

AUSTIN

40
YEARS OF
AUSTIN CITY
LIMITS

MONTHLY | OCT
2014

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LOCAL

WINE

WINERIES, BARS, SOMMELIERS AND MORE

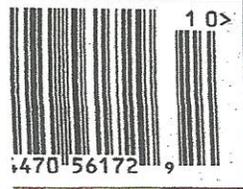
SWIRL, SNIFF, SIP:
WINE-TASTING 101

SOMMELIERS PICK
THE BEST LOCAL WINE

REDS, WHITES, ROSÉS
OH MY!

CREEK
YARDS
KASBOURG

monthly.com US \$4.95



DIALED IN

MOVE OVER, HOLLYWOOD! AUSTIN IS BECOMING
A HUB FOR FOLKS IN THE TV INDUSTRY

FALL FUN

120 CONCERTS, PLAYS, ART EXHIBITS
AND MORE TO ATTEND THIS MONTH



Grapes

ESCAPES

UNCORK AND UNWIND AT THESE 34 WINERIES IN AUSTIN AND THE HILL COUNTRY

BY RAMONA FLUME AND BECCA HENSLEY / PHOTO BY KENNY BRAUN / ILLUSTRATIONS BY GRAHAM SMITH

Searching for a quick fall getaway? Look no further. Practically in our backyard, the Texas Hill Country is the second most popular wine tourism destination in the U.S.—right behind Napa Valley. Even better: Fall is prime time for visiting wineries. Whether you're a fan of tempranillos, viogniers or anything in between, there's a winery to

quench everyone's thirst on this list. We've also included four wineries in Austin, in case you're trying to plan a special date night or weekday happy hour. Plus, you'll find 27 wine recommendations from some of the city's best-known sommeliers, a beginner's guide to wine tasting and a list of wine bars you'll want to try immediately. Drink up!



DEVON BROGLIE
**Master Sommelier/
 Associate Global
 Beverage Buyer at
 Whole Foods Market**

Bargain: Globerati Bonarda, Mendoza Argentina, \$6.99
 "This wine is medium-bodied and has deliciously soft plum and cherry flavors and surprising chocolate and spice notes. It's perfect for fall grilling."

Splurge: Bründlmayer Brut Rosé, Kamptal Austria, \$44.99
 "A blend of Pinot Noir, St. Laurent and Zweigelt, this charming wine has red raspberry notes with a fresh, crisp finish. It's delightfully out of the ordinary."

Red: Mauro Gaudio Barbera del Monferrato Superiore, Piemonte Italy, \$19.99
 "I love this wine with all of its red fruit aromas and rich palate. It's deceptively full-bodied and delicious with food."

White: Château Petit Roubié Picpoué de Pinet, Languedoc France, \$13.99
 "Picpoué actually translates to 'lip stinger.' It's a perfect moniker for this freshly acidic and lemony crowd-pleasing white wine."

AUSTIN MONTHLY GRAPE ESCAPES

AUSTIN

1. Lakeview Winery
 2. Austin Custom Winery
 3. The Austin Winery

THE AUSTIN WINERY

9007 Tuscany Way, Ste. 100A, (713) 724-0942, theaustinwinery.com

Urban wineries are all the rage in other cool cities, so why not Austin? This eponymous spot, a model of industrial chic on the East Side, isn't linked to a specific vineyard. It procures its grapes from a coterie of small grape growers in this state and beyond. With a bee-themed label alluding to its eco-aware philosophies, the winery sells vino in both bottles and barrels. Our favorite? The Old Vine zinfandel right from the tap. \$15 tastings, book in advance.

