

WinePress NW  
72 hours in the Tri-Cities  
By Andy Perdue  
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Vis it more than a dozen wineries all within a few minutes of each other in the R ed Mountain AVA.  
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The Tri-Cities. You won't find it listed that way on many maps, but the community of a quarter-million people at the confluence of three important rivers is the heart of the Washington wine industry. From here, it's an easy hop to Walla Walla, the Yakima Valley, the Horse Heaven Hills and Red Mountain.

It's a region now loaded with amenities, home to great restaurants, golf courses, brew pubs, persistently sunny days and a blissful absence of traffic.

Wine Press Northwest is based in the Tri-Cities. Here is our guide to our hometown.

## THE TRI-CITIES

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As the name implies, there are three cities: Kennewick, Pasco and Richland. There also are smaller towns, including West Richland, Benton City, Burbank and Finley. Confusing? Just roll with it. The community is connected by three rivers: the Columbia, the Yakima and the Snake. The Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery slept here before the last big push downriver to the Pacific.

After that, farming arrived with the advent of the Grand Coulee Dam and Columbia Basin Project. Science arrived in full force during World War II and the Manhattan Project.

Wine has surrounded the community for a half-century and penetrated the Tri-Cities in the past decade, certainly bringing an increase in quality of life.

The Tri-Cities is not unlike Santa Rosa in Sonoma County as far as population, amenities and proximity to nearby wine regions. If you are considering a visit to Washington wine country, the Tri-Cities should probably be your base of operations.

The town is at the southern end of the Columbia Basin. More than 300 crops are grown in the outlying rural areas, thanks to the magic of irrigation. The largest employer is the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (with a staff of more than 4,000), so there are a lot of really smart people living here. It's an interesting, diverse community.

## GETTING HERE

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Arriving here is simple enough. Pasco is home to the state's third-busiest airport served by Alaska, Delta, United and Allegiant airlines. Get on the eastbound Interstate 90 in Seattle crossing the Cascades over Snoqualmie Pass, and you will be here in under four hours. It's about two hours south of Spokane on Highway 395. Ride the train from Portland or drive here in three hours following the Columbia River east on I-84.

## WHERE TO STAY

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As with any large community, there are plenty of motel choices in the Tri-Cities, primarily chains. We recommend you take advantage of hotels that are along the Columbia River, as they take advantage of the community's greatest asset.

Courtyard Marriott, 480 Columbia Point Dr, Richland, 509-942-9400. In addition to being right on the Columbia River, it's walking distance to several places to eat.

Red Lion Richland (Hanford House), 802 George Washington Way, Richland, 509-946-7611. One of three Red Lions in the Tri-Cities, this one is in the heart of Richland along the river.

Hampton Inn, 486 Bradley Blvd, Richland, 509-943-4400. Another excellent choice along the Columbia.

Shilo Inn, 50 Comstock St, Richland, 509-946-4661. An older property along the river that is another affordable option.

Clover Island Inn, 435 N Clover Island Dr., Kennewick, 509-586-0541. Overlooking the river in downtown Kennewick at the base of the cable bridge, the Clover Island Inn has an on-site restaurant and is a stone's throw from two others. A great jumping off point for getting to Walla Walla.

The Lodge at Columbia Point, 530 Columbia Point Dr., 509-713-7423. The newest hotel in town has a lot of buzz, partly because it's being built by the Walla Walla man responsible for The Ocean Lodge on Cannon Beach. An 83-room, wine-themed luxury hotel along the river, near several restaurants, it is scheduled to open mid-June.

Corvus Casa. 32807 Vineyard View PRNE, 99320 Benton City, 509-241-0318. For those looking to wake up with a view of vineyards, this guest house on Red Mountain is perfect. Can easily hold four couples with a deck that looks out over Red Mountain.

## WHERE TO EAT

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An old axiom about the Tri-Cities was that there are no good places to eat. And while the community still has a well-earned reputation for supporting chain restaurants, those who want to dine at delicious, locally owned establishments have ample choices now.

The wine industry certainly is contributing to the changing Tri-City culinary scene, as several wineries have opened their own restaurants.

The Kitchen at Barnard Griffin, 878 Tulip Lane, Richland, 509-627-0266. A full menu is available for lunch and dinner most days, just off the tasting room.

J. Bookwalter, 894 Tulip Lane, Richland, 509-627-5000. The first winery/restaurant in the Columbia Valley serves lunch and dinner daily with a focus on local ingredients.

Gordon Estate Wine Bar, 5236 Outlet Dr., Pasco, 509-412-1225. A full lunch and dinner menu along with Gordon Brother's delicious wines. Near the freeway to Walla Walla.

Terra Blanca Vineyard Grill, 34715 Demoss Road, Benton City, 509-588-6082. Terra Blanca has teamed up with a local caterer to provide meals on the terrace. This Red Mountain winery offers sweeping views of the Yakima Valley.

Tagaris Winery, 844 Tulip Lane, Richland, 509-628-1619. Fine dining inside this winery, with a full lunch and dinner menu.

Lulu's Craft Bar and Kitchen, 606 Columbia Point Dr., Richland, 509-713-7880. The newest Tri-City restaurant, Lulu's takes full advantage of its location near the Columbia River with a great deck and a delicious menu - food and drink - sourced locally.

