

Get Cooking

Grab an *apron*, a glass of *wine*, and take a fun-filled *cooking class* paired with artisan wines at LA MAISON in Yakima



A cooking class at La Maison offers hands-on fun in the kitchen, a chance to try new artisan wines, and a full course meal to boot.

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT Amy Gibson, Dustin DeWeber, owner Kathy Sali, and her daughter Eschelle Nunley.



LEFT Learning to cook paella at a recent class RIGHT The panoramic view from La Maison



LOWER LEFT, CLOCKWISE Gourmet oils and spices for sampling; Winemaker Scott Pontin of Pontin del Roza at a recent cooking class; La Maison is styled after a French country farmhouse.

BOOK A STAY & COOK

La Maison
(509) 961-9899
www.lamaisonchef.com

Comfort Suites Yakima
Closest hotel, minutes away
(509) 249-1900
www.comfortsuites.com

Orchard Inn Bed & Breakfast
Closest B&B, minutes away
(509) 966-1283
www.orchardinnbb.com

For more local accommodations:
www.VisitYakima.com

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LA MAISON'S grand kitchen could be the setting for Julia Child's television cooking show, "The French Chef." The traditional French country-style farmhouse sits on a rocky rise with dramatic views from the Naches Heights neighborhood on the outskirts of Yakima. Hence, the original name La Maison de Falaise, which means "cliff house," later shortened to La Maison.

When Kathy Sali and Paul Weaver, her life partner, decided to build their dream home she wanted something different. "I've taken several road trips through France. I fell in love with the food and culture, including the architecture. So I thought, why not a home with the character of an old French farmhouse?" says Sali.

It's a place inspired by the love of cooking, a subject Kathy Sali has been passionate about for a long time. "In my twenties, one of the gals I worked with gave me a cookbook for a birthday. I read it front to back and started

practicing and taught myself how to cook," says Sali. Her zeal eventually led her to cooking classes at Desert Wind Winery in nearby Prosser, where she invited Chef Frank Magana to teach cooking classes in her new dream kitchen. He accepted, and soon Sali was recruiting other local chefs as well.

Sali describes how the concept for La Maison came together, "I love cooking classes and adore entertaining. I love cooking myself, and so I thought this is perfect."

Wine tasting is an integral part of what makes La Maison cooking classes unique. A different winery is featured during each class, and the winemaker is on hand to pour and discuss the wines. Tastings begin as soon as guests arrive. Wines are paired with every entrée throughout the casual evening that involves preparing and cooking a multi-course meal for all to enjoy.

Sali says, "Wine is all about food, and for me food is all about wine as well. It goes together, it's a natural. And

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— KATHY SALI, La Maison

people seem to really love it because it's like going on a wine tour, but during dinner."

She asserts some guests will attend as an alternative to dining out at a restaurant. "Some people come to taste artisan wines and socialize, and just have a nice relaxing evening," she says. "Everyone can put on an apron if they like and help the chef cut up ingredients, prep, and cook. It's hands-on, so everybody gets to help make the dinner."

For those who want to try and recreate the meal experience at home, printed copies of all the recipes are provided.

The wine tastings often prove educational. "One night we had figs, and we had cheese, so we had sugar and sweet and different savory flavors that you tasted with different wines. You could say, okay I've got this wine, does it taste good with the fig? Does it taste good with something salty? It was a fun way to learn how you might pair

certain foods with particular wines," says Sali. Among the featured wineries have been Alexandria Nicole Cellars, Daven Lore, Fidelitas, Kana, Martinez and Martinez, and Pontin del Roza.

La Maison offers different classes to choose from, even a basic cooking class which Sali describes as "coming to my house for a dinner party and we all sit around in the kitchen learning a bit and having fun." Private dinner parties can also be booked for between ten to twenty guests.

A gracious and entertaining hostess, Sali is insistent that nobody leaves wanting. "When people leave here, I want them to have a full belly of food and wine. I don't want people to say, okay where are we going to stop for dinner, because I'm hungry," she says.

Where there's good wine, delicious food and laughter, friendships are sure to follow. There's a sign up above the buffet with the adage, *Enter As Strangers, Leave As Friends*. At La Maison, it's a regular occurrence. 🍷



MORE CLASSES

Here's a few more popular venues that offer cooking classes around Washington wine regions:

Barking Frog Restaurant at Willows Lodge
www.willowslodge.com

Chateau Faire le Pont Winery
www.fairelepont.com

Columbia Winery
www.columbiawinery.com

Desert Wind Winery
www.desertwindwinery.com

Matthews Estate Winery
www.matthewsestate.com

Walla Walla Bed & Breakfast Inns Association
www.wbbia.com

Westport Winery
www.westportwines.com

Windy Point Vineyards
www.windypointvineyards.com

Woodhouse Wine Estates
www.thewoodhousewineestates.com