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WINE TRAIL TRAVELER NEWSLETTER

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Wine Trail Traveler welcomes you to our first newsletter. Visit winetrailtraveler.com to find out more about wine trails. Check out our multimedia learning section and the community section, where a forum awaits your interaction with other wine enthusiasts.

Valentine's Day Specials

Make this Valentine's Day one to remember. Everyone wants to be remembered on Valentine's Day. February 14th is a day to show you care.

Are you having a difficult time coming up with a great idea for your special Valentine? Will your special Valentine look at you with eyes that say, "Did you forget Valentine's Day again?" Or perhaps when you give a bouquet of flowers, you hear, "Honey, you know I'm allergic to roses." Rather than risk disappointing the one you love and perhaps spending the night in the proverbial doghouse, here is a unique idea.

Name two items that easily go with Valentine's Day. Chocolate and wine! Let's add a third: wineries.

Some wineries and wine trails focus on Valentine's Day. Since Valentine's Day falls in the middle of the week this year, a number of wineries are also offering special events on the weekend before and after Valentine's Day.

Visiting a winery is a great way of celebrating Valentine's Day. You may want to visit a winery you have been to before, or try a different winery. If possible you could take a short vacation by visiting a winery, having dinner and if time permits staying at a nearby Bed and Breakfast.

By using the Internet, it is easy to find wineries that will have Valentine special events. Use your favorite search engine and find your state and you should easily find a list of wineries in your state. Many wineries have good websites with a listing of events.

On the last page is a sample list of several wineries we visited recently and wrote about on our website www.winetrailtraveler.com. These wineries have special plans for Valentine's for 2007. Be sure to check in advance for prices and availability.



Valentine display at Chaddsford Winery, PA

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Chocolate and Wine

The first time I was visiting a winery and offered a piece of chocolate with a particular wine, I was pleasantly surprised. As I continued to visit wineries, frequently a wine was offered with a piece of chocolate. The ambience and the different type of experiences each winery provided increased my desire to know more about wine and the matching of wine with food. How do you match wine with chocolate?



The answer depends on the sweetness of the chocolate and the sweetness of the wine. Many types of chocolate have additional sugar added to them. Most milk chocolates are sweeter than dark chocolates. Ideally, this means a different wine for each type of chocolate. The general consensus is that a wine needs to be as sweet or slightly sweeter than the chocolate.

Sweet wines have residual sugar in them. If you want to know how sweet a wine is look at the label on the bottle or ask at the winery. By definition a wine with 4.5 percent residual sugar is sweet and frequently will make a good dessert wine. If the match of the chocolate and wine is not correct, a great wine may not taste nearly as good as usual.

Many people feel that the chocolate you pair with wine is very subjective. The final decision should be left up to the individual. There are, however, some conventional wisdom guidelines. I put them to experimentation.

I decided to experiment with pairing wines and chocolates at home. I purchased two varieties of white chocolate, milk chocolate and dark chocolate. Next I selected two wines a semi-sweet Riesling and a dry red blend. I decided to follow conventional wisdom and match the sweeter wine with the sweeter chocolate and the dryer wine with the dark chocolate.

After tasting the white chocolate with a Riesling, I exclaimed, "The chocolate really brings out the flavor of the wine." After trying a dark chocolate with the dry red blend I was amazed at how good the red wine tasted. As my preference for wine tends to lean towards white wines, I was pleasantly surprised with the tastes of the dark chocolate and dry red wine. The milk chocolate matched better with the Riesling. I then decided to go against conventional wisdom and tried to match the sweet wine with the dark chocolate and the dry wine with the white chocolate and milk chocolate. The results were not very good. The taste of the wine was off and not complimented by the chocolate.

In recent years, more people are beginning to develop a discriminating taste with regard to chocolate. Some may wish to purchase chocolate made only with a particular cocoa bean. Others may want a chocolate bar with 70% cocoa.

Increasingly found in gourmet chocolate is the percentage of chocolate in the



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chocolate bar. For instance, while shopping for chocolate for a wine matching I noticed some chocolate labeled with 50% and 72% cocoa. This chocolate brand is considered a high end chocolate. In general, the higher the percent of cocoa the less sugar in the chocolate.

