

# The Ultimate List of Upper Peninsula Wineries

*Wineries are popping up regularly in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and sticking around, thanks partly to new cold hardy grapes specifically designed to thrive during the snowiest Upper Midwest winters. But the welcome you'll receive at tasting rooms that stretch from Carousel Winery in the Keweenaw to Threefold Vine Winery in Stephenson, is anything but chilly.*

*Below, featured blogger Jesse Land of Things to Do in the U.P. shares his ultimate list of Upper Peninsula wineries. (<https://www.michigan.org/wineries/>)*

If you're a wine lover, or just someone curious to meet the industrious people growing great wine in not-always-hospitable conditions, carve out a little time to visit a few of these great and often unexpected vineyards and tasting rooms on your next Upper Peninsula vacation.

**Leigh's Garden Winery (<http://www.leighsgarden.com/>)**

That Leigh's hosts a summer artist series featuring the rotating works of local artists is fitting. There's art on (well, and in) the bottle too; many labels feature vintage photographs of Yooper miners and other scenes. Inside, you'll find offerings like "Yooper juice," a rosé, and even rose pedal, made with U.P. Flowers.

Cold-climate varietals star in Little Bay de Noc White, a dry wine made from LaCrescent and Prairie Star grapes and Ludington Street Blues, which is actually a red made of Foch and Marquette. Leigh's makes a great stop amid a shopping trip to Escanaba, where it's located

inside one of the historic downtown buildings. Tip: Ask what's in season. They make seasonal wines focused around local fruits including strawberries, plums and blackberries.

**Northern Sun Winery (<http://northernsunwinery.com/>)**

Not far from Leigh's in Bark River (<https://www.michigan.org/city/bark-river/>) sits Dave and Susie Anthony's estate winery. Northern Sun has been growing grapes for well over a decade, their 3 1/2-acre vineyard now home to more than 3,000 vines. A fully equipped below ground cellar and Mediterranean style cottage tasting room round out this excellent winery. The Mediterranean style cottage tasting room is alone worth the trip, especially for how perfectly it matches the winery's inspiration.

The couple was inspired by their old-world Italian neighborhood in the U.P. There, by late afternoon, everyone would retire to someone's wine cellar for a treat of homemade wine, bread, homemade sausage and cheese. They weren't at first sure they could replicate the growing conditions of Tuscany, even in the so-called banana belt of the U.P., but eventually learned they didn't need to. They worked with researchers at the University of Minnesota, and the cold-hardy varietals they eventually planted have led to multiple awards and return visits from self-described wine snobs. Tip: Don't judge a varietal before you taste. Customers tend to leave with a case or two and then come back for more.



*Photo Courtesy of Jesse Land - Things to Do in the U.P.*

### **Threefold Vine Winery (<http://www.exploringthenorth.com/threefold/vine.html>)**

Formerly located on the Garden Peninsula, Threefold Vine Winery recently relocated to the town of Stephenson, making it a first stop for visitors coming in from Wisconsin and worth the journey from all-parts-Michigan as well.

The new tasting room is located inside the town's historic bank building, but the grapes, apples and other fruit still comes from the family farm.

The Greens are vintners and bee keepers both, and their honey meads –fermented and aged in Kentucky bourbon barrels – are among best sellers. They ferment other UP fruit (raspberries, blackberries and cranberries) and add it to honey.

