

All year: Mon-Sat 11-5, Sun 1-5 *plus...*

Jul/Aug: Mon-Sat 11-6:00

Sep/Oct: Fri-Sat 11-6:00

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FENN Valley

VINEYARDS AND WINE CELLAR

May June 2011

For those who may have forgotten...
I-196 to exit 34 (between Holland & South Haven). East on M-89 at Exit 34 for 3½ mi to 62nd St. South (right) on 62nd 1 mi to 122nd Ave. Left on 122nd ¼ mi. Winery on right. *Follow the signs.*

<http://www.fennvalley.com>

Fenn Valley Wine Festival

Join us on June 25 at 1:00 as we kick off summer with our 20th annual Open House & Wine Festival. Over the years the event has grown to the point where we can no longer hold it in the winery alone, and just like last year, we will hold the main part of the event outside in the grassy area beside the winery. Because it is usually hot at that time of the year and we need a place to get out of the sun, we have rented a huge 4000 square foot tent to house the event. This year we will have two food choices. Joining the "Traditional Mexican Picnic" that has been with us for 17 years will be "Jim Hoyt's BBQ



Specialties", a purveyor of superb chicken and ribs.

Besides the music and food at the main event, we will have three tasting stations located in the vineyard. All three of our People Haulers will be

making the round trip dropping participants off at each of the stations - or you may take a stroll down our farm lanes to visit the vineyard wine stations. *(Continued on page 2)*



2010 Wines Win Awards

We enter a number of wine competitions every year, with one of the first competitions being the Tasters Guild International Competition which takes place during the month of April in Grand Rapids, Michigan. This year, 1850 wines from around the world were entered in this annual competition and we were able to walk away with 17 medals, including 3 Gold medals (see list to right).

While all wineries covet Gold and Silver medals, a Bronze medal is worthy of merit as it signifies the wine has no obvious flaws and is of acceptable consumer quality. To earn a Silver medal, a wine must be above average but may lack that "something extra" in either the aroma or taste that kicks it up to a Gold. A Gold medal is awarded to a wine that has above average aroma and flavor characteristics and has no obvious flaw.

How are the wines judged? There are usually a number of three or four person panels made up of people that have a great deal of wine experience - wine writers, store owners, sommeliers, and winemakers. Wines are grouped and presented in "flights" of 3-5 wines and all wines are hidden in brown bags. *(Continued on page 2)*

Wine Name	Medal
Classic Port	Gold
Premier Cuvee	Gold
Riesling 2010	Gold
Blueberry	Silver
Cabaret Rose 2010	Silver
Cabernet Franc 2010	Silver
Dry Riesling 2010	Silver
Edelzwicker 2010	Silver
Lakeshore White	Silver
Late Harvest Vignoles 2010	Silver
Meritage 2009	Silver
Pinot Grigio 2010	Silver
Pinot Noir 2009	Silver
Traminette 2010	Silver

Partial List of the 2011 Tasters Guild Competition results

WINE COMPETITION *(continued from page 1)*

Each wine is evaluated on its own merit, and is not compared to the other wines in the flight. The wines are graded on a number of factors including, color, aroma, flavor, balance, and finish or aftertaste.

Once a wine has been evaluated, each judge assigns an award (if any) and then the panel must come to a consensus to determine what medal (if any) is awarded to the wine. It is only at this final stage that the judges discuss the wine and compare notes.

Sound like fun? It is not uncommon to judge 90-100 wines in a day. Obviously, nothing can be swallowed! Because one's palate becomes fatigued over time, the wines are presented in order of increasing flavor intensity with wines like Pinot Grigio first thing in the morning and Cabernet Sauvignons later in the day.

Before you rely too heavily on the results of any particular contest, or wine review magazine for that matter, remember that the medal or points given to a wine reflect *someone else's personal opinion* about the wine - not yours. Ultimately, you need to be the judge. Too often we see wine consumers deciding what wine they will purchase based on a point scale or the awards earned. Unless your palate mirrors the critic, you may be sadly disappointed.

"Reserve" Wines

There seems to be a great deal of misconception as to the use of the term "reserve" in the context of wine. Some feel that the term implies something special or magical about the wine.

The dictionary defines "reserve" as, "To keep back, as for ... a special purpose. To set or cause to be set apart for a particular person or use."

At Fenn Valley, we use the term several ways: **Vignoles Reserve** refers to the lot that is set aside as a varietal wine instead of being blended away. **Chardonnay Reserve** refers to the portion of Chardonnay that was barrel aged vs the portion called "Chardonnay" that received no barrel aging. **Cabernet Franc Reserve** refers to the lot (usually from our own vineyards) that was not blended into the "regular" batch of Cabernet Franc. **Riesling Proprietor's Reserve** is the lot of Riesling that tasted different from all of the other Riesling lots from that year and was held back and bottled as a separate entity.

