



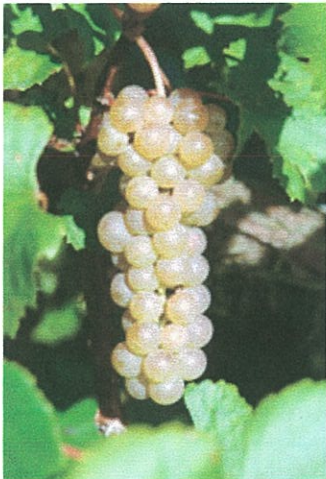
It's called  
THE TEXAS BORDER.



## Drinking In Indiana

**The Hoosier state's three wine trails celebrate the region's key role in American winemaking.**

By Glenn Kaufmann



In addition to its award-winning Chambourcin grapes, Butler Winery grows Cayuga, Catawba and Cabernet Franc, among others.

Indiana Wine Grape Council

A glass of wine is often raised to toast auspicious beginnings. And few beginnings have proven more auspicious than the start of commercial winemaking in the United States, begun in the early 1800s along the Ohio River in what would eventually become part of Indiana. Today, wineries in southern Indiana continue to produce excellent wines, as do scores of mostly family-owned and operated wineries throughout the state.

Around 1806, working with friends, family and investors from his home in Switzerland, John James Dufour founded a colony in southeastern Indiana in and around modern day Switzerland County. Dufour's intention was to continue the family tradition of grape growing and winemaking.

With half a dozen wineries on the Indiana Wine Trail alone (just one of three wine trails in the state) and numerous annual wine-related events, the region of southeastern Indiana around Vevay and Madison on the Ohio River remains the de facto center of wine history, culture and happenings in Indiana. There are, however, 43 active wineries scattered across all parts of Indiana. From The Ridge Winery in Vevay to Anderson's Orchard & Winery just outside Chicago, Indiana winemakers produce hundreds of varieties of wine, from powerful dry reds and delicate whites to

honey meads and ultra-sweet fruit wines.

### What to Drink in Indiana

While vintners in Indiana have had tremendous success in growing a wide variety of grapes, to ensure the highest quality product, a sizable portion of the fruit used in Indiana wines is imported from other states. That said, there are three grapes grown in Indiana that seem to be the most successful in the vineyard and in the glass.

Chambourcin is a hearty French hybrid grown throughout Indiana and is often used in dry red wines, and the occasional rose or desert wine. Catawba is a native American grape first discovered in the Carolinas. It grows well in Indiana and is frequently used in blush, red or dessert wines. Traminette is a sweet grape that grows well throughout Indiana and lends itself to a



The Durm family planted 1500 grapevines in 1991 to kick off production for the Buck Creek Vineyard outside Indianapolis.

Indiana Wine Grape Council



Gewürztraminer-style white wine. Given its broad success in Indiana vineyards and the fact that many of the wineries across the state have developed a wine that takes advantage of its ability to thrive in cold climates, Traminette may be emerging as the signature varietal of Indiana.

Indiana wines are often labeled as sweet wines. And while there are a large number of wineries producing mostly fruit wines, fruity whites and sweeter reds, Indiana's wine industry is so diverse that wine drinkers will find bottles that speak to them whether they like their wines on the sweet side, the dry side or somewhere in between.

### Where to Find It

One outgrowth of so many successful Indiana winemakers is the development of three distinct wine trails to aid travelers and wine aficionados in visiting wineries in separate regions of the state.

The Indiana Uplands Wine Trail is a joint effort between nine central and southern Indiana wineries. From Oliver's famous Camelot Mead on the northern end of the trail to Winzerwald's signature German- and Swiss-style wines in the south, a journey to the wineries along this trail will bring visitors in contact with a broad cross section of Indiana's best wines. The Butler Winery boasts one of the best Chambourcin roses in the state.

Amidst the rolling hills and along the banks of the Ohio River, the six wineries on the Indiana Wine Trail are set in and around Switzerland County, the birthplace of American commercial winemaking. The annual Swiss Wine Festival in Vevay is the perfect time to visit the wineries on this trail.

Seven wineries located in and around the Indianapolis area have come together to form the Indy Wine Trail. The Indy Wine Trail is an excellent daylong excursion for anyone visiting the Indianapolis area with a bit of free time and a taste for wine.

With the possibility of 10 new wineries opening in late 2009 and 2010, many in the northern and north-central parts of the state, it is possible that Indiana may welcome a fourth wine trail in the next year or two.



Butler Winery opened in 2008, making it one of the newest wineries in Indiana.  
*Indiana Wine Grape Council*

### Indiana Winemakers

As was the case with the Swiss who founded the earliest Indiana wine ventures, the Indiana wineries and vineyards of today are by and large smaller family-run operations. When asked how they got started, the response frequently begins with some variation of "Well, I got this winemaking kit for Christmas" and proceeds from there. But the enjoyment of home brewed wines only lasts for so long before many Hoosiers feel the need, or heed the call from friends, to expand their offerings. Soon a tasting room is set up and a fledgling winery begins. That has been the start of literally dozens of successful winemaking stories across Indiana.

Oliver Winery, by far the state's largest, is run today by Bill and Kathleen Oliver, who took on the management of the winery when Bill's father, an Indiana University law professor, retired from the winery in 1983. Bill Oliver Sr. began by planting a small vineyard in 1966 and went on to become a major force in the passage of the Small Winery Act of 1971, which cleared the way for the opening of numerous small wineries in Indiana.

Other family owned wineries in Indiana include Easley Winery (in Indianapolis), Buck Creek, (just south of Indianapolis), Winzerwald Winery (producing a slate of German- and Swiss-style wines in southern Indiana) and Butler Winery (outside Bloomington).

From the earliest days of American winemaking, Indiana has played a key role. Today dozens of

wineries and vineyards throughout the state produce a host of distinctive, award-winning wines that pair wonderfully with food or stand alone amongst the finest wines in the United States. A trio of wine trails weave their way across the state and offer wine enthusiasts and travelers the chance to sample marvelous Indiana wines at their own pace during any season of the year.

**Planning Your Trip**

Visit [www.indywinetrail.com](http://www.indywinetrail.com) or call (888) 846-6463 for information on each of Indiana's wine trails. For trip-planning assistance, contact your AAA Travel agent or visit [AAA.com/travel](http://AAA.com/travel).

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