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Wine Trail Traveler Newsletter

From the Editors:

Welcome to the January issue of Wine Trail Traveler Newsletter. We wish everyone a peaceful New Year.

Wine Trail Traveler will become one year old at the end of January. In December, World Wide Web Awards gave www.winetrailtraveler.com a Gold Web Award. We have learned so much about wine and wineries and enjoyed sharing this information with visitors to our website. Our goals for 2008 include adding more winery reviews, recipes and wine modules. We will also add wine and food pairings, book reviews, and purchase opportunities of wine accessories and books.

Recently, when we tell people that we visited over 150 wineries and vineyards during 2007, they want to know which ones were our favorites. During December, we spent time reflecting about the wineries and vineyards we visited and the wonderful people we met. Every winery had an emphasis on the wine it produced, but there was so much more involved in a winery. The design of a wine label, the architecture of the winery and tasting room, the wine accessories available and the beautiful views of mountains, lakes or vineyards were all part of the visitors' experience.

We decided that we didn't have one favorite, however several wineries came to mind when we established categories. This edition of the newsletter cites the wineries that were our favorites from 2007. The categories included: wineries with a view, tasting rooms, tours, winery restaurants, and winemakers.

Favorite Tasting Rooms

Among the many large and small tasting rooms we have visited, we remember many with particular fondness. A small tasting room can be just as memorable as a large tasting room in your winery experience. We have visited tasting rooms in winemakers' homes and large museum-type tasting rooms. Your experience will be enhanced by the style of the tasting room.

With so many wonderful visits to wineries experienced in 2007, it is not possible to mention every one. If you want more information about the wineries we have visited, go to the winery review section of the website. In the meantime, here are a few of our favorite winery tasting rooms that come quickly to mind.

Gloria Ferrer in California has a large, bright tasting room where visitors sit at small tables while tasting fine wines. McGregor Vineyards in the Finger Lakes offers an unusual experience as they actually escort visitors to rustic tables for their tastings. A small plate of tiny nibbles is provided for the pairing of wine and food. In North Carolina, Duplin Winery's tasting room is filled with many gifts to choose from and a large tasting counter,

but most significant are the stools available at the counter for tasters. Comfortable stools with backs are also available for tasters at Sandhill Crane Vineyards in Michigan. When visiting take your time and enjoy the camaraderie.

Visitors to Clover Hill Vineyards and Winery in Pennsylvania will enjoy the large, elegant tasting room. Be sure to look at the unusual wine bottle holders available for purchase. Veritas Vineyard and Winery in Virginia has a large tasting room with a tasting counter. Visitors have the option of enjoying leather seating near a large fireplace. Mediterranean Cellars is decorated with a Greek influence. Emphasis is on old world culture.

The Winery at La Grange in Virginia offers a unique experience. The tasting room is located in an 18th century renovated house. As you taste wines you have the opportunity to wander through the house. If you ask, you may even hear stories about ghosts.

After walking out of one winery this summer, I said, "I could do all of my Christmas shopping here." Bully Hill Vineyards in New York

is a delightful winery to visit. One building is devoted to all types of gifts, and even in the heat of the summer, one area was decorated for the holidays. Prince Michel in Virginia has an outstanding large selection of a variety of gifts. Here shelves are filled with gift possibilities surrounding the tasting counter. Kluge Estates in Virginia offers a gourmet style shop. Visitors can purchase foods prepared by chefs onsite.

K.S.

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Favorite Scenic Views

Vineyards and wineries along with tasting rooms, while mostly located in rural settings, can also be found elsewhere. Pentamere Winery located in Tecumseh, Michigan and Frederick Cellars in Frederick, Maryland are two urban wineries. Some wineries have established tasting rooms in shopping centers and industrial parks. However, it is the rural settings that can capture the best views of vineyards, with mountains, lakes and medieval cities painting the background.

Some of our favorite views this past year were in Italy. We spent many hours walking among the vineyards at Mormoraia, near San Gimignano. The vineyards are on rolling hills and often one can see the medieval town of San Gimignano in the distance only a few kilometers away. Barone Ricasoli located in Gaiole in Chianti offered stunning views of the Tuscan countryside. From the winery tasting room, one can drive up to Castello di Brolio, the ancestral home of the Ricasoli barons. From this vantage point, there are beautiful views of the surrounding country with its vineyards and olive groves.