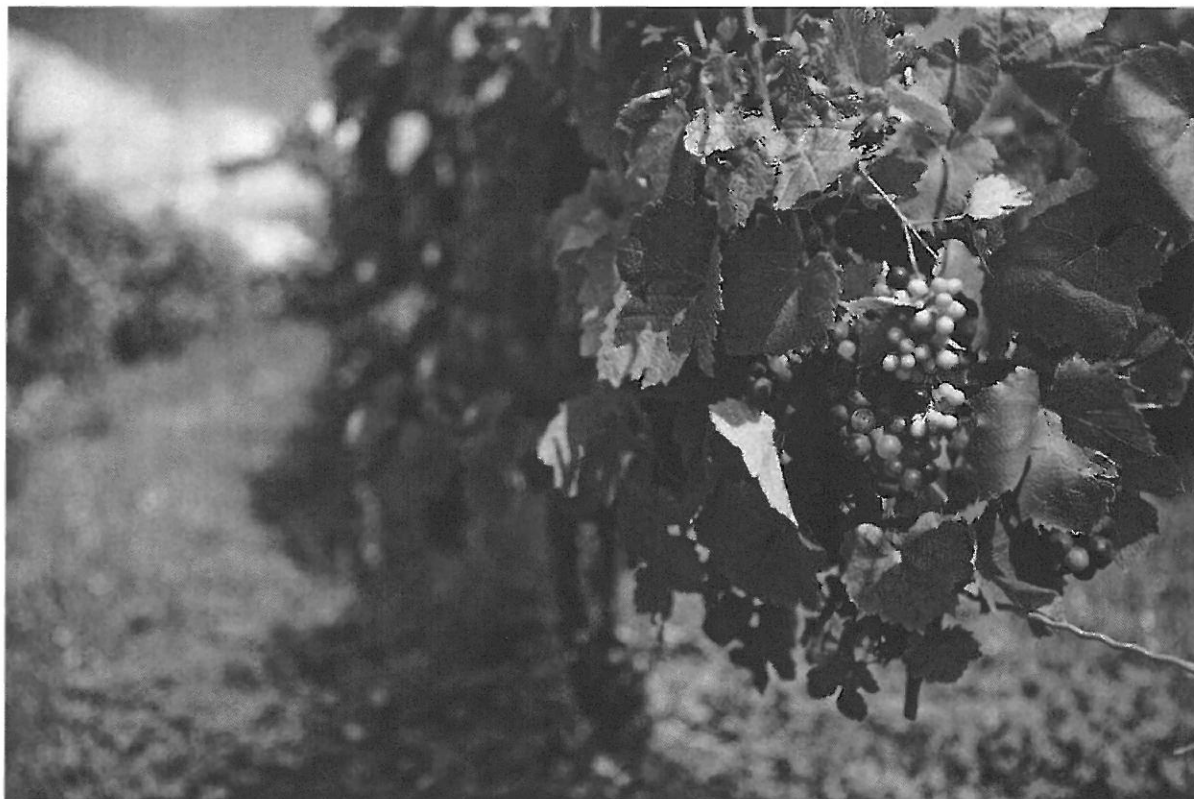
Leaders in the local organic food movement, they come by their label "Honestly U.P." well, honestly, with a focus on creating flavors so authentic to region they could not be replicated elsewhere. Local art's for sale on the shelves—pottery, watercolors, photography and hand-

made wooden wine stoppers. Tip: Gift the Christmas Tree Ship table wine for its story and good cause. The wine pays homage to the trees carried from the Upper Peninsula to Chicago more than a century ago, and a portion of each sale goes toward a local history group.

**Garden Bay Winery (<http://www.gardenbaywinery.com/>)**

When the golf course owned by Garden Bay Winery owners John and Gloria could no longer support itself, they repurposed the course by planting grapes and berries and began making wine in what used to be the club house. Now they've opened a new tasting room in Cooks, which is just a few minutes away from Manistique. The winery's motto is "made with a lot of berries and a lot of love," and owners are committed to staying small (but good) and keeping customer interaction personal.

Their vineyard position allows for the growing of European varietals like Pinot Grigio and Riesling, but the all-time best-seller, says John, remains the "Yooper Stupor" high-alcohol blend of raspberry, strawberry, blueberry and blackberry wine. Tip: The Keeper's Ice Wine is a steal at \$25, its natural sweetness coming from vidal grapes frozen on the vine, paired with a hand-made label drawing of McGulpin Point Lighthouse. Like its sister winery, Garden Bay is open May through October.



*Photo Courtesy of Jesse Land*

**Yooper Winery (<http://yooperwinery.com/>)**

The newest tasting room by the owners of Garden Bay Winery bottles under its own label, with combined wines of the two vineyards taking home many recent awards including golds each for the blackberry and strawberry wines. Owners buy grapes and "the sweetest fruit" from across the Upper Peninsula and lower Michigan and are expanding into wines made from cold hardy varietals that grow best nearby. Favorite sellers at this location include the plum, strawberry-rhubarb, strawberry gold, "Lights Out Blackberry," honey peach and cranberry, enjoyed straight or in a spritzer. Tip: The winery's open daily but only May through October.

**Mackinac Trail Winery (<http://www.mackinawtrailwinery.com/>)**

Just fifteen minutes away from the new Garden Bay Winery location sits Mackinaw Trail Winery's Manistique tasting room. With live music outside in the summer and world-class sangria on hand, this cool little tasting room makes for a fun stop. And if you want to grab

lunch while in Manistique, the excellent Upper Crust Deli is right across the river.

The unusual marina setting for a tasting room offers a feast for the eyes of unspoiled beaches, for the taste buds grapes crafted into wine using the old-world techniques of the owners' Italian immigrant heritage. Owner/winemaker Ralph Stabile compares the experience of tasting rooms across Michigan's north to those he experienced in Tuscany, where you "know the people behind the bar pouring your wine made it or owns it." The winery is part of a 13-state Northern Grapes Project, focusing on crafting cold hardy wine grapes into world-class wines. Tip: Try some newer blends that use Marquette, Frontenac Gris, LaCrescent or Petite Pearl grapes.

