

VOLUME 1

ISSUE 3

MAY 2007

WINE TRAIL TRAVELER NEWSLETTER

Summer Fun

Enjoy the weather with picnics, walks and fine wine!

by Kathy Sullivan

For many of us in the United States, spring has taken its time reaching us. The cruel fingers of winter have very slowly released their grip. Gentle warm breezes stir the foliage. With vineyards budding, birds singing and plants flowering, it is time to think of spending relaxing, free moments outdoors. Time spent outdoors is soothing for the soul. As Edward Fitzgerald said,

*A book of verses underneath the bough, a jug of wine,
a loaf of bread-and thou.*

Picnics, countryside walks or strenuous hikes can be relaxing, enjoyable and romantic with planning. A picnic can be a very spontaneous event as in a "pick up and go" style. Throw a few items in a bag and pick up a blanket on the way out the door. However, if you will be traveling any distance or over rough terrain, it is better to have a plan. Decide where you are going and discover the regulations regarding picnicking and beverages. Skyline Drive, in Shenandoah National Park, permits alcoholic beverages in many areas unless posted otherwise. Check the weather forecasts and make accommodations if necessary. Choose how to pack supplies, food and wine. There are many choices available whether baskets or picnic/wine carriers.

One item that many wine enthusiasts would enjoy is the wine backpack or the picnic backpack that will hold a wine bottle and wine glasses. Our preference for these types of items is to make sure they are lightweight especially if you are planning to walk far or hike uphill. There are a number of good backpacks and you will find one that meets your needs. If you decide to order online, do check out reviews on the item. It is always good to get someone else's opinion. We prefer a backpack that has room for plates, utensils, cutting board, wine glasses, napkins, wine and food.

Things to consider when purchasing a good picnic/wine carrier include: size, weight, comfort and cold storage. Backpacks often include place settings for two or four. Check to see if there is room for additional settings. Consider the weight of the picnic/wine carrier if you are hiking for an extended period. Carrying extra weight can tire you out quickly. Check to see if the straps on the picnic/wine carrier fit comfortably. Can you adjust the straps in case you need to wear a jacket? Will the picnic/wine carrier allow you to keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot?

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This combination picnic and wine backpack has room for four place settings. It includes plates, utensils, cheese board, cloth napkins and more. An insulated wine bottle holder attaches to the side. Four glass wineglasses replaced the plastic wineglasses. An insulated pouch behind the backpack is roomy enough for food.

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In addition to picnic supplies, there are other items to carry. Think of packing sunscreen and mosquito repellent. Bottled water may be needed while hiking long distances, along rugged terrain, up elevations and down slopes. A camera can capture memories.

Last spring and summer, we enjoyed lunch on a rock. In late April, the trek to Marys Rock in Shenandoah National Park was difficult but worth it because it had an outstanding view. Upon arriving at the overlook we spied one other hiker perched between rocks reading a book. We had our lunch on a rock and enjoyed the views. Our lunch was simple with two types of cheese, crackers and a Pinot Grigio. It was the perfect setting to watch birds flying below, take photographs and feel a constant breeze. The scenery was breathtaking and the solitude was uplifting.

In August, we hiked up Maryland Heights at Harper's Ferry National Park. It was a hot day and water breaks along the way helped us make it to the rocks for a spectacular view of the Potomac River and the town of Harper's Ferry. We enjoyed crackers and cheese with a picnic red wine. There was plenty of room to find a rock

and spread out. This area was busier than Marys Rock, however, there was plenty of room with unobstructed views.

Everyone has different ideas of where to walk, hike and picnic. Choose your favorite spot and enjoy. If you have a spot that you enjoy, write and let us know at info@winetrailtraveler.com.

Tip: Our experience has been that picnic/wine backpacks and baskets sell out quickly. If you plan on purchasing a basket or carrier for this summer, buy one soon.

Proverb:

*With wine and hope,
anything is possible.*

Below:

A picturesque setting along Skyline Drive, Shenandoah National Park, Virginia. A perfect place to enjoy a little wine and cheese. Whether you choose a private, state or national park, check to see if consumption of wine is allowed on the premises.



May Events

May is the perfect month to consider visiting your favorite winery or to be adventurous and explore a new winery.

Mother's Day May 13, 2007

With only a few days left before Mother's Day, here are some quick ways to say, "I love you."

For a special treat make the champagne cake recipe found in the [recipes](#) subsection of the Wine, Food and Arts section of the website. This recipe is time consuming but worth it. It uses about three quarters of a bottle of champagne or sparkling wine. You can always drink the left over champagne and if you like sweets add some of the Chambord to the champagne.

For a mother who has "everything" a bottle of sparkling wine is a special treat. For the mother who enjoys sweets, a bottle of dessert wine with a high residual sugar is just the thing. Taste the wine at a winery before you purchase it. Selections of wine-flavored jams are available at numerous wineries. Other gifts you may find at a winery include wine-scented candles, artwork including paintings, ceramics and more. Many wineries have gift baskets wrapped with cellophane available. These gift baskets are beautiful to look at and practical as well.

Rather than taking your mother a gift, maybe she would like to visit a winery with you. Some wineries are featuring special Mother's Day events this year. Check out your favorite winery or explore other wineries to discover what they have to offer. If a winery does not have a restaurant, pack a lunch. Many wineries have lovely outdoor areas available for picnicking. Plan to purchase your wine at the winery you are visiting. Wintergreen Winery in Virginia loans out picnic baskets and has an assortment of items you can purchase to fill the basket. Located along a beautiful stream with a weeping willow, it is an ideal location for a picnic.