Anthony's at Columbia Point, 550 Columbia Point Dr., Richland, 509-946-3474. Westsiders are familiar with this regionally owned chain. The Richland location has quickly established itself as the go-to place in town, thanks to the great seasonal menu, deep wine list and great location along the Columbia River.

Budd's Broiler, 450 Columbia Point Dr., Richland, 509-946-8178. This steakhouse is part of the Anthony's empire, with an emphasis on turf over surf.

3 Eyed Fish, 1970 Keene Road, Richland, 509-628-3255. From the owners of LuLu's is this wine bar with casual dining. Lots of wine-focused dinners, this is not far from Red Mountain and other wineries.

Stick+Stone, 3027 Duportail St., Richland. Great pizzas, soups and sandwiches. Great beer list. Not far from Red Mountain.

Atomic Ale Brewpub, 1015 Lee Blvd., Richland. 509-946-5465. This nuclear-themed pub features great craft beer, pizza and other pub grub. Great lunch stop.

Brick House Pizza, 3791 Van Giesen St., West Richland. 509-967-3733. Great pizza and beer in a casual setting. Not far from Red Mountain.

Ethos Bakery and Cafe, 2150 Keene Road, 509-942-8417. Coffee shop and bakery that has great local reputation. With a casual dinner menu ideal for takeout.

Graze, 8530 W Gage Blvd., Kennewick., 509-221-1020, and 735 The Parkway, Richland, 509-713-7699. Gourmet sandwich shop that started in Walla Walla has expanded with two locations in Tri-Cities. Ideal for takeout for vineyard picnics.

Monterroso's, 1026 Lee Blvd., Richland, 509-946-4525. Fine Italian dining in an antique railroad dining car. Reservations recommended.

Bin 20, 2525 N 20th Ave., Pasco, 509-544-3939. This wine bar inside the Pasco Red Lion has a great wine list and delicious casual dining menu. Near the Tri-Cities Airport and close to the freeway to Walla Walla.

Ice Harbor Brewing Co. 206 N Benton St., Kennewick, 509-582-5340. Great local craft beer producer known for burgers (and its support of veterans) with two restaurant locations. The marina location on Clover Island (350 N Clover Island Dr.) offers river views.

Cedar's Restaurant, 355 N Clover Island Dr., Kennewick, 509-582-2143. A longtime local hangout with a fine-dining dinner menu, a full bar and a popular boat-friendly deck overlooking the Columbia River.

## **WINERIES**

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Needless to say, there are plenty of wineries within short driving distance. Planning for a three-day visit to the Tri-Cities is fairly easy because one day can be spent on Red Mountain, one day touring Tri-City wineries, then a day for heading to nearby Prosser or Walla Walla. Here are a few suggestions.

Red Mountain: Located on the edge of town between Benton City and West Richland, it is home to nearly a dozen wineries, all within a few minutes of each other. Wineries such as Kiona, Tapteil, Hightower, Hamilton, Cotes de Ciel, Hedges, Fricchette and Fidelitas are all along Sunset Road. Around the corner on DeMoss Road are Terra Blanca and Tucannon Cellars. Near the top of Red Mountain is Col Solare, the crown jewel of the region. Nearby wineries include MonteScarlatto, Corvus Cellars, Upchurch Vineyard, Chandler Reach, Goose Ridge, Anelare, Sleeping Dog and Purple Star.

A cluster of wineries - all with restaurants - near the freeway in Richland - are Barnard Griffin, Bookwalter and Tagaris. Not far from these three are Powers/Badger Mountain Vineyards, Kitzke, Goose Ridge and Market Cellars, Farmhand Winery, Longship Cellars and Sun River Vintners.

Prosser and its dozens of wineries is an easy 30-minute drive on the way back to Seattle. Columbia Crest, one of the Pacific Northwest's largest wineries, is another 30 minutes south of town.

## OTHER ACTIVITIES

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Want a break from wine touring? There are plenty of activities in the Tri-Cities. Here are a few ideas:

**Golf:** With perpetual sunshine and 10 regional courses, there's plenty of opportunity to work on your golf game.

**The river:** The Columbia River is the community's greatest asset. Enjoy strolls along more than 25 miles of cycling trails, kayaking, waterskiing, fishing and other activities. If you're a fan of loud boats and big crowds, show up the last full weekend in July for the annual Water Follies festival and unlimited hydroplane races. Join thousands of other fans who line the banks of the Columbia River.

**History:** Lewis and Clark buffs will want to visit Sacagawea State Park in Pasco, where the intrepid duo camped Oct. 16, 1805 on their way to the Oregon Coast. The park includes an interpretive center (confirm hours before you go) and an outdoor art installation by Maya Lin. If you can score a tour of the B Reactor on the Hanford site outside Richland, you can see the world's first full-scale atomic reactor, which played a key role in the end of World War II.

**Sports:** Sports fans can take in a minor-league baseball game in the summer with the Tri-City Dust Devils (Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson played here one season) or a hockey game with the Tri-City Americans of the Western Hockey League.

Andy Perdue is editor and publisher of Great Northwest Wine, an award-winning media company. He is also the Sunday wine columnist for The Seattle Times.