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By Tracy Beard

PROVISIONS

ALONG THE TRAIL, ON YOUR
TAILGATE OR DECK!



Tasty Twisters

Whether you go wine tasting, tailgating or are staying home, try out one of my remakes on a couple of old favorites.

Pico de Gallo with a Twist

(Recipe is from a class with the Executive Chef Alexis Palacios at the Esperanza Cabo San Lucas)

4 Roma tomatoes – cut and deseeded
1 oz fresh cilantro leaves
¼ cup white or red onion - chopped
1/8 cup jalapeño - chopped
1 oz lime juice
½ cup fresh mango - chopped
½ cup fresh pineapple - chopped
Salt & pepper to taste

Cut the onion, cilantro stems and jalapeño into small pieces and mix them in a molcajete or bowl with salt and pepper. Marinate the ingredients for 10 minutes. Taste the seasoning and add salt and pepper to taste. Add the pineapple and mango. Chop the cilantro leaves and garnish. Remember to prepare your pico de gallo close to the time you will be serving it. Refrigerate covered with a plastic wrap until serving. Enjoy with tacos or crispy tortilla chips.

Guacamole with a Twist

2 avocados
1 oz fresh cilantro leaves
¼ cup white onion
1 clove garlic
½ jalapeño
1 oz lime juice
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tomatillo – chopped
¼ cup cucumber – seeded and chopped
Salt & pepper to taste

Cut the onion, cilantro stems, and jalapeño in small pieces and smash them with salt and pepper in a molcajete. Leave them to marinate for ten minutes. Cut the avocados in half, deseed and add to the mix, smashing the avocado until you reach your preferred consistency. Remember to leave a few chunky pieces to add texture to the guacamole. Add the tomatillo, olive oil and cucumber. Mix. Add salt and pepper to taste. Chop the cilantro leaves and garnish.

RESPLENDENT RIDGEFIELD WINERIES

It's a Sipping Trip!

Story & photos
by Tracy Beard

Burgundy, France; Napa, California; and even the Willamette Valley region in Oregon have made their way onto the map of famous wine destinations. Winemakers in Ridgefield, Washington, are making concerted efforts to be noticed. My husband Steve and I recently spent a couple of weekends checking out six Ridgefield wineries: Bethany Vineyard and Winery, Confluence Vineyards and Winery, Gougér Cellars Winery and Restaurant, Stavalaura Vineyards and Winery, Three Brothers Winery and Windy Hills Winery.

Bethany Vineyard & Winery

One of my favorite ways to spend the day is savoring fabulous picnic foods



while sipping tasty wines. On our first weekend, we stopped at Bethany Vineyard and Winery, a lovely family establishment where Walt Houser and daughter Bethany showcase their artisanal wines. Walt's grandson, Eli Anderson, is the current winemaker. Eli creates wines predominantly from pinot noirs, but he also makes 12 other varieties of wine, from sweet rieslings to herbal cab francs and bold petite syrahs. On a stunning 75-acre property, Bethany Vineyard offers ample space to sit in the shade on the patios, relax on the grass, or stroll around the lake and through the vineyards (pictured above). Outside food is not allowed at the winery, but munchies are available to order on site.

Next stop: Confluence Vineyards & Winery

This boutique winery, owned by Greg and Jae Weber, features club night dinners, intimate concerts and a small variety of wines loved by family and

friends. Their 2019 Chardonnay is crisp and clean with notes of pear and melon, and their 2016 Syrah reserve has classic spicy notes and hints of black fruit. Guests are welcome to bring their own snacks or charcuterie boards. Sandwich boxes can be ordered on site to enjoy with the wine.

Gougér Cellars Winery and Restaurant

Our last stop for the day, this refurbished firehouse offers a unique setting with a rooftop patio, indoor dining and a lovely garden patio behind the building. Guests can order delicious appetizers or indulge in an incredible Reuben sandwich. We enjoyed all the wines

at Gougér. Gary was a pharmacist and optometrist in Sonoma County, California. After attending an amateur winemaking event with his friend Andy, they bought some grapes and a barrel and made zinfandel in 2002. The zinfandel took an international gold medal in *Winemaker* magazine. The next year they made three more wines and earned three more gold medals. Gary's interest in winemaking grew.

Burned out in the pharmaceutical industry, he decided to attend the University of Adelaide in Australia to pursue his new love of winemaking as an enologist (winemaker).

Day 2: Three Brothers

Our second day of wine tasting began at Three Brothers Vineyard and Winery, offering more than a dozen wines for tasting. This family-owned winery crafts small-batch wines from hand-picked estate grapes. I was excited to find varieties that I hadn't tried before — fratelli miscela and dolcetto. Both wines are sweet and tasty. In 2018 the Berlin International Wine Competition named Three Brothers "Washington State Winery of the Year." The tasting room features several TVs where guests can watch sporting events and order delicious foods while tasting wine.

Stavalaura Vineyards and Winery

The origins of Stavalaura are unique. Joe Leadingham's daughter Laura



needed something for a high school assignment. Most students were dissecting frogs. Growing up, Laura loved frogs, and the thought of dissecting one did not bode well. In lieu of participating in the dissection, Joe got some pinot noir starts from Bob Morris at Phelps Creek Vineyards and Winery in Hood River. Laura planted the starts and used them for a horticultural project. The vines did well, which inspired Joe to produce more. He took a two-year viticulture course and two years of enology and began making wine.

Joe wanted to plant something new in the area. After speaking with botanist Tom Thornton, he decided to plant golubok, a southern Russian/Ukrainian grape, and zweigelt-rebe, a northern European varietal. Both of these grapes do well in the Southwest Washington region. Stavalaura is now five years old, and Joe has been producing wines from the golubok and zweigelt-rebe grapes for three years. These grapes make lovely wines. When visiting, be sure to ask for the tasting bites created by Joe's wife Beverly.

Last stop: Windy Hills

Our wine tasting tour through Ridgefield ended at Windy Hills Winery. This is the largest winery in Ridgefield and feels more like a visit to a grandiose winery in Napa Valley. Weddings and events are

regular occurrences at this upscale establishment. The day we arrived, there was a concert and a large crowd of guests. The wines are well known and quite good. Windy Hills offers a moderate selection of wines and food. My favorite was the 2019 Viognier, made with grapes from Walla Walla, Washington. It was fun sipping wine and listening to the music.

All six of these wineries offer some scrumptious wines and fun settings. Ridgefield is an easy drive for most CRR readers within the distribution area, and I highly recommend checking them all out. It is vital to support local businesses, and wine tasting is a pleasurable way to spend the day.

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Photos, from left: Bethany Vineyard & Winery; Gougér's tasting set-up; Windy Ridge.



Pictured here at Stavalaura Vineyards & Winery with her husband, Steve, Vancouver, Wash. resident Tracy Beard writes about luxury and adventure travel, traditional and trendy fine dining and libations for regional, national and international magazines. She has written CRR's "Out & About" column since 2016.