

Coast Starlight Cheese Tasting

Thanks for participating in today's wine and cheese tasting. As a part of this unique experience, we believe that knowing a little bit more about today's sensory event will enhance your experience. For premium passengers we are proud to offer a regional trio of cheeses, one produced in California, another in Oregon and a last one in Washington State, all designed to complement and contrast today's wine selection.

Southbound on Train 11 – Seattle to Los Angeles

Farmstead Smoked Gouda – Washington

Small family owned dairy farm operations have seen their numbers dwindle in recent days and are now very much the exception when compared to the number of large agribusinesses with which they compete. The Appel family of Ferndale, Washington, has managed to defy those odds and is thriving within their niche market. Today's sampling features their Farmstead Smoked Gouda, which combines textural creaminess with a balanced smokiness that harmonizes exceptionally well with the mild nutty flavor qualities of this young cheese. Possible libation pairings include; fruity Sauvignon Blanc, Washington state Syrah and hop-balanced micro-brews.

Lavender Cheddar – Oregon

Since 1935 Rogue Creamery's handmade pasteurized cheese has been using old world practices. A unique example of their artistry is their Lavender Cheddar, which blends imported French lavender blossoms with Rogue's creamy buttery cheese. This magical balance is subtle, fragrant and yet mysterious with floral flavor notes which provide a fresh lingering finish. While suited to a variety of pairings, it is especially complimented by fruits and floral varieties such as Semillon, Gewurztraminer and Viognier.

Jalapeno Pepper Jack – California

Crescent City California's Rumiano Cheese Company has been championing local and sustainable production practices, essentially since their beginnings in 1921. One of their consistent award winners has been their Jalapeno Pepper Jack cheese. A semi-firm, creamy white, sweet and hot pepper flecked pasteurized cows milk cheese that is as much at home with a crisp Chardonnay as it is with a tall cold brewed long-neck. Rumiano has been a long time award winner recognized by both the American Cheese Society and the California State Fair.

Northbound on Train 14 – Los Angeles to Seattle

Vella Dry Jack – California

Mention "Dry Jack" and you're reminded not only of a remarkable regional cheese, but also of the Vella family which has been producing cheese for nearly 70 years in Sonoma, California fifty miles north of San Francisco. Today, Ignacio Vella continues to produce this American classic just as his father did, allowing the moisture inherent in regular jack to evaporate through a long aging process. The result is a rich, nutty and denser style with a depth of flavor that becomes deeply concentrated as a result of its twelve month aging.

Smoked Tillamook Cheddar – Oregon

The Tillamook County Creamery Association, a farmer-owned Oregon cooperative of over 110 dairy families was founded over 100 years ago. Their young smoked Cheddar is aged 60 days, just enough to balance the natural hardwood smoke with which it has been infused. This mild yet distinct cheese proves an interesting match for a range of beverage pairings from Pinot Noir and Syrah to semi-dry Rieslings. Like all things food and wine, the best pairing becomes the one which resonates personally with each of us.

Flagship, Marco Polo Black Pepper Cheddar – Washington

In the heart of Seattle's historic Pike Place Market hundreds of people everyday witness a time-honored process that is perhaps 5,000 years old. The crowd watches a vat of the freshest local milk from a single family farm north of the city being churned into homemade, artisan style curds at the award winning home of Beecher's handmade cheese. The quality of their handiwork is very evident when sampling the Marco Polo, a creamy churned cheddar with lightly milled green and black Madagascar peppercorns. The cheese has a peppery bite with great texture and a beguiling flavor that pairs well with medium bodied Merlot, but is also suited to other wines as well.

Prices are in U.S. currency and include all taxes. Amtrak accepts major payment cards. Gratuity is at the passenger's discretion. Water served upon request.



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FEATURED WINE & CHEESE SELECTIONS



Enjoy the journey.™

Welcome to the Coast Starlight Wine & Cheese Tasting

Each day, we will present four different wines and three different cheeses, from places along the route of this great train. We hope you will find it educational, but more importantly, that you'll have some fun exploring the amazing world of wine that is often right outside your window. All of these wines are available for purchase at the end of the tasting at suggested retail prices, and we will include a Coast Starlight wine bag to make sure the wine arrives home safely. These descriptions of each wine are offered to help give you some information – but remember, everyone finds different qualities in wine (that is what makes wine so interesting), so the only opinion that really counts is yours!

