

## You Can Volunteer in a Grape Harvest

Visiting a vineyard in September and October offers views of hanging grapes waiting for harvest. Some of the grape varieties may be ready for harvest in late August while others may remain on the vines into November. A few wineries and vineyards have events in which you can participate in the harvest. On one of the last ninety degree days of September we ventured to Basignani Winery in Sparks, Maryland to help harvest the Marechal Foch grapes.

Around nine in the morning a small group of volunteers began to arrive at the winery. They were warmly greeted by the four winery dogs. There was a vast mixture of ages of the seventeen volunteers. It didn't take long to discover that they all had an interest in wine. This unifying interest occurred in conversations throughout the day.

Co-owner, Lynne Basignani greeted the group and directed the harvesters to Wayne, the vineyard manager. He told us that we would pick three rows of the Marechal Foch and another four rows a bit further up the hill. Wayne instructed us to wear gloves and select pruning shears. The gloves would offer some protection against bee stings, however there were few bees interested in the grapes on

this morning. Wayne demonstrated how to harvest a cluster of grapes. If you have experience pruning around your home, you'll catch on immediately.

Picking up a lug we marched to the top of a small incline. The rows of grapes looked very healthy and the purple grapes hung throughout the vines. At times, the grapes did a good job of hiding in the foliage so we needed to carefully look for them. Taking the pruning shears, we made cuts close to the vine and placed the cluster into the lug. At first, I was content to remove the immature grapes from the cluster, however Wayne told us that a few of those were okay to leave on the cluster. I was able to work much faster not ridding a few immature grapes.

One quickly concludes that this is very easy work. It was interesting talking to the other volunteers and made for a relaxing, although hot morning. So why would one volunteer to harvest grapes? One reason is an interest in winemaking and the realization that wine making starts in the vineyard. Some wanted to learn how to harvest. Mark and Marcia Miller of Halethorpe, Maryland like the idea of helping a Maryland winery. They enjoyed the social aspect of the day. Sue Hurley of Perry Hall, Maryland does not have a large yard to work in at home. She gets a feeling of satisfaction picking grapes.

By the time we reached the end of the row, we had filled several lugs. The group took a well-deserved water break and headed uphill to the next section of Marechal Foch. These four rows were newer and the foliage was not as thick as the previous rows. Although we had to pick four longer rows, we worked much faster.

There are many traditions associated



*Grape clusters were placed into lugs.*

with harvesting grapes. One common tradition to both old and new world vineyards is food. Lynne Basignani fixed a delightful meal for all to enjoy after the harvest. We enjoyed a pasta dish, bread, different meats, olives, tomatoes, fresh mozzarella cheese and many other delightful items. Although beer and soda were available, most of the volunteers drank the several different Basignani wines available.

Only a few wineries and vineyards open their fields to volunteers. Call the local wineries in your area or check their website to see if they want volunteer help.

T.S.



*Harvesting grapes at Basignani Winery in Maryland*

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# Crush and Press

First, there was the typically tiring harvest, now the winery workers rush the grapes to the crush pad where stems, leaves and occasionally other items are removed. The Wine Trail Traveler team was fortunate to see a crush and press taking place at Anthony Road Wine Company in New York.

At most wineries, crush takes place immediately after the harvesting of the grapes. The quality of the wine is affected if picked grapes are allowed to set too long between harvesting and crush. On a rare occasion, a winery may use refrigeration, for no longer than 24 hours to keep the grapes fresh. However, every winery tries to go to crush immediately

At Anthony Road white wine grapes were being crushed. A forklift brought a large plastic-lined crate of grapes to the crush pad. After lifting the grape-filled crate, about 20 feet, the forklift operator slowly tipped the crate from a 45-degree to a 90-degree angle. The grapes began falling into the stainless steel crusher/destemmer machine. Another winery worker stood on a high platform assisting the grapes into the machine. As the green clusters dropped into the crusher/destemmer, juice also poured into the top of the machine. The weight of the grapes in the crate was already crushing the fruit.



*Stems and leaves fall into a bin from this destemmer.*

The crusher/destemmer has a horizontal "blade" which crushes the grapes. In the crush process,

the grapes are not completely crushed but the grape skins break releasing juice. The machine separates the grapes from the stems filling a bin with stems. Some wineries make use of the stems for compost in the vineyard.