Matching gourmet chocolate with wine is a great experience. The conventional wisdom of matching the sugar levels of the wine and chocolate worked well in my experiment. Try matching chocolates with your favorites wines. What do you like? Consider posting your results in the Wine Trail Traveler *forum*.



Wine Tip

When holding a wineglass, hold the glass by the stem, if it is a white wine. If the wineglass is held by the bowl, the wine will become warm.

Wine Fun

Each month Wine Trail Traveler will include a bit of fun. It may be a wine word game or map search. Check the wine *forum* at www.winetrailtraveler.com for Reader's answers.

What words can be made out of fermentation? (Fermentation is the process of yeast changing sugar into alcohol.)

All appropriate answers will be grouped into one answer on the forum. Check the *forum* at www.winetrailtraveler.com to see how your answers compare.

Reader's Write:

We love to hear from our readers. If you have a question that will be of interest to our readers submit your question to kathy@winetrailtraveler.com. Letters will be published as deemed appropriate.

Sample:

For years I have heard that wine should be aged, but the other day I was talking to someone who said that is totally wrong. What does Wine Trail Traveler say about that?

Answer:

Very few wines should be aged. Most wines produced today are produced with the idea of being consumed within a year.

If you are planning on purchasing wine to keep for any number of years, the best advice I can give you is to buy from a reputable dealer. As one winemaker told me, "I can almost guarantee that when the wine leaves my winery, it is good wine. However, I can't guarantee what happens to it after it leaves here."

To keep wine, it needs to be kept gently. No extreme temperatures. No bright sunlight. No vibrations. Wines that are higher in tannins tend to keep better. It may be difficult to properly store wine for years.

Good luck with your search for your special wine.

Wine Trail Traveler

What's New at the Website

Since the debut of the website on January 21, 2007 additions have been made to the Learning Section. [Guide to Visiting Wineries](#) is an eight page pdf file that can be printed or viewed on a computer. This guide contains valuable information about visiting wineries.

An Articles subsection was added to Learning. Three articles are available describing learning opportunities that people may want to pursue. One article discusses a community college class. Another article describes an all day learning opportunity at a Virginia winery. The third article relates a wine tasting at a restaurant.

Check out the new articles in the Learning Section of Wine Trail Traveler.

The Community Section

The Community section of the website is a place where people can meet to discuss wine in the forum, check out the current edition of the newsletter, read op-ed articles that you may or may not agree with, and check out some other wine related sites with the links. The forum is directly related to the newsletter and the op-ed articles.

New Writer

Wine Trail Traveler welcomes Erin K. Sullivan as one of our writers. Erin is featured in the Learning section. She is the host on the video *How to Taste Wines*. Erin has added an article which appears in the Community Section under Op-Ed Articles.

Erin is currently an actor and model in New York City. She first became interested in wine while in Provence, France for a semester of study abroad. Erin had the opportunity to take a wine class.

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Valentine Events

Maryland

Elk Run

February 10: Wine, Roses and Chocolate Fondue

Linganore Winecellars

February 1-28: Cask to Kisses

New York – Finger Lakes

Atwater Vineyards

February 10-11: Seneca Lake Wine Trail's Chocolate and Wine

February 14: The Essential Sensual Feast

Fox Run Vineyards

February 10-11: Chocolate & Wine on the Seneca Lake Wine Trail

Goose Watch Winery

February 10-11: "Be Mine" with Red Wine Sale

Swedish Hill Winery

February 10-11: Sweetheart of a Red Wine Sale

Pennsylvania

Chaddsford Winery

February 14: Wine and Chocolate for Lovers

February Weekends: Wine & Chocolate Reserve Tastings

Twin Brook Winery

February 10-11 Wine, Cheese and Chocolate Weekend

Va La Vineyards

February 10-11 Valentines Decadence Weekend

Virginia

Pearmund Cellars

February 10-11 Chocolate & Dessert Wine Tastings

February 10-19 Taste Wines and Win Gift by matching heart from Winery at La Grange

The Winery at La Grange

February 17 Gourmet chocolate

February 10-19 Taste Wines and Win Gift by matching heart from Pearmund Cellars