Wine Tour Cottonwood: Pillsbury Wine Company

Nope, no "dough boys" on North Main Street in Old Town Cottonwood, but there is plenty of wine tasting. With more wineries adding tasting rooms every year, the attraction of the old town just keeps getting better.

In the Pillsbury Wine Company's well-appointed tasting room that opened in 2010, there is something on the list for everyone. This includes Southeast Arizona wines made from single varietals and blends of reds and whites, and even a dessert wine. The structure of nearly all their creations is excellent with each exhibiting a wide variation of flavors from zingy bright to earthy dark berries.

By trying one of Pillsbury's mixed white and red tasting flights, you should get a good idea of the flavors available in their versatile selections. Be sure to pick a flight that includes a few of their white wines. This is because one trend that is obvious while touring the Verde Valley's tasting rooms, is that the Arizona white wines, especially the Chardonnays, have steadily improved in excellence and are also very enjoyable.

If you can find any left in stock, Pillsbury's Chardonnays are known for a bouquet of peaches and earth (Arizona style) and a crisp un-oaked finish with perfect acid balance. In the $25 range, this is an appropriate wine to save for a fancy seafood meal to allow your guests to experience a wine that is sure to be a surprise.

If you like red wines with a soft berry finish and classic ripe cherry bouquet, be sure to try the "Roan Red". It is a mellow easy drinking blend that will please a just about everyone with spicy meat appetizers or after dinner. Priced in the mid $20's, it's quite reasonable.

Into dessert wines? Try Pillsbury's Caldera Desert Wine with its licorice, fresh straw aromas and slight acid finish. As with many desert wines, Caldera is fortified with a little extra alcohol.

What's good about Old Town Cottonwood is that you can park the car and browse, and that's just the perfect way to get to know this Arizona treasure.