

WASHINGTON

SPRING 2010

TASTING ROOM

The magazine
for people
who love
wine tasting

ON THE FARM WITH

**Chef Tom Douglas
& Jackie Cross**

121

Spring
Wine Events

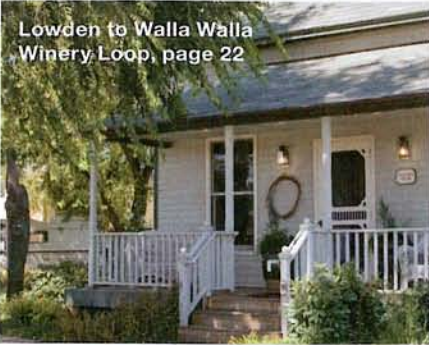
Barrel Tasting
Cheese & Wine
Cooking Classes
New Releases

SPRING WINE TOURING
DOWNTOWN SPOKANE
WALLA WALLA LOOP





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TASTING
ROOM *weekend*



METROPOLITAN *Vibes*

Spend *two days* in SPOKANE'S DOWNTOWN ARTS DISTRICT, exploring hip hangouts, cool eateries and *tasting rooms galore*

WRITER *Linda Hagen-Miller*

Washington's second largest city has morphed into wine central with eight downtown tasting rooms, a European style wine bar and an impressively stocked wine shop. A half dozen more wineries fall within a ten-mile radius of the city limits.

Spokane's historic downtown Davenport District—anchored by the Davenport Hotel—has come into its own as a trendy, vibrant pedestrian-friendly hub bustling with live theater, music, art exhibits, and performances. Along with superb wine tasting, you can now eat your way from China to Italy and back to the Northwest, sip exotic drinks at Bistango, down craft beer at Steamplant Square, and shop at a plethora of galleries and specialty stores.



ABOVE Grande Ronde Cellars exhibit of artist Cheri O'Brien
LEFT River Park Square has an impressive array of specialty shops, including a tasting room for Arbor Crest Wine Cellar



FRIDAY

4PM CHECK IN

Across from the Davenport Hotel and within easy walking distance of downtown wineries is the boutique European style Hotel Lusso where a burbling fountain ushers you into the right mood for a relaxing weekend. The elegant Lusso has old-world charm with softly furnished rooms, high ceilings and spacious bathrooms of marble and stone.

4:30PM WINE TASTING AND ART

Most downtown wineries are weekend-only operations, but if you arrive on the first Friday of the month when wineries are open late, you can maximize your time and join the locals for wine tasting and art gallery hopping.

About a dozen years ago, attorneys Greg Lipsker and Michael White, took up winemaking as a hobby, concocting home brews that were, to their surprise and to their taste-testing friends' delight, quite good. Today they operate Barrister Winery beneath the train viaduct on Railroad Avenue in a faithfully restored 100-year-old brick building. An occasional passing train adds to the atmosphere as you sample Barrister's signature Cabernet Franc. And you must try the Rough Justice red blend, they had me at the name.

Next stop is Whitestone Winery, one block west on Cedar Street. Whitestone's roots run deep. In fact, they are the only winery in Spokane that grows their own grapes. Years ago while Walter and Judy Haig enjoyed a glass of wine and the view from the deck of their Lake Roosevelt summer home 60 miles west of Spokane, they learned that the area had been a prolific wine grape producing region before the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam. One can only imagine how that discovery and a few glasses of wine led them to establish an estate vineyard followed by a downtown tasting room.

Son Michael Haig is winemaker and his school chum Heath Kays handles marketing and usually staffs the tasting room. Pieces of Red is the winery's signature blend and Lake Roosevelt Red is a perfect accompaniment to grill fare.

From their renovated fire station facility on Pacific Avenue, Robert Karl Cellars produces wines that consistently garner national awards. Convinced that Washington's Columbia Valley grew the best wine grapes in the world and that Spokane would be a great place to raise their three boys, Joe and Rebecca Gunselman moved to Eastern Washington in the late 90's to start a family winery. The name Robert Karl is a salute to family members.

Rebecca handles the tasting room and business side



TOP Hotel Lusso is in the center of the Davenport arts district and within walking distance of tasting rooms, art galleries, music and theater venues BOTTOM Co-owner Rebecca Gunselman runs the tasting room at Robert Karl Cellars

and Joe wears the winemaker hat while juggling a full-time career as an anesthesiologist. Grapes come from the Horse Heaven Hills American Viticultural Area, known for excellent fruit, and sweat equity comes from the entire family and a cadre of friends.

Steve Trabun jokes that Barili Cellars on West Second Avenue is “a hobby gone wild.” He was a kitchen wine crafter who met fellow hobbyist Russ Feist by delivering a load of grapes to him. They decided to take their pastime to the next level in 2006. Last year marked their first releases, including high octane Double Barrel Red, big, bold and 15% alcohol. Steve’s wife, Dana recently completed Washington State University’s Enology Certificate Program, another example of the friends and family ties that run strong through many of Spokane’s wineries. (Note: Barili Cellars is closed until Mother's Day weekend in May.)

7PM COMFORT DINNER

Behind the scenes at Wild Sage American Bistro on West Second Avenue, petite Alexa Wilson is a sauce mistress with a 10-burner stove and a penchant for layering flavors. Wild Sage crafts all of its pasta, bread and the best popovers in the state, and this is a good place for sophisticated comfort food like Rosemary Gnocchi with Oxtail Ragù as well as international fare with a Northwest influence.

