

# WINE TRAIL TRAVELER QUARTERLY



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## On the Cover: B. Cellars

by Terry Sullivan

B Cellars in Calistoga, California is off the beaten track in Napa Valley. Located on the Silverado Trail, the winery offers both traditional wine tastings and wine tastings in the barrel/tank room. For those who see the romantic side of wine, a tasting by candlelight next to barrels is a must.

## WINE TRAIL TRAVELER QUARTERLY

### Cover Story

Focus on Napa Valley, Lake  
County and  
Lake Michigan Shore AVA

### Publisher

Wine Trail Traveler LLC

### Editors

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As that old Bob Dylan lyrics say, "Times they are a changing." Many things have changed and are changing. Wines have changed. In the 1960s there were the jug wines that today most wine drinkers do not touch. Today drinking wine is more accepted than it once was although by no means is it seen frequently as in old world wine regions where wine was served daily at meals. Does that mean etiquette has changed? More importantly for wine enthusiasts and tasting room visitors, has etiquette in tasting rooms changed? Below are a few good things to know when visiting a tasting room.

### *Wine Trail Travelers' Top Tips to Enjoying a Visit to a Tasting Room*

A winery tasting room is not a bar. Perhaps one of the reasons I enjoy visiting tasting rooms is the gentle sophistication at most tasting rooms. While there are some ostentatious wineries, those are few and far between. If you are looking for a quiet time to visit a winery choose to visit during the week.

1. Whether you know a lot about wine or zilch, do not come off as a wine snob. Of course the term wine snob really needs to be defined. My personal definition of a wine snob is someone who enters the tasting room and immediately announces he/she is a wine connoisseur, begins degrading the wines from the get-go and loudly complains about the stemware or lack of and the wines. The wine snob forgets, that for the winemakers, the wine

nearby.

## Wine Tidbits: Times are Changing But What About Etiquette in the Tasting Room?

Kathy Sullivan

is their child. Winemakers are responsible for starting it and raising it until the wine can stand on its own in the bottle. Respect the winemaker's hard work and skill in producing the wine. At the same time if one does not like a wine, it is okay to quietly mention it but do not announce it to the whole room. First you might be "wrong," your taste buds may be off that day. By announcing that a wine is not good, others who may like the wine will not want to try it. It is unfair for the winemaker. This reminds me of a time we were in a tasting room talking with a winemaker/owner. A visitor arrived from an "unnamed state" and said to us, "Don't visit (state) because all the wines are bad." Little did he realize that we had visited wineries in the state mentioned and different wineries were producing some very nice wines. By making such a blanket statement the visitor only showed his ignorance and attitude.

2. Perfume and strong aftershave are a distraction in the tasting room. Scents like these take away your ability to accurately smell and taste the wines. Visitors to the winery will have their tastings interfered with when standing

3. Chewing gum interferes with wine tasting; so do not chew gum when entering the tasting room. Do you want peppermint or spearmint flavors mingling with your wine? It seems almost too silly to mention but we have been in tasting rooms where people arrived chewing a wad of gum.

4. While much of the wine industry is under the federal government much is left to the individual states to administer. One of these that significantly impacts wineries comes under tasting fees. States can require tasting fees or not. For wineries that do not charge tasting fees, there is significant loss of a product in providing free tastings. Therefore if you find a wine you like be sure to consider purchasing a bottle of the wine. It benefits the winery and you. A few months later when you open that bottle of wine you will remember the great experience you had at the winery.

5. Typically weekends and holidays are busy at many wineries. If you can, choose to visit during the week. You are likely to get more of a personal experience and in some cases perhaps meet the winemaker.

6. Sometimes vineyards are close to the tasting room. Do not pick the grapes to ask what they are? Unless you are at a U-pick vineyard, the grapes are not yours to pick.

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# FOCUS ON NAPA, CALIFORNIA

BY TERRY SULLIVAN



Wine drinkers around the world were shocked to discover that California can compete with the best wine regions. Stag's Leap Wine Cellars took first place for their Cabernet Sauvignon at the 1976 Judgment of Paris. Shortly afterwards customers started to demand California wines at restaurants in New York City and elsewhere throughout the United States. This competition in 1976 sparked a worldwide interest in wines from California.

