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Vermont Winemakers To Host Wine and Chocolate Weekend February 11th and 12th

Montpelier, Vermont (January 18, 2012)—Vermont winemakers are hosting a statewide Wine and Chocolate Weekend on February 11 and 12, 2012 in honor of Valentine’s Day. Each Vermont winery has created a unique pairing of one of their wines and a local chocolate confection or other Vermont dessert product.

The range of wines featured during the Wine and Chocolate weekend reflects the variety of wine and wine products from Vermont. These include raspberry wine, cassis, mead, ice cider and red grape varieties like Marquette and Frontenac. Some of the sweets served during the weekend come from family recipes, or will be made specifically for the wine pairing, like the Sichuan pepper and rosehip truffle that Middlebury Chocolates created for the pairing with Lincoln Peak’s Marquette.

“We’re making Glüwein infused with cinnamon, cloves and orange peel, so we thought it would be nice to add some chocolate in there too,” said Christine Foley of Neshobe River Winery, who will serve homemade triple chocolate balls, a family favorite, with the wine.

The participating wineries will be open from noon to 5 p.m. during the Wine and Chocolate weekend. Wine and chocolate tastings are free. Visitors can also purchase a bottle of the featured wine with the accompanying chocolates for Valentine’s Day gifts.

Wineries participating in the Wine and Chocolate Weekend include:

Artesano Mead, Groton. Artesano Mead winemakers will be at Shelburne Vineyard on Sunday to pour samples of their raspberry mead. (802) 584-9000; www.artesanomead.com.

Boyden Valley Winery, Cambridge. Pairing: Cassis dessert wine with Snowflake Chocolates’ dark chocolate truffle. (802) 644-8151; www.boydenvalley.com.

Caledonia Spirits and Winery, Hardwick. The company is partnering with Magic Spoon Bakery. Pairings: Elderberry and Blueberry Mead with Linzertorte cookies; Black Currant Mead with double fudge cookies; a martini with their Barr Hill gin and Eden Ice Cider's Orleans served with Lazy Lady "Oh My Heart" cheese; and a cocktail with Barr Hill vodka and Eden Ice Cider cocktail served with Cabot Clothbound cheddar. (802) 72-8000; www.caledoniaspirits.com.

Champlain Orchards, Shoreham. Pairing: Ice cider with their own apple pie— a perfect, and natural, fit. (802) 897-2777; www.champlainorchards.com.

Eden Ice Cider, West Charleston. Winemakers from Eden Ice Cider will be at Caledonia Spirits and Winery to pour samples of their ice cider. Pairings: shortbread cookie from Magic Spoon Bakery with Calville Blend or Northern Spy ice cider; Orleans and Barr Hill gin martini with Lazy Lady "Oh My Heart" Cheese; vodka and ice cider cocktail with Cabot Clothbound cheddar. (802) 895-2838, www.edenicecider.com.

Grand View Winery, E. Calais. Pairing: Raspberry Infusion wine with handmade Laughing Moon chocolates at the winery's Waterbury Center tasting room. (802) 456-7012; www.grandviewwinery.com.

Lincoln Peak Vineyard, Middlebury. Pairings: Marquette red wine with Middlebury Chocolates' Sichuan pepper and rosehip truffle created especially for this pairing; and Frontenac red wine with Daily Chocolate's fruit- and nut-stuffed hearts. (802) 388-7368; www.lincolnpeakvineyard.com.

Neshobe River Winery, Brandon. Pairing: Dark chocolate glüwein-- a wine infused with cinnamon, cloves, orange peel, and chocolate-- with homemade triple chocolate balls, a family favorite. (802) 247-8002; www.neshoberiverwinery.com.

pane é salute, Woodstock: The restaurant will feature a new dessert special that will be available throughout the winter-- La Garagista Vergennes Rouge wine paired with truffles from Erle LaBounty's Farmhouse Truffles for \$15. (802) 457-4882; www.osteriapaneesalute.com.

Putney Mountain Winery, Putney. Pairing: Vermont Cassis-- a dessert wine of black currants, blueberries and raspberries-- with a homemade Cassis Swirl, a cookie with a swirl of chocolate and a swirl of the cassis. (802) 387-4610; www.putneywine.com.

Shelburne Vineyard, Shelburne. On Saturday, free wine tastings will be paired with treats from Vermont Butter and Cheese Creamery, Blackflower Chocolates and Nate's Cupcakes, accompanied by strains of violin and cello from VSO musicians Laura Markowitz on Violin and John Dunlop on Cello. Sunday will also feature free wine tasting paired with Arcury's Chocolate-covered English Toffee. Artesano Mead, Fat Toad cheese spreads and Caramel will also offer free sampling and Chair Massages from Beda Beeli will be available to those who wish to indulge themselves. While admission is free on both days, voluntary donations will all benefit the WARMTH

program, providing heating assistance to low-income Vermonters. (802) 985-8222; www.shelburnevineyard.com

Snow Farm Vineyard, South Hero. Pairing: Baco Noir wine with homemade brownies made with Baco Noir-soaked cherries. (802) 372-9463; www.snowfarm.com.

Sugarbush Farm & Vineyard, Colchester. Pairing: Sugarbush Farm will pair their wines with their maple confections. (802) 893-2928; www.hillisfarm.com.

For more details about the Wine and Chocolate Weekend, please visit the <http://vermontgrapeandwinecouncil.com>. The VERMONT GRAPE AND WINE COUNCIL is a consortium of over 25 wineries, vineyards and farms in Vermont that are producing interesting and delicious wines, ciders and other fermented products indigenous to the Northern state. Please visit, <http://vermontgrapeandwinecouncil.com>.