



# Wine Down While Biking Through Long Island Wine Country

by Kelly Laffey

**T**he sun warms your face as you pass by the rows of vines at a speed much faster than a walk, but far slower than a car. With the wind in your hair, you stopped noticing that you're wearing a helmet long ago and can simply focus on the fresh air, bucolic scenery and the promise of wine as soon as you stop. Only a few more miles to pedal.

Just under 80 miles from New York City, but what feels like light-years away, Long Island Wine Country's 60-plus vineyards beckon. And when the weather is as nice as the scenery, who wants to stay indoors? With the emergence of wine and bike tours, the active wine drinker can now combine the two passions.

"People who are cooped up in the winter want to be outside, and perhaps not feel guilty about indulging a little," says Jason Cohen, the owner of Pour & Pedal ([pourandpedal.com](http://pourandpedal.com)), a group that does exactly what its name advertises—leads bike tours through Long Island Wine Country. The all-inclusive tours, complete with tastings, begin on either the South Fork or the North

Fork, stopping at two wineries from a roster that includes Raphael, Pellegrini Vineyards, Coffee Pot Cellars or Pugliese Vineyards on the North Fork; and Duck Walk Vineyard, Channing Daughters Winery or Wölffer Estate Vineyard on the South Fork.

Tours typically cover about 12 or 13 miles, but with ample breaks for tastings and a picnic lunch, which are included in the Pour & Pedal tours, they are accessible to even the least intrepid of wine adventurers. Bikes are of the leisurely, beach cruiser build, with large, comfy seats. "The terrain is really flat," adds Cohen.

On the North Fork, the route follows Main Road, more formally known as Route 25, taking advantage of the wide shoulder. Seeing Wine Country by bike also gives you an awe-inspiring perspective on the area. People in cars often pass by historic sites without even noticing. But on bicycle, you're able to more deliberately take in the scenery. The private tastings are pre-

A woman with long blonde hair, wearing sunglasses and a green dress, is smiling while riding a bicycle. She is wearing a gold shoulder bag. The background shows a clear blue sky and the ocean.

## WINE COUNTRY

planned at each stop, with a Pour & Pedal guide leading you through the different varietals as you sip.

Toward the end of the tour, riders get to enjoy the unique part of the trip—biking through an actual vineyard. Picture off-roading in between the lush grapes, as they prepare to be something much more tasty. Whereas the time spent on the road is relatively flat, the tour in the vineyard provides more adventure, offering unparalleled views of the vines, as it often ends at the highest point on a property.

If beer and biking is more your style, Brew Crew Cycles ([brewcycles.com](http://brewcycles.com)) has your ride. Newly launched this year, the company takes revelers on a tour of Riverhead's burgeoning craft brewery scene. Specifically, you'll visit Crooked Ladder Brewing Co., Long Ireland Brewery and Moustache Brewing Co., all while pedaling a 14-seater passenger bike. This tour is less of a workout than a form of transportation, and the party bike only really needs eight people to commit to pedaling in order to propel the bike.

The bikes, which reach a max speed of 6 mph, are controlled by a tour guide who steers and keeps an eye on the rowdiness level. Tastings are not included in the tour, allowing party-bikers to tailor their beer-drinking experience to their liking—perhaps someone wants all light beers for summer. Or all stouts. Or just large enough quantities of beer.

Brew Crew Cycles is a family business run by 10 women who decided to partner after going on a similar party-bike tour in Portland, Oregon. "We thought, 'This would be so good to do in Riverhead,'" founder Victoria Clacherty recalls.

Over the past five years, three breweries have opened within a half-mile radius in Riverhead. "We want to make Riverhead the craft brewing capital of Suffolk County and, hopefully, Long Island," says Riverhead Town Supervisor Sean Walter, adding that Brew Crew Cycles may help toward that goal.

The East End is all about an active lifestyle, but combining the great outdoors and a local pour seems only natural. Sip, sun and repeat. ☀