

# Valparaiso festival highlights restaurants, wine



Valparaiso Food & Wine Festival on July 16 offers wine pairings for the first time. (Valparaiso Events / Handout)

By **Jessi Virtusio**  
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**T**he 4th annual Valparaiso Food & Wine Festival July 16 has taken an upscale turn.

"This year ... we are doing food pairings. We have added aerial performances. There's of course live music. There's culinary demonstrations, which is a little bit different," said Jennifer Peek, marketing director for Valparaiso Events.

Peek said the revamping allows more emphasis on vendors such as Blue Point Oysters & Sushi Bar, Bon Femme Cafe, Designer Desserts, Don Quijote Restaurante, Greek's Pizzeria, Kelsey's, Lucrezia Olive Oil & Wine Bar, Main + Lincoln, Pikk's Tavern and Sage Restaurant.

"What we were looking to do was make sure it was an experience for people who really enjoyed wine. We looked at what people are asking for: to have the tastings along with the wines so they can figure out food pairings," said Peek, of Valparaiso.

"The culinary demonstrations create more time for people to relax and enjoy so we definitely still have the

unlimited wine tasting. Valparaiso just has such a great list of upscale restaurants so we really wanted to bring them in and let people experience more of what we have to offer."

The Actors Gymnasium provides aerial performances and live statues. The Jeff Brown Trio performs live music.

"People really enjoy being able to be outside on a beautiful summer evening downtown. It's just a great venue to stroll, be out and enjoy the summer too," Peek said.

"There'll be over 60 wines to taste. There will be 10 food pairings. Then we will have three different culinary demonstrations ... People will have plenty to do."

M&S Collison Centers, which has locations in Valparaiso and Chesterton, is presenting partner of Valparaiso Food & Wine Festival, one of Valparaiso Events' ticketed offerings that help support other events year-round.

"We have a great downtown. The fact that we're able to have so many events keeps people coming downtown. That makes for a great community," Peek said.

"We have a lot of sponsors that enjoy our events and marketing themselves at our events, and that keeps the rest of the events free. We do over 80 days of events in Valparaiso each year and most of them are free and family-friendly, so it's nice to be able to live in a community that's so active."

## **Valparaiso Food & Wine Festival**

When: 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. July 16

Where: Central Park Plaza's William E. Urschel Pavilion, 70 Lafayette St., Valparaiso

Tickets: \$75 unlimited food and wine samples; \$35 unlimited food samples; limited tickets available

Information: 219-464-8332 or [www.valparaisoevents.com](http://www.valparaisoevents.com)

Etc.: must be 21 or older with valid identification

*Jessi Virtusio is a freelance reporter*

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