

Wine festivals offer suggestions for fall

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BY BILL GARLOUGH Columnist

Fall food and wine festivals are an affordable way to experience a wide variety of wines. This helps broaden your palate while discovering your wine preferences. In addition, at many festivals, knowledgeable winemakers are on hand to answer questions, helping you learn more about all aspects of wine. Here's a great example:

Kohler Food and Wine Experience

These programs were conducted by regionally and nationally acclaimed industry leaders. Chicago's featured chefs included Rick Tramonto of Tru (and several other restaurants co-founded with Gale Gand) and Adam Siegel of Bartolotta's Lake Park Bistro. On the wine side, Andrea Immer Robinson, the first woman ever chosen best sommelier in the U.S., was a headliner along with wine makers and owners of prestigious wineries from around the world.

The first program we signed up for was the Grand Tasting on Oct. 26 (\$25 per person). This was held in a large heated tent and offered tastings of over 100 wines from around the world. Oregon's Domaine Serene's Pinot Noirs and Port wine from Taylor Fladgate, Croft and Fonseca were all show stoppers. A pleasant surprise was to discover the excellent offerings from local Wisconsin winery Stone's Throw, located in Door County.



Columnist Bill Garlough attended the American Club of Kohler, Wis., a food and wine festival where he met Chef Rick Tramonto of Tru, a celebrity Chef (top 3 in Chicago).

The ticketed events included programs on chocolate, lamb dishes, cheese classes, Italian food, hearty Alsatian stews, savory seafood dishes and amuse-bouche (appetizers). Wines sampled included French Champagne, New Zealand Sauvignon Blancs, California Zinfandels, Spanish Tempranillo, Italian Brunellos and Canadian Ice Wines. Some spirits were also sampled including programs on tequila, martinis, vodka, beer, cognac and scotch.

As you can see, there are a multitude of choices making this a fantastic experience. Of course, you should pace yourself and use conveniently provided spit buckets, to ensure a reasonably lucid experience. Mark your calendar for late October next year to attend this event. Information is released in July and the popular programs book fast. Visit www.destinationkohler.com for more info.

Thanksgiving food and wine pairing

When planning to pair wines with your Thanksgiving dinner, it is important to note that this meal has many complex flavors that make pairing a true challenge.

For a soup course, I prefer a Gewurztraminer or Viognier white wine, as they pair well with exotic and flavorful cream soups. With the main turkey entrée, I am partial to Pinot Noir (the current wine industry's recommended pairing).

Pinot Noir's fruity, low tannin levels and earthy notes pair well with turkey and the deeper flavors of classic savory stuffing recipes.

Bill's Picks

Hugel (Alsace) Gewurztraminer, \$22
Miner Family Vineyards Viognier \$20
Rosenblum Viognier \$17
Beaulieu Vineyard Carneros Pinot Noir \$17
Mark West Pinot Noir \$10
Castle Rock Mendocino Pinot Noir \$13
A to Z Oregon Pinot Noir \$18
Jigsaw Oregon Pinot Noir \$17

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