

Northwest Wine Crawl

Make a day of discovering delectable Northwest Portland

BY KERRY NEWBERRY

AH...SPRINGTIME in Portland, blue skies and sunshine. Forget the weekend errands. It's time to kick off the pink galoshes, step into some flip-flops and sip, stroll and streetcar a Saturday away. Savor a few wise words by J.R.R. Tolkien as you meander the city streets (with a guide from a writer with a skewed sense of direction), "All who wander are not lost." Enjoy.

9:45 a.m. Alfresco Brunch

Toast the start of the weekend at a hidden oasis on N.W. Vaughn: the lush garden wilds at Meriwether's Restaurant (2601 N.W. Vaughn, 503-226-9463). It's alfresco dining most divine, with petite bistro tables peppered amidst a palate of pine and sage, an elegant fountain, gazebo and a fire pit for warmth.

Field-to-table cuisine recently turned a new corner here, one that is just up the road. Chef Tommy Habetz and farmer Spence Lack collaborated to nourish a three-acre vegetable farm on N.W. Skyline Boulevard, in addition to building a smoke-house with a chicken coop are underway.

Seasonal brunch items vary, but dishes to taste now: from house specialties, the smoked salmon hash with Yukon potatoes, caramelized onions, frisee, poached eggs and bacon hollandaise (\$15), or hangtown fry with fried local oysters, frizzled onions and bacon-cheddar scramble (\$14). For a delectable omelet, try the duck confit with caramelized onions and Gruyère with home fries and seasonal greens (\$15). Traditional fare highlights Oregon blueberry pancakes (\$11) and a Belgian waffle with fig syrup and chestnut butter with a side of sage sausage (\$13).

Bubbles marry with breakfast of course, and morning sips range from a locally crafted sparkling by Domaine Meriwether (\$9) to the Meri Cocktail, Domaine Meriwether Brut and a splash of pomegranate juice (\$8) or the Grand Mimosa, Grand Marnier, fresh orange juice with Adami Prosecco on the rocks. Reservations recommended!

11 a.m. Un Café, Please!

Once the lavish brunch winds to a close, it's time to begin the crawl. Cross the street to 26th, walk two blocks to Thurman, then swing a left until you run into a smattering of outdoor bistro tables reminiscent of Ernest Hemingway's "A Moveable Feast."

Order a petit espresso at St. Honoré Boulangerie (2335 N.W. Thurman Street, 503-445-4342) to sip outside and people watch or carry it to the first wine haven.

11:15 a.m. Ageless Companions: Wine and Cheese

"Wine and cheese are ageless companions, like aspirin and aches, or June and moon, or good people and noble ventures," penned M. F. K. Fisher. If you harbor a fetish for fine cheese and wines au naturel, you will definitely fall head over heels for The Square Deal (2321 N.W. Thurman, 503-226-9463).

Set your wanderlust free as you wend through bottles stacked from the great wine regions of Europe. Chalkboard signs printed with the Loire Valley, Alsace and Burgundy lead to bottles awaiting contemplation. Owner Dan Beekly and crew feature wines from winemakers they know and vineyards they've likely visited. Many of the wines are organic or biodynamic and small production (2,000 to 4,000 cases).

Saturday, open tastings are hosted in the back of the shop, near two other essential spots to spend time: a cozy room with dark luxurious leather chairs and Steve's Cheese corner.

"The poets have been mysteriously silent on the subject of cheese," wrote English novelist G.K. Chesterton. Not so with Steve Jones. This resident maître fromager waxes poetic on not only cheese, but charcuterie as well. His selection of artisan cheese reads like a great book, handwritten notes feature the farm, region and essence of each triangular block. It's a counter that will be difficult



Meriwether's on N.W. Thurman has an elegant patio and an equally exquisite menu.



St Honoré Boulangerie not only makes gorgeous bread, but also great espresso.

to leave. In addition to the gripping novel of cheese, 25 to 30 alluring charcuteries will distract. Especially the Pata Negra.

Noon Wit and Wine

Swing a left off 23rd Avenue at Quimby to visit the venerable Liner & Elsen Wine Merchants (N.W. 22nd Avenue and Quimby, 503-241-9463). Domestic, imported, old, rare, elegant and funky bottles line the walls of this 18-year-old wine shop. Here you can tantalize and test your palate with esoteric, classic or noble varietals selected for the Saturday whimsy from noon until the well runs dry. Five to seven wines from the monthly newsletter are poured and the featured bottles greet near the door with exuberant handwritten tasting notes.

