

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 30 wineries, a distillery, three 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 terroir for cool climate 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 90 local businesses, four area Chambers of Commerce, 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** (typically valid during the winter from December through March) and **Riesling To Visit Passport** (valid from April through July) offering visitors a fun and affordable way to explore our growing membership, sample wine and commemorate their wine tasting journey along the Trail.

Trail-wide events staged throughout the year, such as **Pasta & Wine Weekend**, **Chocolate & Wine Weekend**, **Cruisin' the Tropics Weekend**, **Spring Wine and Cheese Weekend**, **Smokin' Summer Kickoff** and the annual **Deck the Halls** weekends allow visitors to learn first-hand from winemakers and local chefs how to pair food and wine. Other annual popular Trail events include **Winemaker Wednesdays** where consumers take advantage of slower times at the wineries for more engaging experiences with owners and winemakers, 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 34 member wineries have won hundreds of national and international medals and are recognized as world class producers of Riesling, Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Honey Wines (Meads).

Seneca Lake Wine Trail members include 34 wineries, a meadery, distillery and 3 breweries: Anthony Road Wine Company, Atwater Estate Vineyards, Belhurst Winery, Castel Grisch Winery, Catharine Valley Winery, Caywood Vineyards, Chateau LaFayette Reneau Winery, Earle Estates Winery & Meadery, Fox Run Vineyards, Fruit Yard Winery, Fulkerson Winery, Glenora Wine Cellars, Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards, Hickory Hollow Wine Cellars, J.R. Dill Winery, Kings Garden Vineyards, Lakewood Vineyards, Lamoreaux Landing Wine Cellars, Leidenfrost Vineyards, Miles Wine Cellars, Penguin Bay Winery, Prejean Winery, Ravines Wine Cellars, Red Newt Cellars, Rock Stream Vineyards, Seneca Shore Wine Cellars, Tickle Hill Winery, Three Brothers Wineries and Estates, Torrey Ridge Winery, Ventosa Vineyards, Villa Bellangelo, Wagner Vineyards, White Springs Winery, and Zugibe Vineyards.

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

Seneca Lake Wine Trail – A Tasteful Experience!

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