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TASTING ROOM[®]

The magazine
for people
who love
wine tasting

182

FALL WINE TOURING IDEAS

FROM GRAPE STOMPS
& HARVEST FESTIVALS
TO WINERY TOURS &
RIVER RAFTING FUN

VISIT 15 NEW TASTING ROOMS

BALLARD * ELLENSBURG
EVERETT * SEATTLE * SPOKANE
WALLA WALLA * WOODINVILLE

Recipes &
Wine Pairings
from **Seattle's**
Top Restaurants

Display until Nov. 30, 2010



In the heart of the *valley*

WRITER *Linda Hagen-Miller*

B*eginning of Life, Big Belly, Bountiful.* If this translation of the Native American word *Yakima* isn't enough to initiate a road trip to Central Washington, maybe "Corkage-Free Zone" is.

Last year a dozen downtown Yakima eateries partnered with six downtown wineries and wine shops in a corkage-free zone, an immensely popular handholding exercise (or is it stem and fork holding?) that has enlivened city center and spurred business for all concerned. Simply buy a bottle of wine from a participating shop or winery, show your receipt at a partner restaurant and voilà, enjoy your wine without paying the customary corkage fee.

"It adds a whole new dimension to dining out," says Jar Arcand who owns Santiago's Gourmet Mexican Restaurant

and is credited with spearheading the corkage-free zone.

In the heart of the largest wine grape producing region in Washington State, Yakima is surrounded by 70 wineries and four viticulture regions with over 15,000 acres planted in vineyards. Wine appellations Rattlesnake Hills, Red Mountain, Snipes Mountain and Yakima Valley skirt the Yakima River in a 65-mile swath between Yakima and Benton City.

Family is everything in the Yakima Valley where orchardists lay claim to three and four generations and many restaurants are operated by husband/wife or father/son combinations.

Plot your Yakima weekend with a winery stop at the north end of the valley, and then cruise the delightful downtown wineries and shops. Next

day hit a few central and south valley wineries before heading home.

SATURDAY AM

10AM LET THE TASTING BEGIN

At the northern tip of the valley, Tasting Room Yakima's 1900's farmhouse sets the stage for a down-to-earth wine weekend. With a flower festooned wrap-around porch overlooking the Yakima Valley and Cowiche Canyon Nature Preserve, the co-op tasting room offers over 20 wines from Harlequin Wine Cellars, Naches Heights Vineyard and Wilridge Winery.

"It's the soil," says Damon Lobato who manages the tasting room with Lori Carpenter. "Plus over 300 days of sunshine. Up here (elevation 1,731

With a
NEW DOWNTOWN
DISTRICT THAT
BILLS ITSELF AS A
CORKAGE-FREE
ZONE, YAKIMA
MAKES AN IDEAL
BASE CAMP FOR
WINERY HOPPING
IN THE YAKIMA
VALLEY

View from Tasting Room Yakima looks out onto Yakima Valley vineyards and orchards from its perch on top of Cowiche Canyon



FROM TOP Covered porch at Tasting Room Yakima and manager Damon Lobato (pictured); Garden Girl, a French country inspired boutique; Kana Winery downtown tasting room; Barrett Orchards store and fruit stand.

feet) the wind drops the temperature at night. The grapes can rest, allowing more acidity. Our wine is more European in style.”

Down the hill and around a couple of sharp bends, Barrett Orchards is a wine fortification stop. OK, I made that up, but if you’re preparing for a serious day of wine tasting, you’ll need nutritional reinforcements. Fourth generation orchardists Mark and Cheryl Barrett manage thriving orchards and a general store stuffed to overflowing with gifts, kitchen items and healthy snacks. Build a wine-to-go snack pack with fruit of the season, Cougar Gold Cheese, smoked salmon and chocolate.

SATURDAY PM

12:30PM HEARTY LUNCH

Head into town and enjoy a bountiful lunch at Gasperetti’s Restaurant. Italian family recipes rein supreme at Gasperetti’s, a Yakima tradition for over 40 years where owner and patriarch John Gasperetti is likely to stop by your table to check your satisfaction level. Start your meal with Aunt Rose’s tasty antipasto or lightly-breaded onion rings.

1:30PM TASTING & SHOPS

Time to hit downtown tasting rooms, sip and buy your favorite wine, and start your corkage-free experience.

Palmer Wright, owner of Kana Winery, is a winemaker, otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat), facial plastic surgeon and retired Dead Head. He laughs at the latter but admits he borrowed the names of Dark Star and Katie Mae from the infamous band.

Beer and wine take equal billing at Tim’s Downtown Tasting Room offering five brews from Yakima Craft Brewery and wines from Upland Estates, Naked Winery and Tim’s own label.