A trio of gentleman with astute palates will likely be on hand with winemaker stories, the perfect wine to pair with your dinner and witty repartee. Be sure to take note of what they are pouring, it might be akin to a Trimbach Riesling Clos Ste. Hune.

12:42 p.m. A Streetcar Named Desire

Hop the streetcar at the intersection of 23rd and Marshall and ride to the 11th and Lovejoy stop (\$1.75 fare for two hours). The streetcar arrives every 12 minutes in case you miss this one.

12:50 p.m. Do You Bling?

Luxury reigns in this 2,300-square-foot space, chic with a touch of industrial. Chocolate, caviar, cigars and Champagne are just a few of the delicacies to peruse at Pearl Specialty Market and Spirits (900 N.W. Lovejoy, 503-477-8604). Hydrate

and indulge from their wall of water, the selection spans more than 15 countries. You can refresh with water from an Irish spring in Tipperary, Fiuggi (water served at the Vatican) or the couture Bling H2O, a bottle sealed with a cork and handcrafted with Swarovski crystals (\$50). Proprietor Malik Pirani, akin to a water sommelier, can explain the nuances of water (more than you might realize), from pH levels and salinity, to nitrate levels and the varied bubbles in sparkling.

1 p.m. In Vino Veritas

A quick jaunt across the street leads to a taste of French terroir at Vinideus (1019 N.W. 11th Avenue, 971-544-1323). About 85 percent of the wines hail from France, supplemented with bottles from Spain, Italy and the Northwest. Swirl, sniff and sip from the elegant Riedel stemware at this neighborhood shop while watching local denizens and hounds cruise by.

Take your palate from France to the mountains of Lebanon and beyond at Verdun Fine Chocolate and Gifts (421 N.W. 10th Avenue, 503-525-9402). It's a few blocks away and feels like a chocolatiers version of Tiffany's. Exquisitely handcrafted chocolates sparkle in colorful foils at this family run shop.

1:45 p.m. Words on Wine

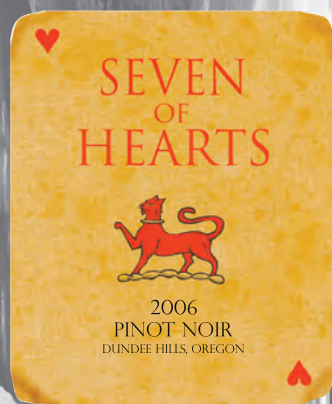
Stroll or streetcar to Powell's Books (1005 W. Burnside, 503-228-4651) for a visit to the wine book aisle and pick up the Kermit Lynch classic, "Adventures on the Wine Route: A Wine Buyer's Tour of France."

A skip away, lunch awaits at ten-01 (1001 N.W. Couch, 503-226-3463). In the upstairs wine cellar ham hocks mingle with bottles of Burgundy as sommelier Erica Landon and Chef Jack Yoss duke for

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Tickets \$20

100% of the \$20 entry fee's net proceeds will benefit the Cat Adoption Team, a non-profit organization offering pet shelter and adoption services in our community. More information at www.catadoptionteam.org

Info/RSVP Call 503-474-9042



Steve's Cheese (inside The Square Deal Wine Shop) you'll find wheels and charcuterie.



Cacao is a serious chocolate lover's paradise with bars and drinking chocolate.

WINE RETAIL

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PORTLAND (CONTINUED)

The Pearl Wine Shop
1314 N.W. Glisan • 877-732-7555
www.thepearlwineshop.com
Ken Collura

Portland Wine Merchants
1430 S.E. 35th Street • 503-234-4399
www.portlandwinemerchants.com
Rory Olson

Pour Wine Bar & Bistro
2755 N.E. Broadway • 503-288-7687
www.pourwinebar.com
Robert Volz

Sip D'Vine
7829 S.W. Capitol Hwy. • 503-977-9463
www.sipdvine.com
Jill Crecrast

Square Deal Wines
2321 N.W. Thurman • 503-226-9463
www.squareddealwines.com
Dan & Elizabeth Beekley