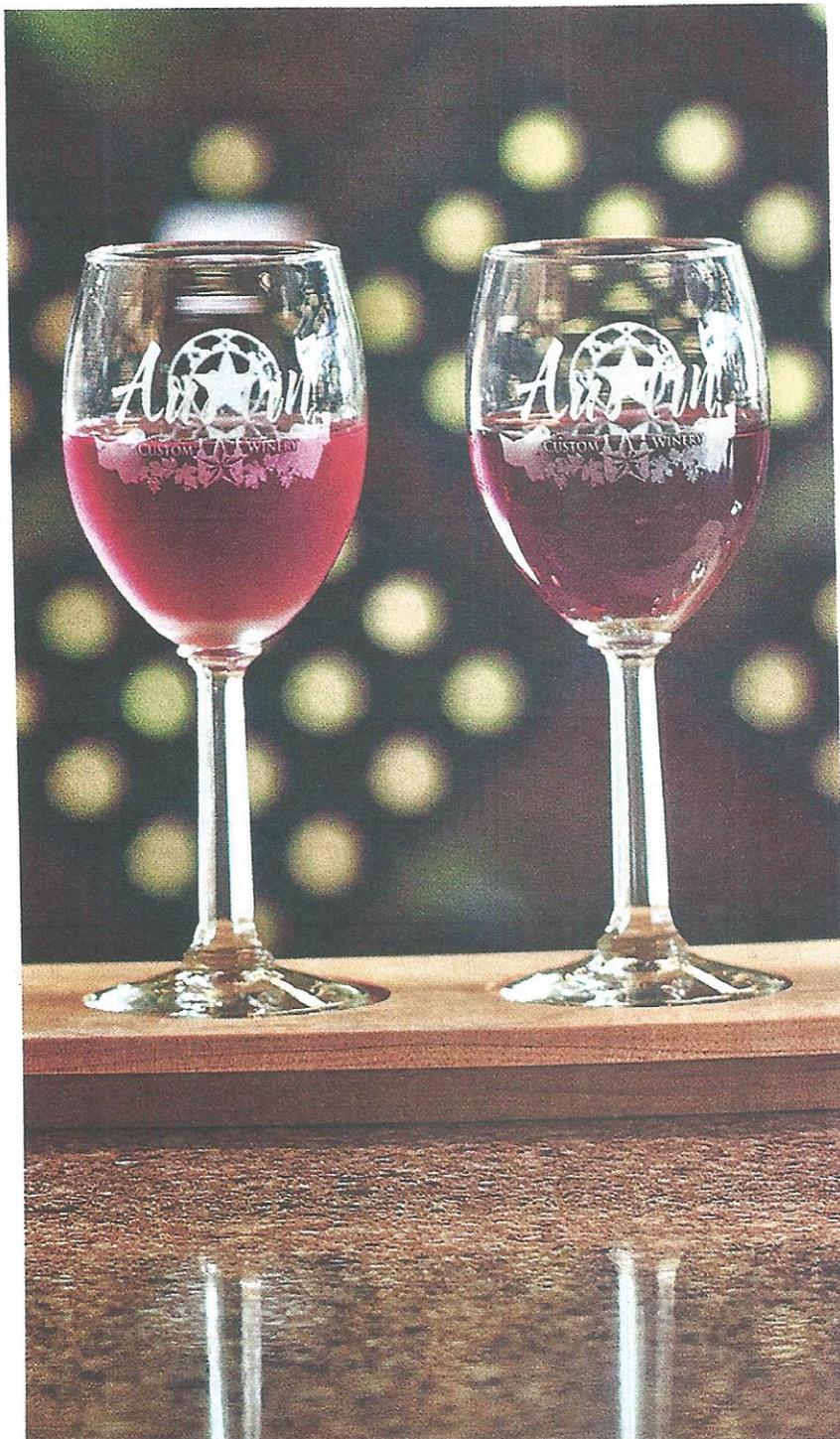
AUSTIN CUSTOM WINERY

5207 Brodie Lane, Ste. 130, (512) 394-0600, wineatx.com

This winery's owner and self-taught winemaker, Mary Charron, wanted to spread her love for the art of winemaking in 2007, so she established one of the first micro-wineries in the state. Today, Austin Custom Winery offers nearly 65 wines from around the world. Take a seat at the granite bar and tickle your palate with black-cherry pinot noir, seasonal ice wines or viognier pinot grigio. Make it an even more "custom" experience with the Vintner for



PHOTO BY KRISTAL MALLOY.



a Day program and design your own wine label—perfect for anniversaries and birthdays. \$7 tastings.

LAKEVIEW WINERY

6550 Comanche Trail,
(512) 291-2801,
lakeviewwinery.com

It used to be that The Oasis was just about margaritas and sunsets. But Kenny and Gail Fowler have changed that paradigm with the establishment of Lakeview Winery, set in the Oasis Shopping Village. Using mostly Texas grapes from their winemaker's vineyard in Rock-

dale, the oenophiles craft and bottle their creations locally. The winery's reds, including the merlot, have won silver in the Lone Star International Wine Competition, but white wine aficionados may want to muse over the complex Hippy Hollow Naked Chardonnay. \$10 tastings.

BOTTLE SERVICE

12 wine bars that will satisfy any red, white or rosé craving you may have

Apothecary
4800 Burnet Road,
(512) 371-1600,
apothecaryaustin.com

Aviary
2110 S. Lamar Blvd.,
(512) 916-4445,
aviarylounge.com

Cork & Co.
308 Congress Ave.,
(512) 474-2675,
corkandco.com

East End Wines
1209 Rosewood Ave.,
(512) 904-9056,
eastendwinesatx.com

The Grove
6317 Bee Caves Road,
(512) 327-8822;
3001 S. RR 620,
(512) 263-2366,
grovewinebar.com

Henri's
2026 S. Lamar Blvd.,
(512) 442-3373,
henrischeese.com

House Wine
408 Josephine St.,
(512) 322-5210,
housewineaustin.com

Mulberry
360 Nueces St., (512) 320-0297,
mulberryaustin.com

Red Room Lounge
306 E. Third St., (512) 501-1536,
redroomatx.com

Uncorked
900 E. Seventh St.,
(512) 524-2809,
uncorkedtastingroom.com

Vino Vino
4119 Guadalupe St.,
(512) 465-9282,
vinovinoaustin.com

Winebelly
519 W. Oltorf St., (512) 487-1569,
austinwinebelly.com



JOELLE COUSINS

**Certified Sommelier/
General Manager, Red
Room Lounge**

**Bargain: Trimbach
Pinot Blanc, Alsace
2011, \$15**

"This wine complements a wide variety of food but can also be enjoyed on its own. It has fresh lemon and apple character and finishes dry with a beautiful mineral texture. It's my go-to wine more often than not."

**Splurge: Krug Brut
Rosé, Champagne NV,
\$325**

"The first thing that I turn to when I am willing to splurge is Champagne. Its involved production process and historical backbone demands high prices. Drink this on your wedding night—so worth the money!"

**Red: Domaine Jean
Foillard 'Fleurie,'
Beaujolais 2010, \$50**

"With the perfect balance of body, fruit and earth, this is my ideal glass of red wine."

**White: Mesh Riesling,
Eden Valley 2006, \$25**

"This dry-style riesling is thought-provoking and unique. Its vibrant acidity is displayed by means of citrus elements, like Meyer lemon, tangerine and Key lime, while being balanced by rich stone fruit, beautiful florals and a subtle minerality."

AUSTIN MONTHLY GRAPE ESCAPES

WINE ROAD 290

1. Chisholm Trail Winery
2. Fredericksburg Winery
3. Rancho Ponte Vineyard
4. 4.0 Cellars
5. Grape Creek Vineyards
6. Hilmy Cellars
7. Torre Di Pietra Vineyards
8. Becker Vineyards
9. Woodrose Winery
10. Pedernales Cellars
11. William Chris Vineyards
12. Hye Meadow Winery
13. Texas Hills Vineyard



Grape Creek Vineyards

BECKER
VINEYARDS

464 Becker Farms
Road, Stonewall,
(830) 644-2681,
beckervineyards.com

An undisputed granddaddy of Texan wine production, Becker Vineyards harvested its first grapes in 1995. It began when Richard and Bunny Becker of San Antonio searched the Hill Country for a log cabin to restore and found 46 acres of raw land ripe with mustang grapes. Now a 100,000-case-per-year winery, with vintages that have been served in the White House and have won some of the wine world's top medals in France, it's totally Texan with Napa-level élan. \$12 tastings.

