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CAMBRIA

Niagara Wine Trail grows longer

By **Bill Michelmore** - NEWS NIAGARA BUREAU

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Charles Lewis/Buffalo News
Sandra and Larry Manning pose at the latest addition to the Niagara Wine Trail, Freedom Run Winery in Cambria.

CAMBRIA — Eleven varieties of wine and a feast of roast duck, lamb and steamship rounds of beef will set the flavor for the grand opening Saturday of Freedom Run Winery, a new addition to the growing Niagara Wine Trail.

The food will be prepared by Warren J. Drew, executive chef of Lancaster Country Club. And Freedom Run's winemaker, Robert A. Green, will be on hand to dispense viticultural insight along with samples of red and white wines.

"Niagara County is an area with excellent potential that hasn't been taken advantage of yet," said Alan Lakso, a professor of viticulture at Cornell University.

Freedom Run aims to do just that, with festivities from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at the winery and vineyards at 5138 Lower Mountain Road, near Route 270, in the center of Niagara County.

Sean Manning, one of the winery's founding brothers, who also is a professional pottery artist, will give demonstrations of the art between noon and 1 p.m.

The price of admission is \$15, which includes food and wine.

The winery was founded by Larry, Sean and Chip Manning, three brothers who were raised in Cambria, then left home to pursue different careers.

They raised families, producing nine children in all. Though in their early to mid-40s, the three brothers recently retired at about the same time and decided to open the winery.

With Larry's wife, Sandra; Chip's wife, Vicki; and Kathy Baker, the tasting room manager, the Mannings nurture 12,000 vines on 10 acres that produce about 50,000 bottles of wine a year.

A spacious wine tasting room, with luxurious leather sofa and chairs and a bar of natural granite from the jungles of Brazil, greets visitors to Freedom Run. The winery was named for the Underground Railroad.

The Manning brothers used their own skills and toil to build the winery. Sean Manning made the washroom basins and the colored glass front of the tasting bar. He also painted large murals of grapes and grape leaves on the concrete floor of the processing room.

Larry Manning did the woodworking, including maple beams and a bamboo floor.

The Niagara Wine Trail, which opened in 2002 with two wineries, has grown to 10, with several more in the development stage.

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