)

14.6%

Drink

2024

-

2028

\$48 RRP

16.5

## **Fujishin, Lanae Ridge Vineyard Syrah 2020 Snake River Valley**

*Spent about 24 months in approximately 70% new French oak. 125 cases produced.*  
Dark garnet. Smells of nutty oak and black-cherry fruit. Nutty and oaky flavours of black cherry and plum mix with softer acidity than I would like. Those same nutty oaky notes linger in the finish. Fluffy, fleecy tannins. Too much wood influence. (AY)

14.6%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$54 RRP

15

## **Fujishin, Bord du Serpent 2018 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, with small amounts of Petit Verdot and 5% Malbec. Aged for 24 months in 70% French, 30% American oak - 100% new. 139 cases produced.*

Very dark garnet. Aromas of black cherry and toasted oak. Smooth flavours of mocha, black cherry and plum mix with nutty oak and hints of dried herbs. Soft, fleecy tannins hang in the background. Decent acidity. (AY)

14.7%

Drink

2024

-

2029

\$87 RRP

15.5

## **Hat Ranch Grüner Veltliner 2023 Snake River Valley**

*185 cases produced.*

Palest gold. Smells of unripe apples and lime pith. Flavours of lemon pith and lime pith mix with unripe apples and a light, chalky minerality. Decent acidity. Lean and bright. (AY)

12.9%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$24 RRP

15.5

## **Hat Ranch Pinot Grigio 2023 Snake River Valley**

*99 cases made.*

Pale blonde with pale-copper highlights. Aromas of pears and crab apples. Tart flavours of crab apple and unripe pear are crisp and bright with very good acidity. The wine is a little short on the palate, but otherwise pleasant in its leanness. (AY)

13.5%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$26 RRP

15

## **Hat Ranch Tempranillo 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Fruit comes 50% from Hat Ranch vineyards, 30% from Williamson vineyard, and 20% from Rockspur vineyard. 239 cases produced.*

Aromas of sweet cherry fruit. Round and plush flavours of cherry and dark plum have a nice aromatic sweetness to them and very faint, almost imperceptible tannins. A hint of herbal bitterness lingers in the finish. Decent acidity. A little on the simple side, but straightforward and clean. (AY)

13.9%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$33 RRP

15.5

## **Hat Ranch, Red Blend 2021 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 61% Malbec, 20% Tempranillo, 19% Merlot from Hat Ranch, Sawtooth, Rockspur, and Williamson vineyards. 242 cases produced.*

Dark garnet. Aromas of blueberries, flowers and black cherries. Juicy flavours of black cherry, blueberry and liquorice root have a nice brightness thanks to very good acidity. Lightly leathery tannins wrap around the core of fruit. Notes of chopped green herbs and oak linger in the finish. (AY)

14.1%

Drink

2025

-

2028

\$30 RRP

16

## **Hat Ranch Petit Verdot 2021 Snake River Valley**

*The Petit Verdot comes from Sawtooth vineyard, blended with 5% Merlot from Rockspur vineyard. 75 cases made.*

Very dark garnet. Smells of blueberries, liquorice and oak. Flavours of blackberry, blueberry and a touch of citrus peel are shot through with a heavy dose of oak. The tannins dry the mouth and linger with a bitter quality in the finish. Soft acidity. (AY)

14.9%

Drink

2025

-

2026  
\$35 RRP  
13

## **Hells Canyon, Reserve Chardonnay 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Vineyard planted in 1981 and grown at 2,500 ft (762 m) of elevation. 100% barrel-fermented. 226 cases produced. TA 5.6 g/l, pH 3.42.*

Pale yellow-gold. Aromas of lemon curd and white flowers. Flavours of lemon curd and sweet oak mix with nice grapefruit pith and fresh pomelo notes. There's a faint minerality under the wine, and decent acidity, though I would love more. (AY)

13.4%  
Drink  
2024

-  
2026  
\$42 RRP  
16

## **Hells Canyon, Reserve Cabernet Franc 2020 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 79% Cabernet Franc, 14% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, grown at 2,500 ft (762 m) of elevation. 27-year-old vines. TA 6.5 g/l, pH 3.44.*

