

St. James, Missouri – Wine Country

While residents of St. James, Missouri may not appreciate the local culture, thousands of visitors a year flock to this small town to enjoy the scenes and tastes of the local wineries. Some of the first families to settle in the St. James area – with locally-recognized names like Cardetti, Donati, Ferrigno, and Sbabo – came from Italian wine-growing country. Bringing their love of grapes with them, these families began a lasting tradition of vineyards here in the St. James area.

Known as the “Ozark Highlands” region, as well as the “Little Italy of the Ozarks,” St. James boasts a number of local vineyards, including establishments like Ferrigno Winery and Heinrichshaus, but the most easily accessible grape-growers are currently St. James Winery and Meramec Vineyards.

St. James Winery, located in sight of I-44, has been family owned and operated by the Hofherrs since the 1970s. The second generation has since taken over the business, and continues to update their practices and offer innovative wine-making techniques. According to their website, www.stjameswinery.com, St. James Winery produces more than 130,000 cases of wine per year and distributes them around the country. Many of these wines are award-winning! One of the most recent additions to the St. James Winery is a travelling taste-tester in the form of a souped-up motor home, the R-Vino Express.

Also newly-built is the open-air café at Meramec Vineyards, Bistro d’Vine. Also visible from I-44, Bistro d’Vine serves lunch and dinner at their new facility, offering weekend entertainment and wine-tasting educational opportunities. Their website, www.meramecvineyards.com, is regularly updated with local information and pictures from their events. Their open-beam, natural wood winery is truly breathtaking, and that’s to say nothing of their wines!

Although they might be located a bit more off the beaten trail, Ferrigno Winery and Heinrichshaus \ also have a great deal to offer the St. James area. Nestled off of State Route U, Heinrichshaus Winery is owned and operated by Heinrich & Gina Watkins Grohe, and is the perfect place for a quiet picnic with friends, sharing a bottle of locally-bottled wine. Ferrigno Winery also boasts quaint outdoors charm on top of their fantastic grape-based beverages. Having hosted wedding receptions and other events, Ferrigno Winery’s rural setting (down State Route B) makes everyone feel at ease.

Whether you are interested in visiting a small, local winery like Heinrichshaus or Ferrigno Winery, or looking for a tour of growing and thriving establishments like St. James Winery or Meramec Vineyards, St. James, Missouri has a great deal to offer. Come sample the tasty wines and juices grown, pressed, and bottled here.