HYE MEADOW
WINERY

10257 W. Hwy. 290,
Hye, (512) 657-2855,
hyemeadow.com

With three antique silos, a corrugated, tin-roof-topped barn and a canopy of oak trees, Hye Meadow Winery, a relative newcomer to the winery scene, looks every part the old-time ranch. But the wine crafted here by expert winemaker Jeff Ivy is anything but old school. From bubbles to aglianico to the spicy 2012 tempranillo, the wines are presented with whimsy and a welcoming joie de vivre. And the winery's general cheerfulness manifests just how much owner Mike Batek loves his job. \$10 tastings.

GRAPE CREEK
VINEYARDS

10587 E. Hwy. 290,
Fredericksburg,
(830) 644-2710,
grapecreek.com

This vineyard is Florence meets Texas atop a hill. Reach it down a long, vine-flanked drive that's reflective of a Tuscan wine road. Patios, tiled roofs and sun-dappled saffron walls add to the illusion of Italy. Specializing in Italian varietals, the winery gets accolades for its molto buono Montepulciano creations. Jason Englert, an intuitive winemaker, likes to let wines make their own journey to the bottle. Ride the tram through

PHOTO COURTESY GRAPE CREEK VINEYARDS.



the vineyard, passing by the crush pad and tank room to finally arrive for a libation in the barrel room. \$20 for tastings and tour.

WOODROSE WINERY

662 Woodrose Lane,
Stonewall,
(830) 644-2539,
woodrosewinery.com

In 2005, vintner Mike Guilette took over Woodrose Winery, one of Wine Road 290's oldest properties, with the intent of increasing production by 20 percent every year. Today, the winery boasts 25 acres of malbec, cabernet, mourvèdre and tem-

pranillo and produces 30 signature wines. In addition to a tasting room, Woodrose also operates a dancehall; both host tastings, live music on Saturdays and special events. \$10 tastings.

RANCHO PONTE VINEYARD

315 RR 1376,
Fredericksburg,
(830) 990-8555,
ranchoponte.com

Rancho Ponte owner Roberto Ponte, a fourth-generation vintner, was born into winemaking, growing up on vineyards in North and South America. His heritage gave way to an explor-

atory passion, and he now specializes in intriguing, unconventional blends. Ponte isn't afraid to break established old world traditions with signatures like the "Triple M" wine, made with merlot, mourvèdre and muscat manelli. Taste a dozen varietals in the 3,500-square-foot barn or enjoy a bottle on the back patio overlooking the 5-acre vineyard. \$12 tastings.

WILLIAM CHRIS VINEYARDS

10352 Hwy. 290, Hye,
(830) 998-7654,
williamchrismwines.com

Red wine aficionados

William Chris Vineyards

line up—this estate vineyard does the purple grape proud. With consistently awarded vintages crafted from exclusively Texas-grown fruit, William Chris Vineyards isn't afraid to show off its Lone Star roots. It's a collaboration between winegrowers Bill Blackmon and Chris Brundrett, whose philosophy focuses on old-world wine-making techniques and considering every visitor as family. Ensnared in a century-old farmhouse, this hospitable wine hideaway features live music most Saturdays. \$10 tastings.

SOMM SUGGESTIONS



JUNE RODIL

**Advanced Sommelier/
Wine & Beverage
Director at McGuire
Moorman Hospitality**

Bargain: *Broadbent
Vinho Verde Rosé,
\$8-\$10*

"It's low in alcohol, so you are able to enjoy it in more abundant amounts. It's juicy, bright and has just an ever-so-slight sweetness that makes it so refreshing."

Splurge: *Red
Burgundy*

"It takes perhaps one bottle in a case of Red Burgundies to blow your mind, but that one bottle is so good, that you'll immediately start saving your pennies to buy another case. Two of my favorite producers: Denis Bachelet, Mugneret-Gibourg."

Red: *Bourgogne
Rouge*

"I can't get enough of that French juice. Bottles of note: La Rioja Alta Vina Ardanza Reserva Rioja 2005 and Lopez de Heredia Vina Tondonia 2002."

White: *Grand Cru
Blanc de Blancs
Champagnes*

"This is the wine I want to start off with, especially for a special occasion. It is bright, savory and mouth-watering to the finish. Favorite buys: Pierre Gimmonet Special Club, Vazart-Coquart Grand Cru Brut, Ruinart Dom Ruinart."



WINE ROAD 290



- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Chisholm Trail Winery | 8. Becker Vineyards |
| 2. Fredericksburg Winery | 9. Woodrose Winery |
| 3. Rancho Ponte Vineyard | 10. Pedernales Cellars |
| 4. Four Point Cellars | 11. William Chris Vineyards |
| 5. Grape Creek Vineyards | 12. Hye Meadow Winery |
| 6. Hilmy Cellars | 13. Texas Hills Vineyard |
| 7. Torre Di Pietra Vineyards | |

4.0 CELLARS

10354 Hwy. 290,
Fredericksburg, (830)
997-7470, fourpointwine.com

Call it a triumvirate: Three of Texas' most storied wineries, all located farther afield, come together in one sleek Hill Country tasting room. It's a true deal for one-stop imbibers. Try Brennan Vineyards, the groundbreaking mavens of local viognier and tempranillo. Enjoy the perky, dry rieslings and ponderous gold-label shiraz crafted by the boutique Lost Oak Winery. And don't even think about leaving without experiencing magic in a glass: the liquid French spirit of McPherson Cellars Rhône-style Les

Copains. Themed tastings, such as chocolate and wine, up the ante. \$10 and up for tastings.

PEDERNALES CELLARS

2916 Upper Albert Road, Stonewall, (830) 644-2037, pedernalescellars.com

This family-owned winery's tempranillo evokes fresh-picked cherries with Spanish almonds, while its French-style viognier will promote cool on even the steamiest day. Tiptle from a shady deck as you ogle panoramic Hill Country views—and yield to the urge to relax and stay awhile. Free guided cellar tours titillate, but oenophiles will swoon over Pedernales'

reserve room, where six-person, sommelier-led tastings explore estate blends, older vintages and library-level wines during a 50-minute session. \$12.95 tastings; \$25 reserve tastings, book in advance.

