

# Tantalizing Tastes of Temecula

By Pam Bokelmann

*Pam Bokelmann is an HR manager by day and an avid fan of wine, food and travel by night. During her Temecula experience she took notes while her husband Bill snapped photos.*

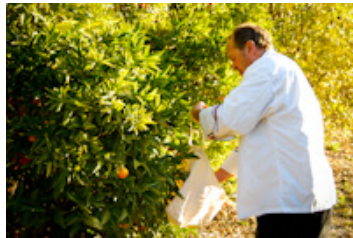


Whether you're looking for great wines to taste or a relaxing and peaceful getaway just a few short hours away from Las Vegas, the place to be is Temecula, California.

Temecula gives you an assortment of accommodations and dining selections to choose from. During the World of Wine Winter Barrel Tasting event held on March 3-4 we had the pleasure of staying and dining at the INN at Europa Village, a beautiful bed and breakfast in the heart of the Temecula Wine Country. Our hosts for the weekend were **Innkeepers/Executive Chef Dean Thomas** and his wonderful wife **Nicole**. Chef Dean and Nicole reside and operate the **INN at Europa Village** for Europa Village Winery. The INN has been recently renovated and you are personally cared for by Dean and Nicole, who make you feel like family. The INN rests atop 5 acres of lush grounds with a panoramic view from its hilltop location. The views down the Temecula Valley from the bedroom balconies and dining patio are breathtaking.

Chef Dean and Nicole are well known for creating the best breakfast "Experience" in Southern California. We were very surprised and honored when we were treated to a special dinner "Experience" upon our arrival at the INN. Chef prepared a four-course gourmet dining experience fit for royalty, consisting of sea scallop with parsnip puree; roasted organic beets with gold beet tartare "chips"; main course of dry rub beef with Chanterelles mushrooms in Syrah and organic vegetables; and grand finale of chocolate pate, berries in Muscat, and a grapefruit curd served on a tuille cookie spoon, paired with a Bolero Muscat cannoli, a perfect end to a perfect evening. Wines paired with our meal included Bolero Libido Red Wine, a traditional Spanish blend of Tempranillo, Grenache, Mourvedre, and Carignane varietals; and C'est La Vie Syrah, both of which are products of the **Europa Village Winery**.

In the morning before our barrel tasting began, we made our way down to the dining room to see what culinary surprise would be greeting



us. To our delight, breakfast began with a banana brûlée, accompanied by fresh fruit from the garden and orchard, followed by a main course of crepe with chives and Swiss cheese, caramelized mushrooms, onions cooked in beer, bay leaf and fennel sauce with fennel pollen on top, an egg with dehydrated tomato powder (made from the garden tomatoes) and micro greens arugula with sliced almonds and slow roasted tomatoes that roasted while we were sleeping. We were told Chef Dean's crepes were the best, and we weren't disappointed. Chef Dean's breakfast creations tantalize your taste buds like a fine glass of wine.

Thirty-two wineries participated in the **World of Wine Winter Barrel Tasting** event. This event invites wine tasting enthusiasts to enjoy the charm of their friendly tasting rooms and sample some of the wineries' upcoming new releases right out of the barrel, along with palate tantalizing food pairings.

One of our first stops off the event map was the **Doffo Winery**, one of the few micro-boutique wineries in the region. Founded in 1997, **Marcelo Doffo** and his family started making wine in his backyard. The winery, situated on 15 acres of hand planted vineyards, has its own wine production facilities and a private tasting room complete with vintage scooters and motorcycles that come from the family's private collection. We sampled from the barrel the 2010 Malbec, and were greeted in the tasting room by **Damien Doffo**, who instructed us to try his mother Zulma's Italian Ribollita vegetable soup served in a sourdough bread bowl before sampling the 2010 Zinfandel. The spicy after flavor of the soup brought out the bold spice of the Zinfandel.

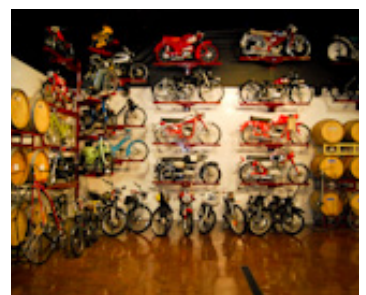
The Wilson family wanted to run a fun, family business that produced great wine. **The Wilson Creek**

**Winery** is all of these; everyone in the family works in some capacity at the winery. When you visit Wilson Creek you truly feel like family. The wine selections for this event included the Double Dog Red, a full-bodied red wine with aromas of cinnamon, dried apple, coffee and black olive and smooth, robust flavors of black plums, anise, cherry preserves, vanilla and sweet wood. The 2009 Family Reserve Late Harvest Zinfandel Port was a sweet, jammy dessert wine with intensity. All were paired with Zambezi duck tacos, which were also very tasty.

**Palumbo Family Vineyards and Winery** is owned by **Nick Palumbo** and his lovely wife **Cindy**. Nick is a passionate viticulturist who believes in producing only what he grows himself. Their 13 acres are planted with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Sangiovese varietals, with Viognier and Syrah varietals planted on neighboring properties. The wine selection for this event was the 2010 Viognier, a classic honey, apricot fruit nose, rich with a dry finish; and the 2008 Shiraz/Cabernet blend, both paired with cold sliced filet of beef with brie and toasted almond fruit compote on a crispy baguette chip.

In 2009, opening a tasting room in Old Town Temecula was a dream come true for **Lorimar Vineyard and Winery** owners **Lawrie Lipton** and **Mark Manfield**. In April they will be opening a second tasting room in the Temecula Wine Country, so Lorimar's barrel tasting was held right on the property of the new tasting room. The wine selection out of the barrel was their 2009 Solo Estate Cabernet-deep color with palate notes of dark cherry, boysenberry and pomegranate finish with a velvety texture. Also out of a barrel was the 2009 Nocturne Estate Syrah-complex palate, dark berry fruit and mild oak. Both flavors went well with the selected food pairing of delicious beef and carrot ragu.

The Temecula Valley is a veritable paradise, rural in nature, with rolling hills and vineyards. Whether you're looking for a quick day trip or planning to stay a couple of days, there's plenty to see and do in the Temecula Wine Country.



**INN at Europa Village**  
33350 La Serena Way  
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(951) 676-7047  
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**Doffo Winery**  
36083 Summitville St.  
Temecula, CA 92592  
(951) 676-6989  
[www.doffowines.com](http://www.doffowines.com)

**Wilson Creek Winery**  
35960 Rancho California Rd.  
Temecula, CA 92591  
(951) 699-9463  
[www.wilsoncreekwinery.com](http://www.wilsoncreekwinery.com)

**Palumbo Family Vineyards and Winery**  
40150 Barksdale Ln.  
Temecula, CA 92592  
(951) 676-7900  
[www.palumbofamilyvineyards.com](http://www.palumbofamilyvineyards.com)

**Lorimar Vineyard and Winery**  
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