*Stems, leaves and a few grapes are collected in a bin.*

A narrow conveyor belt moves the crushed grapes up to the top of the press. Here they are poured into a funnel, which leads into the press. Today many wineries use a bladder type press. This type of press has a large type balloon inside of it. The balloon slowly fills with air and gently presses the crushed grapes against the side. The grape juice flows through the slits in the press into a large pan. From the pan, the juice is pumped into a tank. Winemakers have the option of using plastic or stainless steel tanks.



*Crushed grapes and juice move up a conveyor belt to the press.*

Winemakers are creative in their winemaking. Each winemaker has his/her own unique winemaking



*A rake-like tool helps to gently move the grapes into the crusher.*

philosophy. While the best wines produced are with the best grapes from the vineyard, the winemaker makes the decisions throughout the winery that determines the outcome of the wine. The winemaker decides if the crush should be minimal or harder and how much the grapes should be pressed. Some winemakers will extract as much juice as possible while others will do a light press believing that juice from a light press will ultimately make a better wine.

If making a red wine, the winemaker decides how long to leave the grape skins and seeds in the juice after crushing. During the maceration process the juice will take on the color of the grapes, flavor intensifies and the process extracts tannins from the skins and seeds. After determining when to stop the maceration, the mixture goes through the press.

At several wineries during the fall, we observed that pressed juice was put in large square bins. The color of the juice looked like muddy water. At Glenora Wine Cellars in New York we observed a muddy looking recently pressed Pinot Noir. The winemaker had the juice pass through a filter that used diatomaceous earth to filter the juice. The filtered juice looked clear with a slight red tint.

A tremendous amount of work goes into making a bottle of wine. Two important steps in the process take place during the fall months. September and October are wonderful months to visit wineries and observe the crusher/destemmer, the press and filters.

K.S.

# Halloween Festivities

If you are looking for activities for the end of October, check these out:

Pearmund Cellars  
Broad Run, Virginia  
"Trick or Treat with Cab  
Frankenstein"  
October 27 & 28 Cost \$5  
Call 540-347-3475

Winery at La Grange  
Afton, Virginia  
"Trick or Treat at La Grange"  
October 27 & 28 Cost \$5  
Call 703-753-9360 for more  
information.

Along the Cayuga Wine Trail in  
New York State,  
Knapp Vineyards and Americana  
Vineyards have special  
Halloween events.  
Check them out for details.

If you just happen to be in  
Missouri, check out Cave  
Vineyard for the Halloween Party  
Inside the Cave!  
Saturday, October 27, 2007  
A Google search will give you  
more information.

## Wine Tip

Not sure what type of wine to  
have with dinner, use a sparkling  
wine/champagne. These wines  
should be used for everyday  
and special occasions. Sparkling  
wine is good with any food even  
popcorn.

## About WTT

[Wine Trail Traveler](#) is a winery  
and vineyard virtual visitor  
center. It features winery  
reviews, a forum, recipes, and  
gentle wine education.

Sign up for our free newsletter  
and free forum.

# Ghostly Times

October is the month of the year  
that people think about ghosts.  
Whether or not they actually  
believe in them a visit to a friendly  
"haunted" winery can be a lot of  
fun.

On the East Coast, there are  
wineries that may label their  
wines with a ghostly name or may  
reputedly have a history of ghosts  
flickering lights and slamming  
doors in the night. When visiting  
Miles Cellars in the Finger Lakes  
region of New York, be sure to ask  
about their ghostly experiences.  
You will hear about the experiences  
of doors slamming and flickering  
lights. Through the years as  
owners came and went the house  
had additions built and eventually  
fell into disrepair. Doug Miles and  
his father purchased the house and  
began the historical preservation  
process. While restoring the Greek  
revival style house, Doug and his  
wife, Susan would occasionally  
sleep in their car fearful of the  
ghostly sounds and unexplained  
happenings. Today the Miles Cellars  
tasting room is in the original two  
rooms built in 1802. Miles Cellars  
is host to a friendly ghost couple.  
Be sure to ask about the more  
rambunctious ghost visitors who  
have left the house. Also, ask to  
see the special label bottle of  
"Ghost."



*Miles Cellars in New York is home to  
a married ghostly couple.*

Another winery in New York, The  
Winery at Marjim Manor, reportedly  
has resident ghosts. They are  
located in Appleton, New York  
along the Niagara Wine Trail. Be  
sure to check out their wines while  
you are asking about their ghosts.  
Ask about the wine names such  
as "Thursday Afternoon at Three."

What happened at three o'clock on  
a Thursday?



