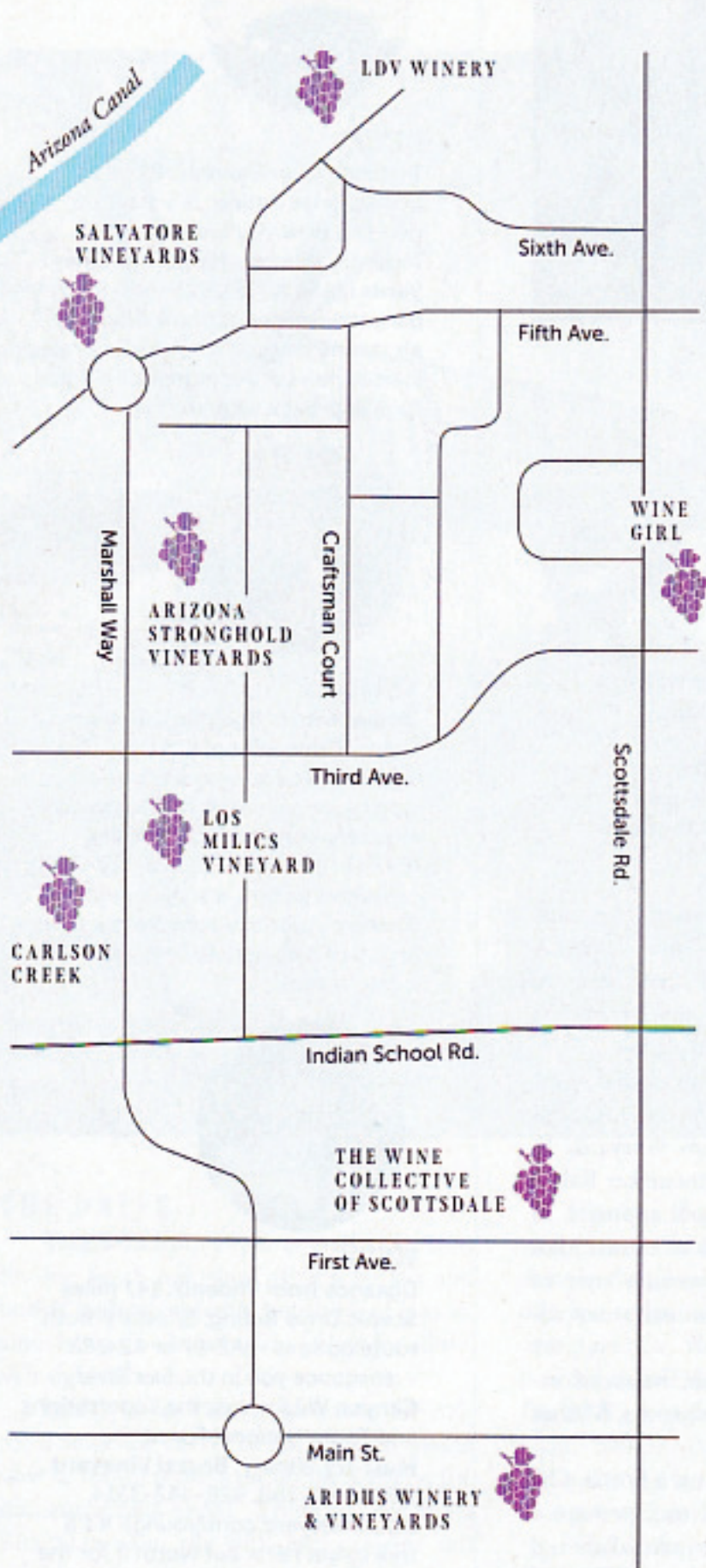


Stay Local on the Scottsdale Wine Trail

BY LEAH LEMOINE

IF YOU'D PREFER A WINE ADVENTURE a little closer to home – somewhere you can Uber, say – may we suggest the Scottsdale Wine Trail? Old Town boasts a constellation of eight tasting rooms, wine bars and bottle shops where you can sip to your heart's content and then sleep it off in your own bed. Plus, there's a nifty passport (\$5) that provides discounts at participating wineries. scottsdalewinetrail.com