Today, the Napa vineyards consist of 102 acres with the majority of vines planted with Cabernet Sauvignon. The vineyards and winery are located in the Stags Leap District.



B Cellars is located on the Silverado Trail in Calistoga, one of the northern areas of Napa Valley. The "B" refers to degree brix, an indicator of the sugar level of the grapes. Our tasting was set up in the barrel/tank aging room; lit candles cast a romantic setting to the area. Chef Christina Machamer conducted our tasting. Christina was the winning chef of season four Hell's Kitchen on FOX television.



Round Pond Estate is located in Rutherford, between California Route 29 and the Silverado Trail. One tasting option is to pair wine with food. Our tasting took place on an outside patio area that has more seating areas for intimate wine tasting experiences. Vineyards surround the winery/tasting room facility. Our outdoor tasting paired with food offered a relaxing experience in a photogenic setting.



Perhaps the most shocking news from the 1976 Judgement of Paris is that California wines won first place for both the reds and the whites. Chateau Montelena in Calistoga was the first place winner for its Chardonnay. A visit to the winery provides a castle-like structure for the setting. Some of the movie *Bottleshock* was filmed at the winery.



Shafer Vineyards is located along the Silverado Trail in Napa. They may best be known for their Hillside Select Cabernet Sauvignon, a high-end wine that has many fans amongst wine enthusiasts. Tastings are by appointment and include a flight of wines in the Shafer portfolio.



The misty day had a touch of fog covering the hillside vineyards at Storybook Mountain Vineyards in Calistoga. It was a perfect setting for this winery that was originally established in 1883 by two brothers who had the name Grimm. Our tasting was in caves dug out over 100 years ago. As you walk to the tasting area you will pass barrels of wine aging.

# FOCUS ON LAKE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

BY TERRY SULLIVAN



North of the Napa Valley lies Lake County. The largest freshwater natural lake in California, Clear Lake influences the vineyards that are planted closeby. Vigilance Vineyards has 200 plus acres of sustainably farmed vineyards. With views of vineyards, Anderson Marsh and Clear Lake, this is a wonderful vineyard to visit. The tasting room is surrounded by vineyards.



There is a vineyard trail that leads from the Vigilance Vineyards tasting room to the Gregory Graham tasting room. Hikers can enjoy walking through the vines and sampling the wines at both places. Gregory Graham Winery is surrounded by 27 acres of vineyards. The hilltop location provides picturesque views of vineyards and Clear Lake.

Also nestled in Lower Lake is the Hawk and Horse vineyards. Visit the tasting room and notice the horse related theme. Wine travelers can choose among several ways to tour this property. For those who enjoy hiking consider a walk along the trails. Others may want to learn more about biodynamics that might include a visit to see the Scottish Highland cattle. Horse lovers may want to visit the horses.





Six Sigma is another ranch located in Lower Lake. The ranch includes 40 acres of vineyards and has grass-fed sheep and cows. The tasting room is located in what was once a stagecoach stop for Middleton. Wine enthusiasts can take a tour of the vineyards in an all-terrain Pinzgauer.



Steele Wines is located in Lakeport. At one side of the winery/tasting room building travelers will see a painted quilt decorating the building. Steele Wines participates in the Lake County Quilt Trail that helps to promote agri-tourism. The quilt square pattern is Fifty-Four Forty or Fight, a slogan used by James K. Polk during the 1844 Presidential election. The quilt square reminds one of a shooting star, an image frequently seen at the winery.

