

“Where to Wine” in a Shed

by [Kat Collins](#) | [Wine Travel Guides](#) | [0 comments](#)

What do you think when you hear “fruit wines?” Fruit wines that aren’t made from grapes? Unless you’re a sugar lover, I bet you’re wrinkling your nose in derision. Coming from Pennsylvania, we have A LOT of fruit wines, and most of them aren’t good. I’m talking cheap, sugary, syrup bombs that make you think of childhood cough syrup. Hence, the reason that Pennsylvania has a reputation of making sweet wines (or sweet shit as one lovely winemaker calls it). There’s even rumor that someone who makes non-grape wines aren’t truly winemakers or wineries.

Wine, on a very basic level, is made from fermented grapes. While people mostly associate wine with grapes, wine can be made from a wide array of fruits, so long as there’s enough sugar content in the fruit to convert into alcohol during the fermentation process. Fruits that can be made into wine range from the familiar (blackberries and pineapples) to the exotic (durians and mangosteens). The most widely produced non-grape fruit wine is cider, or “apple wine” which is made from fermented apples. There are “wineries” that only make non-grape fruit derived wines and most of the time, I turned my nose up at them. Humble, I was not.



Until I visited a little, teensy-weensy nondescript winery in a shed on the side of the road behind a farm stand. We were doing a round of wine tasting at various

wineries in PA. We pulled up to this shed in Shartlesville, PA, right off Old Route 22 (middle of the corn fields, folks)...literally, a shed...and I questioned if we had the right address. We double- and triple-checked and sure enough, it was right. This couldn't be a winery, could it? Seriously? We walked in to the shed and I was amazed. It was this cute, tiny shop with jellies, farm goods, cheeses, and believe it or not, wine. Fruit wine. As in, non-grape wine. I didn't want this, but my friend convinced me to give it a shot.

[Bashore & Stoudt County Winery](#) is truly a country winery, established in 1999. They don't have a website except for their listing on the [Berks County Wine Trail](#) website. They do have a [Facebook page](#). Bob and Dave Stoudt are [fruit and vegetable farmers](#) first, who decided to make wine with their fruit, in addition to selling it from their farms and orchard. Their focus of winemaking in Pennsylvania is classic fruit wines. Many of their wines are produced from fruit they grow in their nearby orchards. They are particularly know for their plum wines, in particular their Shiro Plum wine. Maybe if there is a bigger demand for their wine, they'll step up their marketing game. There should be a bigger demand for their wine. It's damn good.

They don't add much sugar to their wines (beyond what is needed to convert to alcohol), preferring to let the fruit shine naturally. It felt like a fruit wine should be...a true expression of the fruit, not a sugar-laden syrup pretending to be a wine. I bought a bottle of their "famed" Shiro Plum Wine which has won several awards. The color is a clear rich amber, fuller bodied, almost with a late harvest viscous texture, and light to medium legs that dissipates fairly quickly (there is no ABV listed on the bottle) . The nose of the wine is intriguing...overwhelming notes of spiced plum, deep floral bursts of marigolds and toasted almonds, with a tiny bit of tangy acidic apricot on the silky lip-smacking finish. This is a fruit wine? A complex fruit wine? I'm impressed! And humbled.

I keep going back for another sip...another taste...another ponder...perplexed at the changing flavors as it warms in my glass. Initially it was really chilled, almost too cold to appreciate any flavor, slightly bitter (that's what I get for chilling it quickly in my freezer and forgetting I put it there an hour and a half later). As it is warming to about 50-60 degrees F, the flavor is nuanced, pronounced, evolving. Definitely better at this temperature. I picture having it with a pork tenderloin, or roasted turkey, maybe even a spicy curry.

It just goes to show what I'm trying to prove, that East Coast wines are so much more than the reputation of "sweet shit." What you expect manages to surprise you and change that expectation. While I'm not a convert to non-grape wines as a whole, if winemakers continue to produce non-grape wines of this quality, it could happen. If you have the chance, seek Bashore & Stoudt Country Winery

out and take your new VinGardeValise® Petite with you! You won't be disappointed. You may even be a bit surprised. Don't say I didn't warn you! Kat Collins is a late bloomer in the wine world. Her religious upbringing believed wine was of the devil and promoted all sorts of sins. She's since discovered that there is a reason Jesus turned water into wine, it's heavenly! Okay...maybe it had more to with the miracle thing, but still. Kat is the creator and author of HumbleWineSnob.com, and has over 20 years writing and blogging experience. While her focus is on East Coast Wine in the United States, she's open to wine experiences from all over the world. You can find her on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).