Dark garnet. Aromas of freshly hewn oak and camphor wood layered over dark fruits. The oak pervades flavours of black cherry and plum, crowding them out and making this a mouthful of wood rather than fruit. Softer acidity doesn't help matters. (AY)

13.3%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2025  
\$42 RRP

## **Hells Canyon, Atomic Black Syrah 2020 Snake River Valley**

*10% of the wine is a blend of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Fruit grown at 2,500 ft (762 m) of elevation. 151 cases produced. TA 6.5 g/l, pH 3.44.*

Very dark garnet. Smells of sweet oak and blackberries. Flavours of blackberries and sweet oak mix with black cherry. The tannins here are wood-driven and drying, parching the mouth. Too much oak here, overwhelming the fruit. Softer-than-needed acidity doesn't help. (AY)

13.6%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$68 RRP

13

## **Holesinsky Viognier 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Grapes grown at an elevation of 2,700 ft (823 m). Direct to press, cold-macerated and fermented in stainless-steel tanks. 163 cases produced. RS 10 g/l, pH 3.37.*

Near colourless. Smells of white peaches and Asian pears. Flavours of white peach and Asian pear mix with a hint of citrus pith. Decent acidity, but it could do with more. Pleasant, if a bit straightforward, with a bit of sweetness. (AY)

11.5%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$16 RRP

15.5

## **Holesinsky, Stainless Steel Chardonnay 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Grown at 3,381 ft (1,031 m) of elevation. Fermented and aged in stainless-steel tanks. 201 cases produced. RS 2.4 g/l, pH 3.29. Certified organic.*

Smells of cut grass, green apple and pink grapefruit. The wine is extraordinarily lean for Chardonnay, with flavours more akin to Sauvignon Blanc: grassy green apple and lime. Excellent acidity, but seemingly just unripe. (AY)

12%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$18 RRP

14.5

## **Holesinsky, Buhjolais Gertschen Vineyard Rosé Syrah 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Closed with a screwcap. 130 cases produced.*

Light baby-pink. Smells of berry jam, citrus peel, and a hint of something vegetal. Unripe flavours of blackberry and blackberry leaf mix with that vegetal note. Softer acidity than I want in a rosé. (AY)

11.5%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$14 RRP

13

## **Indian Creek, Williamson & Arena Valley Vineyards** **Viognier 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Destemmed and crushed, then pressed. The juice was settled for 12 hours and racked to a stainless-steel tank for a cool inoculated fermentation. Cold stabilised for one month, clarified with bentonite clay and filtered before bottling. 200 cases produced. TA 6 g/l, pH 3.53.*

Smells of orange peel, apricot and peach pit. Flavours of peach pit, apricot and orange peel mix with citrus pith and a hint of bitter herbs. Decent acidity. Textbook varietal expression. (AY)

12.8%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$20 RRP

16

## **Indian Creek Tempranillo 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Destemmed then cold-soaked on the skins for three days and inoculated. Aged for a total of 16 months in a combination of American and French oak. 150 cases produced. TA 4.8 g/l, pH 3.91.*

Medium-to-dark garnet in the glass with purple highlights. This wine smells of black cherry, baking spices and oak. In the mouth, fleecy tannins wrap around a core of sweet oak, black cherry, nutmeg and leather. Soft acidity. Too much wood here, as the tannins parch the mouth. (AY)

12.4%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$30 RRP

14.5



## **Koenig Chardonnay 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Aged for six months in neutral barrels. Full malolactic conversion. 168 cases produced. Smells of vanilla and lemon curd with hints of oak. Silky flavours of lemon curd and grapefruit mix with the vanilla of oak and a touch of orange peel. Decent acidity. (AY)*

13.9%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$22 RRP

15.5

## **Koenig, Rosé Dry 2023 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 60% Merlot and 40% Sangiovese. Fermented and aged in stainless-steel tanks. Malolactic conversion blocked. 330 cases produced.*

Palest baby-pink. Smells of berries and watermelon. Bright and juicy flavours of strawberry and watermelon mix with a hint of dried herbs. Silky, bright, crisp and juicy. Excellent acidity. (AY)