CHISHOLM TRAIL WINERY

2367 Usener Road, Fredericksburg, (830) 990-2675, chisholmtrailwinery.com

All trails lead to Chisholm Winery, especially for the Oval Oven pizzeria. The on-site Italian-style restaurant, featuring handmade dough imported from Naples, centers on a wood-fired brick oven. Try the specialty quail sausage



Pedernales Cellars



Fredericksburg Winery

and applewood-smoked bacon pie—a perfect complement to estate signatures like the Belle Starr Blanc du Bois. The Fredericksburg winery, decked out with a Texas saloon feel, also hosts special events year-round, like the annual Fall Fun event on Oct. 18, with freshly harvested fall wines and live music. \$10 tastings.

FREDERICKSBURG WINERY

247 W. Main St.,
Fredericksburg, (830)
990-8747, fbgwinery.com

What better way to get acquainted with a newly tuned palate for Texas wine than a free tasting? Fredericksburg Winery, conveniently located on Main Street in the heart of downtown, offers a no-frills free tasting for guests' first flight of five wines, from dry Gewürztraminers and burgundy to sweet ports and orange

muscats. Established in 1996, the family-owned operation, which makes all of their wine on-site from Texas-sourced grapes, was recently recognized as one of the top three producers in Texas by *USA Today*.

TEXAS HILLS VINEYARD

878 RR 2766, Johnson City, (830) 868-2321, texashillsvineyard.com

Owners Gary and Kathy Gilstrap knew they wanted to create Italian-style wines when they bought their Pedernales River Valley property almost 20 years ago. The unique Texas soil was ideal for varietals like pinot grigio (they were the state's first producer) and one of the region's largest plots of sangiovese. In addition to making award-winning wines, they are dedicated to organic, sustainable processes, from turkey compost fertilizers to a "rammed earth" tasting room. \$5 tastings.

HILMY CELLARS

12346 E. Hwy. 290,
Fredericksburg,
(830) 644-2482,
hilmywine.com

The passion of self-taught winemaker and Hilmy Cellars owner

Erik Hilmy can be seen in every aspect of his booming Fredericksburg vineyard. He and his wife, Neldie, fell in love with a sprawling plot of former farmland in 2008 and quickly established thousands of sangiovese and petit verdot vines—all harvested by hand. The now-prosperous vineyard, complete with an on-site winery and eco-friendly tasting room, is classified as a "working farm," using all-natural solutions, like guinea fowl, cats and Great Pyrenees to control pests and local white-tailed deer. \$10 tastings.

TORRE DI PIETRA VINEYARDS

10915 E. Hwy. 290,
Fredericksburg, (830)

644-2829,
torredipietra.com

Don't be fooled by the foreign moniker. Opened in 2004, Torre Di Pietra is known as a Highway 290 trailblazer because of its Mediterranean varietals, which are perfectly suited to the unique Texas Hill Country habitat. The spacious Tuscan-style tasting room has everything an oenophile could dream of, from specialty Texas-made foods like pestos and CKC Farms goat cheese to a dance floor that swells with people during live music on weekends. The property is currently expanding its primitive blocks and the first harvest of albarino vines is scheduled for 2015. \$10-\$15 tastings.



TEXAS HILLS VINEYARD PHOTO BY GARY GILSTRAP; FREDERICKSBURG WINERY PHOTO COURTESY THE WINERY.



MARK SAYRE
Advanced Sommelier/
Beverage Director at
Four Seasons Hotel

Bargain: 2012 Feraud-Brunel Cotes de Rhone Villages, \$18; 2011 Casa Ferreirinha Douro Vinha Grande, \$12
"The southern Rhone Valley in France and the Douro Valley in Portugal both deliver for similar reasons: rich red fruits, supple, round texture, wild, gamy aromas and flavors and that complex old-world minerality that separates them from others."

Splurge: Krug Grande Cuvee, \$226
"As much as I love vintage Champagne—why not make it a killer non-vintage Champagne? This is an intense, rich, layered and powerful wine from a Champagne house that never misses."

Red: 2011 Hedges Red Mountain Estate, \$23
"A wine of mostly Bordeaux varieties, this red is treated as if it were from an actual Bordeaux estate—the epitome of expression from a family's estate."

White: 2007 Trimbach Riesling Cuvee Frederic Emile, \$53
"Alsace, France, is another place that carries a rich history with rieslings. This one is characterized by ripe peach, caramelized citrus, beeswax and honeycomb with a steely, knifelike edge."

AUSTIN MONTHLY GRAPE ESCAPES



DRIPPING SPRINGS & DRIFTWOOD



1. Bell Springs Winery
2. Solaro Estate Winery
3. Driftwood Estate Winery
4. Wimberley Valley Winery
5. Duchman Family Winery
6. The Salt Lick Cellars

BELL SPRINGS WINERY

3700 Bell Springs Road,
Dripping Springs,
(830) 483-9463,
bellspringswinery.com

There's always something new to try at Bell Springs, just 20 minutes from Austin. The Dripping Springs winery churns out six to eight

new releases every year, in addition to monthly experimental batches, from Chilean-style chardonnays aged in whiskey barrels to Drip-pin' Sweet white wine blends with fresh peach infusions. But signature varietals, like cabernet franc and nebbiolo, and a tasting room set amid acres of oak and cedar trees, attract a loyal crowd of oenophiles. \$7-\$10 tastings.



Bell Springs Winery

SOLARO ESTATE WINERY

13111 Silver Creek Road, Dripping Springs, (832) 660-8642, solaroestate.com

Solaro Estate is going head-to-head with Napa contenders with its grapes grown in the Hill Country and High Plains of Texas, and racking up dozens of awards since its first harvest in 2009. And the scenic vineyard and tasting room, situated 1,250 feet above Barton Creek, are on the same international scale. Lovely breezes trace terraced Italian vines, like Montepulciano and their double-gold award-winning barbera, which are handpicked before being processed and barrel-aged on-site. \$10 tastings; winery tours featuring limited edition wines are available by appointment.

