



# Vintage

# indulgence

Michigan's "Culinary Capital" hosts a signature event that celebrates fine wine and the art of culinary expression. BY DIANNA STAMPFLER

There are so many opportunities and places in Michigan to enjoy a memorable meal and fine wine in pleasant surroundings with good friends.

Then there is the Vintner Food & Wine Celebration, where eating is an art; where preparation, pairing and presentation are as much a part of the recipe as placement on the pallet; where passion for food is rediscovered, and flavors are meant to be savored; and where friendships are crafted along the way.

This most unique confluence of culinary expression — now in its eighth year — takes place Nov. 8-11 at Crystal Mountain Resort in Thompsonville, 28 miles southwest of Traverse City. It is comforting and fitting to fill a pre-winter weekend with food and wine, especially in a region gaining widespread popularity as Michigan's "Culinary Capital."

"The weekend provides a wonderful setting in which to explore the complexities of wine from around the world and indulge in gourmet cuisine prepared

by some of Northern Michigan's finest chefs," said Brian Lawson, Crystal Mountain's public relations manager. "This has truly become one of our signature events."

Vintner Weekend kicks off on Friday with a guided tour of a handful of wineries located along the scenic Leelanau Peninsula, followed by a grand reception showcasing award-winning regional wines and a variety of gourmet hors d'oeuvres.

On Saturday, participants choose two



of eight classes designed not only to further their culinary knowledge but also make their mouths water in anticipation of what is to come later in the day.

The impressive slate of presenters includes winemaker Larry Mawby, who shares his knowledge of sparkling wines; wine writer Brian Cain, who focuses on Spanish wines; and Isaac Hartman of New Holland Brewing, who unveils insight into the art of brewing beer. Also, Joe Borello discusses pairing wine with food, and Bob Dalic, from Vintage Point, offers his vino expertise.

an unforgettable meal as the weekend comes to a close.

Packages, including two nights' lodging and all culinary offerings, start at \$349 per person; three-night packages start at \$449 per person. A la carte rates are also available for the tours, classes and the closing dinner. For more information or to make reservations, call (800) YOUR-MTN or visit [www.crystalmountain.com](http://www.crystalmountain.com).



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Chocolatier Mimi Wheeler, of Grocer's Daughter in nearby Empire, serves up the sweetest session of all, where chocolate is the center of attention. Guest vintner and award-winning sommelier Joseph Carr will speak about his Napa Valley wines and his years in the industry. Darren Hawley, the new executive chef at Crystal Mountain, reveals the secrets of the evening's five-course gourmet dinner.

As many as 200 guests will be served

To mix dough in a food processor, combine the flour, sugar, salt and baking powder in work bowl fitted with metal blade. Pulse 3 times at 1-second intervals to mix. Cut butter into 1-tablespoon pieces and add to work bowl. Process, pulsing repeatedly at 1-second intervals, until the mixture is fine and powdery, (resembles a coarse-ground cornmeal) and no large pieces of butter remain visible, about 15 pulses in all. Add eggs to the work bowl, and



pulse 10 times or so, until the dough forms a ball. Scatter flour on work surface, and knead dough into it. Press and knead the dough quickly 3 or 4 times until it is smooth.

Press the dough into two equal disks. Sandwich the disks of dough between two pieces of plastic wrap and press it into a 6-inch disk. Refrigerate the dough until firm or until you are ready to use it, at least one hour.