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WINE TRAIL TRAVELER NEWSLETTER

Wine Festival Fun

Wine festivals are loud, noisy and lots of fun. Live music, food vendors, craft and art tables and wine tasting tents are all part of a wine festival. Thousands of people may be attending, so be prepared to wait in line at favorite winery tents. Take an opportunity to talk with others about the wines you taste.

If you are interested in wine, it will not be long before you begin to hear about various wine festivals around the world. Wine festivals give you the opportunity to taste a variety of wines offered by a large number of wineries. While most wine festivals occur during the summer or early fall, there is one festival in Canada called the Ice Wine Festival in January.

Wine tastings at festivals may vary from festival to festival. In some cases, you may receive tickets to exchange for a tasting. At other festivals, you are expected to use common sense and not drink more than you should. Tastings are measured but even so, after a number of tastings they can begin to add up. Security is usually around to monitor behavior. We have heard that at the wine festival in Watkins Glen, New York, police will be at the exit gate, stop your car, say hello and if you appear to have been drinking too much, ask you to pull over and sleep it off. Other festivals may have a taxi available to drive you home, and you will need to go back to pick up your car the next day.

The camaraderie at wine festivals is great. Everyone has an interest in wine. The arts and crafts, food vendors and music all together emphasize the positive aspects of wine. As Homer wrote in the Odyssey:

*Wine can of their wits the wise beguile,
Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile.*

After you begin attending wine festivals, you may want to volunteer at a festival. Frequently wineries are looking for volunteers. In May, we volunteered to work at the Wine in the Woods festival in Columbia, Maryland for Fiore Winery. We offered tastings to visitors and supported staff behind the tables. The experience was great., with camaraderie, laughter and a sense of excitement. As I told Rose Fiore, "This was as much or more fun than attending the festival."

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Virginia Wines at Vinopolis - Results

In our April newsletter, we wrote about Virginia Wines being presented at Vinopolis in London. We have the results and from what we have heard the Virginia wineries that participated with their wines at Hampton House and Vinopolis are happy with the results.

According to Antony Champ, White Hall Vineyards, "I am very pleased with the Virginia Wine Experience in London. We had good attendance from the trade. All of the comments on the wines were good."

Andrew Hodson, at Veritas, "...our biggest compliment was that Hugh Johnson picked Veritas Petit Verdot as the only one he wanted to take with him!"

In an analysis of the event on www.vawineinlondon.com, Richard Leahy, executive director of the Virginia Wine Experience in London noted, "As a result of this tasting, Virginia has clearly been established as a quality wine region in the minds of leading opinion shapers in the U.K. wine trade."



Tallest man in the world fascinates a young visitor near the food vendors.

Wine Festival Tips

To make the most of your wine festival visit, be prepared. Below are a few suggestions to help you have a wonderful day.

- Buy tickets in advance; you may save money. Check to see if tickets are refundable in case of rain.
- Eat before you start tasting. Tasting on an empty stomach is a mistake.
- Go early or go late to avoid crowds.
- Hope, from Doukénie Winery, Loudoun County, Virginia suggests dividing the day in half. Start your tasting with white wines, take a break, eat lunch and end with tasting red wines.
- Consider tasting only one varietal at each winery and compare. For example, taste only Meritage blends. This will help you decide which winery makes the Meritage blend you like most.
- Take a small journal. If there is a wine you would like to purchase at the end of the day, write the name down and the winery's name. If you are sure you want to purchase the wine, you may be allowed to leave it at the winery and pick it up when you leave the festival.
- Wear sunscreen.
- Take time to swirl your wine, notice the bouquet and the flavors.
- Step to the side while you taste your wine. This is not a tasting room, and with thousands of people in attendance, everyone wants to taste the wine.
- Take time to enjoy the music.
- Enjoy browsing the arts and crafts available.
- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Take bottled water with you. Try to drink as much water as wine.
- Wear sunglasses.
- Bring your ID.
- Have a designated driver with you. Tickets for designated drivers are usually less. While you are enjoying tasting wines, designated drivers can enjoy the food, crafts or art displays and music. After the festival, thank your designated driver with a bottle of wine.
- Consider volunteering at your next wine festival.

Look at visiting the wine festival as a great adventure and enjoy.

Wine in the Woods

In May, the traditional Wine in the Woods festival in Columbia, Maryland was held for the 15th consecutive year. With an increasing number of wineries in Maryland, 18 wineries were present at this festival. The gates opened at noon and as Mike Fiore of Fiore Winery said when the gates opened it was “like a flood.” Attendees of all ages were to be seen at the Wine in the Woods festival. There is something for everyone. As one walks throughout the festival, spring and summer colors abound. One of the advantages of attending this festival is the shade from the towering trees. Light filters through the leaves. After entering the gates and receiving a paper bracelet and wineglass, one passed by a Demonstration Tent set with seats for presentations about wine. Topics included how to taste wine, white wines, red wines and dessert & sweet wines. Beyond the Demonstration Tent, were white tents, one for each participating winery. Farther on were many smaller tents for artisans and crafters.

