

Volume 3  
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# Wine Trail Traveler Newsletter

Last month we wrote four articles about some of the many heart-warming stories we've heard from winery and vineyard owners, winemakers, growers, and staff. This January edition will continue the theme of "chicken-soupish" stories.

## Wineries' Best Friends

If you have been visiting wineries, you very likely have come across a dog or two. If you visit Basignani Winery in Sparks, Maryland delightful and friendly border collies will welcome you. Meanwhile, if you visit Barrel Oak Winery in Delaplane, Virginia, you may want to take your dog with you. Barrel Oak Winery is most definitely a dog loving winery with two golden retrievers Bogart and Barley.

One of my personal favorite winery pet stories is RagApple Lassie located in Boonville, North Carolina. According to the owners, "A lot of people choose to come here because of its name – it's unique." The winery is easy to locate with a silo just outside the winery building that Frank and Lenna Hobson painted with cow spots like Holsteins. So, what do cow spots have to do with a winery? According to the owners, Frank Hobson had a calf as a 4-H project when he was growing up. Frank named the calf RagApple Lassie and the calf became his pet. Frank fondly



RagApple Lassie was named after an owner's pet cow.

recalls going swimming with RagApple Lassie. I wanted to ask what became of RagApple Lassie, but I was almost afraid of the answer. After growing up on a small farm, I knew what the possible answer might be. For me, it wasn't a good idea to become attached to a farm animal. But Frank did. RagApple Lassie followed Frank everywhere on the farm. It is now buried on the property. Frank named the winery in honor of his favorite pet.

Farther north in the Blue Ridge area of Virginia, at Chateau Morrisette, David Morrisette has a great fondness for dogs. David's dog, Hans, was a constant companion. When his dog passed away, David decided to memorialize his dog. He created the dog's image on a wine label. Chateau Morrisette was one of the first wineries to use an animal's image on a wine label. The Black Dog wine's label pictures an artist's view of an angel with a glass of wine and a black dog sitting on her lap. Today the winery provides assistance to St. Francis Service Dogs and Service Dogs of Virginia. The winery also supports animal adoption programs.

In Michigan, on Leelanau Peninsula, Black Star Farms is the first winery we have visited that takes care of abused animals. This began with a group of abused horses and the care of abused animals continues today.

Carlson Vineyards, located in Grand Valley, Colorado, is a cat friendly winery. Parker Carlson, winemaker and owner, has his own cats that meander throughout the tasting room. What makes Parker unique is that at the time of our visit he had discovered a young cat family of six that someone abandoned. Since he already had his own cats, he was attempting to find new homes for the abandoned kittens. As we talked with Parker under the shade of a tree, the kittens crept out from behind a lug to carefully watch us. Wine bottle labels are colorful, fun loving and some represent cats. Names



Kittens find refuge at Carlson Vineyards in Colorado

include Laughing Cat Sweet Baby Red, Laughing Cat Riesling and Laughing Cat Gewürztraminer.

If you are wondering whether to take your pet to a winery, contact the winery in advance. Do not be alarmed if you see pets at wineries. Many wineries have dogs and cats that are very much a part of the

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winery experience. At McRitchie Winery and Ciderworks in Thurmond, North Carolina, two friendly winery dogs will greet you. They also entertain the children while the parents can taste the wines.

K.S.



Winery cat enjoys the barrel room at Plum Creek Cellars in Palisade, Colorado.

## Looking Forward to 2009

The Wine Trail Traveler February edition of the newsletter will list some of the favorites from 2008. This edition is a result of the many requests we receive about our favorite winery, vineyard, wine, tour, scenic spot etc.

In January a companion lodging website will be published. It has reviews on lodging facilities, maps showing destinations and recipes. Unlike the recipe section of winetrailtraveler.com website, the recipes in the lodging website may not have wine as an ingredient. The destination menu lists wineries, attractions, lodging facilities and restaurants in a geographical area. Using the menu will help in plans to travel to a particular destination.

The Wine Trail Traveler blog will continue to grow. The blog began in January 2008 and by December was recording close to 4,000 views. In 2009, we will add a monthly video podcast along with our other entries.

We will also begin offering consulting services to winery/vineyard tasting rooms.

T.S.

