

Minnesota

Monthly

7 Vines Does MN Wine Right—No Matter the Season

M minnesotamonthly.com/food-drink/7-vines-does-mn-wine-right-no-matter-the-season/

By Reed Fischer

March 7, 2019



Mulled wine using 7 Vine Vineyards' Marquette
PHOTO BY CASIE BELDO

Winery visits typically evoke warm-weather visions—especially in Minnesota. Greenery, airy clothing, and patio seating all pair exquisitely with a glass of wine. But 7 Vines Vineyard and Winery is building up an experience as cold-hardy as the grapes. (And we were hip to them back in August—read our feature on local wineries here.)

Located amid lake homes and forest in Dellwood on the northeast side of White Bear Lake, the winery is a 20- to 30-minute drive from the Twin Cities. Its wine bar opens at 3 p.m. Wednesday-Sunday unless there's a special event planned.



7 Vines Vineyard, winter versus summer PHOTO (LEFT) BY CASIE BELDO; PHOTO (RIGHT) BY ACKERMAN + GRUBER

Opened to the public in October of 2017, 7 Vines' tastefully designed event space is well-equipped for summer weddings and warm, sunny afternoons. In fact, from April through the end of the year, expect weddings to book the entire estate most (if not all) weekends. While everything's under inches of snow, the spacious dining room and wine bar area take on a different character. An enormous gas-powered fireplace has a magnetic pull, and the window-filled building offers plenty of vantage spots ideal for taking in a vibrant late-afternoon sunset.

With a mug of mulled 7 Vines Marquette in your hand, the possibilities fully take hold.



The Cuvée du Peltier paired with pear-and-prosciutto flatbread
PHOTO BY CASIE BELDO

The 5,500-plus vines on the 30-acre grounds are brown and hibernating but remain a beautiful backdrop for indoor contemplation—or a peaceful showshoe hike. If we get more snow, as predicted, the winery might add another outing to their March calendar. A vigorous walk in the chilly air proves perfect for burning off some of the menu of cheeses, flatbreads, soups, and desserts that have been carefully curated to pair with different wines. (Try the pear-and-

prosciutto flatbread with the cuvée to taste what we're talking about.) One more mug of mulled wine? Okay, twist our arm.

The winery is part of what was once a 188-acre estate passed down through the descendants of James J. Hill. It was purchased by Ron and Arlie Peltier in 2010. The Peltiers have invested more than \$8 million in the winery, which they plan to pass down to their seven grandchildren, who inspired the 7 Vines name.

Currently, 7 Vines' wines—red, white, rosé, and sparkling—include Minnesota-made, cold-hardy Marquette, Frontenac, and La Crescent grapes. They also locally produce Cabernet, Riesling, and others with grapes from other regions. Minnesota is a challenging new frontier for wines. But these bottles are legit. The 60-minute tour takes you down to the production facilities (industrial-chic and replete with photo ops), where the winery's sommelier, Maureen McKenna, walks you through the complex flavor adventures you crave. Most of their oak barrels for aging come from the state—redolent of dill and coconut—with some from France that smack more of vanilla and cloves. Unexpected notes blossom on your palate: pineapple, banana, smokiness, and subtle bitterness that melts with the right cheese.

No matter the season, this \$30 tour of the facilities, led by McKenna along with winemaker Bryan Forbes, provides an entertaining balance of the craft and science behind the production line. In between McKenna's studied explanations of each wine's pairings, Forbes jovially explains the grapes, the fermentation process, the equipment, and his philosophy. All the while, you're sipping and tasting, of course.

7 Vines Vineyard
101 MN-96 East, Dellwood
651-478-6300

By Reed Fischer

<https://www.minnesotamonthly.com/food-drink/7-vines-does-mn-wine-right-no-matter-the-season/>