

## St. James, Missouri Special Events & Celebrations

For such a small town, St. James, Missouri certainly hosts a number of events throughout the year to help keep their residents busy. These events include a Grape and Fall Festival, celebrating St. James's grape-growing heritage; Old Iron Works Day, focusing on the history of the Maramec Iron Works at Maramec Springs; a Christmas parade; city-wide yard sale; and much more!

Settled by a mixture of Iron Works families and Italian vineyard farmers, St. James is home to a number of nationally-renowned wineries, including St. James Winery and Meramec Vineyards to name a few. In celebration of this heritage, in early September St. James hosts the Grape and Fall Festival, with 2007 being the 74th year for the festival.

Full of local flavor, the Grape and Fall Festival kicks off with the queen pageant, where the fair queen is crowned. Other events include footraces for the kids, grape stomps for all ages, a Saturday-morning parade, a downtown street market, carnival-style rides, and exhibit competitions from local artisans. The Festival also features local livestock, including hog and steer shows and auctions and an open greased pig contest. For more information on the Grape and Fall Festival, check out the following website dedicated to the festival and its history: <http://grapeandfallfestival.com/default.aspx>

Despite the popularity of the Grape and Fall Festival, Old Iron Works Days draw an even larger crowd, featuring craftsmen and artisans who hearken back to the days of the Maramec Iron Works. These men and women demonstrate traditional tasks, such as basket weaving, butter churning, horse shoeing, and chair caning, just to name a few. Sporting historically accurate costumes, these skilled individuals truly show what life was like when the Maramec Iron Works were functioning.

Located at beautiful and scenic Maramec Springs Park, Old Iron Works Days are an excellent family event with some participatory events like cross-cut saw and soap making. See the following website for more information on Maramec Springs and Old Iron Works Days: <http://www.maramecspringpark.com/maramec/oldiron/index.html>

While these two festivals are the main attractions of the year, St. James hosts a number of other local activities. A Christmas parade happens each at the beginning of December, culminating in a visit from Santa at "Santa's Workshop", a small building that the city brings in each year to house Santa. Santa comes riding in on a fire truck and spends some time visiting with the children, while the high school choir sings Christmas carols and patrons sip hot chocolate.

St. James also draws cyclers throughout the year for tours of the countryside, including local wineries. Beginning at the St. James Tourist Information Center, bicyclists spend a Sunday afternoon traveling from one winery to the next, enjoying the local views.

Although the residents of St. James may be small in number, this charming town hosts a number of entertaining family events throughout the year that provide living in this small town with some local appeal.