

Temecula Valley



Vine Times

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Wine Country Vision Taking Shape

There is still plenty of room for growth in Temecula Valley Wine Country. With only 1,500 acres planted in grapes and more than 33,000 acres set aside for the Temecula Valley wine-making region, the area could boast as many as 50 to 75 wineries over the next five years, according to those who are planning for the area's future. At a recent meeting of Wine Country Vision 2020, a Wine Country Community Plan has begun to take shape. The plan will serve as a blueprint as Riverside County prepares a massive overhaul of rules and guidelines governing the grape-growing region. Riverside County Supervisor Jeff Stone said Wine Country needs to add 20 to 45 more wineries if it is to remain a viable tourism destination. Wine Country currently has about 30 wineries. Nearly 20 new wineries are on the drawing board. Existing winery owners want to make sure there are enough vineyards to support the anticipated growth. They also are concerned about the quality of the growth. "The last thing we want is one big solid tasting room strip," said Bill Wilson, one of the owners of Wilson Creek Winery and president of the **Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association**.

Vintners Heading to China

Temecula Valley winemakers are headed to Asia in March as part of a delegation interested in tapping into the growing Asian wine market. The winery representatives will join Riverside County Office of Foreign Trade and Riverside County Supervisor Jeff

Stone on a trip to China, which has dropped all taxes and tariffs on California wines. The group will network with government officials and others in an attempt to get a foothold in the Chinese wine market, where sales jumped 20 percent to \$2.8 billion last year, according to the county Office of Foreign Trade. The Asian wine market excluding Japan is expected to double by 2012. Chinese consumers are becoming more sophisticated and the buying power of the middle class has increased in the past 10 years, but there's a lot of competition from Chilean, Australian and other non-American wines.

**This Thanksgiving
Leave the Cooking to
Wine Country Chefs**

This Thanksgiving leave the cooking (and the cleanup) to the chefs of Temecula's Wine Country. Executive Chef Clay Blake and his culinary team at the Creekside Grille at Wilson Creek Winery are whipping up a memorable buffet feast that includes butternut squash soup; homemade ravioli stuffed with ricotta, spinach and butter sage, hand carved roast turkey with giblet gravy, mushroom and sausage stuffing, candied sweet potatoes and string beans almandine, honey glazed Black Forest ham, salmon and pumpkin spiced bread pudding. The buffet includes a glass of almond champagne or wine. Cost: \$50 per person; \$24.95 per child 6-12; children under 6 free. The Thanksgiving Day celebration at South Coast Winery Resort & Spa starts at 11 a.m. and run until 9 p.m. Prices range from \$34 per person for a traditional roast turkey meal to \$38 for lobster, scallop and shrimp turnover with Riesling cream, spinach and locally grown honey carrots. For children under 17 it's \$17 for a turkey dinner with soup and dessert.

**Wilson Creek Hosts
Vines and Wines 101**

Lindsay Polmeroy, creator and owner of The Wine Smarties, a San Diego-based wine event, education and consulting company, will hold the second Vines and Wines 101 class at Wilson Creek Winery for Wine Club members and wine lovers. The class is perfect for the aspiring wine professional or the average person who just wants to know a bit more about wine. The class on Dec. 13 from 1 to 3 p.m.

will focus on pairing wine and food. Cost: \$50. For more information call: (951) 699-WINE (9463)

Taste the Changing Seasons in Wine Country

One of the nice things about the coming of fall and winter are the changes to Wine Country menus. Lighter summer entrees typically are replaced by heartier fare as the thermometer drops and appetites pick up. At the Pinnacle Restaurant at Falkner Winery Executive Chef Gianni Ciciliot has introduced a number of new items to the menu. For example, new appetizers include pulled pork sliders, Mediterranean flat bread and prosciutto-wrapped asparagus. Keeping to the Mediterranean/American food theme, Pinnacle now offers an ahi crunchy salad, a Portobello "Monte Cristo" sandwich, ancho chicken wrap with mandarin oranges and hearts of palm, Italian beef sandwich with thinly sliced top sirloin and au jus on the side, chipotle lime pasta with blackened chicken breast in a chipotle lime cream sauce, and a vegetarian garden vegetable pasta with assorted vegetables in a Madeira cream sauce. At Café Champagne at Thornton Winery Executive Chef Steve Pickell has added seasonal items including peppered beef carpaccio, grilled pork rib rack chop and ginger sesame chicken noodle salad.