## Romance on the Peninsula

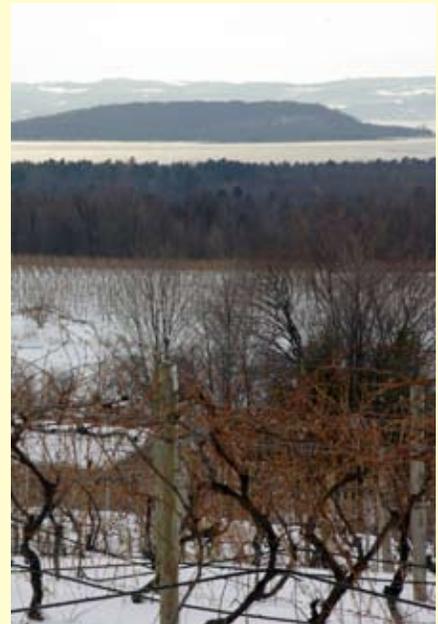
There are many reminders of love. A wedding ring, a park bench where there was a proposal, a special candle lit dinner, or perhaps a special bottle of wine. If you happen to be an owner of a winery how do you propose and keep a permanent reminder of your love?

Spencer Stegenga, proprietor of Bowers Harbor Vineyard in Traverse City, Michigan was faced with this challenge. One day he and his girlfriend Erica Schoenherr were walking the property and Spencer stopped at a bare spot of land. Spencer proposed to Erica; she said yes. A month later, at the spot of the proposal, the soil was prepared and grapevines were planted. Spencer dedicated the vineyard to Erica. The 4.64 acres are home to Cabernet Franc and Pinot Grigio vines. Cabernet Franc grapes from Erica Vineyard are used to create the Erica Vineyard Cabernet Franc. The first vintage was 2004.

A vineyard proposal is special. We have visited several wineries who work with the groom-to-be to make the proposal a special event. One winery had a proposal room in a tower overlooking the vineyard. We wonder if the name of the room gives it away. Another winery strings lights out in the vineyard. The tasting room manager turns them on at the time of the proposal. However having a vineyard named after you is truly remarkable.



A vineyard, even in Winter can make a romantic spot for a proposal.



Chateau Chantal sits atop a beautiful setting on Michigan's Old Mission Peninsula.

The Old Mission Peninsula must be a magical place for romance. The breathtaking beauty of the area adds to the romance. Vineyards and wineries fit well in the country-side, especially considering the proximity to the 43rd parallel. This parallel runs through many of the world's best wine regions.

Not far away from Bowers Harbour another romantic story unfolds. Robert and Nadine Begin have created a spectacular winery and bed & breakfast facility that emphasizes great wine and hospitality. The couple met later in life. Robert was a priest in the archdiocese of Detroit and Nadine was a Felician Sister. Both decided to make a change in their life paths. They met and were married in 1974. Later they named their child Marie-Chantal. Robert had a dream of building a wine chateau styled after the European chateaus. Upon completion of the chateau in 1993, Robert and Nadine named the winery after their daughter. Both Robert's and Nadine's first career paths put them in service to others. Now, service continues as they host visitors to the winery and bed & breakfast. The setting for Chateau Chantal is perfect for romance. Atop a hill with vistas of vineyards, farms, the bay and islands, this setting is perfect for proposals, weddings and anniversaries.

T.S.

## Families Make It Happen

Despite the news of some winery family disputes, we want to highlight wineries where families work together. The following are just a few of the examples we have discovered as we travel through wine country. They all deserve special credit.

Sprucewood Shores in Ontario is the result of family and extended family working together to create a dream. Located on the north shores of Lake Erie, Sprucewood Shores winery and vineyards are situated on 52 acres of land that Gordon and Hannah Mitchell purchased in 1975. Vineyards were started in 1991 and now there are 35 acres of vineyards including Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. After many years of selling grapes to area wineries that produced award winning wines, the Mitchells decided to build their own winery. The Tuscan style winery was in the process of being finished when Hannah Mitchell became seriously ill. Construction on the winery came to a halt, while all of the family focused on Hannah overcoming her illness. Hannah is now recovering thanks to the help of family. Today Tanya, a daughter who trained as a winemaker, is the winemaker for Sprucewood Shores while her father, Gordon, takes care of the vineyards. Hannah is the CFO and their son, Jake is the multimedia director. Their two other children are also involved in the winery; Stephen helps with sales and marketing and Marlaina works with finance and events. Family love and honor is a highly valued aspect, which no amount of money can buy.



