



Community Pulse

Crossing Vineyards makes wine pairing easy

By Amanda Hoffmann

Staff Writer

Corks will be popping this month in Bucks County at Crossing Vineyards and Winery, which is celebrating its fifth year open to the public for wine tasting, tours and classes.

The bash will include live music, a drawing for a VIP Winery Tour and private tasting for eight, and free gifts with each case purchase from noon to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 11, and Sunday, Oct. 12.

Established in 2000, with its first vintage in 2002, Crossing Vineyards and Winery is a boutique winery set on a 20-acre, 200-year-old estate.

"It's a small winery, we aren't doing hundreds of thousands of gallons of wine per year," said Christine Carroll, who owns Crossing Vineyards and Winery with her husband, Thomas Sr., and son, Thomas Jr. She said bottles range in price from \$12 to \$24.

"Everything is artisanal, it's hand done," Christine said.

Christine said Thomas Jr. planted the seeds for today's winery when the family first purchased the acreage during the mid '80s.

"Thomas looked out the window and said, 'This would make a good vineyard,'" Christine said.

"We dismissed the idea at first," said Christine.

After Thomas's return from California, where he had pursued an acting career and indulged his interest in wineries, he convinced his parents to begin planting.

"He was so enthusiastic about the idea, so we started to research it, and here we are," Christine said.

This month, Crossing Vineyards and Winery is gearing up for its fall and winter classes with a Wine 101 class, covering the basic principles of pairing food and wine.

The class costs \$30 for a two-hour session and delves into the theory behind food and wine pairings, offering an understanding of how the components and flavors in each interact to heighten taste.

"The major benefit of pairing wine and



Photo courtesy of Crossing Vineyards and Winery

The Carroll family: Christine, Thomas Jr. and Thomas Sr., run Crossing Vineyards and Winery. food is that it enhances the flavor of the food, and it definitely increases the pleasure of the meal," said Christine.

"You can kind of think of wine almost as a sauce, enhancing the taste of what you are eating," she added. "If you think of meat on the grill, and you have that with a delicious sauce that brings out the good qualities of the meat, wine is kind of similar in that way."

Wine is also similar to sauces in that

Class instructor Eric Cavatore, a sommelier with a background in fine dining and cuisine, said the first instruction he gives to his students is that they have to decide for themselves what wines they like. Students don't have to be wine connoisseurs or gourmet cooks to enjoy the benefits of the right wine pairing.

"It's about them and not me. I know certain guidelines to try to help them to find a good match, but it comes down to what people like, what food they like and what wine they like," said Cavatore, who has been teaching at the winery for the past four years.

Students will go a step further than the basics, like pairing red wine with meat and white wine with fish, to explore pairings with sweet, sour and tart dishes.

Ultimately, students will be able to discover which matches are good, bad or indifferent for themselves based on their own personal tastes.

Cavatore said that, while some unusual foods have great matches, others, like soups, spicy foods and salads with vinaigrette dressing, typically don't pair well with wine.

"People eat and drink things, and they don't really think about it," Cavatore said. "In class, it's like they are watching a black-and-white TV, and after I explain what is going on, and they open their minds to it, it's like switching to HDTV."

There are several classes currently registering students, including Wine and Wellness, \$20, which focuses on making moderate wine drinking part of a healthy lifestyle. The Wine List Survival Guide, \$20, is about learning to navigate intimidating restaurant wine lists. French Wine For Beginners, \$35, teaches about the legendary wines of France, and Toast the Holidays, \$99, includes a Riedel Tasting Kit, along with instruction on glass stemware.

Carroll said that there will be some new classes starting up, including one on champagne in time for Valentine's Day.

For more information on the birthday bash and classes, call 215-493-6500 or visit www.crossingvineyards.com/events.

one might fret about complimenting or clashing with flavors.

"I would say that often people feel intimidated about wine. They want to enjoy it, but they feel uncomfortable," Christine said.

She added, "Our whole focus is to get away from snobbery in the world of wine. We try to make people feel, when they leave the class, that they are a little more empowered when it comes to wine."