## FOCUS ON LAKE MICHIGAN SHORE,

### MICHIGAN

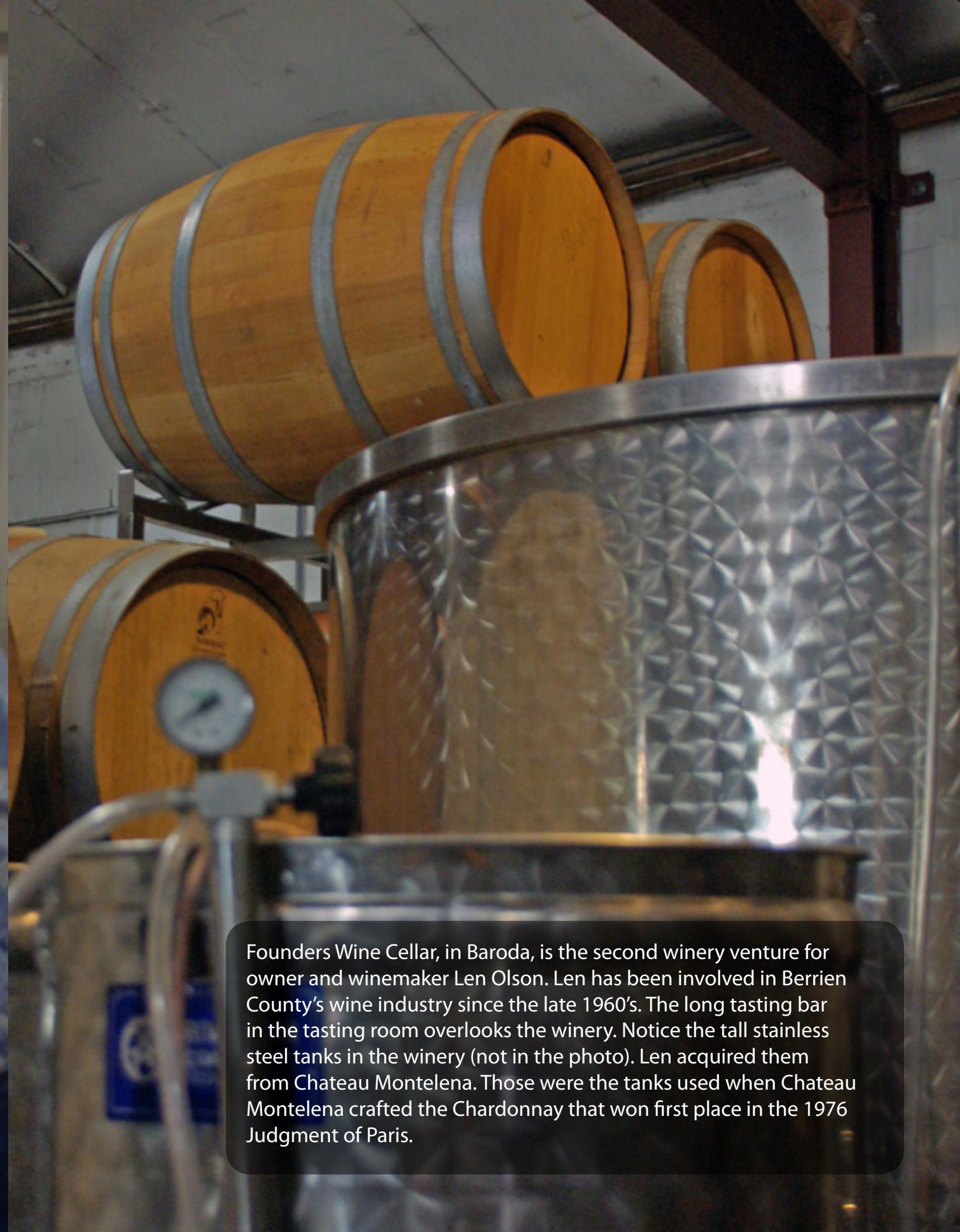
BY TERRY SULLIVAN



The Lake Michigan Shore AVA is located in southwestern Michigan. Most of the vineyards are within a few miles of Lake Michigan. Old Shore Vineyards is one of the newest vineyards in the area. Wine tastings are outside near the vineyards. Wine enthusiasts can explore the region and taste a wide array of wines.



Cody Kresta Vineyards and Winery is located in Mattawan. Travel to Cody Kresta on a weekend where you will discover a cozy tasting room with a lovely patio created by a delightful and friendly couple, David and Mary Lou Butkovich. The owners want people to visit for the wines and to experience a boutique winery in Michigan's beautiful countryside.