Storyteller Wine Co.
5511-B S.W. Hood Ave. • 503-206-7029
www.storytellerwine.com
Michael Alberty

Thirst Wine Bar & Bistro
0315 S.W. Montgomery St. Suite 340
503-295-2747
www.thirstwinebar.com
Leslie Palmer & Gary Kneski

Vicinato Wine Bar
4605 N.E. Fremont • 503-288-8487
Wade Schaible

Vinideus Beamont Village
4759 N.E. Fremont • 503-284-2795
www.vinideus.net
Dominique and Diane Vidal/
Fred and Patricia Raclot

Vinideus Pearl
1019 N.W. 11th Ave. • 971-544-1323
www.vinideus.net
Dominique and Diane Vidal/
Fred and Patricia Raclot

Vino
1226 S.E. Lexington • 503-235-8545
www.vinobuys.com
Bruce Bauer

Vino Paradiso Wine Bar & Bistro
417 N.W. Tenth Ave. • 503-295-9536
www.vinoparadiso.com
Timothy Nishimoto

Vino Vixens
2929 S.E. Powell Blvd. • 503-231-8466
www.badgirlwines.com
Erin Marie Palmer

Vinopolis Wine Shop
1025 S.W. Washington • 503-223-6002
www.vinopoliswineshop.com
Dan McCallum

Why Not Wine
7907 S.E. Stark • 503-262-0696
www.whynotwineoregon.com
Lindy Palmberg

The Wine Cellar
13486-A N.W. Cornell • 503-643-5655
www.badgirlwines.com
Erin Marie Palmer

Wine Down on 28th
126 N.E. 28th Ave. • 503-236-9463
www.winedownpdx.com
Stuart Herold

Woodstock Wine and Deli
4030 S.E. Woodstock • 503-777-2208
www.woodstockwineanddeli.com
Nathan Garrett

REDMOND
Avery's Wine Bar
427 S.W. Eighth Street • 541-504-7111
Kelly Ramey/Mary Thompson

WineStyles
222 N.W. Seventh, Ste. 5 • 541-526-0489
Margie Sellers

ROSEBURG
Dino's Wine Bar & Italian Deli
404 S.E. Jackson • 541-673-0848
Debra DeNino

SALEM
Grand Vines
195 High St. N.E. • 503-399-9463
www.grandvines.com
Tim Duffy

Santiam Wine Company
1930 Commercial S.E. • 503-589-0775
Debra Rios

SEASIDE
Wine and Beer Haus, The
1111 N. Roosevelt, Ste. 200 • 503-738-0201
www.thewinehaus.com
Jeff Kilday

SHERIDAN
Private Reserve Wine
19702 S.W. Highway 18 • 503-843-3900
www.oregonboutiquewines.com
Susan Mundy

SILVERTON
Howard Hinsdale Cellars
119 N. Water St. • 503-873-9463
Howard Hinsdale

SISTERS
Cork Cellars
161A Elm Street • 541-549-2675
www.corkcellars.com
Emily Pelletier

TIGARD
Pacific Northwest Wine Club
16285 S.W. 85th Ave., Ste. 104
503-620-6691 • www.pnwc.com
Dan Paynter

TILLAMOOK
Blue Heron Cheese & Wine Company
2001 Blue Heron Drive • 503-842-8281
www.blueheronoregon.com
Debby Self

Debbie D's Wine Tasting Room
2210 N. Main • 503-842-2622
Debbie Downie

TUALATIN
Parallel 45
8294 S.W. Nyberg Street • 503-612-9219
www.p45winebar.com
Steve Sweeney

Taste of Wine
7590 S.W. Nyberg Street • 503-504-6591
www.taste-of-wine.com
Sharon Noneman

WineStyles
7009 S.W. Nyberg Street • 503-691-7777
www.tualatin.winestyles.net
Jerry & Amy Anderson

VANCOUVER
La Bottega
1905 Main Street • 360-571-5010
www.labottegafoods.com
Celia Ghormley

Salut! Wine Co.
16020 S.E. Mill Plain Blvd., Suite 105
360-891-5505 • www.salutwine.com
David D. Gray

Vancouver Gift & Wine Cellar
418 W. Eighth St. • 360-993-5006
www.vancouvercellar.com

