

L'ECOLE NO 41

Regional

THIS IS L'ECOLE NO 41'S THIRTEENTH consecutive Winery of the Year honor, a track record few US producers can match. The achievement naturally speaks of consistency. But such success is also the result of small shifts in emphasis that have kept the brand and its wines contemporary and emblematic of this corner of the Columbia Valley.

In some cases the changes aren't small at all. In 2008 L'Ecole planted Ferguson Vineyard, a parcel among the much-vaunted ridgeline plantings of the Sevein project in the Walla Walla Valley's southern flank. Named for founders Baker and Jean Ferguson, the vineyard was precarious an investment as any L'Ecole had attempted—the proof of which was there for all to see in the remarkable wall of basalt that formed the western edge of the property, some 20 feet thick and seemingly impenetrable. How would wine from this parcel compare with the brand's two iconic bottlings, Apogee and Perigee? With its challenging soils and howling ridgeline winds, how would it perform at all?



This year, they got their answer: The inaugural Ferguson bottling, the 2011, was L'Ecole's top-performing wine at our tasting table.

Ferguson lies just uphill from Seven Hills Vineyard, the source of Perigee, and already the differences between the two properties are striking. "Every variety we grow up at Ferguson takes on a darker coloration," says owner Marty Clubb, "whether it's the merlot or the cab franc or the malbec; it's so unlike Seven Hills, only four hundred feet downhill."

Perigee is formidable this year as well, showing more of its mineral frame in a cool vintage, supporting red fruits, black cherry and red plum. But it doesn't possess the tannic thrust of the 2011 Ferguson, a blend of cabernet, merlot and franc that even in its youth is giving off several of the classic Walla Walla aromatic umami markers—the cedar and sun-dried tomato notes. It's expressive, precocious, unique to place, showing all its potential for a bright future. — P.J.C.



Viticulturists: Marty Clubb (pictured) and Sadie Drury

Winemaker: Mike Sharon

Founded: 1983

Acres owned: 85

Annual production: 43,500 cases

Estate grown: 50%

Owners: Marty and Megan Clubb

Known for: A classic Walla Walla brand, expanding into new territory

Location: Lowden, WA

Website: lecole.com

TOP-SCORING WINES 2014

94	'11 Walla Walla Valley Ferguson Vineyard	\$60 (10/14)
92	'11 Walla Walla Valley Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard	\$50 (10/14)
91	'13 Columbia Valley Old Vines Chenin Blanc	\$16 (10/14)

Wine & Spirits

28th ANNUAL

HALL OF FAME

Here are the superstar performers, the wineries whose collections of wines have earned the most *Winery of the Year* awards in the past 27 years.

24 Awards

Penfolds 89, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

20 Awards

Concha y Toro 92, 97, 98, 99, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Chateau Ste. Michelle

88, 89, 90, 97, 99, 00, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

17 Awards

Antinori

89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 00, 01, 03, 04, 06, 14, 15

Boutari

92, 94, 98, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Ridge

96, 99, 00, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Shafer

91, 93, 94, 95, 99, 00, 01, 02, 03, 05, 06, 07, 08, 10, 11, 14, 15

15 Awards

Louis Jadot 86, 92, 95, 96, 97, 99, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15

14 Awards

Bouchard Père & Fils (2014)
Iron Horse (2015)
Qupé (2015)

13 Awards

Flowers (2015)
L'Ecole N° 41 (2015)
Williams Selyem (2015)

12 Awards

Beringer (2014)
M. Chapoutier (2007)
De Loach (2013)
Joseph Phelps (2006)
Louis Roederer (2015)
Von Strasser (2015)

11 Awards

Andrew Will (2015)
Aveleda (2012)
Diamond Creek (2013)
Gary Farrell (2008)
Champagne Krug (2015)
Robert Mondavi (2014)
Niepoort (2014)
C. von Schubert (2014)
Storybook Mountain (2015)

10 Awards

Catena Zapata (2015)
Cune (2015)
E. Guigal (2015)
Henschke (2013)
Kendall-Jackson (2012)
Dr. Loosen (2015)
Santa Rita (2011)

9 Awards

Marqués de Cáceres (2008)
Ceretto (2012)
Veuve Clicquot (2011)
Geyser Peak (2007)
Rosenblum (2006)

8 Awards

Carmen (2008)
d'Arenberg (2015)
J.M. da Fonseca (2010)
King Estate (2015)
Merryvale (2006)
Ravenswood (2015)

7 Awards

Beaulieu (2010)
Benziger (2013)
Joseph Drouhin (2011)
Frog's Leap (2015)
Schloss Gobelsberg (2015)
Grgich Hills (2008)
Paul Jaboulet Aîné (2015)
Kenwood (2014)
Domaine Lefflaive (2013)
Masi (2008)
Quinta do Noval (2015)
Peay (2015)
Rochioli (2014)
Roederer Estate (2013)
Ruffino (2008)
Truchard (2014)
Robert Weil (2014)
Yalumba (2012)

6 Awards

Bründlmayer (2009)
Buil & Giné (2015)
Calera (2014)
Clos du Val (2011)
Duckhorn (2011)
Gai'a (2015)
J. Hofstätter (2015)
Leeuwin Estate (2015)
Leonetti (2012)
Movia (2013)
Patz & Hall (2008)
Pride (2006)
Tahbilk (2014)
Hermann J. Wiemer (2015)

Each winery appears with the number of Winery of the Year awards earned since the first Buying Guide in 1987. The date of the most recent award appears in parentheses.

For a complete list of awards for each winery, visit wineandspiritsmagazine.com.