Founders Wine Cellar, in Baroda, is the second winery venture for owner and winemaker Len Olson. Len has been involved in Berrien County's wine industry since the late 1960's. The long tasting bar in the tasting room overlooks the winery. Notice the tall stainless steel tanks in the winery (not in the photo). Len acquired them from Chateau Montelena. Those were the tanks used when Chateau Montelena crafted the Chardonnay that won first place in the 1976 Judgment of Paris.

# Wine and the Bible

## Wine, Vines, and the Song of Songs

by Meghan Sullivan

Summer is the season for weddings. This year, my fiancé and I have seven weddings to attend, including our own. At a recent wedding we went to, we heard a reading from the Song of Songs, also known as the Song of Solomon. Perhaps the most sensual text in the Bible, this book is often read at weddings. Today, many view the Song of Songs literally, as a collection of romantic poems about the relationship between two lovers. The early Jewish and Christian interpreters of the Song of Songs, however, interpreted the book differently.

In the Jewish tradition, the Song of Songs was interpreted allegorically. Rather than viewing the text as representative of a relationship between two lovers, ancient Jewish interpreters believed that the text represented the love and the union between God and Israel. Likewise, many Christian interpreters have viewed the book allegorically. Christian biblical scholars and theologians see the relationship between the lovers as a symbol for the union between Christ and the Church and as a symbol for the love between Christ and individual believers.

Wine comes into play in the Song of Songs because of the book's focus on the seasons and fruit. In chapter two, the male lover summons his counterpart, calling, "Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past, the rains are over and gone. The flowers



appear on the earth, the time of pruning the vines has come, and the song of the dove is heard in our land" (NAB, 2:10-12). The season at hand here is spring, and the blossoming of flowers and vines represents the awakening of love.<sup>1</sup> Those familiar with caring for vineyards know that pruning often takes place prior to the arrival of spring. Many biblical scholars, therefore, have interpreted the Hebrew word translated as "pruning" as "singing," which is another meaning for the same word in Hebrew. The "singing" described here likely refers to the aforementioned dove.

A few verses later, the narrator again mentions vineyards, calling, "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes that damage the vineyards; for our vineyards are in bloom!" (2:15). According to Othmar Keel, vineyards and vines describe feminine charms in the Song of Songs.<sup>2</sup> Keel contends that the vineyards in this passage

represent a group of women. In the ancient Near East, foxes were symbols for sexual prowess. Thus, the purpose of catching foxes was to protect the women, the "vineyards." Conversely, early Christians interpreted the foxes as evil powers. Gregory of Nyssa explains this interpretation in a prayer to God: "All these earthly powers with whom humans struggle - princes and authorities and world-rulers of darkness, and spirits of wickedness - are little foxes, wretched and treacherous, consigned under your power. If you overcome them, then our vineyard, our human nature, will receive the grace proper to it, and will begin the harvest of grapes with the blossom of virtuous conduct."<sup>3</sup> The vineyards, then, represent human nature, and Gregory prays that God will destroy evil with His grace in order to harvest virtue.

In the Song of Songs, the female lover's fruitfulness is described in terms of fruit. "Come,

my lover," says the female. "Let us go forth to the fields and spend the night among the villages. Let us go early to the vineyards, and see if the vines are in bloom, if the buds have opened, if the pomegranates have blossomed; there will I give you my love" (7:12-13). Her love, as described in chapter 4:10, is "better than wine." Gunter Krinetzki interprets the above passage figuratively, saying it represents the couple's entrance into a paradise of love.<sup>4</sup>

The Song of Songs can afford wine aficionados many lessons, literal and figurative alike. Love, for example, is like wine. It doesn't take seven weddings to celebrate the love in our lives - all we need do is sip a glass of wine.

<sup>1</sup> J. Cheryl Exum, *Song of Songs: A Commentary*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 127.

<sup>2</sup> Othmar Keel, *The Song of Songs: A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994), 102.

<sup>3</sup> Richard Alfred Norris, trans. and ed., *The Song of Songs: Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing, 2003), 128.

