

TOUR LOCAL WINE BARS

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With fall just around the corner, it's a great time to check out wine bars on Oregon's North Coast — the weather cools down, the crowds start to disappear, and what's a better way to enjoy autumn color than with a glass of wine in hand.

Three popular local wine bars are good bets: WineKraft in Astoria, Vino Manzanita in Manzanita and the wine bar at Sweet Basil's Café. Northwest wines dominate their respective wine lists. Featured are varieties of Oregon and Washington wines (and some California wines, depending on the venue) that are generally regarded as the best in the world. People come from far and wide to experience them.

WineKraft in Astoria

WineKraft enjoys a great location — on the Astoria waterfront at the west end of Pier 11, just off the Astoria Riverwalk; the view is impressive. While there, visitors can taste up to 34 different wines — whites, reds, rosés, bubbles and dessert wine. Five different kinds of beer are available as well as tasty wine cocktails and, of course, some non-alcoholic beverages. Cheese and charcuterie plates may be purchased along with another half dozen scrumptious delicacies to enhance your experience.

Opening its doors in June 2015, WineKraft was a dream come true for owner Rebecca Kraft. "I was a hair dresser for many years and ... ready for a change," she says. "I've been planning this for a long time — a place where people could come and drink good wine, re-



Above: A red wine from WineKraft in Astoria.

Left: Sweet Basil's Cafe chef and owner John Sowa pours a glass of wine in the Cannon Beach restaurant's wine bar.

lax and enjoy events — a real people-gathering spot."

April Thorgramson, Kraft's daughter, also works at WineKraft, helping make her mother's cherished vision a reality. They finish each other's sentences.

Every Friday and

Saturday night, they have music starting at 6:30 p.m., featuring performers like Red Beans and Rice and Howly Slim to name two. Other events run the gamut from wine tastings and wine 101 classes taught by sommeliers to more whimsical offerings. The latter include providing coloring books for adults. Then, there's Tippy Painting, alternately taught by local artists

Jo Pomeroy-Crockett and Ronni Harris, where participants enjoy wine and come away with a finished painting. The Astoria Pub Knitters gather monthly at the wine bar regularly too.

WineKraft was a venue for the FisherPoets Gathering in February and holds a monthly first Tuesday poetry open mic night. The wine bar will also be a presence at the Pacific Northwest Brew Cup later in September. Visit <http://winekraftnw.com> for details on everything that's happening.

Vino Manzanita

Current owner Dixie Lee, a diminutive brunette, bought Vino Manzanita, located at the corner of Fourth Street and Laneda Avenue in downtown Manzanita, about 10 years ago. "It'd been open for a couple of years with a very limited wine selection and perhaps a couple of small plates on offer," she remembers. Today, Vino has remained small but viable, serving up to 25 customers inside with additional seating on a back patio and a few tables out front for use when the weather permits.

Visitors can sample five different reds and three whites by the glass (well, two whites and a sake selection), as well as two sparkling wines: prosecco and a sparkling

rosé. There's also a small assortment of beers. The list of wines by the bottle is robust and includes reds, whites, champagne, sparkling wine, dessert wine and port.

As many as a dozen small plates are on offer with such delicacies as smoked salmon, pate, spanakopita, several different cheese plates and lots more. Two dinner entrées are available every night, prepared off the premises.

Lee makes a point of sharing some of the more popular Oregon wines with customers. "Most people are adventurous that way. Often from out of state, they're always eager to try Oregon wine," she says.

"I never had any formal training beyond just tasting a lot (and) traveling to different countries to sample wine," confides Lee. "I go to California about once a year, even though we specialize in Oregon pinot noir. I like to carry things you can't get

in local stores and feature wines from all over. Being such a small operation, anything I offer by the glass I love customers to taste. Wine is beautiful because it's natural and a great world to be in."

September and October are good months; the wine bar gets a lot of retired people coming in once kids are back in school.

WINE BARS AND SHOPS ON THE NORTH COAST

WineKraft,

80 10th St., Astoria

The Cellar on 10th,
1004 Marine Drive, Astoria

Hotel Elliott Wine Bar,
357 12th St., Astoria

The Wine and Beer Haus,
1111 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside

The Wine Shack,
124 N. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach

Laurel's Cannon Beach Wine Shop,
263 N. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach

The Wine Bar at Sweet Basil's Cafe,
271 N. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach

Vino Manzanita,

387 Laneda Ave., Manzanita

The Winery at Manzanita,
235 Laneda Ave., Manzanita

— coming soon