

Destination wines

FROM PAGE 2

Farms, agrees with that concept. Coe played a pivotal role in helping to develop the Leelanau Peninsula Vintners Association (LPVA). "When you are in Germany or Italy or California you should drink the local wines," said Coe. "Essentially that is what we are trying to do with our trail on the Leelanau Peninsula, we want visitors to the area to buy and drink our local wines. There is another important component to this and that is having the local residents supporting what we are doing. We want them to look in their own backyard first for wine. We believe that they will be pleasantly surprised by the quality of wines that exist here." Touring wineries has become big

business. A recent study by Michigan State University has documented that Michigan Wine Tourism is on the rise. Area and regional tourism associations have seen a lot of interest in wine touring requests in recent years. "Wineries and lighthouses are our two most requested destinations," said Dianna Stampfler, Marketing & Media Director with West Michigan Tourist Association.

The Traverse City Convention & Visitors Bureau has found similar results with callers and visitors to their tourist center.

"Certain times during the year about 1 in 3 calls or visitors to our center are looking for wine trail information," said Kathy McCafferty of the Visitor Center. "At times we can't even keep the wine trail maps in."

Both peninsula wine trails produce an annual wine trail map. Visitors and residents alike use maps to visit the 10 wineries of the LPVA and the four wineries of the WOMP.

Another important aspect of a suc-

cessful wine trail is hosting special wine tasting events. Old Mission holds two events annually. Their Blossom Days was started in 1994 to create awareness of the four wineries on the peninsula and to celebrate the beauty of the blossoms.

Two years ago the group came up with another idea of combing two age-old favorites.

"We know that there are a lot of chili cook off's but there are not very many mac & cheese competitions so we started one," said Spencer Stegenga of Bowers Harbor Vineyard. "We have eight different recipes prepared by various restaurants from the area and participants get a glass and get to pair up the mac with our wines."

The Leelanau Peninsula Vintners Association was the first official wine trail to form in Michigan getting started in 2000. The LPVA organizes four wine trail events annually. In September the group hosts the Harvest Stompede a run and walk through the vineyards along with

gourmet pasta and a special wine pairing at each winery (see Article).

Toast the Season in November celebrates the coming holidays. Each participant receives one locally made grapevine wreath, an ornament at each of the 10 wineries, a commemorative logo wine glass, a special wine pour at each winery paired with a gourmet holiday food item.

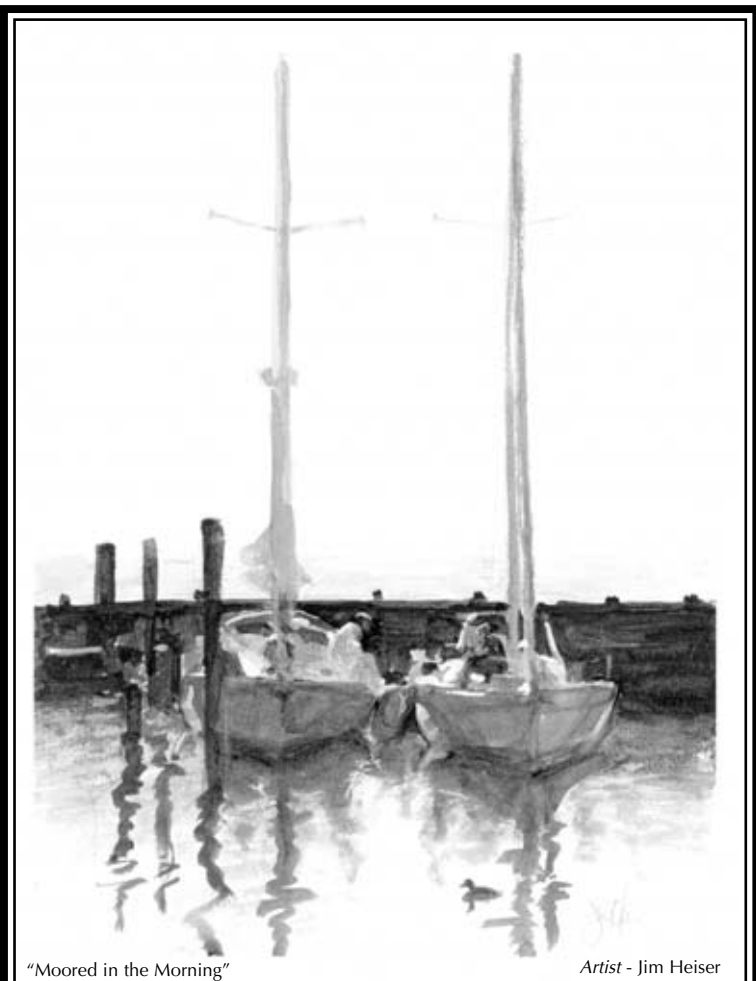
In February the group hosts Taste the Passion that features a snowshoe run or walk through the vineyards and a chocolate and wine tasting experience afterwards. In May the Spring Sip & Savor features new release wines paired with gourmet foods.

Touring the wine trails of the Old Mission Peninsula and the Leelanau Peninsula is a lot fun whether you are going with a friend, family members or a group. To learn more about the Wineries of the Old Mission peninsula visit their website at www.oldmissionwineries.com or call (231) 223-4050. To learn more about the Leelanau Peninsula Vintners visit

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

Wine trail maps are available at all member wineries and at area Chamber of Commerce's and Visitors Bureaus.

Reggie Ontario writes about travel destinations.



"Moored in the Morning"

Artist - Jim Heiser

Leland Food & Wine Festival

June 12, 2004
Noon to 6 p.m.

This event sponsored by the Leland Business Association

6/6-751458-WT

LEELANAU

A Taste of Northern Michigan

Since 1975

CELLARS

Our Chardonnays have been winning awards coast to coast for many years.

Visit us at the winery tasting room to sample all of our award winning wine free of charge.

29 Years of Award Winning Wines

12683 E. Tatch Rd., Omena MI 49674 • (231) 386-5201
www.leelanaucellars.com

The Silvertree Deli & Gourmet Market

119 St. Joseph Ave.
Suttons Bay, MI 49682
231-271-2271

We have the world's largest selection of Michigan wines.
Over 238 selections from 28 wineries.
We also have more than 900 other wines from all over the world. Stop by and see us, we know you'll be back!

6/6.751455.wt