<sup>4</sup> Keel, 46.

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## Times are Changing But What About Etiquette in the Tasting Room?

7. Politeness will get you places. In June of 2012, we visited a delightful boutique winery in Maryland. After a few minutes of asking questions and tasting wines, the winery owner offered us a tour of the winery. As we were about to embark on the tour six more visitors arrived. We stayed in the tasting room enjoying the ambiance and conversations. Eventually the winemaker-owner noted with a smile that since this was not a rowdy bunch, he would give all of us a tour (the benefits of being pleasant.)
8. Ask questions and show your interest in the winery and wines. Whether you want to know the story of the winery, how a wine was made or why a winemaker might blend two or three wines for a unique wine, ask questions. To get you started here are a few questions we ask while visiting wineries. Of course questions vary depending on the winery and to whom you are talking.
  - How old is the winery? How old are the vineyards?
  - Where do you source your grapes?
  - Was the winery building renovated? What was the original use of the building?
  - How long was the wine aged?
  - What would you suggest pairing this wine with?
11. Do not grab a bottle of wine to pour your own tasting.
12. Do not ask for an extra tasting unless you are contemplating purchasing a bottle of the wine.
13. Share experiences with others in the tasting room. Wine is a wonderful conversation topic.
14. According to law, a visitor who has been perceived to have too much to drink, may not be served.
15. Before visiting a winery, make sure you eat. Wine on an empty stomach is quickly absorbed by the body.
16. While tasting wines drink as much water as wine.

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## A Splash of Wine

### Savory Summer Lamb Kabobs

#### Ingredients

1½ lbs Shannon Ranch Natural Grass Fed USDA Spring Lamb sirloin roast, cut into 1½" cubes  
Savory Summer Marinade (recipe follows)  
1 small onion, cut into 1½" strips  
1 red bell pepper, cut into 1½" cubes  
12" wooden skewers, soaked in water

#### Ingredients for Savory Summer Marinade

½ c dry red wine or orange juice  
¼ c fat-free chicken broth  
3 T grape jelly  
3 T red wine vinegar  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 t dried rosemary leaves, crushed  
2 t dried marjoram leaves, crushed  
1 bay leaf  
1 t seasoned salt  
1 t finely chopped ginger root

#### Directions

1. In medium bowl, blend marinade ingredients.
2. Add lamb cubes; cover, refrigerate and marinate 4 to 24 hours.
3. Mix several times.
4. Remove meat from marinade and discard marinade.
5. Thread meat on skewers, alternating meat, onion, and bell pepper.
6. To broil: cook lamb 4 inches from heat source. Broil for 5 to 6 minutes per side or to desired degree of doneness: 145 degrees for medium-rare, 160 degrees for medium or 170 degrees for well.
7. To grill: Cook lamb over medium-hot coals. Grill 4 inches over coals for 5 to 6 minutes per side or to desired of doneness: 145 degrees for medium-rare, 160 degrees for medium or 170 degrees for well. Cover and let stand 10 minutes. Internal temperature will rise about 10 degrees.

Serves 4

Recipe provided by [Vigilance Vineyards and Winery](#) in Lake County, California.

### Petite Sirah Braised Short Ribs

#### Ingredients

5 lbs bone-in beef short ribs, cut into 2" pieces  
Kosher salt and fine ground black pepper  
3 T canola oil  
3 yellow onions, small diced  
3 carrots, peeled and small diced  
2 celery stalks, small diced  
3 T all purpose flour  
1 T tomato paste  
1 750ml bottle B Cellars Petite Sirah  
10 parsley stems, reserve leaves for garnish  
4 thyme sprigs  
2 bay leaves  
4 cloves garlic, sliced  
32 oz beef stock

#### Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F

1. In a large Dutch oven, heat canola oil until it begins to "shimmer" but not smoke.
2. Liberally season short ribs with Kosher salt and fine ground black pepper.
3. Sear short ribs on all sides until deep golden brown. This may have to be done in batches. Set ribs aside and pour off any excess fat that may have rendered from the ribs.
4. Add diced onions, carrots, and celery to Dutch oven and sauté, stirring often, until caramelized (approximately 5 minutes.)
5. Stir in tomato paste and cook until color becomes deep red.
6. Incorporate flour and stir until well combined. Add B Cellars Petite Sirah, short ribs, and any that may have accumulated.
7. Bring wine to a simmer and cook until the liquid is reduced by half (approximately 30 minutes.)
8. Add the herbs, garlic, and beef stock, bring back up to a simmer then cover and transfer to the oven. Cook short ribs until fork tender (approximately 2½ hours.)
9. After short ribs have been braised, remove from pan and strain sauce.
10. Reduce sauce until it reaches desired consistency and season to taste. Spoon sauce over ribs, and garnish with chopped parsley leaves.

Serves 6

Suggested Pairing: B Cellars Petite Sirah

Recipe provided by [B Cellars Winery & Tasting Salon](#) in Napa Valley, California.

# Rock Cornish Game Hen baked in Boysenberry Nectar

\*Third place winner in 2002 Lafayette 95th Street Wine Festival!

While in Colorado we visited Redstone Meadery. A wide range of meads await wine enthusiasts. Boysenberry Nectar is a medium sweet mead. The boysenberries make it crisp and drier.

## Ingredients

4 Rock Cornish game hens  
2 c Redstone Boysenberry Nectar  
2 t fresh rosemary  
½ c (1 stick) butter, melted  
2 c breadcrumbs (specifically, cubes of whole wheat French bread brushed with olive oil, salt and pepper and toasted in 350 degree oven)  
¾ c fresh or frozen cranberries

## Directions

1. Thaw birds
2. Preheat oven to 350.
3. Boil mead, rosemary and cranberries until reduced by half.
4. Toss ½ the melted butter with the breadcrumbs.
5. Rinse birds and pat dry; rub cavity and surface with coarse (kosher) salt or sea salt.
6. Stuff them with breadcrumbs, and place in roasting pan.
7. Pour reduction over birds, then the rest of the melted butter, grind black pepper on them, and bake for 1-1½ hours, basting occasionally, until meat thermometer in one of the birds declares them safe.

Recipe provided by [Redstone Meadery](#) in Boulder, Colorado.

# Hawk and Horse Vineyards Latigo Sweet Potato Pie

If you like Pumpkin Pie, you'll love this dressed up cousin! An original American comfort food elevated to new heights - like a cowgirl in her best Stetson! We enjoy this all year 'round, but it is a special treat at Thanksgiving - or on a rainy winter Sunday for breakfast.

## Ingredients

2 medium sweet potatoes - roasted and peeled  
2 medium eggs  
1 c heavy cream  
¼ c real maple syrup  
¼ c dark brown sugar  
2 tablespoons vanilla - yes - two tablespoons - we do not use vanilla sparingly at this ranch!  
¼ c Hawk and Horse Vineyards Latigo Dessert wine  
To taste: ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg

## Directions

1. In a food processor or blender, process sweet potatoes until smooth and creamy.
2. In a large bowl, beat eggs
3. Add sweet potatoes and blend until smooth
4. Add maple syrup, sugar, vanilla, Latigo, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg - blend until uniform and velvety.
5. Pour into 9" pie crust - or, for a gluten-free delicacy, into a deep buttered baking dish - preferably glass.
6. Sprinkle lightly with nutmeg.
7. Bake in 350 degree oven for 30 minutes or until done (use tooth-pick method - if it comes out clean, its done.)
8. Remove from oven and serve with fresh whipped cream or vanilla bean ice cream

We make our own whipped cream: use one cup of heavy whipping cream, sweeten with just a couple of tablespoons of maple syrup, one teaspoon Latigo and one teaspoon vanilla - YUM!

Enjoy!!!!

Recipe provided by [Hawk and Horse Vineyards](#) in Lake County, California.

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On the Back Cover

Scene from the Bell Hill  
Vineyards tasting room in  
Lakeport, California. Clear  
Lake is seen in the distance.  
A park is between the tasting  
room and the lake. This  
vacation spot area brings in  
seasonal foot traffic.



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