13.8%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$20 RRP

16.5

## **Koenig Syrah 2021 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of three different vineyards. Open-top fermenters with daily punchdowns. Goes through malolactic conversion in tank and then racked to 100% French oak (65% new) for 24 months. 582 cases produced.*

Very dark garnet. Aromas of blackberry and blueberry. Plush, velvety tannins wrap around flavours of dark blueberry and black-cherry fruit. Softer acidity. Sweet oak is well integrated for the most part but pokes out in the finish. (AY)

15.1%

Drink

2024

-

2028

\$34 RRP

15.5

## **Koenig Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah 2020 Snake River Valley**

*50% Cabernet Sauvignon and 50% Syrah. Spends 28 months in 75% new American oak. 604 cases produced. pH 3.73.*

Dark garnet in the glass, this wine smells of black-cherry fruit with a hint of blackberries. In the mouth, juicy black-cherry and blackberry fruit has a nice touch of aromatic sweetness from the sweet oak, which is very well integrated. Fine-grained tannins leave a classy impression in the mouth, and very good acidity makes for an overall juicy quality. Overly heavy bottle. (AY)

14.6%

Drink

2024

-

2029

\$36 RRP

17

## **Koenig, Lanae Ridge Vineyard Nebbiolo 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Spent 24 months in neutral oak. 362 cases produced. pH 3.67.*

Light ruby with a blood-red rim. Smells of strawberry and dried flowers and a hint of snuffed candle. Lightly grippy tannins wrap around a core of strawberry flavour and that varietally characteristic note of asphalt. The tannins stiffen with time and dry the mouth a bit, but there's enough acidity here to keep the wine fresh, and even a little stony minerality peeking through. Very successful wine that leaves me wishing more people were experimenting with the variety in Idaho. (AY)

14.6%

Drink

2025

-

2029

\$34 RRP

16

## **Koenig Sangiovese 2021 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of fruit from two different sites. Open-top fermenters with daily punchdowns. Goes through malolactic conversion in tank and then racked to 100% neutral oak for 24 months. 367 cases produced.*

Smells of cherry and roasted fig. Flavours of cherry and Nutella mix with a touch of citrus peel. A nutty quality lingers in the finish, with softer acidity than I'd like and lightly grippy tannins. (AY)

14%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$34 RRP

15

## **Koenig Zinfandel 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Spends 26 months in 50% new American oak. 438 cases produced.*

Smells of blackberries and liquorice. Flavours of blackberry and nutty oak mix with liquorice and brown sugar. Very ripe. Softer acidity. Plush, barely perceptible tannins. (AY)

15.5%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$34 RRP

14

## **Koenig, Oak Age Ice Wine Riesling 2012 Snake River Valley**

*600 cases produced. RS 250 g/l, pH 3.43.*

Light amber. Smells of crushed roasted nuts. Flavours of candied nuts, vanilla cream, candied orange peel and a hint of *café au lait* are nice but very syrupy, without enough acidity to keep them vibrant. Notes of sweet coffee linger in the finish. (AY)

10.8%

Drink

2016

-

2030

\$80 RRP per half

15.5

## **Koenig, Williamson Vineyard Ice Wine Riesling 2022 Snake River Valley**

*600 cases produced. RS 190 g/l.*

Light-to-medium yellow. Smells of butterscotch – almost precisely like Werther's Original candies. Silky, even syrupy flavours of butterscotch and candied lemon mix with orange

blossom. Very sweet, but without enough acidity to keep it from being somewhat cloying. Would doubtless taste lovely over vanilla ice cream, however. (AY)

11.5%

Drink

2024

-

2030

\$30 RRP per half

15

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Riesling 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Whole-cluster-pressed, fermented and aged in steel. 150 cases produced.*

Smells of Asian pear and white flowers. Flavours of Asian pear and citrus zest mix with citrus pith and a hint of dried herbs. Decent acidity. Crisp. (AY)

13.7%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$30 RRP

15

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Riesling 2022 Snake River Valley**

*Whole-cluster-pressed, fermented and aged in stainless-steel tanks. 200 cases produced.*

Smells of paraffin, Asian pear, and citrus oil. Bright and even zippy flavours of Asian pear, mandarin zest and grapefruit have a nice cut to them thanks to very good acidity. Missing some complexity, however. (AY)