9PM EUROPEAN NIGHTCAP

One more stop and you can call it a night. As a lumber industry executive, Aaron Kelly traveled the world with his wife Katrina and fell in love with Venice’s Caffè Florian, inspiring them to open the European styled LeftBank a year ago. The bar is packed with an international array of wine and is the perfect spot to top off your evening with a glass of champagne and dessert.

SATURDAY

10AM SLEEP IN

Start leisurely with the Lusso’s continental breakfast that includes the owner’s special recipe coffee cake.

11AM HEAD TO THE MALL

Arbor Crest Wine Cellar’s downtown tasting room in Riverpark Square shopping mall is two blocks from your hotel. Angie Tann worked at the historic Arbor Crest Wine Cellar eleven miles from town for a decade and handles the downtown tasting room with aplomb. She’ll give you her own specialized tasting lesson and lead you through the winery’s offerings that range from blended and single vineyard Chardonnays to acclaimed Dionysus Red. »



TOP LeftBank Wine Bar MIDDLE Barrister Winery co-owner Michael White pouring LEFT Steve and Dana Trabun of Barili Cellars RIGHT Chef Alexa Wilson of Wild Sage American Bistro with her Wild Caught Washington specialty dish



12PM HEARTY PUB GRUB

Make a pit stop before more wine tasting at Post Street Ale House, next door to Hotel Lusso. Along with typical pub fare, you can try their famous fried pickles.

1PM THREE MORE WINERIES

Big buzz in the downtown wine scene: Don Townshend of Townshend Winery purchased Caterina Winery last year, creating a sublime marriage of tradition, history and fine wine making. Caterina has been wooing customers with Italian style blends at the former Broadview Dairy building since 1993, and sitting at a patio bistro table beneath old style street lamps is like a quick flight to Tuscany. This spring you can sip wine created especially for Caterina by Don Townshend, who's garnered numerous awards for the wine he produces at his Green Bluff winery.

Dave Westfall, part owner and tasting room manager at Grande Ronde Cellars, says he grew up drinking French wine. When pressed for details, he admits that he was an altar boy in the Boston Diocese and worked as a wine wholesaler for most of his adult life. That storied background created a philosophy that wine should be sold when it's ready, not when the cash register calls. Grande Ronde also sponsors painting and cooking classes while showcasing local art at the Second Avenue tasting room. Be sure to sample 2005 Bridge Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon, a wine produced in the saignee method where some juice is drained before fermentation. Grande Ronde also sells Mountain Dome sparkling wine, crafted in the foothills of Mt. Spokane.

Long before a little blue tweet bird became ubiquitous in our society, Lone Canary Winery had Clooney, an artistic rendering of Washington's state bird the American Goldfinch. That gentle little fellow is a lot like Mike Scott's philosophy of creating restrained, European style wines that, as he says, reign in the fruit rather than letting the grapes overpower the taste. Lone Canary's signature Sauvignon Blanc is such a wine, perfected from Mike's 20-plus years in the industry. The tasting room is tucked in an industrial area on the east edge of the downtown.

4PM VINO, CHEESE & CHOCOLATE

Be sure to drop by Vino! A Wine Shop on Washington Avenue where you'll find a wonderland of 1,000 Northwest and international brands that have been carefully taste-tested by owner John Allen and his staff. On a Friday or Saturday night, this specialty wine retailer packs in a crowd to taste the store's newest offerings, and the winemaker is often there to talk you through the samplings.



TOP Caterina Winery offers outdoor patio seating BOTTOM Tasting Room manager Sulochana "Sulo" Abeid pouring for visitors

Bottom Left: J. Michel Photography

spokane WINERIES

Download a map of Spokane area wineries online at
www.SpokaneWineries.net

DOWNTOWN

Barrister Winery

www.barristerwinery.com

Whitestone Winery

www.whitestonewinery.com

Caterina Winery

www.caterina.com

Lone Canary Winery

www.lonecanary.com

Grande Ronde Cellars

www.granderondecellars.com

Barili Cellars

www.barilicellars.com

Vintage Hill Cellars

www.vintagehillcellars.com

Arbor Crest Cellars

www.arborcrest.com

Robert Karl Cellars

www.robertkarl.com

GREATER SPOKANE AREA

Knipprath Cellars

www.knipprath-cellars.com

Latah Creek Winery & Gift Shop

www.latahcreek.com

Liberty Lake Wine Cellars

www.libertylakewinecellars.com

Mountain Dome Winery

www.mountaindome.com

Nodland Cellars

www.nodlandcellars.com

Townshend Cellar

www.townshendcellar.com

Trezzi Farm

www.trezzi.com

Food and Wine

www.trezzi.com

visitor INFO Go to www.visitspokane.com

Cheese lovers will think they've died and gone to heaven at Saunders Cheese Market next door. Owner Kim Morin stocks the shop with as many as 150 artisan cheeses from around the globe.

There is no doubt you have found heaven on earth at Chocolate Apothecary. Hundreds of years ago, chocolate was prescribed to cure all manner of ills and owner Susan Davis followed her comfort food indulgence by opening a 1600s, European style chocolate "pharmacy" in the historic Flour Mill, less than a mile from Caterina Winery.

7PM DINNER

Scratch on West First Avenue has a big city vibe, but much of the food is local, sourced from the fields and farms surrounding Spokane. Chef Jason Rex changes the menu every couple of months and their signature dish is the Seafood Trio with crab cake, scallops, prawns and lobster risotto. 🌿



TOP The Rain Lounge adjacent to Scratch Restaurant MIDDLE Arbor Crest tasting room inside River Park Square LEFT Michael Haig is Whitestone Winery's gregarious winemaker and general manager RIGHT Whitestone Winery downtown tasting room