Living across the country? Make plans to take your mother to a winery when you are visiting.

Memorial Day Weekend

Memorial Day will be here very quickly. Gather together with friends and families. Visiting wineries is a wonderful idea. Many wineries have areas for picnics.

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Plan to purchase your wine at the winery. Some wineries need advance notice if a bus, limousine or large group of people (eight or more) will be participating.

While beer drinking is frequently part of Memorial Day celebrating, don't forget wine for the wine enthusiasts. Do you know someone who enjoys beer but does not touch wine? We have discovered that beer drinkers may prefer sweet wines.

By Memorial Day, the weather will be getting warmer and cars will be getting hot very quickly. Remember to store your wine correctly. If you are not sure how to store it, ask at the winery where you purchase it. Memorial Day Weekend is a highly traveled weekend. Be responsible in your drinking. Have a wonderful and safe Memorial Day!

Wine Tip: If you have a friend who will be a designated driver, give them a bottle of wine as a "thank you" at the end of the night.

Wine Fun: Try this Recipe!

Knapp Cajun Pork Creole

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 lb Pork
- 1 T Cajun Seasoning
- 1 c Chopped onion
- 2 T Chopped fresh parsley
- 1/4 c Finely chopped bell pepper
- 1/2 c Knapp's Chardonnay
- 1 T Chopped garlic

Directions

1. Roll pork in cajun seasoning then place in large saucepan with enough water to just cover the pork.
2. Add 1/2 cup of Knapp's Chardonnay, cook over medium-high heat, cover for 10 minutes.
3. Then add onion, parsley, bell pepper and garlic.
4. When pork is tender, remove from pan, let cool and then take off the bone and cut into pieces.
5. Return pork to pot leave uncovered, simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Can be served over rice.

Recipe donated by [Knapp Winery Vineyard and Restaurant](#)

What's New on the Website

During April, we returned from the United Kingdom and placed four winery articles from Southeast England and one vineyard article from Wales on winetrailtraveler.com. We decided to visit several more wineries in Virginia. Since many of the wineries in the Monticello area were sending wines to England to be tasted we decided to visit the wineries on the Monticello Wine Trail that we hadn't previously visited. These wineries include Cardinal Point, Oakencroft Vineyard and Winery, Veritas Vineyard and Winery, Whitehall Vineyards, and Wintergreen. On our way home, we stopped by Naked Mountain Vineyard in the Blue Ridge area of Virginia.

On our monthly trip to New York, we visited several more wineries along Cayuga Lake. These wineries included: King Ferry Winery, Cobblestone Farm Winery and Vineyard, Long Point Winery, Buttonwood Grove Winery, Knapp Vineyards Winery and Restaurant, and Six Mile Creek Vineyard. King Ferry and Long Point are the only two wineries on the east side of Cayuga Lake. To the south of Ithaca lies Six Mile Creek. The other wineries are located on the West side of Cayuga Lake. The weather was perfect and the wineries are looking forward to a the leafing of the vines.

Our last trek for the month was to Long Island in New York. We picked up our daughter, Erin, in New York City and headed east into Long Island Wine Country. We visited Paumanok Vineyards, The Lenz Winery, Pindar Vineyards, Pugliese Vineyards, and Roanoke Vineyards. It was interesting tasting wines with Erin. She has a well-developed palate and does a great job talking about the wines she tastes.

Check out the [Wine Trail](#) section of the website for articles about these wineries.

Another addition to the website is the recipe section. We added several more recipes in all categories. The entree section became large enough to reformat. Now entrées is divided into categories for beef, fish, pork and poultry. We had the time to try one of the recipes. The Champagne Cake was absolutely delightful. The few glasses of champagne left over made the recipe even better. Check out the [recipes](#) in the Wine, Food and Arts section of the website.

Wine News Update

On May 1, 2007, Francis Ford Coppola unveiled the name of his Sonoma winery. Since its March 2006 purchase, the winery has been known as the Francis Ford Coppola (yet unnamed) Winery. On May 1, Francis Ford Coppola officially christened the property "Francis Ford Coppola presents ROSSO & BIANCO." The winery name is the same as the popular line of wines introduced in 1997.

Letters from Readers

We recently received a question on our forum. The question follows. We hope that if anyone has had a similar difficulty, the answer will clear everything up. If not please, email me at kathy@winetrailtraveler.com.

Kathy,

The cake sounds wonderful, could you give me the recipe for it. I am new to the site and don't know how to get to it, if it is posted. If not could you just email it to me? I have been trying to find a bakery that makes it and no luck. So thought I would make it myself and saw your posting, so would love to get the recipe.

*Thanks much,
A Forum Member*

Dear Forum Member,

Thanks for asking. The champagne cake was wonderful and I look forward to making it again. I am even considering experimenting with different fruit flavors besides the raspberries.

The recipes are in the Wine, Food and Art section of the website. Click on recipes on the side column under Food. Then click on desserts. It is the third recipe under desserts. If you click on the word Open in the top right corner of the recipe, it will open in a new window so you can print it.

Here is a direct link: <http://winetrailtraveler.com/centers.html?ps=/recipes/dessert3.html>
Enjoy! Let us know how it turns out.

Kathy
winetrailtraveler.com.