England also has its share of wineries with views. Breaky Bottom Vineyards in Rodmell, Lewes East Sussex was an adventure to find. The long drive to the bottom offered views of the English countryside along with sheep resting peacefully along the road. One could observe the chalky cliffs as the road wound down to the vineyard and winery. The winery is located in an old stone building whose color



Vineyard at Mormoraia, Italy. The town of San Gimignano is in the distance.



View of Mount Helena from the patio at Rosso & Bianco Winery in California

blended in with the vineyard, still resting in early spring. Splashes of yellow from daffodils reminded one that bud break was close.

The Finger Lake region of New York has many wineries with picturesque views. Our favorite view was at Miles Wine Cellars in Himrod, New York. The tasting room is in a Greek Revival style house and just a short walk from the cliffs overlooking Seneca Lake. From this vantage point, one is quite high and the lake spreads out before the observer.

A favorite view in California was at the Rosso & Bianco Winery in Geyserville. The large patio area outside the tasting room offers views of the vineyards and the snow capped Mount Helena in the distance. The tasting room at Gloria Ferrar in Sonoma sits high above the vineyards. Our visit in late February afforded the view of the yellow mustard growing between the rows of grapevines.

In Virginia, many wineries are located within sight of the Blue Ridge Mountains. At Fox Meadow Vineyards in Linden, Virginia, it is possible to see seven mountain ranges from the winery's large deck.

When you visit a winery, take time to enjoy the scenery while you enjoy trying the wines. There are different views to observe throughout the year. Always remember to carry a camera with you and enjoy pictures in years to come.

T.S.

Favorite Winery Tours

One of the significant aspects of visiting wineries is the opportunity to take a tour of the winemaking facility. Many wineries offer tours while a few do not. Some wineries charge for a tour. If you would like to take a tour, check in advance to see if a tour is available.

Many tours have been remarkable whether it is because of the enthusiasm of the tour guide, the tour itself or the size of the tanks. Our favorite tour was at Del Dotto in California. Here is the opportunity to walk through old tunnels carved by Chinese workers after the railroads were completed. Oak barrels fill the dark caves and a dark green fungus hangs from the ceilings. On the top of the barrels, small candles flicker, giving off just enough light. Wine tasting is during the tour from the barrels. At Schramsberg in California, the tour was also excellent and ended with a wonderful tasting in a small library-type setting. Seated at a table we tasted wines, and then our tour guide explained and showed us how to open a bottle of champagne. We all listened carefully for the traditional pop. Only a tiny pop was heard. According to our guide, the louder the pop, the more nuances the champagne loses. A tour at Pleasant Valley Wine Company in New York State provides one with a view of large redwood tanks. These are no longer in use but kept, as redwood is now protected from harvesting.



The tour at Del Dotto in California goes through candle lit caves.

Favorite Winemakers

While most winemakers are busy with their focus on producing fine wine, we have occasionally had the opportunity to meet some of the winemakers at the wineries we visited. At Pearmund Cellars, we were fortunate to meet Chris Pearmund who is very involved in the wine industry. Chris was the first winemaker to encourage us in our dream for the Wine Trail Traveler website.

On Long Island, we met Charles Massoud who was friendly and gave us a tasting from a barrel to compare with a bottled wine. Charles worked hard for decades to see his winery grow. Today his sons are involved in the business.

At Lenz Winery on Long Island, we met Eric Fry, who believes in guiding interested visitors in learning about how to taste wine. Eric believes that people know how to taste and has visitors tell him what they taste rather than telling them what they should taste. He also believes in using a "fruit salad" mix idea for producing wine. He picks his Chardonnay grapes at different times in order to obtain different flavors and then creates a blend.

At Keswick Vineyards in Virginia, Stephen Barnard is the winemaker and general manager. Beginning

his wine education at Stellenbosch University in South Africa, Stephen has also worked at Rappahannock Cellars in Virginia. He believes that the vineyard manager and winemaker must work together to create wine. The vineyard manager is "not a grape grower but a wine grower."

Steve DiFrancesco, at Glenora Wine Cellars in New York's Finger Lakes is friendly and passionate about producing wine. Steve is also the winemaker at Knapp Vineyards Winery.