### **Algomah Acres Meadery (<http://algomahacres.publishpath.com/>)**

Thanks to the folks at Algomah Acres, I now know what mead is. And for those of you who are in the dark like I was, mead is simply wine made from honey. And it's delicious. Located in a historic catholic church, Algomah Acres makes many different great beeswax products in addition to their mead.

This was (<http://www.uptravel.com/>)the Upper Peninsula's first meadery, and the latest evolution focuses on the making of small batches of artisinal meads, some fermented with grape juice, others with apples. At the tasting room location, you'll also find beeswax candles, natural soaps and bees. They keep 50 to 100 hives at any given time. Tip: Anything you ever wanted to know about mead, ask! Owners know all about mead, a drink with a history dating back 20,000 to 40,000 years such as that the June full moon is called the mead moon since it's the time when hives are most full of honey. It's also the root of the term "honeymoon" since it's the month of lovers.





*Photo courtesy of Carousel Winery*

**Carousel Winery** (<https://www.michigan.org/property/carrousel-winery/>)

Located in the same small town as **Keweenaw Brewing Company's** (<https://www.michigan.org/property/keweenaw-brewing-company/>) production facility, Carousel Winery offers tastings of wines from around the world. They also allow customers to make their own wine! Tip: Call ahead for an appointment to use the winery's equipment. They say the process takes about one hour and then in six to eight weeks you can return for the final bottling. They even let you create a custom label, and they monitor the wine's development in climate-controlled facilities. Talk about a cool gift idea.

**1668 Winery & Lockside Brewery** (<http://1668winery.com/>)

Since the wine growing season is short in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, owners of 1668 Winery and Lockside Brewery (named after the year Sault Ste. Marie was founded) have taken to making wine with grapes from around the world but with distinctly local names and labels. The Laker Red Merlot features pictures of freighters going through the Soo Locks, the City

Noir Pinot Noir a scene overlooking the city and International Bridge. Wines are served alongside food with a local link, too, the hand-tossed pizzas featuring meats from a local butcher, the smoked whitefish dip served seasonally when the fish can be locally caught. There's a local artist featured monthly, too, in the art gallery room. Tip: Head to the deck to watch freighters while sipping, or on bad-weather days, know that you can watch from inside via a live feed mounted on the roof!

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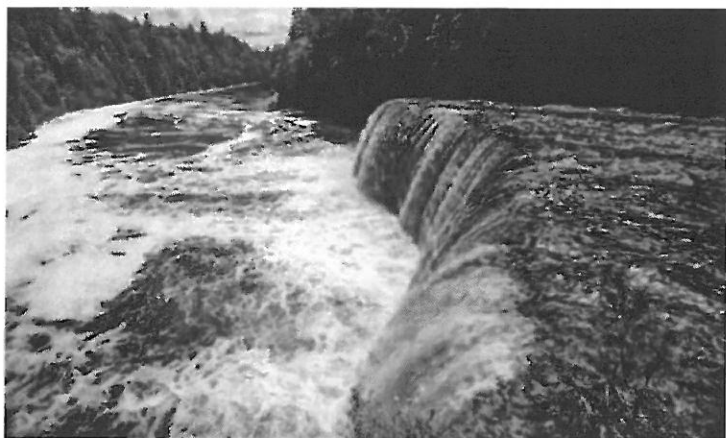
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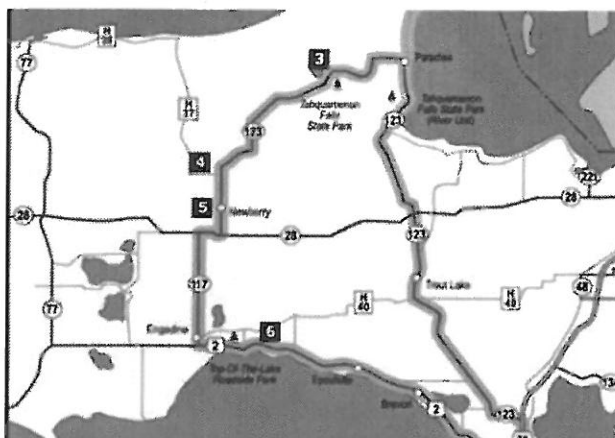
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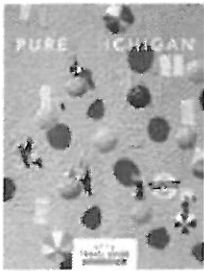


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