

Oregon wineries provide tasty post-Thanksgiving alternative to malls

By Deston Nokes, Portland Travel Examiner
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Many folks are going to hit the stores the day after the big feast, but those with savvy palates and a love of the Oregon countryside can avoid mall madness during Washington County's Annual Wine Country Thanksgiving. All the participating wineries are just a short drive from downtown Portland, Ore.



The weekend marks the release of new vintages at many of Washington County's wineries, giving oenophiles a chance to be among the first to taste new releases, as well as an opportunity to visit wineries that are not regularly open to the public.

Quite a few of the wineries are open by reservation only, or are open Thanksgiving and Memorial Day weekends," said Sylke Neal-Finnegan, communications manager for the Washington County Visitors Association. "Many are offering tours, wonderful wine/food pairings and other hors d'oeuvres."

SakéOne is offering a tour, saké pairings and chocolate-dipped fortune cookies.

Another highlight will be a book signing at Ponzi Vineyards by author/founder Nancy Ponzi of The Ponzi Vineyards Cookbook. She'll be signing copies at the Beaverton vineyard on Saturday from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., and at its Dundee wine bar on Sunday from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

According to Neal-Finnegan, most of the new releases this fall will be white varietals because the '08 Pinot Noirs are still in their barrels or are aging in the bottle. Washington County is known internationally for its outstanding Pinot Noirs.

"The whites will include Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Pinto Gris, and specialty wines; but there will be plenty of reds to taste," she said. "Some are releasing '07 reserve Pinot Noirs and Ponzi will be releasing its '08 pinot noir."

Neal-Finnegan said there are high expectations for '08 Pinot Noirs because the long, warm season allowed the grapes to sit on the vines a little longer. Many predict that the '08 pinots will be the best in years, and most will be released Memorial Day weekend in 2010.

Another benefit is value. According to Neal-Finnegan, Washington County wineries have generally lower-on-average tasting fees.

Most wineries listed below are open Nov. 27 through 29, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. (unless otherwise noted). Each winery may charge a tasting fee, and fees may vary. Event information, fees and participating wineries are subject to change. For additional information about the Thanksgiving holiday weekend tastings, visit the North Willamette Vintners Association's Web site. (www.northwillamettevintners.org)

Participating wineries include:

A Blooming Hill Vineyard & Winery (abloominghillvineyard.com) 5195 SW Hergert Rd., Cornelius; (503) 992-1196; open Fri. - Sun., 12 p.m. - 5 p.m.; \$5 tasting fee (applied toward purchase of one bottle). New release: Pinot Noir. Douglas Fir Noble Christmas trees available for purchase. Fee includes chocolate cake tastings.

Alloro Vineyards (www.allorovineyard.com) 22075 SW Lebeau Rd., Sherwood; (503) 625-1978; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. \$10 tasting fee. New releases: 2008 Estate Pinot Noir, Riesling and Chardonnay, 2007 Pinot Noir and late-harvest dessert wine. Anam Cara Cellars 22222 SW Nicholas View Dr., Sherwood; (503) 537-9150; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$10 tasting fee. Fee includes: Selection of Oregon cheeses. Purchase two bottles of wine, get the third bottle for \$1 (must be same varietal/vintage).

Apolloni Vineyards (www.apolloni.com) 14135 NW Timmerman Rd., Forest Grove; (503) 359-3606; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee (refundable with wine purchase). New releases: 2007 Sangiovese and 2007 Merlot (available in tasting room only).

Árdiri Winery and Cellars (www.ardiriwine.com) 35040 SW Unger Rd., Cornelius; (503) 628-6060; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$10 tasting fee?. New releases: 2007 Pinot Noir. Special tastings: 2008 Pinot Noir, barrel tastings. Fee includes: Logo glass, light food and chocolates made with Árdiri's Pinot Noir. Barron-Wahl Vineyards 27015 SW Ladd Hill Rd., Sherwood; (503) 625-7938; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Light hors d'oeuvres.

Beran Vineyards (www.beranvineyards.com) 30088 SW Egger Road, Hillsboro; (503) 628-1298; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee (proceeds to benefit Community Action programs). Holiday discount, 20% off per case.

Cooper Mountain Vineyards (www.coopermountainwine.com) 9480 SW Grabhorn Rd., Beaverton; (503) 649-0027; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$10-20 tasting fee. Fee includes: Logo glass, live music, cheese and wine pairings. Organic and Biodynamic Vineyard Treks at 11 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. 25% off purchases of cases.