As you can see, the term does not always refer to a wine that was barrel aged, is sweeter, or drier, it refers to a wine that is different from the "standard" lot or the usual style for that wine. In most cases, the word "different" could be substituted for the word "reserve", but the wine would not sell nearly as well as when it bears the name "reserve".

To illustrate how "reserves" are different from the "regular" version of a wine, join us at our Wine Festival on June 25. There we will let you taste a Riesling vs Riesling Reserve, a Merlot vs Merlot Reserve, and a Cabernet Franc vs Cabernet Franc Reserve.

WINE FESTIVAL *(continued from page 1)*

This year *The Trace* (formerly known as *Natchez Trace*) will play for you from 1:00 to 5:00. Over the years *The Trace* has played at many of our events, including picnics in the vineyard, chili cookoff, and the last few Open Houses. They play an eclectic mix of classic rock 'n' roll that'll make you want to get up and dance. Since we have limited picnic table seating, we encourage you to bring lawn chairs & blankets for lawn seating in front of the band.



Jim Hoyt's BBQ Specialties

We like to throw a little education into the mix, so you can join Doug and Eric in the wine cellar where they will show you what a "Reserve" wine is and explain what the term "Reserve" actually means. You will be able to taste from barrels of Merlot and Merlot Reserve, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Franc Reserve, and you will experience a side-by-side tasting of Riesling and the new Riesling Proprietor's Reserve. This fun and educational experience will also give you a behind the scenes look at some premium red wines that will not be released until the summer of 2012.

Besides all of the fun, this is your chance to replenish your wine supplies at a substantial savings. All of the released wines tasted at this event will be specially priced at **25-30% OFF** the regular price. This special pricing applies to STRAIGHT CASES ONLY (12 of a kind). Purchases of 4 or more cases (mix & match whole cases) will receive a 30% discount, so you may want to pool your orders with your family and friends.

The price of admission to the Wine Festival is only \$8.00/adult, which includes a souvenir Fenn Valley logo wine glass, a glass of wine of your choice, and an afternoon of fun. Finally, reservations speed the entry process but are not necessary. If you don't like the lines at the gate, call ahead and you will be able to pick up your glass and tasting tickets at a special "Prepaid Express Gate".

Blues in the Vineyard

Join us from 3-8pm on August 13 for our fifth "Reds, Whites, and the Blues". The afternoon will lead off with The Bryan Michael Fischer Band from 3-5pm, followed by the talents of the Seventh Son Blues Band 5-6PM and The Elwood Splinters Blues Band from 6-8PM. Admission is \$8.00pp and tickets are available at the gate, which opens at 2:30.

We will have wine available for purchase and Jim Hoyt's BBQ Specialties will be available if you want a southern style BBQ. Guests may either bring in food and soft drinks or purchase these items on site.

Also, we have limited picnic table seating, so we encourage you to bring lawn chairs or blankets for lawn seating in front of the bands.

Now for the fine print... Please note that **NO** alcoholic beverages may be brought

on-site. Since the entire Fenn Valley farm is licensed as a Fenn Valley tasting room, *only Fenn Valley wines may be consumed anywhere on the farm.*



New Releases

Following is a schedule of release dates for our vintage dated 2010 wines. In particular, we are anxiously awaiting the release of two special wines: **Riesling Proprietor's Reserve** and **Late Harvest Vignoles**; both are being released at the Wine Fest on June 25. The **Riesling Proprietor's Reserve** is a first ever Riesling Reserve, and was made from heavily Botrytised grapes which gave the wine a distinct Apricot character. The **Late Harvest Vignoles** is our first Late Harvest Vignoles since 2005 and it is loaded with ripe pineapple and coconut character. Both wines are in short supply, so stop in early to pick up yours before we run out.

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Release Date</u>
Cabaret Rosè 2010	Released
True Chardonnay 2010	Released
Edelzwicker 2010	June 15
Riesling 2010	June 15
Dry Riesling 2010	June 15
Chardonnay Reserve 2010	June 25
Riesling Reserve 2010	June 25
Late Harvest Vignoles 2010	June 25
Cabernet Franc 2010	June 25
Merlot 2010	Sept 1
Cabernet Franc Reserve 2010	July 2112
Meritage 2010	July 2112
Merlot Reserve 2010	July 2112



Get It Before It's Gone!

