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August 14, 2008 · By [Editor](#)

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PHOENIX, AZ - Gas prices, economic uncertainty, and even reduced airline amenities are causing many to reconsider the usual travel getaways. Arizona businesses are recognizing the need to offer alternatives. With wine sales in the U.S. at an all time high and the rise in quality of Arizona wines, family owned Arizona Grape Escapes (AGE) was inspired to begin providing a new wine tour based out of Phoenix.

“We’ve fallen in love with Arizona wines and want to share them. It’s just that simple, we’re winos!” says Colleen ‘Chase’ Dalrymple, an owner of the new tour company.

According to the Arizona Wine Growers Association, this state boasts 35 vineyards and 28 bonded wineries. Chase explains, “Wine is often associated with California, France, and Italy. But it doesn’t require world travel; we can think globally and drink locally.”

This philosophy is not limited to the wine itself. According to [Local First Arizona](#), a non-profit organization, 45 cents of every dollar spent through a local business stays in-state, versus only 13 cents when spent at a national chain. “It’s also fascinating to consider the potential reduction on our ecological footprint just by supporting local businesses... imagining the emissions caused by shipping products is certainly a downside to the global marketplace” says Tina Gibson, co-owner of AGE.

With this in mind, the lunches served on the wine tours are made fresh by Bertha’s Café in Phoenix. AGE also helped sponsor Locavore 3 at Tapino Kitchen & Wine Bar, a five-course dinner and wine-pairing event created entirely from Arizona produce.

The new wine tours travel from Phoenix to four wineries in the Verde Valley area: Page Springs Cellars, Oak Creek Vineyards, Javelina Leap, and Alcantara. The daytrips accommodate up to ten attendees, with roundtrip transportation, lunch, tastings, and education included. Wine enthusiasts and novices alike can request an individual seat or reserve the custom bus, dubbed the “WINOBAGO”, for a private group tour at ArizonaGrapeEscapes.com.

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