DRIFTWOOD ESTATE WINERY

4001 Elder Hill Road, Driftwood, (512) 692-6229, driftwoodvineyards.com

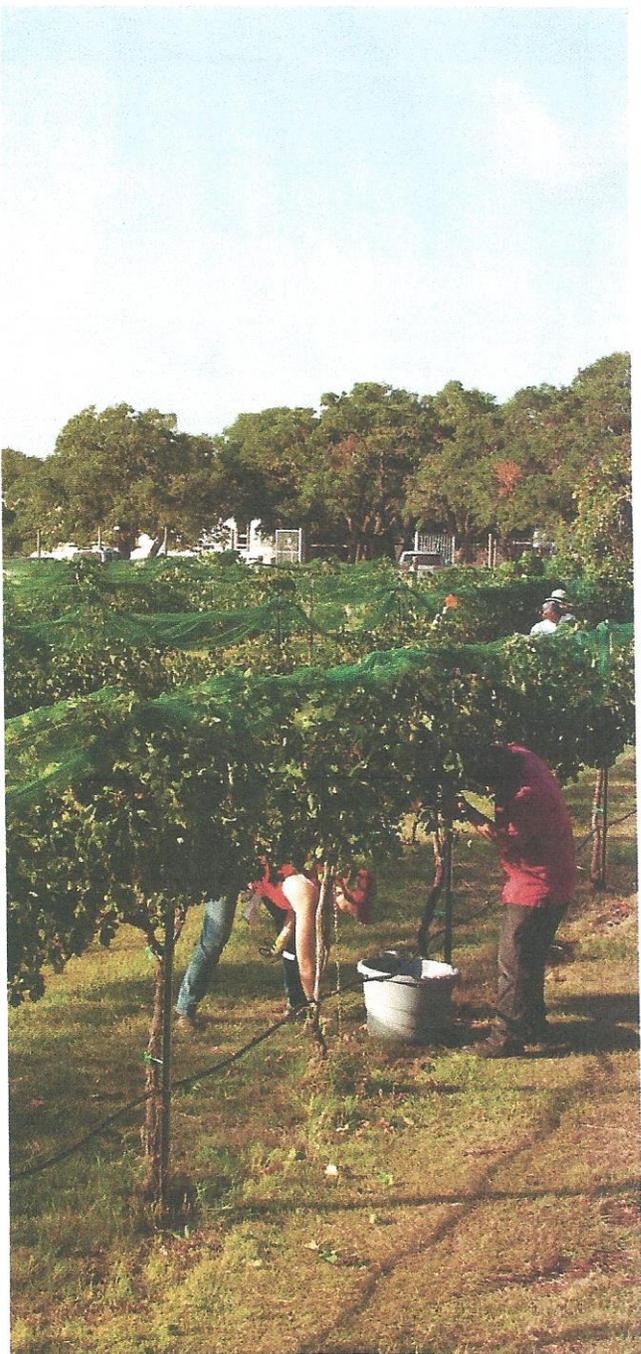
There's never been a better time to visit this winery. The Hill Country estate just planted 3 acres of cabernet vines and is constructing a new 6,000-square-foot winery to handle the increasing demand for signatures like Longhorn Red, a cabernet and syrah blend. There is also a new bridal suite for weddings, and



Harvesting at Solaro Estate Winery

an expanded tasting room and a new VIP space for wine club members is in the works. Despite the growing square footage, the grounds are still perfect for a picnic. Try the Paso Robles wines, grown from vines planted 25 years ago by the family's first generation of winemakers. \$10 tastings.

BELL SPRINGS WINERY PHOTO COURTESY THE WINERY.



DUCHMAN FAMILY WINERY

13308 W. FM 150, Driftwood, (512) 858-1470, duchmanwinery.com

The ruby red color and ripe plum notes of Duchman's dolcetto prove this winery can channel la dolce vita when it comes to Italian varietals. The crisp, citrusy vermentino and stewed-fruit layered aglianico also garner high marks. Winemaker Dave Reilly is passionate about Texas terroir. "He truly respects each type of grape and knows how to coax them in this landscape," says general manager Jeff Ogle. The oak tree-studded enclave, just 20 minutes outside Austin, has a stellar tasting room, as well as wine dinners, jazz brunches and movie nights. \$10 tastings.

SALT LICK CELLARS

18300 FM 1826, Driftwood, (512) 829-4013, saltlickcellars.com

You probably know The Salt Lick for its tasty ribs, sausage and sides. But this compound on an expansive grassy lawn beneath oak trees also grows grapes. With a vineyard and tasting room that adds to the barbecue experience, Salt Lick Cellars sells its grapes to other winemakers and is purveyor of its own wine label, with blends completely composed of Texas-grown grapes. Sample blends like the BBQ Red, perfect for bringing into the restaurant, which proudly remains BYOB and cash only. Just like the good old days. \$7 tastings.

SOMM SUGGESTIONS



CRAIG COLLINS

**Master Sommelier/
Beverage Director for
ELM Restaurant Group**

Bargain: *Cleto Chiarli
Vecchia Modena
Lambrusco, \$17*

"Dry and delicious, everyone I give this to loves it no matter how much or how little they know about wine."

Splurge: *Pierre Peters
Les Chétillons Blanc
de Blancs Grand Cru
Brut Champagne, \$123*

"One of my favorite bottles of wine in the world. It has everything I look for in wine: perfect expression of the flavors of the grape while highlighting the place the grapes are grown at the same time. Since we are splurging, try it with some caviar."

Red: *2010 Pascal
Marchand Avalon
Bourgogne Rouge,
\$28*

"It is hard to find good pinot noir at a reasonable price, especially from Burgundy, but this wine meets all my requirements with its bright red fruit, delicate flower notes, cinnamon and a hint of mushroom."

