



## 2 Get wined

### QUINCY, WASHINGTON

It is with a certain amount of disbelief, flavored by a honey-and-pear sip of the estate's sparkling blanc de blanc wine, that you accept Cave B general manager Jacque Traweck's statement that, "We're a working farm with 30 guestrooms and we happen to have a fine-dining restaurant."

That's a little like calling Hawaii a working guava plantation with nice scenery. Cave B is perched atop cliffs facing the Columbia River Gorge, just next door to the Gorge Amphitheatre. Cave B produces 4,000 cases of wine a year from the grapes grown on its 700 acres, and pairs all that with a spa, tasting room, and stone and timber lodge. The restaurant whips up a five-course tasting menu for which people drive an hour from Ellensburg

to enjoy pleasures like a velvety lobster soup or a tender piece of perfectly roasted quail. Guestrooms with leather couches and double-sided stone fireplaces are in cottages that face the river or are carved out of the side of a cliff. Parked in the middle of the state, Cave B makes a fine home base for conducting wine tours of the Yakima and Columbia Valleys.

But be warned: You might never leave the property once you cross the river on I-90, pass the Wild Horses sculpture, and then exit at Quincy. Cave B winemaker Rusty Figgins makes delicious, fruity blends of the 15 grape varieties growing on the property. All the wines are 100 percent estate-grown and bottled, and are available for purchase at



the winery, at prices below \$30. "And there's no pressing of our grapes," Figgins says, referring to the way his grapes are crushed but not pressure-pressed to squeeze out every bit of juice. "It's all free-run juice. Only estates can afford to do that. It helps mitigate the tannins from pressing."

One could happily make a day of tipping Figgins's cab and merlot blends before tottering off to Fernando Divina's Tendrils restaurant for a multicourse feast (with more wine) that features local products like Cattail Creek lamb and vegetables grown on a patchwork of raised garden beds on the property. An advocate of seasonal, locally grown foods and author of a cookbook devoted to indigenous foodstuffs, Divina hopes to one day rely completely on foods procured within a 200-mile radius of the property. For my part, I hope that means he can always find the ingredients for his perfect, juicy scallops on a puddle of brown miso spiced with star anise and a sweet and crunchy stack of bread pudding slices.

There are a dozen wineries to explore within 30 miles of Cave B, but the dedicated oenophile can be more ambi-

tious. I drove two hours to Walla Walla, parked my car on Main Street and began tasting wines at the Waterbrook Winery. A few doors down is the Cayuse tasting room, which sells out of its stellar cabernets fast. Canoe Ridge and Amavi are in converted industrial buildings on the outskirts of town—the former bottles a 100 percent cabernet franc that is only sold on the property. Ten miles east on Route 12 is the charming L'Ecole No. 41 in a refurbished schoolhouse, where you can taste excellent Bordeaux-style wines in a room adorned with library shelves, books, and a tasting bar made from a converted chalkboard. From here, about 140 miles of wineries stretch before you as you head west, with some three dozen wineries to explore, nearly all of which offer free tastings. Time it right and you can wash back up to Cave B in time for dinner and stargazing, concluding the day with a glass of Rusty's ice wine that evokes happy memories of apricots and peaches.

**Cave B Inn at Sagecliff** (509-785-3500; [www.caveb.com](http://www.caveb.com)) More Northwest wine info at [www.winesnw.com](http://www.winesnw.com).

## FANTASTIC VITICULTURAL VOYAGE

In Walla Walla, the **Marcus Whitman Hotel** (509-525-2200; [www.marcuswhitmanhotel.com](http://www.marcuswhitmanhotel.com)) is a grand, old, restored property that makes a fine base for exploring the region's wineries. A wine tasting guide is available in the lobby.

In Yakima, at the beginning (or end) of the wine trail, check out the **Seasons Performance Hall** (509-453-1888; [www.seasonsmusicfestival.com](http://www.seasonsmusicfestival.com)), a new venue for live jazz and classical music that was built in a former church and has the heavenly acoustics to match.