

Regional

L'Ecole N° 41

Focused on its estate planting in the Walla Walla Valley, L'Ecole is a regional powerhouse, a top performer in our tastings year after year.

The Legacy: L'Ecole N° 41 was founded by Baker and Jean Ferguson in 1983, at a time when Walla Walla vineyard development was still in its infancy. So they sought purchased fruit further afield in the Columbia Valley while the Walla Walla slowly filled with vines. For decades, Walla Walla could boast of just two major sources of fruit, Seven Hills and Pepper Bridge vineyards, and not surprisingly, these became the backbone of the brand. Seven Hills is an estate vineyard for L'Ecole, and it was the first winery to make wine from Pepper Bridge fruit, in 1993. Since the turn of the century, the winery has made tandem reserves from these two vineyards, calling the wines Perigee and Apogee. Perigee showed best in the 2012 vintage, the blend based on older plantings at Seven Hills. Mostly cabernet sauvignon (55 percent), along with merlot, franc, malbec and petite verdot, its leafy spice and dark, ferrous structure supports warm plum fruit.

The Future: L'Ecole's future may rest with the Ferguson Vineyard, a windswept, shallow-soiled ridgeline at the SeVein property. "Bud break is earlier up there than any other location in Walla Walla," says Marty Clubb, the Fergusons' son-in-law and the grower behind L'Ecole. "You'd think that harvest would come earlier, but no, the heat accumulation is slower and more gradual."

Ferguson, Filtered: Fruit from the vineyard composes the winery's newest flagship, called simply Ferguson, first made in 2011. The power of the Ferguson Vineyard fruit is palpable in L'Ecole's top-scoring wine this year, the 2012 Walla Walla Valley Cabernet Sauvignon. It anchors the wine with a gritty, gutsy, basaltic grip, accounting for 22 percent of the blend with fruit from Pepper Bridge and Seven Hills, as well as a pair of Rocks vineyards, Stone Valley and Yellow Jacket.

— P.J.C.



TOP 100 WINERIES 2015



photo of Marty Clubb by Kirk Hirota.

Marty Clubb

Winemaker: Mike Sharon
Viticulturists: Marty Clubb and Sadie Drury
Owners: Marty & Megan Clubb
Founded: 1983
Acres owned: 85
Cases produced: 47,500
Estate grown: 50%
Location: Lowden, WA
Website: lecole.com

TOP-SCORING WINES

- 93** '12 Walla Walla Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$40 (10/15)
- 92** '12 Walla Walla Valley Perigee Seven Hills Vyd. \$50 (10/15)
- 92** '12 Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$32 (8/15)

Wine & Spirits

PREMIER CRUS: The wineries that have earned the most **Top 100** awards.

Each winery appears with the number of awards earned since the 1988 Buying Guide, the first, to this issue (2016). The date of the most recent award appears in parentheses. To view a complete list of awards for each winery, visit wineandspiritsmagazine.com.

25 Awards

Penfolds (2016)

21 Awards

Concha y Toro (2016)

Chateau Ste. Michelle (2016)

18 Awards

Antinori (2016)

17 Awards

Boutari (2014)

Ridge (2015)

Shafer (2015)

15 Awards

Louis Jadot (2015)

Bouchard Père & Fils (2016)



Cabernet vines planted in the 1880s at Kalimna Vineyard contributed to Penfolds' 25th Top 100 award.

14 Awards

Iron Horse (2015)

L'Ecole N° 41 (2016)

Qupé (2015)

13 Awards

Flowers (2015)

Joseph Phelps (2016)

Louis Roederer (2016)

Williams Selyem (2015)

12 Awards

Beringer (2014)

M. Chapoutier (2007)

De Loach (2013)

Diamond Creek (2016)

Champagne Krug (2016)

Niepoort (2016)

Storybook Mountain (2016)

Von Strasser (2015)

11 Awards

Andrew Will (2015)

Aveleda (2012)

Cune (2016)

Gary Farrell (2008)

E. Guigal (2016)

Dr. Loosen (2016)

Robert Mondavi (2014)

C. von Schubert (2014)

10 Awards

Catena Zapata (2015)

Henschke (2013)

Kendall-Jackson (2012)

Santa Rita (2011)

9 Awards

Marqués de Cáceres (2008)

Ceretto (2012)

Veuve Clicquot (2011)

Geyser Peak (2007)

Luis Pato (2016)

Ravenswood (2016)

8 Awards

Carmen (2008)

d'Arenberg (2015)

J.M. da Fonseca (2010)

Frog's Leap (2016)

King Estate (2015)

Merryvale (2006)

Quinta do Noval (2016)

Roederer Estate (2016)

Yalumba (2016)

7 Awards

Beaulieu (2010)

Benziger (2013)

Buil & Giné (2016)

Maison Joseph Drouhin (2011)

Gai'a (2016)

Schloss Gobelsberg (2015)

Grgich Hills (2008)

Hermann J. Wiemer (2016)

Paul Jaboulet Aîné (2015)

Kenwood (2014)

Domaine Leflaive (2013)

Masi (2008)

Movia (2016)

Peay (2015)

Rochioli (2014)

Ruffino (2008)

Truchard (2014)

Robert Weil (2014)