David Hill Vineyard & Winery (www.davidhillwinery.com) 46350 NW David Hill Rd., Forest Grove; (503) 992-8545; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee. Fee includes: Logo glass and light food.

Elk Cove Vineyards (www.elkcove.com) 27751 NW Olson Rd., Gaston; (503) 985-7760, 1-877-ELK-COVE; open Fri. - Sun., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee. New release: 2008 Pinot Noir, Pinot Gris.

Freja Cellars (www.frejacellars.com) 16691 SW McFee Place, Hillsboro; (503) 628-7843; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$10 tasting fee (applied toward wine purchase of half-case or larger). New release: 2006 Reserve Pinot Noir. Fee includes: Logo glass, assortment of fruit, cheeses, chocolates and bread.

Garden Vineyards (www.gardenvineyards.com) 12960 NW Dick Rd., Hillsboro; (503) 547-9046; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$10 tasting fee (applied toward wine purchase). Fee includes: Light snacks.

Helvetia Vineyards (www.helvetiawinery.com) 23269 NW Yungen Rd., Hillsboro; (503) 647-7596; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$2 tasting fee (refundable with purchase). New releases: 2007 Chardonnay, 2008 Gewürztraminer barrel tastings. Smoked salmon, gifts and Christmas trees available for purchase.

J. Albin Winery 19495 Vista Hill Dr., Hillsboro; (503) 628-2986; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee. Handcrafted Pinot Noir, Saignee Rosé, sparkling wines, dessert wine and Pinot Gris.

Montinore Estate (www.montinore.com) 3663 SW Dilley Rd., Forest Grove; (503) 359-5012; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$10 tasting fee includes logo glass. \$15 tasting fee includes culinary pairing classes and logo glass.

Oak Knoll Winery (www.oakknollwinery.com) 29700 SW Burkhalter Rd., Hillsboro; (503) 648-8198; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee. Fee includes: Live music and light food. Special case discounts (20-50% off), pick an ornament from the holiday tree and open it to reveal percentage-off discount on purchase of a case.

Patton Valley Vineyard (www.pattonvalley.com) 9449 SW Old Highway 47, Gaston; (503) 985-3445; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$15 tasting fee. New releases: 2007 Lorna-Marie Reserve Pinot Noir, 2007 Syrah. Fee includes: Glass and food.

Plum Hill Vineyards (www.plumhillwine.com) 6505 SW Old Hwy. 47, Gaston; (503) 359-4706; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee. Fee includes: Glass, music and snacks.

Ponzi Vineyards (www.ponziwines.com) 14665 SW Winery Ln., Beaverton; (503) 628-1227; open Fri. - Sun., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$20 tasting fee. The Ponzi Vineyards Cookbook book signing with author/founder Nancy Ponzi (Sat. and Sun.) New release: 2008 Tavola Pinot Noir. Fee includes: Riedel Pinot Noir Glass.

Purple Cow Vineyards (www.purplecowvineyards.com) 52720 NW Wilson School Rd., Forest Grove; (503) 330-0991; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee. New releases: 2006 Tempranillo Reserve, 2007 Gabriela.

Quailhurst Vineyard Estate (www.quailhurstwines.com) 15031 SW Pleasant Hill Rd., Sherwood; (509) 427-5132; open Sat., Nov. 28, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.; \$20 tasting fee. Fee includes: Logo glass, gourmet hors d'oeuvres, entertainment and specials on selected wines.

Shafer Vineyard Cellars (www.shafervineyardcellars.com) 6200 NW Gales Creek Rd., Forest Grove; (503) 357-6604; open Fri. - Mon., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$5 tasting fee. Fee includes: Hors d'oeuvres, hot apple cider and coffee; 36th anniversary special: Purchase one case, get the second case free (excludes Pinot Noir).

SakéOne (www.sakeone.com) 820 Elm St., Forest Grove; (503) 357-7056; open Fri. - Sun., 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. (Tours: 12 p.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m. and 3 p.m.). \$10 tasting fee. Rice Exposed Tour: tastings of fresh Oregon koji rice and kasu, rice cake pressed from fermented sake, which is commonly used as a pickling agent in Japanese cuisine. Fee includes: Tour, saké pairings, chocolate-dipped fortune cookies. Saké and sakétini holiday gift sets 20% off.

Tualatin Estate Vineyard (www.tualatinestate.com) 10850 NW Seavey Rd., Forest Grove; (503) 357-5005; open Fri. - Sun., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Complimentary tastings.