At Anthony Road Wine Company in New York, we were fortunate to meet winemaker, Johannes Reinhardt, originally from Franconia, Germany. He believes the quality of a wine is developed in the vineyard. He also believes that a winemaker can "fix some wines but you will know it."

Veritas Vineyards and Winery in Virginia has a father and daughter winemaker team. Andrew was recently joined by his daughter Emily. Together they produce the wines. Emily won the Judges' Choice Award in the 2007 National Women's Wine Competition.

Fletcher, the enthusiastic winemaker at the Winery at LaGrange in Virginia taught a one day class at the winery. His stories filtered into the class and

made for a very relaxing event that was a crash course on vineyards and winemaking.

Another storytelling winemaker is Mike Fiore, owner and winemaker at Fiore Winery in Maryland. Mike tells the story of growing up on a vineyard in Tuscany and leaving to come to America. At one time he interviewed for a winemaking job with Robert Mondavi. Mike's story ends with his winery in Maryland where he now produces Italian style wines and others.

Brad Hansen, the winemaker at Prince Michel Vineyards and Winery in Virginia led a group of forty on a barrel tasting of wines at different stages of aging. He spoke of his winemaking philosophy and believes that wines should be similar but with a difference.

Mike Roberts is the owner and winemaker at Ridgeview Wine Estates in Sussex England. Mike began his vineyards in the early 1990's after studying the terroir. He decided to plant the Champagne grapes since his land was very similar to the Champagne region in France. Mike is pleased with his award winning sparkling wines.

Enjoy available opportunities to talk with winemakers.

Favorite Winery Restaurants

It is always nice to run across a winery that also has a restaurant. You have the opportunity to sit, relax and pair the wines with food.

When visiting Knapp Vineyards along Cayuga Lake in New York, on a nice summer day, eat outside on the patio that has grapevines casting shade on the tables. Their crabcakes are excellent.

The Bistro at Duplin Winery features a lovely cuisine and ample portions. You may want to try the chicken salad.

Plan to stay for lunch at the Bully

Hill Restaurant in New York, where fresh seasonal ingredients are emphasized and the view of Keuka Lake from the deck is picturesque.

When visiting Italy do not miss Barone Ricasoli Winery. After a long historical tour of the castle and a delightful scheduled tasting, be sure to stop at Barone Ricasoli's restaurant. Try the wild boar in tomato sauce served over pasta. It pairs nicely with Chianti which seems only fitting since the boars feasted on Sangiovese grapes.



Lunch at Bully Hill Winery Restaurant along Keuka Lake in New York

Our Winery Partners

Stop by these wineries that advertise with Wine Trail Traveler.

Pickering Winery (*new advertiser*)

Rt. 187 Between Wysox and Rome
Wysox, PA 18854

Grove Winery and Vineyard (*new advertiser*)

7360 Brooks Bridge Road
Gibsonville, NC 27249

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 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

Our Artists Partners

Mastin Designs

2710 Astoria Blvd. Apt. 2C
Astoria NY 11102

Recipes with Wine

It's Game Time and what's better than a bowl of steaming chili and corn chips? Try this chili recipe that uses one-half cup of red wine.

Category: Entrées

Title: **Supreme Chili for Six**

Ingredients

1½ lbs ground beef
Salt
Pepper
3 cans of red kidney beans
3 cans stewed tomatoes, Mexican style
2 celery stalks
1 red sweet pepper
¼ c red wine vinegar
2 T chili powder
1 t cumin, ground
1 t parsley, dried
1 t basil, dried
1 dash Worcestershire sauce
½ c red wine (do not use cooking wine)

Directions

1. Brown ground beef. Drain well.
2. Sprinkle with pepper and salt to taste.
3. Using a crockpot, add beef, beans, tomatoes, celery, sweet red pepper, Worcestershire sauce and vinegar (if desired.)
4. Mix together basil, cumin, parsley and chili powder. Add to crockpot.
5. With crockpot on low setting, cook for 7 hours. Add red wine and cook for 1 more hour.

Serve in bread "bowls" with corn chips. Adjust the amount of chili powder, depending on how "hot" you want the chili to taste.

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.

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

Wine Tip

When cooking with wine, use a good quality wine. It doesn't need to be expensive to be a quality wine.