Vinotopia Restaurant and Wine Bar
11700 S.E. Seventh St. • 360-213-2800
www.cinetopiatbeaters.com
Rudyard Colman

WELCHES
Andrea's Wine Gallery
67195-C East Hwy. 26 • 503-927-5207
www.andreaswinegallery.com
Andrea Galusha

WEST LINN
Wine About It
22240 Salamo Rd. • 503-723-5152
Akhil Kapoor

WILSONVILLE
Wine Xing
25977 S.W. Canyon Creek, Suite D
503-582-8355 • www.winexing.com
Eric Bean

WOLF CREEK
Circle of Wolf
300 Front St. • 541-866-2520
Karen and Dan Schilberg/
Nancy and Lloyd Johnston

YACHATS
The Wine Place
373 N. Highway 101 • 541-547-5275
www.iloveoregonwine.com
Carrie Yano

Yachats Wine Trader/River House
125 Ocean View Drive • 541-547-4100
Carrie Monschke

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Albertson's
www.albertsons.com

Fred Meyer
www.fredmeyer.com

Haggen
www.haggen.com

Lamb's Thriftways
www.lambsmarkets.com

Made in Oregon
www.madeinoregon.com

Market of Choice
www.marketofchoice.com

New Seasons Markets
www.newseasonsmarket.com

QFC/Quality Food Center
www.qfconline.com

Ray's Food Place
www.gorays.com

Roth's Fresh Markets
www.roths.com

Safeway
www.safeway.com

Thriftways
www.tbriфтwaystores.com

Whole Foods Market/Wild Oats
www.wholefoodsmarket.com

Zupan's Markets
www.zupans.com 🍷

HOOD RIVER

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taste these and other Columbia Gorge wines and microbrews, plus peruse seasonal fruit and flowers, and art and photography at The Gorge White House (2265 Highway 35). It is a historic home on a century-old working farm.

Holt likes that easy proximity of urban amenity and rural retreat in Hood River. She calls herself a “tag-along mom,” because her sons and husband, Alan, were the ones dragging her south as they first chased the Gorge’s stiff westerly winds back in the late 1980s. “But I fell in love with the area,” she said.

She and her husband later bought a vacation home across the Columbia in Washington, and visit at least once a month.

She likes the variety of small, independent retailers. In particular, she goes for art jewelry, and for that she likes Twiggs, Made in the Gorge and the Columbia Center for the Arts.

Many of the downtown’s independent retailers occupy some of more than 20 Hood River structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Away from the city core, residents and visitors find a mix of familiar national retailers and distinctly local landmarks. Principal among the longtime beacons for visitors is the Columbia Gorge Hotel, perched west of town near where the waters of Phelps Creek plunge toward the Columbia at Wah Gwin Gwin Falls.

Keeping on a historic note, the Mount Hood Railroad served as an economic lifeline for the valley, carrying fruit and forest products to market beginning in 1906. Now the train acts as a family excursion or romantic outing for two, complete with a dining car and a narrator covering local history and key points of interest. Its trains board passengers downtown, and travel along the Hood River through forests, meadows and numerous fruit orchards.

Poke around the side streets and periphery of Hood River, and you can ferret out other surprises, among them a host of places that kick out good, inexpensive and authentic Mexican food—as you would hope, in a county where 26 percent of residents are Hispanic.

Seamus Egan and his wife, Linda Healy, visit frequently from Portland, sometimes to golf, sometimes to bike the back roads, sometimes to get an “al pastor” (spicy pork) burrito at El Rinconcito Taqueria, locally known as “the trailer” (1833 Cascade Avenue).

For sit-down Mexican—and a host of other shopping—visitors head south to the area of Hood River locals refer to as “the Heights.” Hood River Taqueria (1210 13th Street) centers a budget-dining district, augmented two years ago with down-home Southern flavors of Dixie’s Southern Grub (1302 13th Street).

“I’ve seen huge changes in Hood River,” Jo Anne Holt said. “It has become a much livelier place year ’round, while maintaining its away-from-it-all feel. You can go downtown and have a variety of restaurants and shopping experiences that weren’t there 20 years ago.”

