

Seneca Lake Wine Trail

New York State's Largest and Most Active Wine Trail

In 1986 the Seneca Lake Wine Trail was formed in the heart of New York State's Finger Lakes region to attract more visitors to experience its rich history, beauty, and production of world-class wines. Today, Seneca Lake Wine Trail is the largest and most active wine trail in New York State with a community of over 36 wineries, a distillery, two breweries and a meadery.

Seneca Lake's natural combination of deep water, at 632 feet it is the deepest of the Finger Lakes, and sloping hillsides provides the ideal microclimate for grape growing. Its unique geology and topography protect the growth of hardy native grapes and premium hybrids as well as more delicate varieties such as Riesling, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir.

Paul Thomas, Seneca Lake Wine Trail Executive Director, is a graduate of Cornell University and longtime Finger Lakes resident who oversees the organization's successful collaborative marketing and communications efforts. Working with more than 80 local businesses, four area Chamber of Commerce's, several tourism and regional organizations, the Seneca Lake Wine Trail has become a nationally and internationally recognized wine appellation rivaling the wine regions of California and Europe.

Seneca Lake Wine Trail implements innovative programs such as the **Polar Passport** (valid from December 1, 2008 to April 12, 2009) and **Riesling To Visit Passport** (valid from May 1 to August 31, 2008) offering visitors a fun and affordable way to sample wine and commemorate their wine tasting journey along the Trail.

Trail-wide events staged throughout the year, such as **Chocolate and Wine Weekend**, **Cruisin' the Tropics Weekend**, **Spring Wine and Cheese Weekend** and the annual **Deck the Halls** weekends allows visitors to learn first-hand from winemakers and local chefs how to pair food and wine. Other annual popular Trail events include **The Golden Nose Awards** where consumers can taste the previous year's vintage, learn how to judge wine and then actually judge Finger Lakes wines and **Bargain Bash** when wineries clean house by offering bargains on wines and wine accessories.

The rich wine history of Seneca Lake can be traced back to 1866, when the Seneca Lake Grape Wine Company opened a winery on the western shores. Then in 1882, New York State opened an Agricultural Experiment Station on the northern end of the lake (Geneva, New York) for grape breeding and research programs. Their success confirmed Seneca Lake as a prominent player in the grape growing industry. However, with the passage of Prohibition in 1919, the bottom of the grape market fell out and many of Seneca Lake's vineyards either closed or were replanted to produce grape varieties for the juice or fruit market.

In the early 1970s, Charles Fournier, a young European, planted 20 acres of Vinifera on the east side of Seneca Lake while at the same time German native, Hermann Wiemer, bought and planted 140 acres of Vinifera on the west side of Seneca Lake. The success of these two vineyards along with the establishment of a wine research program at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station were a catalyst to the revitalization of Seneca Lake as a grape growing and wine producing region.

In 1976, New York State passed the Farm Winery Act to encourage grape growers to expand into the wine production business. One year later, Seneca Lake became home to its first new winery: Glenora Wine Cellars, followed by Wagner Vineyards, Herman J. Wiemer Vineyard and Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards.

Today, Seneca Lake Wine Trail's 36 member wineries have won hundreds of national and international medals and are recognized as world class producers of Riesling, Pinot Gris, Gewurztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Honey Wines (Meads).

Seneca Lake Wine Trail members include 36 wineries, a meadery, distillery and a brewery: Amberg Wine Cellars, Anthony Road Wine Company, Arcadian Estate Winery, Atwater Estate Vineyards, Belhurst Winery, Bloomer Creek Vineyard, Cascata Winery at The Professors' Place, Castel Grisch Winery, Caywood Vineyards, Chateau LaFayette Reneau Winery and Inn, Earle Estates Winery & Meadery, Fox Run Vineyards, Fulkerson Winery, Glenora Wine Cellars, Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards, Hickory Hollow and Highland Wine Cellars, Lakewood Vineyards, Inc., Lamoreaux Landing Wine Cellars, Leidenfrost Vineyards, Miles Wine Cellars, Nagy's New Land Vineyard & Winery, Passion Feet Vineyard & Wine Barn, Penguin Bay Winery & Champagne House, Prejean Winery, Red Newt Cellars, Rock Stream Vineyards, Red Tail Ridge Winery, Rogue's Hollow Winery, Seneca Shore Wine Cellars, Stony Lonesome Wine Cellars, Tickle Hill Winery, Torrey Ridge Winery, Ventosa Vineyards, Villa Bellangelo, Wagner Vineyards, White Springs Winery.

For more information on Seneca Lake Wine Trail wineries and events call toll-free 877.536.2717 or go online at www.senecalakewinetrail.com.

Seneca Lake Wine Trail – A Tasteful Experience!

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