

A perfect pairing

Learn about wine and yoga in the heart of Washington's high-desert wine country

BY JESS THOMSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN CLARK

Blissfully in the middle of nowhere: Cave B Inn & Spa. **BOTTOM ROW** Roasted duck breast with French horn mushrooms and squash from Tendrils; tasting cave.



THE QUESTION RICOCHETS around the rock-walled wine cellar. "What's the difference between white wine and Chardonnay?"

It's the first night of our yoga-and-wine retreat at Cave B Inn at SageCliffe, a hushed desert haven lined with vineyards and spread 900 feet above the sage-lined banks of the wide, flat Columbia River.

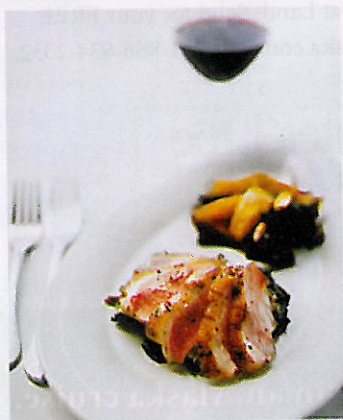
I bite my lip. I'd assumed that a wine/yoga weekend would draw advanced downward doggers as well as wine connoisseurs who would know that Chardonnay is a type of white wine. I realize, however, that here in central Washington, not everyone, like me, drinks wine like water.

Our host, Freddy Arredondo, answers the beginner's question without missing a beat. He launches into a lesson on grape varietals and brings the group to a central point: Though we're all here to learn about wine, we each start from a different place.

Indeed, we're a motley crew: There's a gaggle of work colleagues, some of whom enthusiastically unroll new yoga mats. A shutterbug is here to photograph the vineyards' fiery fall colors. And one woman is tasting her very first sip of red wine.

After sampling Merlots from three vineyards on the property, we compare notes and wonder how yoga and wine will meet. Will we be balancing on our hands above a glass of Syrah, feeling our heart chakras tingle with its peppery scent?

Not quite. Our first class is a limbering candlelit session taught by flow-yoga instructor/wine educator Angela Gargano, who focuses on the most essential poses, guiding us from sun salutations to inversions. We leave the studio feeling invigorated but not overworked, the path back to our rooms lit by the moon.



Northwest Escape



Yoga overlooking the Columbia River? Not a bad way to spend a weekend.

Wine and shine

I wake just before sunrise. Twisted up in my comforter, I consider skipping the morning's yoga class in favor of a soak in my tub. But then I remember hearing about an apple-potato-cheddar omelet, and I hop out of bed. As we pad down the path to the studio, Cuvée, the winery's dog, scampers at our heels. The trellised vineyards ignite with the sun's first rays—

bright pumpkin, butter, and terra-cotta.

This next yoga class is faster and more challenging but still approachable. There is no "om-ing" or chanting—but the yoga studio is all windows, and gazing out over the grapes and the Columbia River Gorge beyond, I feel a refreshing surge sweep through my body.

After four hours of exercise and a tad too much sun, we're starving. Fernando Divina, the chef at Tendrils, the inn's restaurant, takes us on an edible tour of local ingredients from the fertile Ancient Lakes region: silky Columbia River salmon, hazelnuts from a nearby orchard, rich osso buco from a local ranch, and the last tomatoes from Divina's vegetable garden.

Each course is paired with a Cave B wine, selected by Arredondo, who seasons relatively simple wine explanations (how oak barrels lend a different flavor from steel tanks) with more complicated enological knowledge (how Cave B enhances a barrel Chardonnay's mouth-

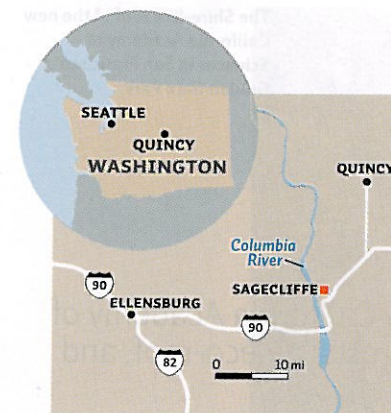
feel by stirring it with a stainless steel rod while it ages).

The next day, after our morning yoga session, we pick some late-harvest Semillon for Cave B's ice wine, taste the juice, test the grapes' sugar levels, and learn about blending. Then it's back to yoga.

I could get used to this routine.

As for the connection between wine and yoga? The pairing is subtle, not simultaneous, but by the end of the weekend, it becomes clear: Spending hours on a yoga mat, taking in the energy of Cave B's natural surroundings, is not unlike hovering between barrels of Cuvée du Soleil, tasting how a wine ages over time. Both require an internal attention that, caught up in our daily grind, we too often forget.

