

NOVELTY HILL JANUIK

Mike Januik
Winemaker, Novelty Hill and Januik Winery
Owner, Januik Winery

Mike Januik is one of Washington's most acclaimed winemakers, but he'd rather you taste his wine and decide what you think of his winemaking for yourself. He also thinks it's important you know he will never call a wine "intense." That's a descriptor he reserves for camping trips.

Mike doesn't think it is essential you know he was named one of the world's ten "Masters of Merlot" by Wine Enthusiast magazine. He'd be the last guy to tell you he's had ten wines appear on Wine Spectator's prestigious "Top 100" list, most recently earning a place there with the 2003 Novelty Hill Cabernet Sauvignon (the only other label to benefit from his winemaking talents, aside from Januik, of course). He is more impressed with a good University of Oregon football team than the master's degree in enology and viticulture he holds from the University of California, Davis. He doesn't think you'd be interested to know he was the head winemaker at Chateau Ste. Michelle for ten years before leaving to start Januik Winery in 1999 or that he's been making wine in the Columbia Valley since 1984.

But he thinks you might be interested to know he plays the guitar; was once a forest ranger; loves to cook; owned a wine shop in Ashland, Oregon; is as well known among family and friends for his fresh fruit smoothies and holiday eggnog as his Cabernet; prefers reading poetry to non-fiction; was once a whitewater river guide and sends text-messages to his two college-age sons about as often as he tastes through wines during harvest.

He's been described as intelligent, creative, compulsive, innovative, compassionate, proud, humble and inspired. He's part hippy, part establishment and complete perfectionist and bon vivant. "Unlike many of his winemaking brethren with much less to hang their hats on, Januik is not egocentric," wrote Pierre Rovani for Robert Parker's Wine Advocate. He's found his sweet spot running a small winery that is all about creating something that brings pleasure to the table. As Mike would say with a shrug, "I want my wines to speak for themselves."

Enough said.

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