And, she said, if you tire of all that “city” life, you’re only five minutes from the orchards, and a half hour from Mt. Hood. 🍷

Stu Watson worked 24 years as a reporter and editor for several Northwest newspapers. In addition to freelance writing, he coordinates activities for the Hood River Downtown Business Association.

WINE CRAWL

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space, charcuterie versus wine. I’d suggest a taste of both. For a light lunch toast with a sparkling and pair with the house-made charcuterie plate (\$14), truffle fries (\$8) or house made bacon-shallot tater tots (\$6), oysters with apple-pink peppercorn mignonette (\$2.50 each, \$14/half dozen) and a seasonal side of greens (\$9).

3 p.m. Hindu Deities and a Frida Kahlo Wine Barrel

It’s time to backtrack a few blocks to Glisan, heading up toward 16th for enlightenment and mystery. Antiques & Oddities (1605 N.W. Everett Street, 503-222-4246) glows with a canary yellow exterior and red Tibetan murals on a busy street corner. But the minute you step into this 5,000-square-foot warehouse, serenity sets in. Specializing in antiques from China, the maze of altar tables, Mongolian chests, detailed Tibetan cabinets and Afghani tribal jewelry easily capture the wild imagination. Each turn showcases a new culture or art, from African masks to prehistoric shark tooth fossils; the unexpected is what you’ll find.

Around the corner and across the street, artfully flamboyant barrels showcase local painters and photographers at Urban Wineworks (407 N.W. 16th Avenue, 503-226-9797). Sip from a thematic flight (changes monthly) at the sleek urban warehouse, while gazing at masterpieces ranging from an intense Frida Kahlo portrait (complete with bushy eyebrows) to an iconic black and white portrait photo of a stately vineyard worker.

4:45 p.m. Chocolate Seduction

Wind back toward the Pearl to immerse your senses at Cacao (414 S.W. 13th Avenue, 503-241-0656); it is exquisite. Co-owners Jesse Manis and Aubrey Lindley created a Parisian-style chocolate shop inspired by the legendary Angelina’s on the rue de Rivoli. Elegant and exotically named chocolates enchant from long shelves that frame the shop. A glass case holds delicately crafted artisanal concoctions from six premier producers across the world. Sip one of three decadent drinking chocolates (\$2 a shot) one named Rivoli, homage to their Parisian muse.

7 p.m. Wine and Philosophy

Saunter towards the Park Blocks to Southpark Seafood Grill & Wine Bar (901 S.W. Salmon Street, 503-326-1300). Make sure you find a seat at the bar and let the quixotic, goateed wine director and bar philosopher, Will Prouty, pour tastes from wines both worldly and homegrown. With over 45 wines by the list, he’ll be able to guide you to one you love. For dining, the paella Valencia (\$21.50) or the daily Farmer’s Connection will hit the spot.

9:15 p.m. A Dreamy Nightcap

Slumber at the wine-themed boutique Hotel Vintage Plaza (422 S.W. Broadway, 503-228-1212) where each room is named after a local winery or vineyard. However, if the night is still young, candlelight will be aglow at the hip Clyde Common (S.W. 11th and Stark, 503-228-3333) to un-wine with a nightcap. 🍷

Kerry Newberry is a Pinot-sipping, vineyard-hopping wine and food writer. She resides in Portland.

WEISINGER’S

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the quality of that fruit were any indication of its state, then those of Margaret River would be that of bliss.

As spring buds in Oregon are beginning to break, mature grapes in this part of the world are being picked. Harvest 2008 is well underway. Most of Watershed’s estate whites are already in and the reds are starting. In fact, just yesterday I found myself on top of one of the first tanks of Merlot “pumping over” (circulating the juice over the top of the skins to help extract color). Though the grapes had come in the day before, the juice was already dark red

and well on its way to purple.

When I had finished, I turned around and looked below at the estate vineyards that surround the winery. Again it was a beautiful sunrise and that sweet light of morning was beginning to warm both me and the vines. As I stood there, I thought that in many ways the vineyards around me looked similar to those I had seen in Marlborough, New Zealand, the Alexander Valley of California or even my native southern Oregon. A sense of being home settled over me. Yes, very similar indeed, except for the kangaroos. 🍷

Eric Weisinger is an Oregon winemaker currently on a two-year, self-prescribed traveling wine adventure of working harvests in both hemispheres.