

Wine is for drinking; grapes are for stomping

Publisher's note: *Thank you everyone for your fun stories about wine. Janine Green of Carson City was picked by Lake Tahoe News to win the tickets to the Passport Weekend. Her story is below.*

By Janine Green

I remember my first sip, as if it were yesterday. The broad rimmed glass touched my lips as the flavors of the dark red wine swirled in my mouth. For me this love affair with wine started at a very young age. Growing up in an Italian household, wine was considered just another welcome member of the family. As I have matured, so has my relationship with wine.



Janine Green is on her way to Passport Weekend at the El Dorado County wineries this month.

Photo/Provided

My palate now more enriched, I have learned that the true beauty of wine is not only its taste; wine is much more

complex than that ... its nose, legs, color and clarity, "Ahhhhhh!" Each varietal of wine, with its individual personality and unique characteristics, has added flavor to my life.

Last September, while wine tasting in El Dorado Hills at Miraflores Winery, I took my love of wine to the next, more intimate level. Entering into the tasting room you could feel the energy and excitement surrounding the activities. I sat and slowly removed my shoes and then took my place behind the other participants. The anticipation I encountered was similar to how I feel while I wait in line for an amusement park ride. As I approached the vats filled with grapes, I reflected back to my childhood, watching Lucy grape stomping in my favorite episode of "I Love Lucy". How much would my stomping dance compare with this character of my past? Would I be graceful or clumsy? Not a moment more to analyze the situation, it was now my turn. I was directed to a foot bath and then assisted up the stair.

As I stepped down, I giggled with fear and excitement, feeling grapes explode between my toes. While I moved from vat to vat, I was intrigued by the texture and consistency of the fruity substance that surrounded me. Knowing that one wrong step would leave me bathed in this sweet watery pulp. Suddenly, an awareness and appreciation of the love and labor it once took to produce a barrel of wine overcame me. Had my ancestors once stomped grapes too?

While I stomped, sipping a glass of Merlot, I envisioned the final product that someday I would have the opportunity to taste. The simple delight of this moment enveloped me. Stepping out of the vats with pink stained feet, I knew my love affair with wine had deepened. I have now seen and experienced the raw and unrefined side of wine. It brings a smile to my face even at this moment, glass in hand, longing for my next encounter.