

Local Wine Festivals last all summer long

BY DICK ALLEN

Wine festivals are growing in popularity across the country; every state has at least one. Michigan is no exception; in fact northern Michigan now has 8 wine festivals, double from last year. These festivals attract thousands of participants eager to learn about and enjoy local made wine from grapes grown in the area.

The popularity of these festivals stems from the ability of the participants to sample wines in moderation from several different wineries. Most festivals have between 12 and 20 wineries present, with winemakers and other winery staff on hand to answer questions.

In addition to wine these festivals feature regional cuisine prepared by locally owned restaurants. The food is often served in appetizer portions giv-

ing the participant the opportunity to sample several items and pair them up with the wine. Chefs are often on hand preparing these foods in front of attendees adding additional flavor to the festival.

Each wine festival has its own character and personality. Many have music, some offer jazz while others offer blues or soft rock. Some festivals have beer; hand crafted locally made micro brewed beers, while others have artists displaying their works. Many of the northern Michigan festivals are at harbors or near water.

While each festival is unique, they all have a common denominator; FUN. Wine festivals are a lot of fun, ask anyone that attends, because more than likely they will be bringing others with them next year, maybe you. Don't wait for an invitation though from your

friends, with 8 wine festivals in the next year there is plenty of opportunity to seek one out on your own.

The wine festival craze in northern Michigan started with the vision of two Leland residents: Chris & Kathy Telgard.

LELAND WINE & FOOD FESTIVAL: JUNE 12, Leland Harbor

If you look on a calendar the start of summer usually is around the third weekend of June, unless you live in or near Leland, then the summer starts the second Saturday of June with the Leland Wine & Food Festival. This is the 19th year that organizers from the Leland business community have put the festival on.

It all started when Kathy Telgard and her husband Chris, who were partners in the Bluebird Restaurant, started talking about ways to get more people to come to Leland.

"We wanted to beef up what was traditionally a slow weekend in Leland," said Kathy Telgard, Co-Chair of the festival with her husband. "Memorial Day Weekend was always busy, but then there was this lull for a few weeks so we started talking to others in the business community about a wine festivals."

Why a wine festival?

"We had been out to Napa Valley in the early 80's to some wine festivals and they were a lot of fun," said Telgard. "We were friends with Larry Mawby (L. Mawby Vineyards) and Bruce Simpson (Good Harbor Vineyards) and felt they were making great wine and wanted to help them out."

What the Telgard's didn't realize at

first was how much work and money a wine festival costs.

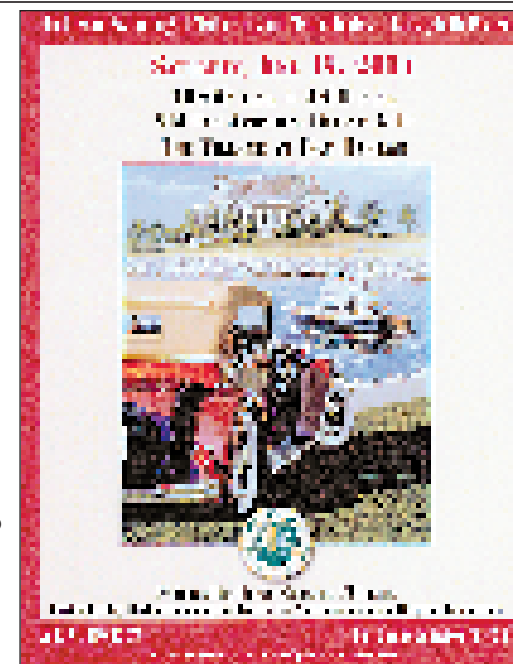
"We had no idea about any of this. We applied for a grant from the newly formed Michigan Grape & Wine Industry Council and got it (the festival received the first ever grant from the MG&WIC)," said Telgard. "We had about 1000 people the first year and now we are up over 3,000, we could probably do more but we have space limitations at the harbor."

The popularity of the festival has people lining up a couple of hours before the gates open at Noon and the festival remains busy until the end at 6 pm. This years Leland Wine & Food Festival will feature 10 wineries from the Leelanau Peninsula, 3 from Old Mission and one from the southwest part of Michigan.

Several restaurants including The Cove, The Riverside and The Bluebird will all be back, along with regional favorites Stonehouse Bread and the Leelanau Cheese Company.

Ron Getz and his band The Heaters will perform all afternoon with special guest Dawn Campbell.

Another popular attraction to the festival is the commemorative Leland Wine & Food Festival poster. The poster will be on sale and the artist will be on hand from Noon till 3 pm to sign.



Just how long will the Telgard's continue the festival?

"It is a lot of work and fortunately Chris and I have a lot of help," said Telgard. "We see this going on forever, the big challenge for us right now is the cost of putting the festival on is going way up."

The Leland Business Council that sponsors the festival uses proceeds from the event to help fund beautification projects in downtown Leland

"We also make a donation the Leland Schools Parents Association," said Telgard. "They provide us with all of the volunteers that day to help pour wine."

Tickets for the Leland Wine & Food Festival are \$8.00 and available only at the event. Participants will receive a wine festival glass and two tasting tickets. Additional tasting tickets are \$2.00 a piece. Wine samples require 1 to 3 tickets depending on the cost of the wine. For additional information on the festival call (231) 256-7747

BAY HARBOR CONOURS D'ELEGANCE FOOD & WINE EXPERIENCE: JUNE 19, BAY HARBOR

There is no rest for those on the wine festival trail because right after the Leland Wine & Food Festival comes a brand new wine festival at Bay Harbor outside of Petoskey. The festival will be part of the famed Concours d'Elegance that features and invitational show of vintage and classic cars, boats, motorcycles and even float planes from all over the country.

"Good wine and food are integral to the lifestyles of our entrants and audience," said David Draper, Chairman of Bay Harbor Concours d'Elegance. "We want to give those who come to Concours another reason to spend time enjoying the whole day. More importantly we wish to promote the local wineries of the



Area wine festivals offer the opportunity to sample a variety of local wines.

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PLEASE SEE PAGE 5