If you’re in need of retail therapy that does not involve grapes, visit Garden Girl, a French country inspired boutique where GG the kitty welcomes even dog-lovers, and goods

Visit Yakima

VISITOR INFORMATION

Yakima Valley Visitors and Convention Bureau

Ph: 800-221-0751
www.visityakima.com

TASTING ROOMS (alphabetically)

Bonair Winery

www.bonairwine.com

Gilbert Cellars

www.gilbertcellars.com

Kana Winery

www.kanawinery.com

Piety Flats Winery

www.pietyflatswinery.com

Tasting Room Yakima

www.tastingroomyakima.com

Tim’s Downtown Tasting Room

Ph: 509-248-5251

Windy Point Vineyards

www.windypointvineyards.com



Hilton Garden Inn and neighboring Ummelina Spa, located in the newly revitalized downtown district.



FROM TOP View from Windy Point Vineyards; Stems wine and gift shop; Piety Flats Winery and Mercantile; fresh baked breads from Essencia Artisan Bakery; Gilbert Cellars sleek tasting room in downtown Yakima.

include everything from harmonicas to gardening gear. Down the street, explore Garden Dance, an eclectic boutique that's all about fashion frivolity.

4PM CHECK IN

Make your way to the Hilton Garden Inn where recently renovated rooms and a staff on super-service steroids erase all feelings of a chain operation. Don't miss Stems adjacent to the lobby, where you can banter with owner Brad Baldwin while you browse a broad array of wine and gift items.

Also adjacent to the Hilton, Ummelina Day Spa offers dozens of exotic treatments in a heart-calming salon reminiscent of an elegant Balinese estate. Hopefully you have called ahead and booked your session since Ummelina is busy (but peaceful) on weekends.

6:30PM WALKING DISTRICT

Wining, dining and entertainment venues are all within a four-block radius, so leave your car at the Hilton. Enjoy a bottle of your newly purchased wine at Santiago's, Yakima's foremost Mexican restaurant, where Chef Jar Arcand has perfected the art of fish tacos. No soggy hunks of mystery seafood here, you'll enjoy a plate big enough to share of lightly floured Alaskan Cod, spicy ranch dip and all the trimmings.

Or sample a bit of history with your dinner at The Barrel House, located in a 1906 building that was once a saloon and, um, hotel. (The oversized safe located behind the bar used to store patrons' guns and money while they visited the ladies upstairs.) Chef/owner Tim Schroeder runs the kitchen while his wife Robin keeps the restaurant humming with an extensive wine list and inventive menu choices including scrumptious desserts built around seasonal fruit.

After dinner, walk to Gilbert Cellars and see what happens when a young and slightly restless third generation orchardist is seduced by the

wine industry. Twenty-nine-year-old Sean Gilbert's family has grown apples, peaches and nectarines on their property since the 1890's and eight years ago converted 80 acres to grapes. "Strong root, great fruit," a Gilbert family saying, has produced award-winning wines from Chardonnay to Malbec. Sample tapas and wine in the sleek tasting room, then head downstairs to enjoy local musicians.

One last nightcap. Stroll to funky, down-home Yakima Sports Center where margaritas and martinis are squeezed from fresh fruit and locals dance to live music.

SUNDAY AM

9:30AM TOURING THE VALLEY

Before you leave lovely downtown, fortify yourself for a big day of touring and tasting with breakfast at Essencia Artisan Bakery where a full platter of eggs, meats and more is under \$8.

A bevy of wineries await you. Such abundance can make it hard to decide which wineries to visit, so we'll offer suggestions.

Bonair Winery, a chateau-like affair with a duck pond and grassy picnic grounds, celebrated its 25th birthday this year with a sense of humor. How else can you explain a wine called Bung Dog Red named after the family mascot?

An authentic 1900's mercantile is home to Piety Flats Winery and general store. Stroll across the creaky wood floor, belly up to the old-style bar and sample from an extensive wine list.

Commanding a magnificent view of the Yakima Valley, Windy Point Vineyards looks and feels like a Frank Lloyd Wright creation if Frank was mellowed by fine wine. Warm wood interior and sink-into leather furniture compliment an array of award winning wines, and the gorgeous grounds invite you to purchase a bottle of your favorite and linger a while in a teak lounge chair. The breeze blowing up from the valley has a message for you: *Come back soon.* 🍷



FROM TOP Santiago's restaurant and owner Jar Arcand (pictured) lead Yakima's corkage-free zone movement; Santiago's acclaimed Washington's Best Nachos dish; duck pond and Bonair Winery tasting room.