

Discover fruits of Arizona vines

by **Karen Fernau** - Apr. 1, 2008 05:30 PM
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Arizona's wine industry has come a long way since Franciscan missionaries planted the first vineyards in the 17th century.

The state's largest wine region is in the Sonoita-Elgin-Patagonia area south of Tucson. Here are a few of the region's top wineries. Call before you go to be sure they're open.

Callaghan Vineyards: From the junction of Arizona 82 and Arizona 83 in Sonoita, continue south on Arizona 83 six miles, just past the "Elgin Wine Country" sign to Elgin Road (not Lower Elgin Road). Turn left, go three miles. Tastings: 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Fridays through Sundays. 1-(520)-455-5322, callaghanvineyards.com .

Sonoita Vineyards: Continue past Callaghan Vineyards about 3 miles to Elgin, where the road forks. Go right. Follow signs to the vineyard, about three miles. Tastings: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. daily. 1-(520)-455-5893, sonoitavineyards.com .

Domaines Ellam: See directions to Sonoita Vineyards - Domaines Ellam is in Elgin, just before the fork in the road. Tastings: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. Details: 1-(520)-455-9309, domainesellam.com .

Arizona Vineyards: From the junction of Arizona 82 and Arizona 83 in Sonoita, take Arizona 82 about 15 miles past Patagonia and toward Nogales. The winery is on the left, at about Mile Marker 4. Tastings: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. daily. 1-(520)-287-7972.

Charron Vineyard: Located in Vail, it's Pima County's only vineyard. From Phoenix, take Interstate 10 east to Exit 281. Drive south 6 1/2 miles to a group of mailboxes, turn left and follow the road to the tasting room. Tastings: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on weekends, or by appointment during the week. 1-(520)-762-8585, charronvineyards.com .

Fort Bowie Vineyards: From Phoenix, take I-10 east to Exit 352. Follow signs to Bowie, less than two miles off the interstate. The winery is behind the post office. Tastings: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays and 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Sundays. 1-888-299-5951, fortbowievineyards.com .

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