

'Winter Delights' grows with the flow

Twenty-four wineries, 96 wines expected at annual LMC event

By **JEREMY D. BONFIGLIO**
Sight & Sound Editor

BENTON HARBOR — It may be tempting, but those attending Saturday's "Winter Delights: A Festival of Wine, Food and Music" probably shouldn't attempt to sample every wine that will be available in Grand Upton Hall at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center.

That's because the annual event is expecting a total of 96 wines from 24 Michigan wineries that are scheduled to participate.

"People enjoy it because it's an opportunity to taste wines from both the area and really from across Michigan all in one spot," says Tonya Martindale, director of conference and event Services at The Mendel Center. "We have 24 wineries coming, which is more than we've had, mostly from this region, but a couple of wineries from the Traverse City area, with 96 wines total. It's going to be a great night to get together with friends and celebrate the growing winemaking legacy happening right here in our state."



MARTINDALE

Although LMC has hosted this event for several years, this is the first since the college opened The Great Lakes Wine Institute in the fall. The program is the Midwest's first and only commercial teaching winery, where students can earn an associate degree in enology, the study of wine-making, and in viticulture, the study of grapes. The program covers all aspects of winemaking from vine to glass, including vineyard maintenance, the science of winemaking, sensory evaluation, logistics, distribution and marketing.

"Now that we have our own enology and viticulture program, I think that just strengthens our ties to these Michigan wineries," Martindale says. "Our students and people in general will have the opportunity to talk to the winemakers who will be here, and ask them how they make their wine, what grapes they are using, and really get a lot of information about their wines."



Photo provided / Jennifer Jacobs

The lineup of award-winning Tabor Hill wines are shown in this photo from last year's "Winter Delights: A Festival of Wine, Food and Music." Tabor Hill will be among the 24 Michigan wineries at this year's tasting event on Saturday in Grand Upton Hall at the Lake Michigan College Mendel Center. "Winter Delights" also celebrates food from a variety of local establishments, and features live music by the LMC Jazz Combo.

Among the new wineries attending this year are Benton Harbor's Vineyard 2121, who will be bringing their 2011 Cabernet Franc, 2011 Chardonnay, 2011 Sweet Autumn Riesling and Scarlett's Libation, a sweet red wine.

Another new winery at the event is Suttons Bay's L. Mawby Vineyard, who will be pouring its sparkling wines Blanc de Blanc, Blanc de Noirs, Cremant Brut and Talisman, which is a unique aged blend.

Baroda's Dablon Vineyards is bringing 2014 Music Box Matinee, 2014 Music Box Seyval Blanc, 2013 Dablon Pinot Noir and 2013 Dablon Chardonnay. And that's just a sample.

"I encourage each of the wineries to bring something new each year, and some of the wines that we will have here Saturday are wines that are not even available in their own tasting rooms," Martindale says. "This will be the first opportunity

IF YOU GO

What: "Winter Delights: A Festival of Wine, Food and Music"

When: 5-9 p.m. Saturday

Where: Grand Upton Hall, Lake Michigan College Mendel Center, 2755 E. Napier Ave., Benton Harbor

How much: \$35 in advance, \$40 at the door (includes 10 wine tastings, \$10 in food samplings and souvenir wine glass), \$20 designated drivers (includes two non-alcoholic beverages, \$10 in food samples and souvenir glass)

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that tasters will be able to try them."

Other wineries scheduled to be at the event include Baroda Founders, Black

Star Farms, Burgdorf's, Chateau Chantel, Chateau Grand Traverse, Cody Kresta, Cogdal, Domaine Berrien Cellars, Fenn Valley, Free Run Cellars, Gravity, Lawton Ridge, Leelanau, Lehman's Orchard, Lemon Creek, Round Barn, St. Julian, Tabor Hill, White Pine, 12 Corners and Warner.

The LMC Jazz Combo will perform throughout the event, and food vendors include The Mendel Center, The Lake-House, Tabor Hill and Bistro on the Boulevard. Admission includes 10 one-ounce pours, \$10 in food tickets and a festival wine glass. Designated driver tickets also are available.

"A lot of people enjoy it because it is winter and it makes for a nice night to get out of your house," Martindale says. "Plus, you don't have to travel to all these wineries, they are traveling to you."

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