*The Winery at LaGrange, Virginia has  
a piano playing ghost.*

In Virginia, the Winery at La  
Grange, was established on  
property which George Washington  
gave Lafayette the privilege of  
naming. Lafayette chose the name  
La Grange meaning "the granary."  
The wine tasting and event rooms  
are located in the mansion, which  
dates back to 1790. While visiting  
the winery, if you chance to meet  
Fletcher, the winemaker, he is apt  
to mention possible paranormal  
activity that some claim to happen  
in the mansion. Be sure to ask  
him about the piano playing  
incident. According to the story,  
in 2006 while the mansion was  
under renovation a family came  
by the mansion. Unable to open  
the front door the parents went to  
the back of the house where they  
heard a piano playing. Assuming  
the children had made their way  
into the house and found a piano,  
their parents found an unlocked  
door and went inside. The children  
were still outside. They searched  
the entire house and were unable  
to find a piano. When you visit the  
Winery at LaGrange be sure to ask  
about the piano and the location of  
the piano legs. Also ask about who  
left the lights on, or did they?

On your travels to wineries, you  
will occasionally find wineries,  
which believe they have ghosts.  
On the other hand, you may come  
across wineries, which will make  
no mention of ghosts and if you  
happen to ask will look concerned  
and begin to whisper, "There may  
be ghosts but we don't talk about  
it."

K.S.

## Our Winery Partners

Stop by these wineries that advertise with Wine Trail Traveler. Be sure to check the [winery ads](#) for more detailed and updated information.

### **Basignani Winery**

15722 Falls Road,  
Sparks, MD 21152

### **Chateau O'Brien at Northpoint**

3238 Rail Stop Road  
Markham, VA 22643

### **Fiore Winery**

3026 Whiteford Road  
Pylesville, MD 21132

### **King Ferry Winery**

658 Lake Road  
King Ferry, New York 13081

### **Kluge Estate Winery & Vineyards**

100 Grand Cru Drive  
Charlottesville, Virginia 22902

### **Pearmund Cellars**

6190 Georgetown Road  
Broad Run, VA 20137

### **Veritas Vineyard & Winery**

145 Saddleback Farm  
Afton, Virginia 22920

### **The Winery at La Grange**

4970 Antioch Road  
Haymarket, Virginia 20169

## Our Lodging Partners

### **Hampton Inn, Geneva NY**

43 Lake Street  
Geneva, New York 14456  
Phone (315) 781-2035

### **Hampton Inn and Suites, Leesburg VA**

117 Fort Evans Road N.E.  
Leesburg, VA 20176  
Phone (703) 699-8640

### **Hilton Garden Inn, Allentown West**

230 Sycamore Road  
Breinigsville, PA 18031  
Phone (610) 398-6686

### **Hilton Garden Inn, Kennett Square**

815 E. Baltimore Pike  
Kennett Square, Pennsylvania 19348  
Phone (610)-444-9100

## Recipes with Wine

With the onset of cooler weather and weekend football games what better time of year to think about chili.

Category: Entrée

Barrington Cellars Cincinnati Chili

Ingredients

1 pound lean ground beef  
1 small onion, chopped  
1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa  
2 teaspoons chili powder  
1/2 teaspoon ground red pepper  
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice  
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes  
1 can (6 ounces) tomato paste  
1/2 cup Barrington Cellars Baco Noir  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1/2 teaspoon salt

Note: may substitute a dry red for the Baco Noir.

Directions

1. In a large saucepan or soup pot, brown the beef with the onion over medium heat for 6 to 8 minutes, or until no pink remains in the meat.
2. Drain off any excess liquid, then return the saucepan to the stove and add the remaining ingredients; mix well.
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

TIPS: This type of chili has the mole (pronounced "moe-lay") flavoring that is popular in traditional Mexican cooking. And to make it authentic Cincinnati-style chili, serve it up over spaghetti and sprinkle finely shredded Cheddar cheese over the top.

Provided by Barrington Cellars, New York.

More recipes have been added recently to our Wine Traveler's website. We will continue to expand the recipe section when wineries donate a recipe to our site.

When you try a recipe, we hope you will take a moment to email us at [kathy@winetrailtraveler.com](mailto:kathy@winetrailtraveler.com) and let us know your experience with the recipes. If you would rather, join the free forum and comment.

Have a recipe that uses wines as an ingredient? If you'd like it published on Wine Trail Traveler send it to [newsletter@winetrailtraveler.com](mailto:newsletter@winetrailtraveler.com).