



# AUTUMN WINE TRAILS

BY JAN ADAMSON

T

here was a time when Texans made their way around the state by following dusty pathways carved by cattle drives and other wanderers. Today's Texans can follow roads that are a lot less dusty and that offer great local wines all along the way. The Texas Hill Country Wine Trails are just the place to see a bit of Texas, experience vast vineyards, and taste a bit of wine.

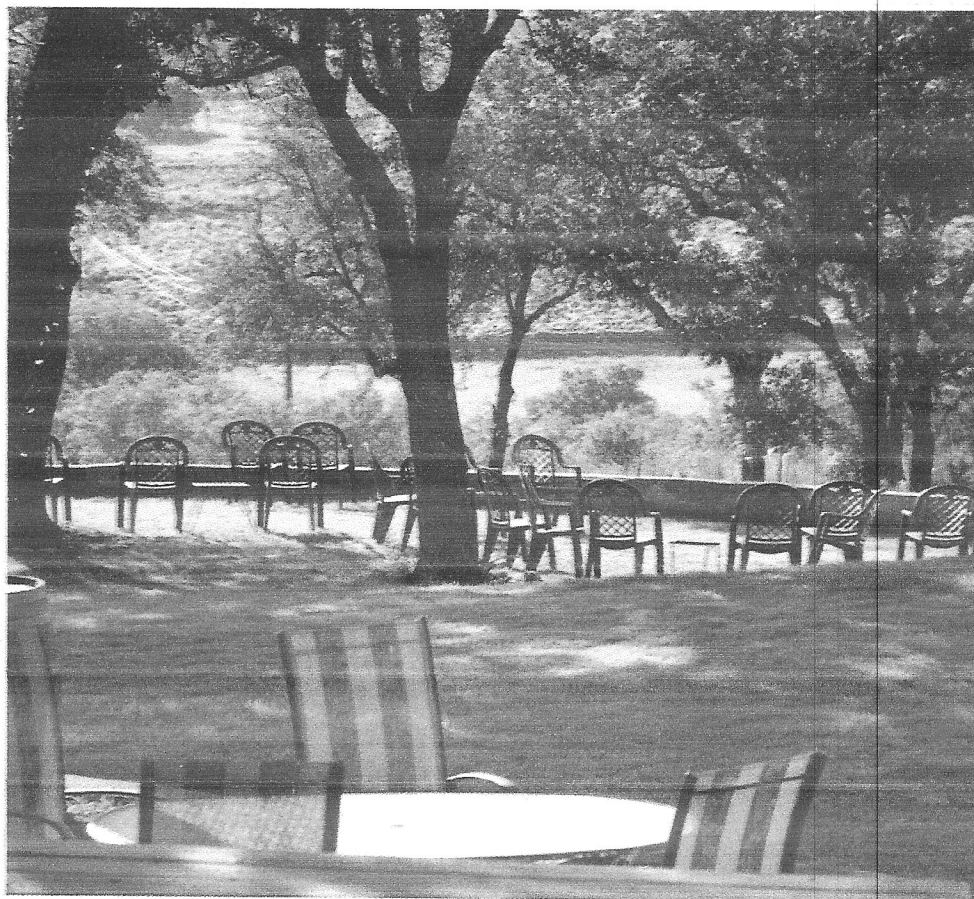
Grape harvest in the Hill Country started in about mid-June and, with the harvest just finishing up, the Texas Wine Month Trail is set for the entire month of October. It's a true harvest festival with the 32 participating wineries holding special events and tastings and offering discounted wines. All of the wineries are within the bounds of the Hill Country, an area in Central Texas defined by gorgeous limestone hills and streams of sparkling water.

What might have been described as nothing more than a hobby just a few years ago, the state's wine industry has seen massive growth. According to Texas Tech University's Wine Marketing Research Institute, Texas had 46 wineries in 2001. That number grew to over 220 by last year. The industry now employs about 11,000 people and 1.2 million cases of Texas wine were produced in 2009.

Wine is no small thing to Texas. But then, nothing is small in Texas.

A total of 10 wine trails exist all across the state, but the Hill Country Wine Trails are numerous and the wineries are within an easy, scenic drive of each other. "The Hill Country is famous in its own right and the beauty, tourism, location, and climate add to the attraction," says January Wiese, Texas Hill Country Wineries executive director.

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The variety of wines produced is extensive: Chardonnay, Pinot Grigio, Cabernet, Merlot, Tempranillo, Sangiovese, Tannat, Viognier, Barbera, Malbec, Picpoul Blanc, Muscats, Vermentino, Norton, and Black Spanish.

"Most of those varieties are grown here, but it seems the Italian varietals are doing well here along with the Tannat, Muscats, Black Spanish, and Norton," January says.

In addition to being a fun outing, the wine trails offer budding oenophiles an opportunity to become even better educated about wine varieties. For a \$20 ticket, participants in October's Texas Wine Month Trail get from one to three complimentary tastes of the wines of their choice at each of the 32 wineries participating, as well as discounts on multi-bottle purchases.