13.3%

Drink

2023

-

2026

\$30 RRP

15.5

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Chenin Blanc 2022** **Snake River Valley**

*150 cases produced.*

Aromas of pears and white flowers. Flavours of pear and white flowers mix with a hint of pear skin and the faint note of citrus pith. Decent acidity and a hint of wet-chalkboard minerality. Somewhat simple. (AY)

13.3%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$26 RRP

15.5

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Emerald Slope Viognier** **2022 Snake River Valley**

*150 cases produced.*

Near colourless with just a hint of greenish gold. Smells of ripe peach and apricot. Crisp flavours of peach and apricot mix with white flowers and a nice bit of citrus. Decent acidity and nice clean length without sweetness. Pretty. (AY)

14.3%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$18 RRP

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Rosé Pinot Noir 2023** **Snake River Valley**

*Spends about 24 hours on the skins, aged and fermented in stainless steel. 100 cases produced.*

Light baby-pink with ruby highlights. Aromas of raspberry, raspberry leaf and dried herbs. Flavours of raspberry and dried herbs mix with a touch of citrus peel. More savoury than the previous vintage. A little bitter on the finish. (AY)

12%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$26 RRP

15

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Rosé Pinot Noir 2022** **Snake River Valley**

*Spends about 24 hours on the skins, aged and fermented in stainless-steel tanks. 100 cases produced.*

Pale baby-pink with a hint of bronze. Smells of watermelon and raspberries. Flavours of raspberry and citrus are crisp with decent acidity. Citrus peel in the finish.

Straightforward. (AY)

11%

Drink

2023

-

2025

\$26 RRP

15.5

## **Sawtooth, GSM 2022 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 66% Syrah, 24% Grenache, 10% Mourvèdre. 200 cases produced.*

Smells of strawberries and cherries. Bright flavours of strawberry and cherry fruit have a nice hint of root beer and a touch of sweet oak. Very good acidity and length. Nice lift.

(AY)

14.5%

Drink

2024

-

2028

\$38 RRP

16.5

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Malbec 2022 Snake River Valley**

*Fermented in two-ton fermenters, manual punchdowns three times a day. Aged in French oak, 30% new, for 16-18 months. 225 cases produced.*

Inky purple. Aromas of sweet oak and blueberries. Flavours of blueberry and black-cherry fruit are shot through with sweet oak and vanilla. Fine-grained tannins and, unfortunately, softer acidity. But there's a little underlying minerality. (AY)

13.5%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$42 RRP

15.5

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Malbec 2021 Snake River Valley**



*Fermented in two-ton fermenters, manual punchdowns three times a day. Aged in French oak, 30% new, for 16–18 months. 225 cases produced.*

Inky garnet. Smells of snuffed candle, black cherry and a hint of raisins. Plush, fine-grained tannins wrap around flavours of blackberry and black-cherry fruit tinged with a hint of brown sugar and sawdust. Soft acidity. (AY)

13.5%

Drink

2023

-

2027

\$42 RRP

15

## **Sawtooth, Classic Fly Series Tempranillo 2022 Snake River Valley**

*175 cases produced.*

Dark garnet. Smells of brown sugar and cherry with a hint of leather and cedar. Flavours of cherry and brown sugar mix with a touch of nutty wood and some lovely freshness thanks to very good acidity. Faint, fine-grained tannins. (AY)

13.6%

Drink

2024

-

2029

\$42 RRP

16

## **Sawtooth, Trout Series Cabernet Sauvignon 2022 Snake River Valley**

*150 cases produced.*

Aromas of chopped green herbs and cherry fruit. Bright flavours of cherry, chopped green

herbs and cedar. Lightly grippy tannins. Classically profiled, with medium body and decent acidity, but missing some depth. (AY)

13.5%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$48 RRP

15.5

## **Sawtooth, Trout Series Petit Verdot 2022 Snake River Valley**

*200 cases produced.*

Inky garnet. Smells of blackberry and blueberry fruit. Plush flavours of blueberry and liquorice mix with brown sugar and a touch of prune. Soft acidity. Too blowsy for me. (AY)

