



ST CLAIR
WINERY & BISTRO

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RAISE YOUR GLASS

New Mexico's sun-soaked soil and cool high-desert nights frame the modern return of wine making to the oldest wine-producing region in the country.

No visit to Las Cruces would be complete without sampling and savoring the extensive selection of delightful wines that constitute one of the area's most important agricultural products.

The rebirth of New Mexico's 400-year-old winemaking tradition began in 1978 and has steadily grown to more than 40 commercial wineries and tasting rooms throughout the state, with around 700,000 gallons of wine produced annually. New Mexico's ideal soil and high-desert climate yield an extensive variety of wines, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling, Merlot, Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel.

New Mexico's flourishing wine trails have been promoted for more than 20 years by the New Mexico Wine Growers Association, and through its unique Wine Passport Program, wine lovers can discover wineries throughout the state and earn prizes while enjoying their award-winning products. The Las Cruces Wine Trail features 10 wineries and wine-tasting establishments, including the oldest "modern" winery, **La Viña**, which was started in 1977. **St. Clair Winery & Bistro** grows grapes on more than 300 acres and offers a variety of European, Americanized and premium wines under its three labels. **Rio Grande Vineyards & Winery** produces 12 different European grape varieties in its modern onsite winery that offers a breathtaking view of the majestic Organ Mountains.

The gift of the grape is also celebrated at annual wine festivals with samplings from New Mexico's wineries, live entertainment and local vendors.

Winemaking in New Mexico dates back to the late 1500s when the first friars arrived from Spain, making it the oldest wine-producing region in the country. It wasn't long before priests across the state started importing grapevines – a variety commonly known as the "mission grape" that's still grown in New Mexico today – and making their own sacramental wine for Mass.

By the 1880s, New Mexico boasted 3,150 acres of grapevines and was fifth in the nation in wine production: almost 1 million gallons annually. But the wine industry was significantly impacted by crop-damaging flooding of the Rio Grande in the early 1900s, followed by the ban on the manufacture and sale of alcohol during Prohibition from 1920 to 1933.



SCAN ME

Get information on New Mexico Wine Trails, Wine Passport Program and upcoming wine festivals