California Wine Selections

Summerland Estate Sauvignon Blanc Central Coast, California

A perfect wine to begin our tasting with, and especially appropriate since the grapes for this wine come primarily from vineyards located very near the route of the Coast Starlight. Summerland Wine Estates was founded by Nebil "Bilo" Zarif in 2002, and specializes in wines that reach their peak in the cooler climates of Santa Barbara and Monterey County. The Sauvignon Blanc has a distinct aroma of melon and citrus, with a refreshing level of acidity, to make this wine a perfect complement to many foods, including seafood, poultry, and, of course, the cheeses on your table. We are big fans of Summerland wines, in large part because they are able to offer very high quality wines at very reasonable price points. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$26.25 bottle / \$5.25 glass**

Rabbit Ridge Zinfandel Paso Robles, California

This well-known winery was founded by Erich Russell in 1981, and he named the winery in honor of his long distance running accomplishments in high school and college. Originally located in Sonoma County, Mr. Russell later fell in love with the Paso Robles area and was one of the first to see the potential for making great wines from vineyards located just to the west of our train station in Paso Robles. He opened his state of the art winery here in 2005. Although they make a remarkable number of wines, they are

justifiably famous for their Zinfandel, and the one we are tasting today has been heavily awarded with medals from many wine competitions. It has the unmistakable aromas of Zinfandel-blackberry jam, spiciness, and candied fruit. Not a wine you want to put in you're cellar–instead, ready to be enjoyed today. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$21.75**

J Lohr Seven Oaks Cabernet Sauvignon Paso Robles, California

Founded by Jerry Lohr in 1972, this winery is one of the true pioneers in establishing Paso Robles as one of the finest areas in California for producing great wines, and they have always been justifiably famous for their Cabernet Sauvignon. Classic aromas of black currant and plum, and unlike some Cabernet Sauvignons, this wine is soft and luscious and ready to enjoy without further aging. It also matches very nicely with all of the cheese selections as well. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$22.50**

Wente Riverbank Riesling Arroyo Seco, Monterey County, California

Wente winery is the oldest continual family owned winery in California, and celebrated its 125th birthday just a couple of months ago. Earlier generations of Wente family winemakers brought many of the clones and grafts from Europe that established California as one of the premier wine regions in the world. Today we are honored to finish the tasting with one of their most unique wines, made from vineyards located in the Arroyo Seco, a region of Monterey County that this train passes through every afternoon northbound, and late morning on our southbound run. It is hard not to like this wine, as the first aromas of peaches and tangerines draws you in for a taste which confirms that this is a wine for sipping in the summer–or any other time of the year, for that matter. We poured this last because it has some noticeable sweetness (2.5% residual sugar levels) but Wente is always going to be first in the list of our very favorite wineries. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$22.50**

Oregon & Washington State Wine Selections

Firesteed Pinot Gris Willamette Valley, Oregon

For almost 20 years, the Firesteed winery has made great wines at amazing prices, and we think the Pinot Gris is a perfect example of a great wine that seems underpriced to us! The 2008 vintage was particularly warm, and this wine has tantalizing aromas of

tropical fruit and peaches, with just a touch of mineral and floral notes on the palate. A wine to be enjoyed with all sorts of foods, or any of our cheese selections, or just as a summertime sipper. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$21.50**

Hogue Genesis Syrah Columbia Valley, Washington

Founded by Mike and Gary Hogue in 1982, the Hogue winery has been making quality wines for almost 30 years, and we particularly liked this Syrah from their Genesis series. Syrah has been enjoying increasing popularity in Washington, and this selection shows why – a complex aroma of smokiness and spiciness, mixed with lovely blackberry and black cherry flavors. A perfect wine to pair with pork or Thanksgiving turkey, it is ready to be enjoyed today! **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$22.50**

Milbrandt Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon Traditions Series Columbia Valley, Washington

Jerry and Butch Milbrandt were third generation farmers, and decided to try their hand at grape growing in the late 1990s. They hired a first rate winemaker by the name of Gordon Hill, and the rest, as they say, is history, as they have established themselves as a first-rate winery in only a matter of a few years. We are featuring one of our favorite from their portfolio–the Traditions Cabernet Sauvignon, which we particularly like because it is a softer style of Cabernet, enjoyable young, and yet it has great complexity in the aroma and on the palate, with flavors of plum, cassis, and even a slight hint of chocolate. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$26.25 bottle / \$5.25 glass**

Chateau Ste. Michelle Riesling Columbia Valley, Washington

More than any other winery in Washington, Chateau St. Michelle has shown how Riesling can be made in numerous styles (they make up to six different Rieslings each year) to please a wide variety of consumers. Today's wine, which could be described either as off-dry (or semi-sweet, to be contrarian), is just plain fun to drink, and the first aroma will make you think of summer fruit, from peaches to melons to apples. There is some sweetness, to be sure, but enough acid on the finish to keep it refreshing and enjoyable. This is a true crowd pleaser, and we are always pleased to be able to offer a selection from what is accurately described as the most prestigious winery in all of Washington. **Available by the bottle to take with you for \$15.75**