

# A MATTER OF GREAT TASTE

## 2-day festival features food, wine and fun

**O**n the first weekend of summer, food and wine lovers will head for the Litchfield Hills to enjoy Connecticut's premiere festival of fine fare.

Annually attracting thousands of visitors, A Taste of the Litchfield Hills will be held Saturday and Sunday at Haight Vineyard, the state's oldest winery.

Now in its 19th year, this two-day food and wine fete features regional culinary purveyors serving their house specialties. Guests will enjoy an eclectic menu ranging from boiled lobster, home-style cavatelli and barbecued ribs to cheesecake, pastries and Italian ice. Covered table seating is provided, plus guests may picnic on the grounds with blankets and lawn chairs.

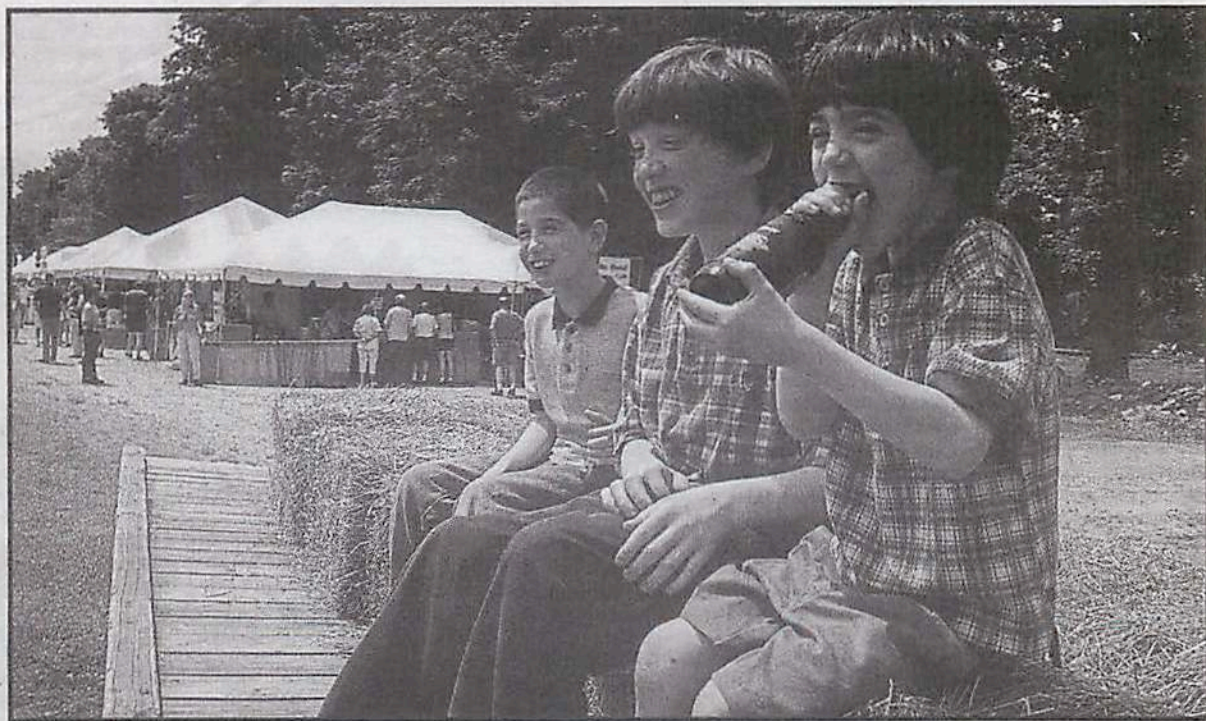
Haight Vineyard's award-winning wines and premium beer will be available by the glass in a garden cafe. Starbucks' coffee, Stewart's old-fashioned sodas and bottled spring water will also be served.

Between courses, guests will enjoy numerous diversions, including live musical entertainment, hayrides, plus shopping with upscale vendors. Tours of the winery featuring complimentary wine tasting will also be offered.

A Taste of the Litchfield Hills will be open from 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday and from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$6 per person, \$5 for seniors, and children under age 12 will be admitted free. Food and beverage purchases are additional. Parking is free.

This year's event is sponsored by American Leisure, the Litchfield Inn, the Republican-American, and WTIC News/Talk 1080.

For details, call (800) 577-WINE, or visit [www.litchfieldfestivals.com](http://www.litchfieldfestivals.com).



Republican-American

Saturday and Sunday bring the 19th annual Taste of Litchfield Hills to Haight Vineyard in Litchfield.

### If you go

**When:** 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.  
Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sunday

**Where:** Haight Vineyard, 29 Chestnut Hill Road, Litchfield

**Attendance:** Now in its 19th year, A Taste of The Litchfield Hills annually attracts 3,500 to 5,000 attendees from throughout the Northeast.

**Facilities:** Covered table seating available; blankets or lawn chairs suggested for picnicking on the grounds.

**Admission:** Adults, \$6; Seniors \$5; Children under the age of 12, Free. Food and beverage purchases are additional. Free parking available on the winery grounds.

## Some Stern remarks helped create event

A Taste of the Litchfield Hills was first held 19 years ago, thanks in part to remarks by renowned food authors Jane and Michael Stern.

In the mid-80s, long before their book, "Eat Your Way Across the USA" was a national bestseller, Jane and Michael Stern were restaurant critics for a Connecticut newspaper.

In one of their particularly negative reviews of a local eatery, the Sterns had referred to Litchfield County as a "culinary wasteland."

"As it was, there was no love lost between the Sterns and the local culinary community," recalls Col. Sherman P. Haight Jr., proprietor of Haight Vineyard, which has hosted the festival since 1985.

"However, their uninformed 'culinary wasteland' remark didn't just leave a bad taste in our mouths," Haight said. "Those

words actually created A Taste of the Litchfield Hills."

According to Haight, local chefs, restaurateurs and residents were so incensed by the Stern's review, they persuaded him to host what has become a Connecticut culinary tradition.

"That first year, over 1,000 guests experienced our so-called culinary wasteland," Haight said. "And thousands more have attended every year since then to enjoy our celebration of fine fare at a country winery in the summer air."

"We've long since forgotten the name of the restaurant that was reviewed, but certainly not the Stern's review," Haight said. "Of course, Jane and Michael are always welcome to attend our festival — just as long as they pay at the gate."

For details, call toll free, 1-800-577-WINE, or visit [www.litchfieldfestivals.com](http://www.litchfieldfestivals.com).