Winemakers Dinners Offer the Best of Both Worlds

One of the best ways to sample a broad range of gourmet food that is artfully paired with award-winning wines is to take a seat at winemaker dinners held throughout Wine Country. Ponte Winery's 7th Annual Fall Winemaker Dinner will be held on Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. Executive Chef Steve Stawinski will make ample use of organic, locally grown produce in a sumptuous six-course meal paired with Ponte wines that includes live entertainment and a chance to meet both winemaker and chef. Cost: \$130 per person. South Coast Winery invites food and wine lovers for an intimate evening with Executive Chef Dean Thomas and winemakers Jon McPherson and Javier Flores on Nov. 14 starting at 6 p.m. It's a great chance to sample new wine releases and a five-course gourmet meal. Cost: \$125 per person. On Nov. 7

**Celebrate the 2009
Harvest Temecula
Valley Style**

Thornton Winery will host an End of Harvest Progressive Winemaker Dinner starting at 7 p.m. Cost of the four-course gourmet meal paired with Thornton wines and champagne is \$70 per person.

South Coast Winery Resort & Spa is making it easy and convenient to enjoy the annual Harvest Celebration Barrel Tasting on Nov. 7-8 hosted by the Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association. Finish off the harvest celebration with a night for two package at South Coast's deluxe villas, which includes ticket to the two-day event, complimentary bottle of wine and two free tasting flights for \$199. The two-day event is a great chance to try new and unreleased wines from more than 20 wineries, taste barrel and tank samples and enjoy food that is specially paired with each wine. Cost: \$89 per person. For more information go to www.temeculawines.org or call (800) 801-9463

**Cook Like Top Wine
Country Chefs**

Want to learn how to cook like the top chefs of the Temecula Valley? Sign up for any number of cooking classes offered by area wineries and dazzle your guests during the holidays with unique and tasteful recipes. At the Yuletide Traditions Cooking Class at Callaway on Dec. 10 from 6:30-9 p.m., Mike Henry, executive chef of Meritage at Callaway, will give you a chance to learn new recipes that you can add to your holiday portfolio. Learn how to prepare shrimp and crab tamales with chile verde and crema, cider brined pork tenderloin with pomegranate salsa and roasted yams, manicotti with ricotta cheese, spinach and wild mushroom and cream puff tower with vanilla custard and red wine and chocolate ganache. Cost: \$50 per person. South Coast on Dec. 7 at 11 a.m. hosts Wild Women of Wine Country Cooking Class. Join the winery's guest chefs as they tickle your palate and you're fancy with their tips, tricks and culinary secrets of cooking with wine. Cost: \$25 per person. Thornton Winery's Holiday Cooking Class on Nov. 14 at 3:30 p.m. and 5:30 p.m. includes a bevy of seasonal items including roasted butternut squash soup, maple roasted pork loin and cranberry

cherry compote. Cost: \$55 per person

New releases... **Inn at Churon Winery** has released a 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon (\$26.99) and 2006 Chocolate Bliss (\$24.99), a blend of port and chocolate. The Cabernet is a mouthful of harvest fruit with spices of cinnamon and cassis with a caramel and cherry finish.

Odds and ends... Every Friday and Saturday from 6-9 p.m. **Inn at Churon Winery** offers five-course wine paired dinners. \$65 per person. Reservations: (951) 694-9070

Coming up... Holiday Candlelight Dinner at **Callaway Winery** on Dec. 5 starts at 6:30 p.m. with a sparkling wine and hors d'oeuvres reception followed by a four-course gourmet dinner paired with Callaway wines. Cost: \$85 per person...

Falkner Winery's Wine Appreciation Class will be taught by in-house sommelier George Myers on Nov. 14 from 10:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Cost: \$45 per person... An arts and craft fair is held every Saturday and Sunday on the picnic grounds in front of **Maurice Car'rie Winery**. It features an array of handcrafted merchandise. Call (951) 676-1711 for more information. **Wiens, Thornton, South Coast, Maurice Car'rie, La Cereza, Falkner and Callaway** are among the more than 170 wineries taking part in the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival on Nov. 18-22... Happy Hour every Friday from 3 to 6 p.m. at the **Meritage Restaurant at Callaway Vineyard & Winery**. Specially priced food and drinks... **Thornton Winery's** Halloween Costume Dinner Dance on Oct. 30 combines five-star cuisine, premium wines, dancing and a live performance by Faultline. Festivities start at 7:30 p.m. Prizes awarded for best, most original, funniest, and scariest costumes. Cost: \$85 per person....

The Vine Times is generously sponsored by the Riverside County Economic Development Agency.

For more information about items in this newsletter, to request media passes to Wine Country events or to schedule a private media tour of Temecula's Wine Country, contact the Temecula Valley Winegrowers Association at 1-800-801-9463 or peggy@temeculawines.org

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