

Details are delicious: Review of Pepper's Ridge Winery

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The listing for *Lakeview Peach* humbly describes the 2015 Gold Medal wine (Dessert category) as "cobbler in a glass." This reviewer must kindly disagree.

Ever swipe your finger across the fuzzy skin of a fresh-picked peach — a country peach, a *homegrown* peach? If you have, you've experienced the scent of this wine.

As for the taste — it simply transports. This isn't the flavor of *baked* fruit. This is orchard-fresh, summery ripeness in a glass. This is the flavor of the fountain of youth.

So skip the mimosas! Serve *this* at your next ladies' lunch. Grab a bottle before Spring and elevate your Easter table. Better yet, order it by the case and serve it at your daughter's wedding. Nothing could be more

romantic to present to your guests.

Here's a fun exercise: Picture a slow-moving evening. You're swaying back and forth on a cushioned front porch swing. The dew is forming, and the sun is setting amid all the cool, moody colors of dusk.

Now, imagine *tasting* that evening.

Can you imagine drinking-in an evening like that?

Take one look at the fading-rose color of the first wine DeWeese ever made, *Elderberry*, and you'll have the same vision. "That was my grandpa's favorite," nods DeWeese.

Elderberry requires no occasion to adorn. This wine is like the old-timer who's somehow richer in solitude. There's only one way to describe it: plain delicious.

(Do not leave Pepper's Ridge without a

bottle of this in your hands.)

DeWeese is "old school," self-proclaimed. He runs his winery in a classic manner. Drive out into the country along a dusty, gravel road — so far out you might think you've missed the place — settle in for a refined and relaxed tasting experience, walk around, sit and talk, come back in and purchase what you love and what you can't live without.

"A lot of people come up to this counter with a case," says DeWeese, "And when we get to looking in it, it'll be an assortment. And you know, that's a real compliment to us."

Pack the truck and head to the winery on the weekend. Pepper's Ridge hosts live musical entertainment every Saturday from

2 to 5 p.m. DeWeese encourages people to bring their own lunch and "enjoy the place," and he keeps Tell City Pretzels, salami, Steckler's cheese and crackers to accommodate people.

"I make wines all the time," says DeWeese, when asked how he remains such an artisan, while maintaining a persistent attention to detail. "And we stay little. I'm really happy with a small piece of the pie."

Pepper's Ridge Winery opened August 11, 2012. The winery is located at 4304 N. County Rd. 200 W., Rockport, and is open from noon to 6 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday. All times in this article are Central.

Visit 'Wine at Pepper's Ridge Winery' on Facebook or call 812-649-WINE (9463) for more information.

Farm-to-table is changing the restaurant business

Farm-to-table is a movement that promotes serving local products, preferably food and beverages acquired directly from a producer.

Farm-to-table eateries source ingredients locally as much as possible, and diners are increasingly expressing a preference for these establishments. According to the National Restaurant Association's "What's Hot in 2015" survey, locally sourced meats and seafood, locally grown produce, environmental sustainability, and natural ingredients/minimally processed foods were

among the most popular food trends.

Farm-to-table establishments reduce the carbon footprints by cutting back on the amount of resources necessary to get food from the farm to the restaurant. The farm-to-table movement began as a countermeasure to big agriculture and chemically controlled produce. Although there is no hard data on just how many restaurants can be considered farm-to-table, organic farming in general is big business. In its 2014 Organic Survey, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agri-

culture Statistics Service reported that sales of organic products increased by 72 percent since 2008. California, Washington, Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Wisconsin were the top five states for organic farming, accounting for 78 percent of organic sales in the United States at the time of the survey.

Supporting farm-to-table establishments can benefit the planet, but consumers should know that there are additional advantages to patronizing such businesses.

• **Support for local businesses:** Local restaurateurs who embrace farm-to-table can support and promote other local operations. Restaurants can help farmers by purchasing excess crops or simply providing the demand for farmers' products.

• **Greater control over ingredients:** In some instances, chefs can travel to nearby farms during harvest to person-

ally select items for their restaurants, ensuring excellent quality.


• **Better taste and quality:** Fresh food is picked at its peak instead of being forced to ripen during a long journey. This typically translates to more flavorful foods.

• **Evolving and updated menus:** Because farm-to-table means sourcing in-season ingredients, restaurants must have fluid menus that change based on the availability of ingredients and fishing and harvesting quotas. This can lead to greater variety and prevent menus from becoming dated or overly familiar.

Hyper-local sourcing that fuels farm-to-table operations continues to be an in-demand restaurant trend. Diners can rest easy knowing that patronizing such establishments benefits both the environment and the local economy.



Fresh, local foods are the hallmark of farm-to-table restaurants.



Pepper's Ridge


WINERY


4304 N. County Rd. 200 W.
Rockport, IN


812-649-WINE

Hours:
Wednesday - Sunday
12:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. CST

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