

Enjoy the whole show

If you've only experienced the Festival in the Park, plan to try one of these other Winefest activities next year

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Sentinel Special Sections

Everyone knows that the party in the park on Saturday is a great time to enjoy Colorado's wine and sunshine. In addition to the main event on Saturday, Winefest has inspired a number of other activities to enjoy all weekend at all ends of the valley. Unfortunately, some of these activities have a limited number of seats and may already be full for 2007, so if they appeal to you, there's just one thing to remember: Save the date for 2008. Next year's Winefest will be Sept. 18-21.

Golf tournament

Winefest kicks off on Thursday, Sept. 13 with a golf tournament at Redlands Mesa Golf Course, followed by an informal reception with



RESTAURANT OWNERS and chefs evaluate wines at a blind taste testing at Moulin Rouge in July in an effort to find new wines to pair with food for the Winemaker Dinners.

wine and hors d'oeuvres. The golf tournament, which will be more of a fun event to enjoy with friends rather than a true test of prowess and skill on the course, has room for more players. Cost is \$120, which includes the green fee, the cart, prizes and the reception. Those who'd like to attend the reception only are welcome; cost is \$40. Call the pro shop at Redlands Mesa to sign up for either one at 263-9270.

Winemaker Dinners

The Winemaker Dinners held on Thursday - Saturday, as well as the Winemakers Brunch on Sunday are not events held to feed the winemakers. They are all unique opportunities for anyone to come and enjoy amazing food that's been carefully matched with amazing

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A wines. Most of the chefs spend weeks planning the menu, they offer dishes that are not normally offered, and they go all out to create a meal that is memorable and delicious, offering such delicacies as charbroiled quail with a Palisade cherry sauce, ostrich steak with pomegranate glaze served with Colorado squash or saffron shrimp and scallops in phyllo cups. Every menu is different, unique and provides a once-in-a-lifetime culinary experience.

The first Winemakers Dinners will be held on Thursday night at the Colorado Wine Room in Fruita, the Moulin Rouge Restaurant in Grand Junction, and the Red Rose Café in Palisade. The event at the Colorado Wine Room will not be a formal sit-down dinner, but a casual cocktail event with appetizers and hors d'oeuvres prepared by DMT Catering. There may still be tickets to the Thursday events, so call the restaurants directly.

Seminars

Friday brings a day of education and another evening of food and wine. There are three seminars on Friday, with a focus on winemaking, wine tasting and wine pairing. These events sell out every year, and this year is no exception, so remember to mark your calendar and sign up early for 2008.

Many of the winemaker dinners for Friday are sold out. Restaurants are allowed to take reservations beginning June 1, and one restaurant was 50 percent sold out by June 2. The Doubletree Hotel and the Moulin Rouge in Grand Junction and the Red Rose Café in



Palisade may still have available seating. If your favorite restaurant is full, remember to call in early June to make your reservation next year.

Wine & chocolate tasting

Friday night finds another great wine pairing in Grand Junction: wine and chocolate with Enstrom's Chocolate. This year, the wine and chocolate tasting will be at the Marriott Hotel, where Viking Range will also be on hand to prepare appetizers. There will be a variety of wines and chocolates, including one chocolate that's 91 percent cocoa for the hardcore, and will be paired with port. Like the chefs preparing Winemaker Dinners, Jamie Simmons with Enstrom's has been carefully considering which wines will complement the various chocolate, truffle and toffee offerings. There is still seating available for this event, where ten different wineries were chosen

GLENN FOSTER, owner of Colorado Wine Room in Fruita, will be hosting a "strolling tapas" Winemaker Dinner Thursday night with DMT catering.

to pair specific wines with the assorted chocolates. To make your reservation, go to www.coloradowinefest.com or call the Winefest office at 464-0111.

Bike ride

On Saturday, if you're looking for something to do before the festival in the park begins, the Tour of the Vineyards is a 25-mile bicycle ride that starts and ends at Peach Bowl Park in Palisade. Showers are available at the pool for bicyclists to use before they proceed to Riverbend Park for the festival. The ride meanders through the orchard and vineyard lands in Palisade and East Orchard Mesa. Additional riders are always welcome, but online registration closes Sept. 12. Procrastinators are welcome to register at Palisade High School on the evening before the ride from 4:30 – 8:30.

Winery tours

On Sunday, most of the local wineries will be open for tasting, and many of them are also serving appetizers. Some will have live music, as well. For more details, see page 18.

This year, try to attend another Winefest event along with the festival in the park to make your Winefest weekend complete.