LDV WINERY

Winemaking is only the tip of the iceberg for Curt Dunham and Peggy Fiandaca. In addition to offering tastings (three wines for \$15, four for \$20), the owners of LDV Winery in Pearce host regular events including Le Nez du Vin (Aromatherapy for Wine Lovers), wine pairing classes (charcuterie, chocolate or cheese), and even European wine cruises along the Danube, Rhine and Rhône rivers. Our recs: any of the Petite Sirahs or the Sky Island Viognier. 7134 E. Stetson Dr., 480-664-4822, ldvwinery.com

SALVATORE VINEYARDS

Italian roots run deep at Salvatore, named for winemaker Jason Domanico's grandfather and created to honor his Sicilian and Calabrian heritage. The Domanico family of wines also includes Passion Cellars and Cabal Cellars, with tasting rooms in Bisbee, Jerome, Elgin, Willcox, Tombstone and, of course, Scottsdale. Our picks: Salvatore's *molto Italiano* Sangiovese or Graciano. Tastings vary by label and availability. 7064 E. Fifth Ave., 480-423-2901, passioncellars.com/scottsdale





CARLSON CREEK ▲

Belly up to the 20-foot copper bar at the Valley outpost of this family-owned Willcox winery, where \$18 tastings include your choice of five wines. Be sure to try the Rule of Three, the Carlson brothers' flagship GSM (Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre) blend. Carlson Creek also has the coolest merch for Arizona wine lovers: super soft T-shirts, tanks and hoodies emblazoned with the Arizona flag rendered in colorful graphics of wine bottles. 4142 N. Marshall Way, 480-947-0636, carlsoncreek.com

ARIZONA STRONGHOLD VINEYARDS

A relative old-timer in the Arizona wine scene, Arizona Stronghold was established in 2007 and boasts a tasting room in Cottonwood, a vineyard in southeastern Arizona and a sister label, Provisioner, as well as its Scottsdale lounge. Its name is a nod to local Indigenous history: Cochise Stronghold was the refuge of the great Apache chief Cochise. Try the Nachise, a GSM blend with Petite Sirah thrown in. Tastings include six wines for \$17-\$20. 4225 N. Marshall Way, 480-779-1600, azstronghold.com

LOS MILICS VINEYARDS

The new kid on the block is already making a splash: Los Milics' Sandra's rosé won our Best of the Valley taste-test of eight Arizona rosés by pastry chef and wine judge Tracy Dempsey. Owner and winemaker Pavle Milic opened this sleek tasting room this spring to complement the tasting room and casitas at his Elgin winery. A tasting flight includes five pours for \$25. Save room for dessert – a rich chocolate ganache brownie or delicate pink Champagne cupcake. 4151 N. Marshall Way, 480-390-1668, losmilicsvineyards.com

THE WINE COLLECTIVE OF SCOTTSDALE

Zoya Vora-Shah does things a little differently than most wine bar owners. In addition to traditional tastings (four wines, starting at \$18), she offers blind tastings and a sommelier-led Sensory Wine Tasting Experience (starting at \$200 for two) where guests can enjoy small food pairings and feel the different soils from Arizona's AVAs (American Viticultural Area). Vora-Shah also stocks quirkier small-batch vintages and a nice selection of natural wines. 4020 N. Scottsdale Rd., 480-912-1746, the-wine-collective.com

ARIDUS WINERY & VINEYARDS

Natural and reclaimed materials make this tasting room feel like you're at the Willcox winery sipping with owners Scott and Joan Dahmer. The couple brought on a new winemaker, Jef Stebben, this July, so visitors can look forward to his vintages in a few years' time. Until then, sip a citrusy and floral yet dry Malvasia Bianca or a Cabernet Franc with notes of cranberry and orange. Tastings run \$15-\$25 and include four wines. 7173 E. Main St., 520-954-2676, ariduswineco.com



WINE GIRL ▲

"This one's for the girls," to quote Martina McBride. Amy and Trevor Johnston take an unabashedly femme approach in their two wine bars (the Scottsdale iteration and their Napa Valley original), trading the typical leather for plush pink booths and white couches. The husband-and-wife team favor California wines on their bright and bubbly menu, but more Arizona vintages may be offered in the future. Flights start at \$23 and include four pours. Also fun: "wine-tails," aka wine-based cocktails. 4025 N. Scottsdale Rd., 480-686-9077, winegirl.com