Although most of the wineries are open

all year as well, the October trail coordinates discounts and events during the entire month. And this year, \$5 of each ticket purchased will go to local breast cancer screening, treatment, and education since October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

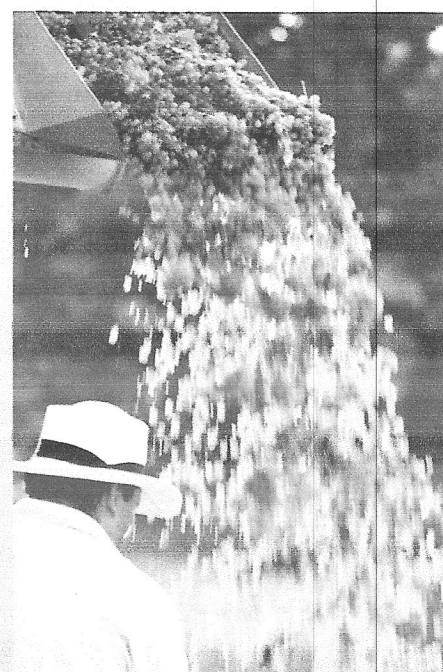
In addition to tasting and touring opportunities, some of the wineries are also holding special events. Singing Water Vineyards is presenting a Saturday concert series throughout the month. Flat Creek Estate has planned a three-course wine dinner, a music festival, and an Asian themed wine dinner. Old and rare wine tastings are planned at Fall Creek Vineyard, and many of the wineries offer picnic supplies for purchase during the October trail. Attendance at special events is coordinated through the individual wineries.

Other trails held throughout the year include the Holiday Wine Trail from November 30 to December 16. Tickets are \$60 per couple and participants receive a grapevine wreath and an ornament from each winery visited. The Wine Lover's Trail is held from February 8 to 17, and the Wine and Wildflower Trail is scheduled for April 5 through 14. All wine trails are self-guided.

"The Hill Country Wine Trail is a great way to experience Texas wine," says January. "With 32 wineries, the trail gives you a chance to visit them all and see what they are all about. We want people to walk away from the trail thinking they had fun and tasted some great wines."

And if the trail gets dusty, you will have ample opportunities to quench your thirst. •

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL PEARY



The Hill Country Wine Trail is a great way to experience Texas win

## Hill Country Wineries

### Alamosa Wine Cellars

Bend  
 alamosawinecellars.com

### Becker Vineyards

Stonewall  
 beckervineyards.com

### Bell Springs Winery

Dripping Springs  
 bellspringswinery.com

### Bending Branch Winery

Comfort  
 bendingbranchwinery.com

### Chisholm Trail Winery

Fredricksburg  
 chisholmtrailwinery.com

### Driftwood Estate Winery

Driftwood  
 driftwoodwine.com

### Dry Comal Creek Vineyards

New Braunfels  
 drycomalcreek.com

### Duchman Family Winery

Driftwood  
 duchmanwines.com

### Fall Creek Vineyards

Tow  
 fcv.com

### Fiesta Winery

Lometa  
 fiestawinery.com

### Flat Creek Estate

Marble Falls  
 flatcreekestate.com

### Fredericksburg Winery

Fredericksburg  
 fbginery.com

### Grape Creek Vineyards

Fredericksburg  
 grapecreek.com

### Kerrville Hills Winery

Kerrville  
 kerrvillehillswinery.com

### McReynolds Winery

Cypress Mill  
 mcreynoldswines.com

### Pedernales Cellars

Stonewall  
 pedernalescellars.com

### Perissos Vineyards and Winery

Burnet  
 perissosvineyards.com

### Pillar Bluff Vineyards

Lampasas  
 pillarbluff.com

### Rancho Ponte Vineyard

Fredericksburg  
 ranchoporte.com

### Santa Maria Cellars

Fredericksburg  
 santamariacellarwines.com

### Singing Water Vineyards

Comfort  
 singingwatervineyards.com

### Sister Creek Vineyards

Sisterdale  
 sistercreekvineyards.com

### Solaro Estate

Dripping Springs  
 solaroestate.com

### Spicewood Vineyards

Spicewood  
 spicewoodvineyards.com

### Stone House Vineyard

Spicewood  
 stonehousevineyard.com

### Texas Hills Vineyard

Johnson City  
 texashillswineyard.com

### Texas Legato Winery

Lampasas  
 texaslegato.com

### Torre Di Pietra Vineyards

Fredericksburg  
 texashillcountrywine.com

### Westcave Cellars Winery

Round Mountain  
 westcavecellars.com

### William Chris Vineyards

Hye  
 williamchrisswines.com

### Wimberley Valley Winery

Driftwood  
 wimberleyvalleywinery.com

### Woodrose Winery

Stonewall  
 woodrosewinery.com

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