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Cochise County Vineyard Update: Willcox tasting rooms to open

Cochise County, Ariz. (Feb. 8, 2010) – New wine tasting rooms Carlson Creek Vineyards and Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards will open this year in downtown historic Willcox. An agricultural center for many years, Willcox and Cochise County now begin a new chapter in Arizona’s wine story. Many Arizona wines literally have their roots in Cochise County because winemakers often get their grapes from Cochise County.

Carlson Creek Vineyards will have wines available for tasting during their grand opening celebration Feb. 13. The tasting room, located on Railview Avenue just across the railroad tracks from the Rex Allen Museum, will feature four wine varietals from the Carlson family, a Syrah, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese. The vineyard is a family owned and operated business. Robert Carlson is the winemaker; his brother John will manage the tasting room, and father, Bob, directs the farming operations. Robert Carlson’s sister and mother are also involved. Robert, Bob and John Carlson have completed viticulture and winemaking classes at University of California Davis. Their first vintage are from grapes they purchased grapes from their Cochise County neighbors. In 2009, they planted their first vines, which they will harvest in 2011. Initially, they will plant grapes on 16 of the 80 acres they own in Cochise County.

Contact: Carlson Creek Vineyards
115 Railview Ave.
Willcox, Arizona
520-776-3000
www.CarlsonCreek.com

Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards: Wine tasting used to be by appointment only at the Chiricahua Mountain foothills tasting room owned by Rod Keeling and Jan Schaefer. However, visitors will be able to sample their Three Sisters Syrah, Two Reds Grenache, Best Friends Chardonnay and Rock Creek Rosé at the vineyard’s soon-to-open tasting room. The Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards tasting room is in the former Willcox Bank and Trust Building, which was built in 1917 and sits next to Willcox’s famous Rex Allen Museum on Railroad Avenue. The wine library will be housed in what used to be the bank vault.

Contact: Keeling-Schaefer Vineyards
154 Railroad Avenue
Willcox, AZ
520-824-2500
www.KeelingSchaeferVineyards.com
Hours: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m., Thursdays through Sundays

A third, **Gallifant Vineyards**, will open a tasting room once renovation is complete.

These new wine tasting rooms are in addition to Willcox wine tasting venues available at Coronado Vineyards and Crop Circle Vineyards.

Visitors who would like information on area accommodations or attractions can call the Willcox Chamber of Commerce at 1-520-384-2272 or 1-800-200-2272.

Located in southeastern Arizona, Cochise County is one of the most culturally, historically and geographically diverse areas in the American Southwest. Its legendary communities—Benson, Bisbee, Douglas, Tombstone, Sierra Vista and Willcox—were strategically located less than a day’s journey by stagecoach and are now just a short drive from one another. For more information about Cochise County, contact the Cochise County Tourism Council at 1-800-862-5273 or visit their website at www.explorecochise.com.

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