*Sprucewood Shores winery and tasting/events room became a dream come true with the help of the entire family.*

West Wind Farm is a small, boutique winery located in Max Meadows, Virginia. The farm has been in the family for four generations and the winery and vineyards is the result of wanting to continue keeping the land in the family. Vineyards add more value to property than most other crops. Value can be added to grapes that are turned into wine. Further value is added if wine is sold out of a tasting room. Paul and Brenda Hric own the farm and it is with the help of their nephews that they create wine and sell it from their tasting room. David and Jason Manley are involved with the entire operation of the winery and vineyards. They want the winery to stay the size it is so that everything is "hands on." With the help of the family, the farm can remain in the family for future generations.



*A cameo of Kathryn on the wine labels is a tribute to a mother keeping a watchful eye on the vineyard and winery from heaven.*

St. Kathryn Cellars in Palisade, Colorado has a unique story to its name. The former owners Fred and Connie Strothman opened the winery in 1999. St. Kathryn Cellars was named after Fred's mother who promised that when she was in heaven "to keep an eye on the vineyard." Kathryn passed away, and the success Fred had made him realize that his mother was keeping watch over the vineyards. He concluded that since his mother was in heaven, he should call the winery St. Kathryn Cellars.



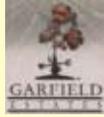
*West Wind Farm tasting room is warm and homey.*

## Wine Trail Traveler Partners

### Our Winery Partners

Stop by these wineries that advertise with Wine Trail Traveler.

#### Colorado



#### Garfield Estates Vineyard and Winery

3572 G Road  
Palisade, Colorado 81526



#### Two Rivers Winery & Chateau

2087 Broadway  
Grand Junction, Colorado 81503

#### Maryland



#### Dove Valley Vineyards and Winery

645 Harrington Road  
Rising Sun, MD 21911



#### Fiore Winery

3026 Whiteford Road  
Pylesville, MD 21132

#### Michigan



#### Black Star Farms

10844 E. Revold Rd.  
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682



#### Chateau Chantal

15900 Rue de Vin  
Traverse City, MI 49686

#### New York



#### Three Brothers Wineries & Estates

623 Lerch Road,  
Geneva, NY 14456

#### North Carolina



#### Grove Winery and Vineyard

7360 Brooks Bridge Road  
Gibsonville, NC 27249

#### Ohio



#### Ferrante Winery

5585 N River Road W (State Rt. 307)  
Geneva, Ohio 44041



#### Grand River Cellars

5750 South Madison Rd. (Route 528)  
Madison, Ohio 44057

#### Oregon



#### Kramer Vineyards

26830 NW Olson Road  
Gaston, OR 97119-8039



#### Redhawk Winery

2995 Michigan City Lane NW  
Salem, Oregon 97304

#### Pennsylvania



#### Pickering Winery

Rt. 187 Between Wysox and Rome  
Wysox, PA 18854

#### Virginia



#### Barrel Oak Winery (check Wine Trail Traveler website for a tasting coupon)

3623 Grove Lane  
Delaplane, Virginia 20144



#### Chateau O'Brien at Northpoint

3238 Rail Stop Road  
Markham, VA 22643



#### 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

## Wine Trail Traveler Partners

### Our Lodging Partners

#### Ontario, Canada

##### **Hilton Garden Inn, Niagara-on-the-Lake**

500 York Road  
Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario  
L0S 1J0  
Phone 905-984-4200  
Toll free: 866-777-9877



#### Colorado

##### **The Wine Country Inn**

777 Grande River Drive  
Palisade, CO 81526  
888.855.8330  
Note: opening in August 2008



#### Michigan

##### **The Inn at Black Star Farms**

10844 E. Revold Rd.  
Suttons Bay, Michigan 49682



#### Pennsylvania

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

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



#### New York

##### **The Halsey House**

2057 Trumansburg Road  
Trumansburg, NY 14886  
Phone: 800-387-5590



### Our Artists Partners

#### New York

##### **Masten Designs**

2710 Astoria Blvd. Apt. 2C  
Astoria NY 11102



### Our Restaurant Partners

#### Colorado

##### **Garlic Mike's**

2674 Hwy 135  
Gunnison, Colorado 81230  
970-641-2493



##### **Garlic Mike's**

103 Rose Lane  
Montrose, Colorado 81401  
970-249-4381



#### Ohio

##### **Ferrante Winery & Ristorante**

5585 N River Road W (State Rt. 307)  
Geneva, Ohio 44041



**Mark your calendars for the  
largest tasting room on the  
planet.**



**For more information**

**Want to be listed on  
this page? Call or send  
an email to Wine Trail  
Traveler.**

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