White: *2013 Scarpetta
Pinot Grigio, \$18*

"This particular vintage is made by Master Sommelier Bobby Stuckey and embodies everything pinot grigio should be: apples, pear, white flowers, a defined wet stone minerality with a soft bitterness on the finish."

LOCAL FAVORITE
FIVE OUT OF THE SIX SOMMELIERS
WE INTERVIEWED PICKED THE SAME
LOCAL WINE AS THEIR FAVORITE:

DUCHMAN FAMILY WINERY
VERMENTINO

"OFTENTIMES, YOU HEAR THINGS LIKE, 'IT'S A GREAT VERMENTINO... FOR TEXAS WINE.' BUT THIS IS JUST A GREAT VERMENTINO—PERIOD," SAYS JUNE RODIL. ADDS JOELLE COUSINS, "IT'S PERFECT ON A HOT TEXAS DAY."

WIMBERLEY VALLEY WINERY

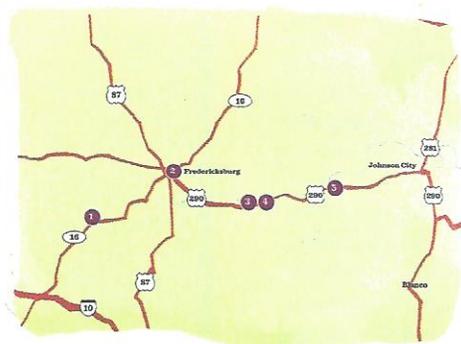
2825 County Road 183, Driftwood, (512) 847-2592, wimberleyvalleywinery.com

Sweet to the sweet might be the unofficial motto for Wimberley Valley, established in 1983, making it one of the Hill Country's oldest wineries.

Specializing in fruit wines, such as cherry, blueberry and plum, winemaker Dean Valentine released two new flavors, raspberry and blackberry, in August. Also crafting variations of viognier and blush, among others, this limestone wine house on 30-acres of ranchland used to sit in a dry county. Thankfully, new laws in 2008 allow for on-site swigging in this cozy locale. \$5 tastings.



FREDERICKSBURG & JOHNSON CITY



1. Santa Maria Cellars
2. Fiesta Winery
3. Messina Hof Hill Country
4. Inwood Estates Winery & Bistro
5. Lewis Wines

FREDERICKSBURG FOOD & WINE FEST (OCT. 25)

Now in its 24th year, this event is known for serving up great wine, great food and a great time. The all-day celebration starts with an alfresco brunch, complete with pairings from a dozen local wineries. The \$20 general admission fee also includes a souvenir glass and



six tasting tickets that are good for three 2-ounce samples or one glass of wine from your choice of 28 featured Texas wineries. Other than wine, attendees can enjoy live music from Zydeco Blanco and The Frank Gomez Band, silent auctions, the Gargantuan Great Grape Toss, a Texas beer tent, serving brews from Pedernales Brewing Company, Spoetzl and Real Ale, and samples from local purveyors like Round Rock Honey and Texas Olive Ranch. Bonus fun: cooking classes and new events, including a seated dinner at Messina Hof Hill Country on Oct. 23 and a wine and hors d'oeuvres party at Wildseed Farms on Oct. 24, now precede the main event. Noon to 7 p.m., 100 block of W. Main St., Fredericksburg, (830) 997-8515, fbgfoodandwinefest.com

MESSINA HOF HILL COUNTRY

9996 E. Hwy. 290,
Fredericksburg, (830)
990-4653, messinahof.com/hillcountry

This is an outpost of Bryan's Messina Hof Winery & Resort, which set the gold standard for Lone Star State wine. A tasting room offering more than 50 options, the wine saloon reflects the history of our state's wine with its location along the Hill Country wine route. A small front-yard vineyard provides fruit for port. Pouring award-winning wines that fuse Italian roots with Lone Star agriculture, this unpretentious

spot does especially well with prodigious, earthy reds. An ideal location for weddings or other events, it also has a bed-and-breakfast for overnight stays. \$10 tastings.

LEWIS WINES

3209 W. Hwy. 290,
Johnson City,
(512) 987-0660,
lewiswines.com

Some people are just naturals. When wine wunderkind Doug Lewis began as a harvest intern at Pedernales Cellars, who knew he was an alchemist? His instinctive wine wizardry set in motion a passion for Texas-grown fruit and Mediterranean-style wines. And



Bottles from Lewis Wines

today, his Lilliputian tasting room and affable winery makes vintages from 100 percent state-grown fruit. Consider the 2013 chenin blanc with its honeysuckle nose and lemony finish. Or, the bright and breezy vinho verde that smacks of Portugal. Merlot buffs will happily indulge in the 2011 merlot, which recalls roasted green chiles. \$10 tastings; advance reservations required.

FIESTA WINERY

147 E. Main St.,
Fredericksburg,
(830) 307-3328; 6260
E. Hwy. 290, (830) 997-
4466; fiestawinery.com

The Hill Country wine scene has expanded by leaps and bounds in recent years, and Fiesta Winery is an excellent sign of the times. The Fredericksburg staple has two tasting rooms—the original Main Street location and an additional Highway 290 location with almost double the square footage, gourmet charcuterie and cheese plates

and live music on weekends. This fall, the winery debuted a new tasting room in San Antonio. In either location, enjoy award-winning favorites like Back Porch Sittin', a semisweet cabernet, or Skinny Dipping, a smile-inducing sweet riesling. \$10 tastings.

INWOOD ESTATES WINERY & BISTRO

10303 E. Hwy. 290,
(830) 997-2304,
inwoodwines.com

Learn from a master in this contemporary tasting room. Dan Gatlin has been making wine and growing vines for three decades. Here, in his third Texas winery, feel his unabashed passion for our state's soil. You'll discover his gift with old-world European-style fruit and vintages. A dense tempranillo that smacks of old vines gets high marks here, as does the flirty, oak-abundant Palomino chardonnay. Pair your drams with some indigenous fare—such as ribs—at the on-site eatery. \$12 tastings.