INFO The Yoga & Wine Retreat is Nov 7–9 (from \$850 per person, including room, meals, tastings, yoga instruction, and gear; 888/785-2283). Or skip the yoga and go any fall weekend. The inn's annual Harvest Festival is Oct 3–5.



48 hours in and around SageCliffe

GETTING THERE From Seattle, go east on I-90 for 150 miles; take exit 143 and turn left on Silica Rd. **Cave B Inn & Spa** (rooms from \$250; sagecliffe.com or 888/785-2283) is 5½ miles down on the left. Both the inn and spa and Cave B Estate Winery are part of SageCliffe resort.

FRIDAY Skip the get-outta-town rush and mosey toward Cave B, stopping at **Taquerias Morelia** (\$; exit 149 off I-90), a Mexican food truck, for spicy carne asada tacos. Check into Cave B Inn, then cozy up on your room's terrace with a bottle of the winery's recently released 2007 Barbera and a skyful of stars.

SATURDAY Start with an easy meditation walk from Cave B Inn to **Inspiration Point** (1.5 miles round-trip), or rent a mountain bike (\$25 per half-day at the inn) for an early-morning spin. Head to

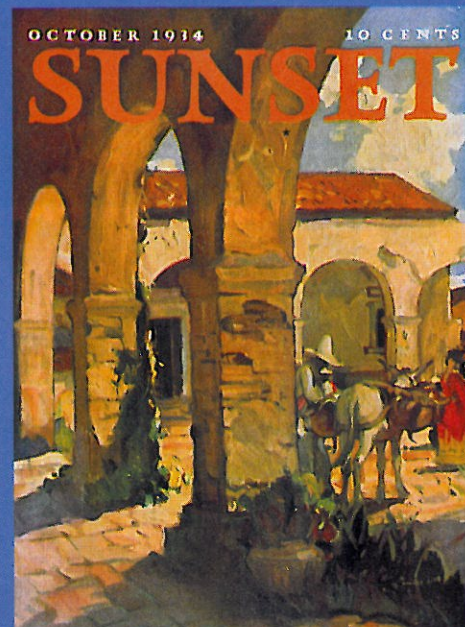
Quincy for lunch at the **SunFire Grill** (\$\$; 23572 *Sunserra Loop N.W.*; 509/787-1524). While in Quincy, tipple in the tasting room at **Jones of Washington** (no tasting fee; 2101 *F St. S.E.*; 509/787-3537) before heading back to **Cave B Estate Winery** (\$6 tasting fee; 348 *Silica Rd. N.W.*; 509/785-3500). Relax with an aromatherapy facial at the **Spa at SageCliffe** (\$140 for a 90-minute facial; 509/785-2036) before digging into sustainable regional cuisine at **Tendrils** (\$\$\$; 509/785-2283), Cave B Inn's noteworthy restaurant. **SUNDAY** Follow the moderately difficult 4-mile round-trip **River Hike Trail** from Cave B Inn down to the Columbia River as the day warms. Then hop in the car and drive to Ellensburg for the smoked tri-tip and marionberry cobbler at **Rodeo City Bar-B-Q** (\$\$; 204 *N. Main St.*; 509/962-2727).

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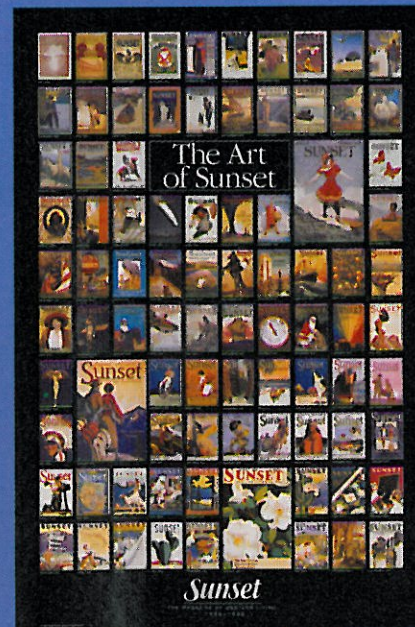
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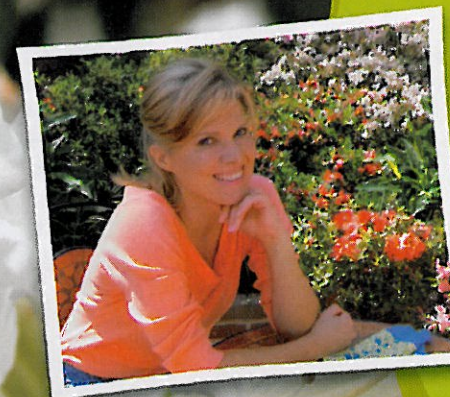


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