Yakima, Washington's Wine Country: Stay and taste the grapes

Written By Tracy Ellen Beard | Sep 10, 2019



The Hotel Maison in Yakima, Washington. Photo by Jim Van Gundy.

YAKIMA, Washington. In the early 1900s people flocked to Yakima, Washington, looking for work in the timber and agricultural industries. The city has survived several economic difficulties over the last century. But over the last decade Yakima has experienced a significant revival. Much of this has been due to Yakima and its environs becoming widely recognized as wine country. Perhaps inspired by the area's substantial hops production, numerous well regarded wineries have opened here over the years, inspiring an increase in tourism. Even better: local investors continue to make concerted efforts to beautify and repurpose the downtown area by hosting art exhibits and adding new shops.

In addition to the area wineries, outdoor enthusiasts will relish Yakima Valley's 300 days of sunshine. Whether you like to hike, raft or snow ski, Yakima has it all. The Cowiche Canyon Conservancy owns and manages over 5,000 acres with more than 30 trails for people to enjoy.

Whatever your pleasure, one of the finest places to stay in Yakima is The Hotel Maison, a beautiful boutique establishment that opened here in February 2016. The Morrier family, successful hop farmers in the area, purchased the 1911 building and remodeled it into a lovely hotel.

Beautiful Architecture

The Hotel Maison is a stunning work of architecture. The building is crafted in the Second Empire style. Popularized in the late 1900s, the style is characterized by its mansard roofs and ornate dormer windows. The Corinthian capitals and other embellished features found at the hotel are, in turn, descended from the Classical style. Architects William Ward DeVeaux and Frederick Heath originally designed the structure for the Freemasons, the world's largest secret men's society.

The Masons in Yakima used the temple on the sixth floor of the building as their ceremonial lodge hall for many years. The temple itself was fashioned after King Solomon's Temple, with massive columns and a stained glass ceiling. The lower levels of the building held offices and other businesses. Eventually the Masons outgrew the building and sold it.

The sixth floor is currently under renovation. Construction is underway that aims to preserve its historic character. When they complete the renovations, the owners plan to make the space available to rent for private events.



Columns in the temple. Photo by Jim Van Gundy.

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the hotel is located in downtown Yakima. It's within convenient walking distance of numerous restaurants, breweries, wine tasting rooms and boutique shops. Its 36 newly remodeled suites offer fantastic views of Yakima, and its lobby serves as an art gallery showcasing local artists.

The Larson Gallery manages the artwork. When a piece sells, they bring in a new painting, effectively creating a revolving art exhibit for guests to enjoy. Prints from the local museum decorate the halls of the walkway down to the hotel garage, and chart the development of Yakima throughout the years.

Tantalizing Wine Tasting Rooms in and around Yakima

The downtown area of Yakima boasts several wine tasting rooms. Owned and operated by the Gilbert family, the Gilbert Cellars has grown fruit in the Valley since 1897.

Curt Gilbert and his nephews Sean and Nate started Gilbert Cellars in 2004. Their 2018 Rosé is refreshing with grapefruit notes, and the fabulous non-vintage port is fashioned from Tempranillo grapes.

AntoLin Cellars is also worth a stop. Not only do they offer appealing wines. They also offer yummy wine slushies. The peach smoothie mix with Riesling wine makes a refreshing cocktail on a hot summer day.

Kana Winery offers marvelous wines and also features live music on most nights. Their Kana Winery 2012 Tempranillo, Stone Tree Vineyard, is simply divine.

An Abundance of Exceptional Grapes

Elsewhere in the Yakima area, you'll discover Dineen Vineyards, a family-owned viticulture business growing some of the best grapes in the area for other wineries. Dineen sells their own wines under the Kamiakin label. Vineyard owner Patrick Dineen has partnered with Guerra's Gourmet Catering to offer wood-fired, Neapolitan-style pizza and other tasty dishes to visitors of the vineyard.