



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

A Toast to the Success of Local Wineries: Senator Ritchie's Weekly Column

PATTY RITCHIE August 16, 2016



When you think of quality wine, what comes to mind first? California? The Finger Lakes? Today, our region is home to a number of wineries that boast some of the most refreshing, tastiest local beverages in the country, many of which have earned local, state and national awards.

Our region is lucky enough to be home to two wine trails—the Thousands Islands-Seaway Wine Trail and the St. Lawrence County Wine Trail, which was created through legislation I

sponsored in the Senate. These trails help to shine a spotlight on our local wineries, literally putting them on a map and creating a tourist destination for people looking to experience our region's "good taste." In addition, they also act as catalysts for economic activity, helping to create jobs and encouraging people to shop locally.

Now is the perfect time to visit our local wineries, as several of them were just recently recognized for their top-notch products:

Busted Grapes Winery: The winery, located in Black River, won the "Best White Wine" category with their "2015 Diamond" at the New York State Fair Commercial Winery Competition. Owners Troy and Nickey Aubin also received a Double Gold for the winery's "Angelo Blu," as well as a Silver for their "Conquered."

Coyote Moon Vineyards: This Clayton winery recently took home a number of awards at the Governor's Cup Wine Competition, held at Watkins Glen. Award-winning wines included their "Brianna," "Fireboat Red" and "Razzle Dazzle."

Tug Hill Vineyards: Another participant in the Governor's Cup Wine Competition, Tug Hill Vineyards took home a top prize for their "White Out, Estate."

These are just a "taste" of the awesome wineries in our region. For a complete list of wineries in Jefferson, Oswego and St. Lawrence Counties, I encourage you to visit the New York Wine and Grape Foundation's website at www.newyorkwines.org. There, you'll find information on wineries across New York State, and can search for wineries in our region, such as:

OSWEGO COUNTY:

Ashley Lynn Winery

Bella Fattoria Winery

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY:

River Myst Winery

High Peaks Winery

Bella-Brooke Vineyards

JEFFERSON COUNTY:

Yellow Barn Winery

Otter Creek Winery

Thousand Islands Winery

Coyote Moon Vineyards

Busted Grapes Winery

The Cape Winery

Venditti Vineyards

As Chair of the Senate Agriculture Committee, it's a top priority for me to support New York's agribusiness owners. In recent years, I have been proud to fight for funding for programs that help bolster New York's wineries and vineyards, as well as to advocate for the passage of legislation to boost the industry, which generates more than \$4.8 billion annually for New York State, and includes nearly 1,700 family vineyards, as well as more than 400 wineries—up from just 14 wineries in New York State in 1976.

Moving forward, I am looking to further strengthen our state's craft beverage industry in a variety of ways. One of my top priorities is looking for new opportunities to connect our region's wine trails that helps to create increased business for local beverage producers. In addition, I am also looking into the possibility of working with Canada to create an

international wine, farm and food trail, which will serve to showcase wines and foods from our two nations and at the same time, bring in Canadian dollars that will support our local economies.

The recent successes of our region's wineries goes to show that we don't have to look very far to find some of the best tasting wines in the state. For more information on our local wine trails, and to stay up to date on my efforts to support the industry, visit my website at www.ritchie.nysenate.gov.