Fiesta Winery Fredericksburg

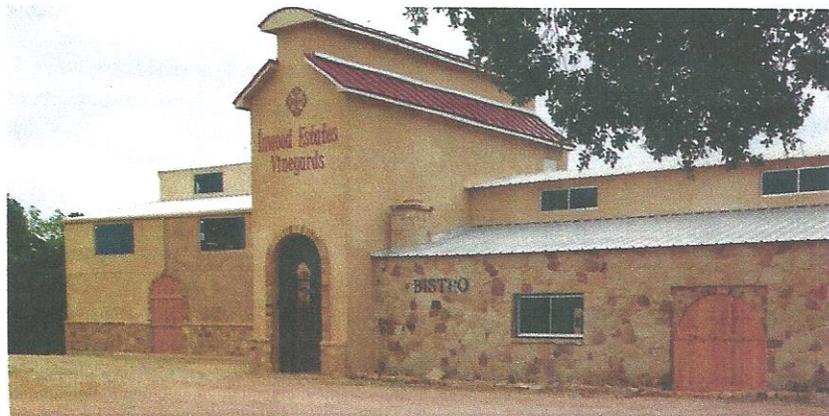
SANTA MARIA CELLARS

12044 S. Hwy. 16,
Fredericksburg, (830)

998-5357, santamariacellarwines.com

It says something about the Lone Star State's wine scene when a Mendoza-born

Argentine travels across the world to start his winemaking business in the Hill Country. Owner and vintner Martin Santamaria opened Santa Maria Cellars in 2011, with a modest tasting room that is comfortable but unpretentious, with the focus remaining on the classic Texas-made, Argentine-inspired wines. Expect to be wowed by the premier malbec, obviously, and the dry cabernet sauvignon, traditionally aged in Chilean oak barrels. \$10 tastings.



SOMM SUGGESTIONS



WILMA MAZAITTE

Advanced Sommelier,
laV

Bargain: *Sciaccarellu, Comte Abbatucci, \$20*

"I love finding wine that doesn't break the bank and totally surprises you. This wine is light, bright and brainlessly good."

Splurge: *1985 Moët & Chandon Dom Perignon Oenoteque, \$923*

"Last year, while traveling, I stumbled upon a small liquor store that had some of this vintage. I am sure they had no idea what they had because it was priced for \$180. I bought six bottles—every one they had in the store! Unfortunately, it is all gone by now."

Red:

"Normally, I pick a lighter red that won't overpower the food or mood. But I truly don't have favorites. My wine preferences change depending on what mood I am in, what time of the year or day it is, what company I'm with or what food I am eating."

White: *Domaine Brubaché Jurançon, \$46*

"There are so many great white wines from so many different corners of the world. This is one of the wines we pour by the glass at laV. Made from gros manseng grapes, it is not your typical find, but amazingly good—dry, citrusy, mineral and albariño-like."



COMFORT & KERRVILLE

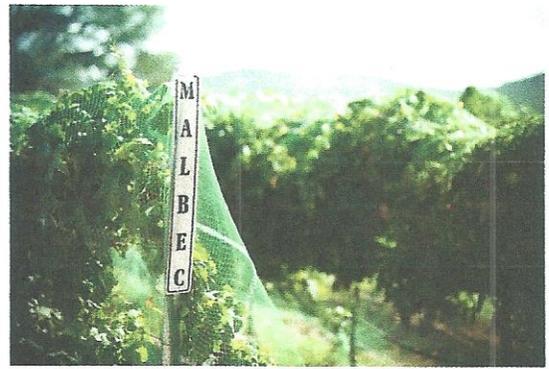


1. Kerrville Hills Winery
2. Bending Branch Winery
3. Singing Water Vineyards

KERRVILLE HILLS WINERY

3600 Fredericksburg Road, Kerrville, (830) 895-4233, kerrvillehillswinery.com

Last year, Kerrville Hills Winery, which is known for its cabernets and merlots, won the Dripping with Taste Festival's People's Choice Award for its purple cab. But the recent acclaim hasn't taken the fun out of the process. Owners Wayne and Carol Milberger say their armadillo insignia signifies their fun approach to varietals, like the new sweet orange muscat called Muskrat Love. Revel in the merriment in the spacious tasting room. \$7-\$10 tastings.



Bending Branch Winery

BENDING BRANCH WINERY

142 Lindner Branch Trail Comfort, (830) 995-2948, bendingbranchwinery.com

With restored original rough-hewn structures, fallen oaks transformed into furniture, floors and tabletops and chunks of gathered stone used for building new edifices, Bending

Branch celebrates the landscape. The folks behind the winery take that homage a step further with their 20 acres of bio-dynamic vineyards that comprise 16 varietals. Savants with red wine, they craft award-winning petite syrah and specialize in the lesser-known Southern French tannat. Discover its cranberry explosion and white pepper finish in the on-site tasting room. \$10 tastings.

WINE-TASTING 101

Certified sommelier Rae Wilson of Wine for the People acknowledges that wine tasting can be intimidating. But she says it doesn't have to be: "I tell people to relax and just have fun. What you like or don't like changes all the time, so keep an open mind and explore." Here are her tips for newbie wine tasters. *As told to Erin Quinn-Kong*

Step 1: Choose Your Method

The most common way to wine taste is to try five to seven wines at a time. But I find it more fun to taste three wines and then choose one that I want to have a glass of. That way, I can explore the whole range of that wine.

Step 2: Analyze the Color

A lighter red looks watery, so it will have a lighter flavor, while a very dense red that you can't see through will have a more concentrated flavor. Keep those things in mind while tasting; soon you will be able to associate how a color presents itself on your palate.



Step 2: Swirl Your Glass

By swirling your glass, you provide aeration to the wine, which releases aromas. To do this, keep the base of your glass' stem on the table. This prevents splashing when you start slowly moving it in a circle.

Step 3: Take a Sniff

After swirling, aromas will get trapped in the bowl of the glass. Put your nose all the way in the glass. Smell it and think about your first impression. You may think the wine smells like flowers or your grandma's kitchen—there is no right or wrong answer.



