

Andrew Will

At Andrew Will Winery, Chris Camarda blends Bordeaux-style reds of exceptional structure and finesse.

A Change in the Weather: Since Chris Camarda founded Andrew Will on Vashon Island in 1989, vintages in the Columbia Valley have gone from warm to warmer. Today, he says, ripening the fruit on his vines is “like frying an egg at 800 degrees; that’s just not how fruit ripens.” He’s been making changes to manage the heat—bulking up his crop size and using prophylactic watering regimes in the vineyards, ticking up his fermentation

temperatures and adjusting the use of new oak in the winery. He’s also learned to embrace the shutdown that vines experience during periods of extreme heat: He thinks it’s actually beneficial for vines at his warmer sites, like Ciel du Cheval, on torrid Red Mountain, and Champoux, in the slightly less torrid Horse Heaven Hills.



Chris Camarda

The Blending Work-around: The best work-around Camarda has developed in the face of warming vintages is blending. Unlike most Washington producers, Camarda tends to emphasize merlot and cabernet franc in his blends, rather than the more powerful cabernet sauvignon. In three of four of his top wines, Two Blondes, Ciel du Cheval and Champoux, merlot and cabernet franc compose most, if not all, of the blends. So even in an exceedingly warm vintage like 2013 (only surpassed by 2014 so far), an Andrew Will wine always has movement within all its mass. The Ciel du Cheval is a case study, from a vineyard that revels in dark fruit expression: It flirts with dark red plum flavors, as the acidity keeps the wine nimble and taut.

Super Sorella: Camarda’s one cabernet-heavy blend, Sorella, is his most impressive feat in 2013. From his portion of the Champoux Vineyard, including Block 1, planted in 1972, it delivers old-vine power, dark and brooding. With air, the wine becomes savory and vinous; its dusty, firm tannins feel focused and on point. It’s the sort of wine to cellar, or decant and savor for hours. —P.J.C.



DETAILS & TOP WINES

Founded: 1989 • **Owner/winemaker:** Chris Camarda
Viticulturists: Richard Holmes, Chris Hoon, Dan Nickolaus
Acres owned: 30 • **Annual production:** 5,000 cases
Estate grown: 25% • **Location:** Vashon Island, WA
Website: andrewwill.com

- 95** 2013 Horse Heaven Hills Sorella Champoux Vineyard S83 (12/16)
- 94** 2013 Red Mountain Ciel du Cheval Vineyard S64 (2/17)
- 92** 2013 Horse Heaven Hills Champoux Vineyard S74 (2/17)

COLUMBIA VALLEY

Wine & Spirits

SPECIAL ISSUE

100 Best Wines

TOP 100 WINERIES of 2017

95 | Andrew Will \$83
2013 Horse Heaven Hills Sorella Champoux Vineyard Inky and dark when first poured, Chris Camarda’s top selection in 2013 feels massive at first pass; it’s mostly cabernet drawn from the old-vine blocks at Champoux. With air its flavors turn a corner, as much savory as dark-fruited, leaning toward crushed pink peppercorn and ground sumac, with textures that seem to reflect that vine age in the finesse of their suave tannins. Those tannins carry a dusty minerality that is saturating but not heavy in the least. Cellar, then serve with beef tenderloin. (W&S 12/16; 716 cases)