

# Resurgence of Food, Art and Wine in the Hudson Valley



By Nick Antonaccio

The history and culture of the Hudson Valley is one of the most storied in our nation's 235-year history. Through the late 19th century, it was a center of agriculture and industry, as well as a magnet for artists

and naturalists.

Then the industrial age and mass communications relegated it to increasing obscurity and derision. The focal point for agriculture shifted West and South while airlines, railroads, and most recently, technology, tore down geographic boundaries and dispersed businesses and populations far and wide. Likewise, new forms of art became decidedly more abstract (and popular) than the landscape paintings created by the Hudson Valley School (that were as much travelogues as they were artistic works).

Our Hudson Valley region suffered immensely through these multiple evolutions of American culture and industry.

In the last 25 years, a slow but steady resurgence has revitalized its reputation. I was reminded of this when I read an announcement for the "Hudson Valley Art and Wine—A Grand Celebration" event on May 20 and 21 at the Lyndhurst Estate in Tarrytown. (See [www.HVWineMag.com](http://www.HVWineMag.com) for the particulars.)

The Hudson Valley, stretching from Westchester to Rensselaer Counties, is shedding its dark cloak of polluted waters, dwindling farmers and winemakers and abandoned, decaying industrial sites. The announcement of next weekend's celebration gave me pause to reflect on several aspects of this renaissance.

1. The bounty of today's Hudson Valley is evident in the organic, locavore movement. On any given in-season Saturday, there are nearly 70 farmers markets throughout the valley, including more than a dozen in Westchester. These local purveyors have revived the agriculture industry of the 19th century,



Virginia Donovan, oil-on-linen, "River View from Glorie Winery."



Sasha Chermayeff, oil-on-wood, "Fall Color in the Baco Noir" at Benmarl Winery.

once again becoming a food supply for the New York metropolitan area.

2. The 19th century reputation for world-acclaimed art has been revived. For the Celebration event, over 35 artists from the Hudson Valley competed to present original works that pair the valley's wine and wineries with their artistic interpretation.

It may seem unlikely that wines may be paired with art. But the artists bridged the

two worlds, capturing the essence of the wineries in their images.

Here is a sample of the pairings presented. First, Glorie Farm Winery Cheval Blanc white wine, paired with an oil-on-linen landscape painting by Virginia Donovan titled "River View from Glorie Winery."

The wine, from a signature grape of the Hudson Valley, was bright and crisp, with elements of green apples and citrus.

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The painting captured the essence of the winery, which sits high on a hilltop in Ulster County, overlooking the Hudson River. It emoted the feeling of a tranquil setting, with unique conditions for growing and producing wines.

2. Benmarl Winery 2009 Baco Noir red wine, paired with an oil-on-wood landscape painting by Sasha Chermayeff titled "Fall Color in the Baco Noir." The wine, from another signature grape of the valley, was robust and complex, with elements of cherries and plums and a mild finish. Taking in the painting, I was transported to the winery in Ulster County, strolling the vineyard, then sitting on a hillside sipping wine with friends in a meditative state of mind.

At the Hudson Valley Celebration event, sponsors will present dozens of Hudson Valley winery-inspired paintings, photographs, jewelry and sculptures by the region's acclaimed artists. You can meet the featured artists and winemakers and pair over 35 wines with local gourmet food. Best of all, a portion of the proceeds will be donated to Lyndhurst to further its Hudson Valley iconic reputation.

Nick Antonaccio is a 30-year Pleasantville resident. For over 10 years he has conducted wine tastings and lectures. He is co-host of "Glass Up, Glass Down," a local cable television series on wine and food; he also offers personalized wine tastings and wine travel services. Nick's credo: continuous experimenting results in instinctive behavior. You can reach him at [nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com](mailto:nantonaccio@theexaminernews.com).

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