13.5%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$48 RRP

14.5

## **Scoria, Williamson Vineyard Grüner Veltliner 2023 Snake River Valley**

*112 cases produced.*

Smells of Fuji apples, honeysuckle and a hint of lemongrass. Lightly sweet, pretty flavours of apples and honeysuckle have a faint chalky texture to them, but I just wish there was more acidity. Clean, but not at all crisp. (AY)

13.2%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$22 RRP

14.5

## **Scoria, Rosé Merlot 2023 Snake River Valley**

*Direct-pressed to stainless-steel tanks for fermentation and ageing. 320 cases produced.* Pale baby-pink. Aromas of sweet berries. Sweetish flavours of cherry and plum have a light grip and a faint citrus flavour. Soft acidity makes the wine a bit weighty on the palate and, combined with the perception of sweetness (though the winemaker claims no residual sugar), it's not quite as refreshing as you'd want. (AY)

13.1%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$22 RRP

14.5

## **Scoria Malbec 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Aged 24 months in 75% new American oak. 360 cases produced.* Inky garnet with purple highlights. Smells of bourbon barrels and candied blueberries. Flavours of blueberry and blackberry are wrapped in fleecy tannins and shot through with sweet oak. The tannins dry the mouth, leaving a slightly parched quality to the finish. Decent acidity, but just too darn much wood influence. (AY)

15%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$34 RRP

14.5

## **Scoria Cabernet Sauvignon 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Aged 30 months in American oak. 390 cases produced.*

Very dark garnet. Smells of black cherry and blackberry fruit. Rich and ripe flavours of black cherry, blackcurrant and blackberry fruit are round and plush, with thick, fleecy tannins that surround and cushion the sweet, ripe fruit. Brawny, but with decent acidity. Will appeal to those who like their Cabernets rich and ripe. Well balanced for all of its elevated alcohol. (AY)

15.8%

Drink

2025

-

2029

\$34 RRP

16

## **Scoria Merlot 2019 Snake River Valley**

*Aged for 26 months in a combination of French and American oak. 240 cases produced.*

Smells of oak mixed with red and black fruits. Leathery tannins wrap around flavours of black cherry and brown sugar shot through with sweet oak. Soft acidity makes the wine plush and heavier than it needs to be in the mouth. (AY)

14.6%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$34 RRP

14

## **Ste Chapelle, Open Air Muscat Blanc 2023 Snake River Valley**

*200 cases produced.*

Near colourless. Smells of white flowers and green melon. Flavours of green melon, green apple, and a hint of floral quality swirl against a wet-pavement backdrop with a faint chalky texture. Could do with more acidity. (AY)

13%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$26 RRP

15

## **Telaya, Skyline Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 2022** **Snake River Valley**

*Spends six months in neutral oak. 275 cases produced.*

Smells of lemon pith and orange peel. Sourish flavours of lemon pith and green apple get more sour through the finish. Decent but softer-than-I'd-like acidity. (AY)

11%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$25 RRP

14

## **Telaya, Emerald Slope Vineyard Picpoul 2022 Snake** **River Valley**

*The Snake River Valley AVA extends just a little bit into Oregon, so while this wine is made by an Idaho producer, it comes from a vineyard just over the border in Oregon. 125 cases produced.*

Smells of lemon pith and wet chalkboard. Silky flavours of lemon pith and grapefruit pith

mix with pomelo flesh, but lower-than-normal acidity. There's a faint chalky sensation lingering in the finish, but I want more zip, especially from this grape variety. (AY)

11.8%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$28 RRP

14

## **Telaya, Scoria Vineyard Malbec 2018 Snake River Valley**

*Twice daily punchdowns, cold soak for 12 days. 20 months of ageing in 40% new French oak. 120 cases produced.*

Aromas of blueberries, blackberries and a hint of wet earth. Rich and round flavours of blueberries and blackberries are shot through with dried herbs and a hint of bitter liquorice root. Decent acidity but I'd like more. (AY)