Step 4: Sip Away

Take a drink of the wine and roll it around your mouth. Let it hit all sides of your tongue. After swallowing (or spitting, if you are trying to minimize alcohol or not tire out your palate) think about the finish—those are the flavors left in the mouth. That's a very important part of the entire tasting experience.



Step 5: Evaluate

This can be as simple as asking yourself if you liked the wine. Or you can think about the body, weight and texture of it. Tannins are also important—they cause a drying sensation on the sides of the tongue. A wine should make you salivate.

SINGING WATER VINEYARDS

316 Mill Dam Road, Comfort, (830) 995-2246, singingwatervineyards.com

The drought might have diminished the inspiration for Singing Water's name—the sound of the Comfort property's creek—but wines are still flowing at this family-run vineyard. Owners Dick and Julie Holmberg planted their first merlot vines back in 1998, quickly followed by plots of syrah and pinot grigio. Enjoy the fruits of their labor in various spaces, like the refurbished barn or outdoor deck. \$6 tastings.



MARBLE FALLS & SPICEWOOD



1. McReynolds Winery
2. Spicewood Vineyards

3. Stone House Vineyard
4. Flat Creek Estate

makes you want to kick off your boots and stay awhile, Spicewood boasts immense, inviting porches, a coursing creek and a homestead that might have belonged to your rich uncle. Virtuosos in the art of Spanish wine, they get an olé for their crisp albariño and a double olé for their fiesta-worthy 2011 tempranillo, which was voted a Texas Top 10 Wine in 2013 by *Texas Monthly*. \$5 tastings.

STONE HOUSE VINEYARD

24350 Haynie Flat Road, Spicewood, (512) 264-3630, stonehousevineyard.com

With a world-famous Australian winemaker who prefers to remain

anonymous at the helm, it's no wonder Stone House produces some wines with an Aussie accent. Crowning a breezy bluff atop Lake Travis, the winery has landscape that suggests the Yarra Valley. "There's an international flavor about the place," agrees owner Angela Moench. But this winery is Texan to the core, harvesting a hearty crop of closely planted Norton grapes, indigenous to the U.S. The results? Sparkling wine and a sangiovese rose 2012 with summer strawberry appeal. \$6 tastings.

FLAT CREEK ESTATE

24912 E. Singleton Bend, Marble Falls,

(512) 267-6310, flatcreekestate.com

The sandy loam soil of Flat Creek Estate, established in 1998, is ideal for the Hill Country vineyard's 20 acres of signature varietals, like its Super Texan sangiovese blend. But the winery's most popular hallmark? The on-site bistro, where Chef Sean Fulford creates gourmet menus, including four-course first Saturday dinners featuring everything from wood-fired pizzas to succulent duck confit. A second tasting room recently opened, featuring a selection of Italian wines and a cuvee wine-tasting system. \$10 tastings; private tastings and tours available by appointment. **AM**

MCREYNOLDS WINERY

706 Shovel Mountain Road, Cypress Mill, (830) 825-3544, mcreynoldswines.com

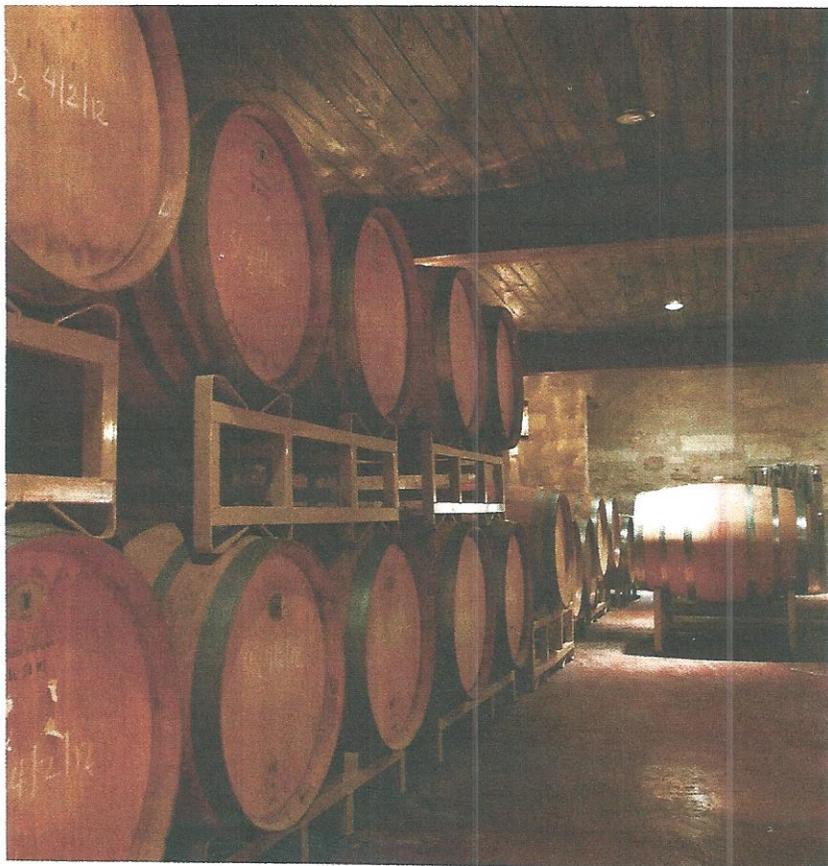
Laid-back and welcoming, this winery with a tiny vineyard occupies a replica pioneer log cabin. After traveling down a gravelly road, you'll be greeted by a friendly dog and the owners, Mac and Maureen McReynolds, who learned to make wine after vineyard stints in Santa Clara, California. Informal and petite, the tasting room has the ambience of an old-time general store, where

the town denizens gather for cards, conversation and a glass of vino. The 2004 merlot pairs well with chocolate—which Maureen will provide. \$5 tastings.

SPICEWOOD VINEYARDS

1419 Burnet Country Road 409, (830) 693 5328, spicewoodvineyards.com

Family-owned Spicewood Vineyards boasts 32 acres of vines, which yield 13 varieties of wine. "We are a real working winery," says owner Ron Yates, pointing to a horizon of vines. The sort of place that



Spicewood Vineyards