

PAIRING WINE WITH GOAT

LOTS OF LAUGHS AND
A LITTLE BIT OF YOGA

BY CYMBRE FOSTER

YOU'RE ON YOUR YOGA MAT SINKING DEEPER INTO CHILD'S POSE WHEN YOU FEEL FOUR TINY HOOVES ON YOUR BACK. THE HOOVES BELONG TO A GOAT WHO MAY TAKE A MOMENT TO NIBBLE ON YOUR PONYTAIL OR BURP IN YOUR EAR BEFORE MOVING ON.

Welcome to goat yoga.

It's one of the latest exercise crazes, marrying a yoga class with naturally playful and curious goats. By design, you won't get an epic workout or increase your mindfulness, but it is almost guaranteed to improve your mood.

Now add wine.

Some Michigan wineries have decided that goat yoga pairs perfectly with their products. Goat yoga debuted at Westview Orchards and Winery in Washington, Mich., last summer. The classes, taught by Updog Yoga of Rochester, were so popular that owner Katrina Roy is offering weekly classes this year as well.

"This is a sixth-generation farm, and for us this is a part of agritourism," says Roy, who co-owns the Macomb County farm with her sister Abby Jacobson. A glass of wine and appetizers are included in the class price.

Nearly every week during the summer of 2018, more than two dozen folks rolled out their yoga mats on a bed of fresh straw. Then one to two handlers ushered in the freshly washed baby goats to nibble and nuzzle during the hourlong class.

"The handlers watch for certain poses to put a little food on their backs to entice the goats to get up close and personal," Roy says. "Most of the time people are rolling around and



Goat yoga has been a hit at Westview Orchards in Washington, which included a glass of wine and appetizers in the class price.

laughing; it's more about the goat interaction than the yoga.

"It's all about the experience. It's laugh therapy, animal therapy and they learn about goats."

When Dave Burgdorf, who co-owns Burgdorf's Winery with his wife Deb, read about goat yoga, he decided it would be fun to bring it to their winery in Haslett.

"I grew up on a farm with goats, and they're better than a puppy," he says. "I like to think

outside the box and thought goat yoga would be a fun activity."

They put up fencing near their grapevines and hired Original Goat Yoga Michigan in Williamston to facilitate. After class, participants could relax with a glass of wine during an hourlong Goat Happy Hour.

"There were probably 30 to 40 people," Dave says. "People really liked it, and it was a great opportunity to interact with farm animals."

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF UPDOG YOGA STUDIO