14.2%

Drink

2022

-

2029

\$28 RRP

16.5

## **Telaya Syrah 2021 Snake River Valley**

*150 cases produced.*

Inky purple. Smells of struck match, iodine and blackberries. Rich flavours of blackberry and black cherry are wrapped in gauzy tannins. Notes of dried herbs linger with a faint bitterness in the finish. Softer acidity than I would like makes this wine sit heavily on the palate. (AY)

14.2%

Drink  
2024  
-  
2026  
\$38 RRP  
15.5

## **Telaya, Block 46 Syrah 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Fermented in a large-format oak barrel with twice-daily punchdowns and cold soak. 22–24 months of ageing in 30% new French oak. 150 cases produced.*

Inky, opaque purple. Smells of iodine, blueberry and earth. Earthy flavours of blueberry and iodine mix with bitter herbal notes that linger with a hint of citrus peel in the finish. Light, cottony tannins. (AY)

14.2%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2028  
\$38 RRP  
14.5

## **Telaya Mourvèdre 2021 Snake River Valley**

*175 cases produced.*

Medium garnet with ruby highlights. Aromas of dried flowers, citrus and blueberries. Flavours of blueberries, flowers and a touch of brown sugar have a silky texture but not enough acidity to be truly refreshing. Lightly grippy tannins sneak up in the finish. Promising flavour profile but needs more zip. (AY)

13.2%  
Drink  
2024  
-  
2025  
\$38 RRP

## **Telaya, Turas 2021 Snake River Valley**

*A blend of 46% Syrah, 13% Malbec, 12% Merlot, 12% Mourvèdre, 8% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Sangiovese. Twice-daily punchdowns, cold soak. Aged for 22–24 months in 30% new French oak. 670 cases produced.*

Dark garnet. Smells of blackberry and wet earth. Earthy blackberry and black-cherry flavours are wrapped in faint, gauzy tannins. There's a faint bitter note that lingers in the finish. Decent acidity. (AY)

13.6%

Drink

2024

–

2027

\$40 RRP

14

## **Williamson Viognier 2022 Snake River Valley**

*14-day fermentation in stainless-steel tanks. 158 cases produced. pH 3.39.*

Near colourless with a hint of pale gold. Smells of tinned peaches and white flowers.

Faintly sweet flavours of canned peaches and tropical-fruit nectar have lower acidity than I would like, leaving the wine a bit flabby in the mouth. Nice flavours, though a bit ripe for my tastes. (AY)

14.8%

Drink

2024

–

2026

\$21 RRP

15.5

## **Williamson, Riesling Dry 2022 Snake River Valley**



*25-day fermentation at less than 70 °F (21 °C) in a stainless-steel tank. 135 cases produced. RS 4 g/l, pH 3.45.*

Smells of honey and pear skin. Bitter flavours of pear skin and citrus peel mix with a touch of honeysuckle and Asian pear. Faintly sweet despite being labelled dry and missing the acidity that would improve the quality of the wine. Bitter notes linger in the finish. (AY)

14.6%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$20 RRP

15

## **Williamson Albariño 2021 Snake River Valley**

*Fermented in stainless-steel tanks. 140 cases produced.*

Smells of green apple and greengage plum. Soft and silky flavours of green apple, sweet celery, and lemon cucumber don't have enough acid to make them truly refreshing, however nice they may be. (AY)

13.1%

Drink

2024

-

2026

\$25 RRP

15

## **Williamson Sangiovese 2020 Snake River Valley**

*Aged for 26 months in used American oak. 141 cases produced.*

Smells of cherry, cedar and a nutty brown-sugar aroma. Slightly smoky flavours of cherry and roasted nuts mix with a touch of dried herbs. Very good acidity keeps things fresh and lighter on the palate. Faint, fine-grained tannins. Intriguing. (AY)

13.6%

Drink

2024

-

2027

\$35 RRP

16

## **Williamson Syrah 2020 Snake River Valley**

*Fermented in an open-top fermenter. Aged for 24 months in a combination of 70% new French oak and 30% used American oak. 139 cases produced.*

Aromas of blackberry and black-cherry fruit. Soft, rich flavours of blackberry, blueberry and herbs mix with mocha and brown-sugar notes as the wine finishes a bit heavy on the palate. Not enough acidity. (AY)

15.5%

Drink

2024

-

2025

\$35 RRP

14