

DAILY CHRONICLE

Uncorked: Sharing a can with Sasquatch

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This time of year Taylor Monson is the star of dinner and lunch parties.

As the sales manager at Goose Ridge in Washington's Columbia Valley, Monson has unfettered access to the bounty offered by the estate's 3,000 acres. There was cherry season, apple season and, of course, there's always the wine that she can bring to a party.

Winemaker spotlight

The Monson family started as cattle farmers.

Scattered across the estate's 3,000 acres are dramatic elevation changes, vineyards, cherry and apple orchards and cattle. Nearly 2,200 acres are planted to vineyards and the wines for G3 by Goose Ridge are priced for everyday drinking while they deliver a tasty collection of flavors.

The G3 Chardonnay 2016 (\$15) has stone fruit, baked warm apple and vanilla, there's hints of apple pie crust all propped up by enough of a toasty vanilla note on the finish to provide an expansive experience.

Because they control the entire process, Monson has maintained blue-collar costs.

"We own our own vineyards," Monson said. "The production is all on us. We own the bottling line and control the product from the ground to the cellar. That allows us to keep our quality high and prices reasonable."

With vineyards in the shadow of the Red Mountain AVA, Goose Ridge takes advantage of the unique terroir with their Cabernet Sauvignon. Washington has a firm grasp on the less voluptuous version of the red wine in the domestic market.

Even though summer days can reach 100 degrees, be bone dry and have huge diurnal shifts, the wines are pure Washington in style. The G3 Cabernet Sauvignon 2016 is dominated by cherry, plum and sweet ground tobacco. It's loaded with flavors but not extracted. There's a mix of unique iron like minerality and earthy flavors. They stand out, draw you in further and aren't readily seen in other domestic wine-growing regions.

"I think of Washington wine as our own category," Monson said. "This is our 21st anniversary of planting the vineyard. We want to connect the story of the vineyard and family because Washington Cabernet is so wonderful."

"We might be the largest winery in Washington that no one knows about."

An assumption that might not last long.

What to buy

There's plenty of room on the bandwagon. A quick walk through a wine shop or grocery store will prove that canned wine has moved from niche market to mainstream. The product also has continued to improve. While white and sparkling wines showed best at first, Cascadian Outfitters, Goose Ridge's foray into the canned market, is perfect for pool side, hiking and other outdoor activities.

The can sleeve looks like a mix between an outdoor store and old fashioned post card with its mountains and Sasquatch silhouette with a wine glass in hand. The Red Blend shows the progress made in canning a red wine while the white flavors are varietal true and show well. Perfect for an adventure in the woods. Bring an extra can, in case you run into Sasquatch.