Near the Demonstration Tent, children were spellbound as they watched a balloon artist make complicated balloon figures. Later children stared in amazement at the “tallest man in the world,” as he walked throughout the festival grounds. Live entertainment was available on two stages all afternoon. Many visitors brought picnic lunches and blankets prepared to spend the afternoon listening to music.

With more than 40 artisans displaying their beautiful works of art, there was something for everyone. I spoke with one woman on Sunday who creates her own decorative designs. She explained that she enjoyed creating and making things. Her husband finally asked her what she was going to do with all of these things so she decided to set up a business. Her lovely items were so popular that Saturday night after the festival she went home to make more for Sunday.

I met Byron who makes unusual and unique baskets. As we talked about his creative baskets and business, he was able to continue working on a blue basket he was creating. Byron had begun the basket at about 11am and estimated the basket would be completed by 3pm.

Another artist creates lovely glass flowers and he focuses on making them into useful items such as bottle stoppers decorated with a flower.

The drift of food aromas was subtle but could be detected as one walked to the other side of the festival where numerous food vendors were set up. Foods were available including Polish sausage, Kettle Corn, butterfly potatoes and more. If you don't bring a picnic lunch, there is plenty of food to purchase.

If you decide to go to Wine in the Woods next May, plan to stay for several hours.

What's New in Wine Trail Traveler

A Flash Module was added to the Learning section about barrel making. The module describes and shows photos of how a barrel is made and discusses toasting the inside of the barrel. We first observed barrel making at Seguin Moreau Cooperage in Napa, California. Watching this centuries old process was absorbing and it was difficult to leave. Everyone worked together to create a functional and beautiful piece of woodwork.

We visited several wineries along Keuka Lake in New York. On our way home we passed through the Upper Susquehanna Region of Pennsylvania. We decided to stop at one winery and were glad we did so. Articles were added about the following wineries/vineyards.

New York State

Bully Hill Vineyards
Keuka Spring Vineyards
Dr. Frank's Vinifera Wine Cellars
McGregor Vineyard and Winery
Heron Hill Winery
Pleasant Valley Wine Company
Hunt Country Vineyards
Rooster Hill Vineyards

Pennsylvania

Spyglass Ridge Winery



Wine Festival Music available all day

Father's Day – A Special Day for Dad June 17, 2007

Father's Day is a 20th century invention. In the early 1900's Sonora Dodd, realized how much her father had done for her and her siblings. Her mother had died in childbirth and her father was responsible for raising six children. Sonora's father, William Smart, was most likely one of the first acknowledged single fathers in the United States.

However, Father's Day was not proclaimed until 1966 when President Lyndon Johnson chose the third Sunday in June to be Father's Day. President Richard Nixon made the designation of Father's Day law when he signed the law in 1972. Today, Father's Day is an opportunity to acknowledge all men who are father figures in our lives.

If you are looking for a unique way to celebrate Father's Day this year, check out a winery. Many wineries have outdoor areas where visitors are encouraged to bring picnic lunches. You may even find a special gift for Dad in the winery's gift shop.

Check out these wineries for details about Father's Day events. (These wineries list with us and have special Father's Day events.)

Fiore Winery
3026 Whiteford Road
Pylesville, MD 21132
Website: www.fiorewinery.com

Pearmund Cellars
6190 Georgetown Road
Broad Run, VA 20137
Website: www.pearmundcellars.com

The Winery at La Grange
4970 Antioch Road
Haymarket, VA 20169
Website: www.wineryatlagrange.com

Wine Fun Recipe

Sirloin Beef Tips in Red Wine
(from Goose Watch Winery)

Ingredients

1 slice bacon, cut in small pieces
2 lbs sirloin beef tips or stew beef
2 c Goose Watch Cabernet Sauvignon
1 c beef broth
1 T tomato paste
1 t salt
1 t minced garlic
1/2 t. dried marjoram leaves
1 T finely chopped parsley
1 bay leaf, broken in half
3 T flour
1/2 lb of tiny white onions, peeled
1 lb baby carrots
2 lbs tiny red potatoes
1/2 lb small mushrooms, cut in half

Directions

1. Heat oven to 375° F.
2. Cook bacon until crisp in a large flameproof casserole over medium-high heat.
3. Remove bacon, leaving fat in casserole.
4. Add beef and brown on all sides.
5. Remove beef and set aside.
6. Add 1 1/2 cups red wine, beef broth, tomato paste, salt, garlic, marjoram, parsley and bay leaf to the casserole.
7. Bring to a boil.
8. Whisk together the flour and remaining 1/2 cup wine; add to the liquid in casserole.
9. Add beef, bacon and vegetables.
10. Cover and bake 1 1/2 - 2 hours until beef is tender.
11. Serve with Goose Watch Cabernet Sauvignon.

Check out other [recipes](#) on the website.

Happy 4th of July!

Check out wineries for special activities to celebrate the day. Keep in mind that great wine can be found in many areas of the United States. Check a new winery out! If you will be traveling, please drive safely. Ask someone to be a designated driver.