

Wine Tasting and Historical Tour



The theme is Italian

Each year we support the [Scottsdale Artist School](#). Over time, the School has evolved into one of America's foremost independent art institutions, offering a robust slate of art programs for adults; and a youth academy for teens and children. Last November, during their annual event (which was virtual), we offered to host a wine tasting and historical tour for 20 at our home.

Of course, at the time we were all in the midst of COVID. An event where one can be outside, social distance and taste wine, sounds like a good contribution. We have never done a wine tasting here before, so I did need to think through the details of hosting this event.

Determining Location and Time



My garden

Our property looks its best in April. Nearly everything is in bloom and the weather is perfect. Months earlier the auction recipient and I determine a date. Two hours of wine tasting seems the right amount of time and 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. is selected.

Welcoming the attendees at the front of the house makes the front porch the ideal location to start. From there my husband and I walk the yard and designate 3 other parts of the property. Areas of interest, a shady spot under a tree, and other factors point us to the right locations for a total of 4 tasting stations.

Food and Beverage



Caprese skewers, bruschetta, tomato & olive polenta bites

I feel very fortunate to have someone who caters for us frequently, knows my kitchen and is a talented and creative chef. Julie Greder designs an innovative menu with multiple options. After some discussion, we decide on an Italian theme with heavy hors d'oeuvres and food that will complement the wine.



Third wine

This is the first time we engage a sommelier, who is highly recommended to us by our local Safeway liquor manager. We contact [Mardi Keckeis](#) and we are instantly good friends. Mardi walks the property and hears our ideas on how we want to the evening to progress, while making wine recommendations.

I put Mardi in touch with Julie and they work on the perfect food/wine pairings.

Renting Glasses



Glasses from Party People Rentals

Since I refuse to have a wine tasting with plastic glasses, I rent flutes and both white and red wine glasses from [Party People Rentals](#). This truly is the easiest option. The cost is minimal and the good news is, that you don't have to wash the glasses before returning them. Who wants to clean 100 glasses?

Fortunately I have 100 glass plates in my garage, so we use those instead of paper ones.

The Day of the Event



Tablecloth by [*Days with Darviny*](#)

With the help of our healthy, young houseguests, tables are placed around the yard. We decide to add some chairs at the 3rd tasting location as an option for sitting.



My 20+year old dress!

With a start time of 5:30 p.m., at 4:00 p.m. I place tablecloths and flowers on the tables. By 4:30 p.m. I am in the shower and getting ready for our guests. The caterer and sommelier are here so I can now focus on just getting cleaned up.

And So It Begins..



Our sommelier, Mardi

Our guests arrive and we are delighted that it is an entire family. They haven't gotten together since before COVID and you can see they are happy to gather and share time together.



First wine

The first tasting is Belstar Prosecco D.O.C. with Lemon Basil Ricotta Brushetta and Shrimp Scampi.



While on the front terrace, my husband explains the history of the property.



Gathering on the front porch

The next wine station is near the well tower, guest cottage and gardens. Here we feature a white wine and a classic Brushetta, Caprese Skewers and Tomato and Olive topped Polenta bites. We talk about the well and how we water our property. The hen house is a big hit!



Second wine

Since it is nearing golden hour, it is the perfect time to take a family photo for our guests.



In the orchard

Next we head to the orchard. A delicious red wine, Massolino Barbera d'Alba, is the perfect accompaniment to Stuffed Mushrooms and Risotto. Nasturtiums from the garden add color to the plate.



Risotto and stuffed mushrooms

The final stop is dessert bites on the back terrace with a sparkling sweeter wine, Rosa Regale. Chocolate Cannoli Tarts and Lemon Raspberry Zabaglione round out the event.

All in all, I believe the evening and tasting went well. And to raise money for such a wonderful organization is an added bonus. I'm still on my [Fast Metabolism](#) diet so I didn't get to taste any wines, but they certainly did smell good!

Happy Tuesday! It's the last week in April. Our houseguests all leave today so the house will feel empty and quiet.

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