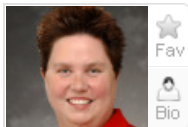


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Shawnee Hills Wine Trail: 12 wineries, one terrific road trip

August 30, 5:39 PM • Chicago Road Trips Examiner • Rochelle Paul

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Family owned, personal attention are among the reasons the 12 wineries/vinards of The Wine Trail are a worth while destination (Photo courtesy of Shawnee Hills Wine Trail)

The green and lush rolling hills of southern Illinois, rich full vines draped with plump grapes, sunny days and romantic sunsets provide the backdrop to the wineries along the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail. Twelve distinct settings from which to choose, 12 personalities to invite and tempt you to come in and stay awhile.

Choose one, choose them all, but choose to include the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail as part of your next road trip.

As fall begins to reach out and touch with her chilly fingers, and leaves melt like butter into brilliant burning color, consider traveling to this rural setting in Jackson and Union Counties for Labor Day and the Fall Festival.

Southern Illinois blends into Missouri and Kentucky down here. This is a simpler part of the state, a place where strip malls and traffic don't overwhelm the senses as much as the northern end of the state. That's why, here along the [Wine Trail](#), you'll find a handsome setting for this palatable experience.

A short drive from neighboring states, practically in the backyard of Southern Illinois University, this is God's country, and you'll love not just the drive, but the views, the people, and the wine.

This year's Fall Festival will be held for the first time in Cobden, Illinois, the heart of the Wine Trail, featuring a variety of award winning wines from all 12 wineries. Down Town Park in Cobden is the setting, bubbling with quintessential small town shops, historical homes and Main Street U.S.A to highlight this picturesque and movie-stage home of the Festival.

Live music will be a part of the festivities, while visitors stop into fall and enjoy the day.

Can't make the Festival?

That's alright. The wineries of the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail can be a separate visit unto themselves.

Since 1995 when three of the Trail's Wineries came together to tap into the tourism potential of the area, The Shawnee Hills Wine Trail has been welcoming visitors to the area. From those original three, the Trail has grown to include 12 award winning Wineries for your pleasure and

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...and the trail has grown to include 12 award-winning wineries for your pleasure and consideration.

So celebrate Labor Day, immerse in a midwestern fall, or just set out to sample some of Illinois' wine, and set off along the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail.

Your host Wineries are:

Alto Vineyards. The Renzaglia Family are your hosts at the Vineyard, set in the foothills of the Shawnee National Forest. With a second tasting room in Champaign, Illinois near the University of Illinois campus, you have two options for trying their wines. With award-winning wine on the table, you are sure to find something to tempt the palate.

Blue Sky Vineyard. Along the eastern end of the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail, you'll find Tuscany in Illinois. With food options and events also available on site, the Blue Sky Vineyard offers more than just a taste of wine to wet your whistle.

Hedman Vineyards. Located in the town of Alto Pass, this vineyard is in the fruit and wine country of Southern Illinois. More than just a vineyard, experience Hedman's B&B, cafe, gift shop or walk the town as you immerse yourself in the opportunities that abound.

Inheritance Valley Vineyard. Since they opened for sales in 2003, this vineyard has taken pride in its winery: small, simple and simply good wines (see their website to prove it). With a range of wines on the menu, you're taste buds will delight at the offerings.

Owl Creek Vineyard. When the Genung Family welcome you to their winery, they welcome you to a place literally with roots in the region's first vines. Taking the reins of Owl Creek from Ted Wichman, its founder, and that original planter, (Ted was co-founder of the Wine Trail and still tends the grapes of Owl Creek) the Genung family grew the output from 3000 gallons to 12,000 gallons of quality wines. Owl Creek is part history, part future.



Romantic getaways are just one of the options for visiting the wine trail (Photo courtesy of Shawnee Hills Wine Trail)

Von Jakob Vineyard. Here is "little Germany" in Illinois. The Jacob's welcome you to their two locations. Special events are offered year round, a gift shop, your private events, and more make up the facilities. Their more than 20 varieties of wine are what they're all about. Wines are also available at 120 retail sites state-wide.

Kite Hill Vineyards. Escape to this B&B and winery for a getaway, or a fun and festive time. Enjoy the area, then step into the peace of Kite Hill, and before slipping off to bed, enjoy a complimentary wine tasting. With a lake to watch, turtle to observe, sunsets to admire, and wine to enjoy, Kite Hill invites you to do it all.

Orlandini Vineyard. With its roots planted back in 1988, the Orlandini's have been offering their wares to the public since 2001. This vineyard is a "high light" of the Wine Trail, Sitting on one of southern Illinois' highest ridge tops. Stop by, meet vineyard dog, Vinnie, and enjoy a glass of "homemade" wine.



Join your hosts along the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail
(Photo courtesy of Shawnee Hills Wine Trail)

U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds - the edge

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homemade wine.

Hickory Ridge Vineyard. Settled on the western edge of the Wine Trail, this family owned and operated winery welcomes you to its cozy setting. Raising their own grapes is just part of the charm of this winery.

Rustle Hill Winery. This is where log rustic meets sophisticated winery. Stop by for a glass of wine, or stay in one of the log cabins. Sit under the stars, sip on your wine, watch a concert from the hillside, and overlook the pond.

With twelve wineries to choose from, each offering their own unique personality, each different, yet all about the wine, a trip to the Shawnee Hills Wine Trail in southern Illinois offers each visitor a day, a weekend, or a week of beauty, peace, and an almost endless choice from the area's award winning wines.

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