Like everything else in life, all good things must come to an end. And so it is with our multi-gold medal winning **42 Ice Wine**.

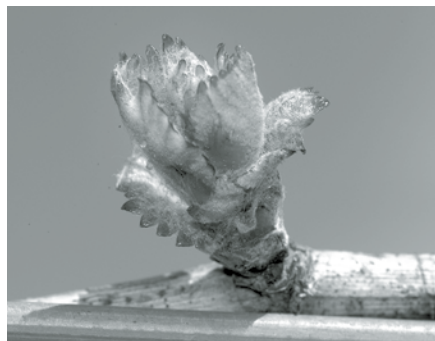
There was a surplus of white grapes in 2008 and we were able to work with Arrowhead Vineyards in Baroda, MI to make over 4000 gallons of Ice Wine. After almost 2½ years, the last of the Ice Wine is now in the bottle and ready for sale.

There isn't much left, so if you want some you will need to pick yours up by mid summer. Keep in mind that it is already 2½ years old, so don't buy it with the intention of aging it for more than 2 years. Even so, it is still a great buy at only \$15.00 per bottle.

Vintage 2011

We are frequently asked what the cold spring of 2011 is doing to the grapes. It is too early to tell - we always reply that we'll let you know in October.

One thing is for certain, the grapes are leafing out later than "normal". Grape vines need a certain number of days between the initiation of growth in the spring and the date of harvest in the fall. If spring comes too late, then there may not be enough days before the first frost at the end of October to get the late varieties ripe. Last year was a superb vintage because we started growth 3 weeks ahead of "normal", which gave the late ripening red varieties plenty of opportunity to ripen. This year is just the opposite, we may be pushing up against the end of the growing season as we ripen the Cabernet Franc. We're keeping our fingers crossed.



FENN Valley

VINEYARDS AND WINECELLAR

6130 122nd Ave.
Fennville, MI 49408

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MAY/JUNE 2011

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A Summer of Winery Fun...

June 25: FENN VALLEY OPEN HOUSE & WINE FESTIVAL. Join us for an afternoon of wine tasting in the vineyard, a Mexican picnic, BBQ specialty foods, live music, and a great time. See details on page 1. \$8.00 adults. *Reservations optional.* 1-5pm.

July 8, 23, and August 5: SUMMER EVENING COOKOUT. You bring the grillmaster and an appetite for fun and good food. We supply all of the wine, champagnes, food, and live music. *The Trace* (formerly Natchez Trace) will play at all three picnics. Enjoy a relaxing evening in our quiet country setting. \$30.00pp *Reservations required. Reservations accepted June 1.*

August 13: REDS, WHITES, & THE BLUES. The Elwood Splinters Blues Band, Seventh Son Blues Band, and the Bryan Michael Fischer Band are here singin' the blues. Bring a picnic basket and park it in the lawn for an evening of live blues, or purchase some of Jim Hoyt's BBQ chicken & ribs. Wine is available on-site. See page 3 for details. \$8.00 admission, no reservations.

Sundays in August: PERFORMING ARTS IN THE VINEYARD. Enjoy performing arts recitals in our vintage garden each Sunday afternoon from 2:30 until 4:30. Get a glass of wine and sit back to enjoy the music. This year we will feature *Keith Scott - blues* (Aug 7), *Folias - guitar & flute tango* (Aug 14), and *Third Coast Ensemble - string ensemble* (Aug 21). *No reservations, no admission charge.*

Tours.....

Our fun and informative cellar and vineyard tasting tours have grown in popularity and we will once again be offering a variety of tours to meet everyone's expectations and schedules.

CELLAR TASTING-TOUR

Our 1½ hour cellar tours provide an in-depth look at how we convert our grapes into wine and how the winemaker can influence the style of the wine by altering various winemaking practices. (*Reservations suggested and are accepted up to 7 days in advance for cellar tours.*)

Cost = \$8, includes logo glass & \$5 coupon.

Nov - July: Sat 3pm (except weekends with scheduled events)
July & Aug: Fri 4pm

VINEYARD TASTING-TOURS

The shorter "standard" tour, will be a 45-minute narration tour through the vineyard with limited wine tasting. Cost = \$5, includes logo glass. *Reservations required in Sept & Oct. Accepted up to 7 days in advance.*

Aug - Oct: Sat 1:30 and 3:00

For those folks that want a more detailed look at our vineyards, join us for our "extended" tour. This tour is 1:45 in length and includes extensive wine tasting in the vineyard. *Reservations are required and are accepted after July 1.* Cost = \$8, includes logo glass & \$5 coupon.

Sept & Oct: Sat 2:15 & Sun 2:15

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