

Art in the vineyard

BY RICK COATES

Art and wine: some say they are one in the same. Larry Mawby, winemaker, refers to wine as the “heart of agriculture” with the letters a-r-t in bold print. Area wine festivals feature works from regional artists on their festival posters often with paintings of vineyard landscapes. Local galleries are unable to keep local vineyard paintings in stock.

Now the Leelanau Peninsula Vintners Association has released a commemorative print to celebrate the emergence of the area’s wine region, which began nearly 40 years ago.

The Leelanau Peninsula Vintners print (see cover of tab) was selected from nearly 20 entries. Torch Lake artist Pat Cain, a retired public school art instructor who spends a lot of time in the vineyards painted the piece.

“One of (my husband’s and my) favorite things to do when friends visit is tour the Leelanau vineyards,” Cain said. “I never tire of seeing how amazingly beautiful this area is. What I tried to do in this painting is communicate that feeling of natural beauty and warmth. It was truly a labor of love.”

Cain said that since moving to northern Michigan two years ago, she has been inspired to paint landscapes, but that she is working to achieve more abstraction in her work.

“I think a successful artist never ‘tells the whole story’, but rather invites the viewer to be drawn into and participate in the completion of the work,” Cain said.

“The inspiration for this painting is everywhere,” she added.

The popularity of local landscape paintings when combined with wine festival posters is evident with the 2001 Leland Wine & Food Festival print by Gene Rantz. The print (see cover) is one of the most popular posters ever at the festival and trying to buy one today is virtually impossible.

“We display the print in our tasting room and it is constantly admired,” said Bonnie Supina, Tasting Room Manager at Chateau de Leelanau. “We could literally sell hundreds of them, not a day goes by that people don’t ask us where they can buy that poster.”

The limited edition prints will be signed and numbered by the artist as well as the 12 winemakers who make up the federally designated appellation known as the Leelanau Peninsula. The prints will sell for \$40.00 a piece and only 100 will exist. More information on the print is available at

www.lpwines.com or to purchase call (231) 938-1811.

Proceeds from the print will go to the Leelanau Peninsula Vintners Association’s efforts to support regional land conservancy efforts as well various art organizations in northern Michigan. The original work will be donated to the Leelanau Conservancy to be auctioned off at their annual dinner in late July.

Additional pieces by Pat Cain can be seen at The Bella Galleria, Old Mission Peninsula and The Blue Heron Gallery, Elk Rapids.

Another artist that often paints vineyard landscapes is Mary Fuscaldò, whose Cat Head Bay piece was selected for this year’s Leland Wine & Food Festival poster. Fuscaldò’s work is very much in demand in the area and she sees a real interest in vineyard landscape pieces.

“I have sold several vineyard landscape pieces and can’t keep them in at the Michigan Artist Gallery in Suttons Bay. The Traverse City Chamber of Commerce bought two Leelanau Peninsula vineyard pieces for their new office building,” said Mary Fuscaldò, who resides on the Leelanau Peninsula. “There is a definite interest in landscape pieces up here especially for vineyard pieces.”

Fuscaldò became interested in vineyard paintings when she spent time in France and painted some vineyards there. When she and her husband bought a place on the Leelanau Peninsula 13 years ago she began painting vineyard landscapes from both the Leelanau and Old Mission Peninsulas.

“Vineyards up here are very magical, you can spend hours in them, there is a lot to see and experience,” said Fuscaldò. “I love painting them.”

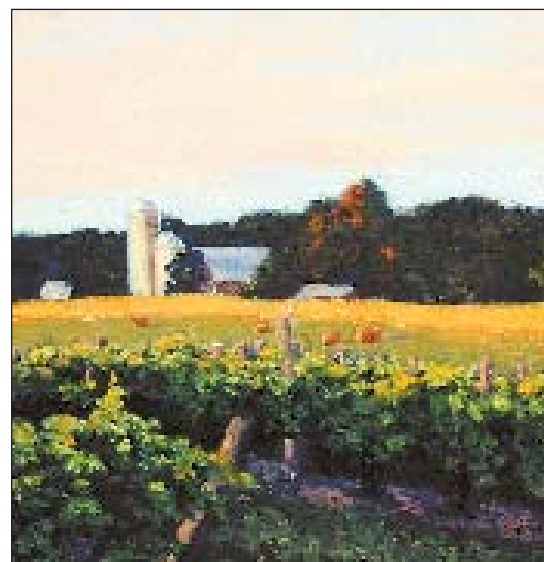
Erin Anderson author of “Look About You: A Magical Childhood in Michigan’s Wild Places,” features Fuscaldò’s works in the recently released book. The painting of the Chateau Chantal vineyard (see cover) appears in the book.

Fuscaldò will be at the Leland Wine & Food Festival to sign her print titled Magic Carpet The Lake Beckons, which is the official print for the 2003 festival. The scene comes from an area known as “Magic Carpet” peers through the trees at Cat Head Bay.

Local wine and local art, life doesn’t get much better when enjoying both.

Rick Coates writes from his home in Acme, MI

At right is artist Mary Fuscaldò’s “Late Afternoon.” On the cover of this issue, in the lower left corner, is her painting of Old Mission’s Chateau Chantal.



Also on the cover: This year’s Leelanau Peninsula Vintners Poster and the Leland Wine & Food Festival Poster from 2001.

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