

Johnson Estate Winery: New Release: Maple Liqueur – Celebrate Maple Sugar Season 2015

New York's Oldest Estate Winery Releases Its First Liqueur – Celebrates with French Crêpes March 21 & March 28

Westfield (NY) – March is maple sugar season in western New York. The coming week's forecasted day-time temperatures in the forties and night-time temperatures in the twenties means that the tapping season for the region's maple producers can finally begin.

Johnson Estate Release New Maple Syrup Infused Liqueur



Johnson Estate will celebrate this year's season with the special release of the winery's newest product, a maple-infused liqueur, now available for tasting and sale in the winery. Jeff Murphy, Johnson Estate's winemaker, used 100% local maple syrup to flavor a fortified liqueur made from estate-grown grapes. The result is unusual, unexpected, and delicious.

Jeff was inspired to make this new beverage because he loves maple syrup – a natural product with a wonderful flavor. As Jeff points out, maple syrup is America's own unique natural sweetener and it was first made by indigenous Americans and then later produced by early American colonists. Jeff used local maple syrup from Red's Best in Clymer, New York and selected a grade of syrup that he felt brought out the best flavor and balance to this special blend of Vidal Blanc wine and neutral grape spirits.

The winery's new liqueur tastes like a combination of sherry and ice wine – fortified and sweet – but with a dry finish due to its 20% alcohol content. The light infusion of maple syrup provides a warming, not-too-sweet maple sensation. The resulting drink is excellent as an aperitif - perhaps served with salted pecans. It may be served "apres-ski", as are mulled wines, after cold activities like skiing, snow-shoeing, or shoveling the driveway! The maple liqueur is also an interesting

accompaniment for desserts: poured over ice cream (or snow or shaved ice) or served with cookies, crème brûlée, or cake.

French Crêpes at Johnson Estate for Maple Weekends, March 21 & 22 and March 28 & 29

Each year, the NYS Maple Association sponsors Maple Weekends, during which the State's maple producers invite customers to view the syrup production at their "sugar shacks". Chautauqua County members of this Association include: Big Maple Farms, Clear Creek Farm, and Fairbanks Maple. This year the weekends will be held on March 21 & 22 and March 28 & 29.

Johnson Estate's own "Maple Weekends" will be held at the same time and will include not only tastings of its new Maple Liqueur, but pairings with freshly-made French crêpes. Chef Jeff Barr will be at the winery on Saturdays, March 21 & 28 from 1 – 5pm, where he will be making crêpes, the traditional French thin version of pancakes, for our customers to sample with the new Maple Liqueur.

Johnson Estate Winery, with 115 acres of vineyards, is the oldest estate winery in New York State. It is a founding member of the Lake Erie Wine Country Trail. For more information please visit www.johnsonwinery.com, or www.facebook.com/johnsonwinery, or call 716-326-2191 or 800-Drink-NY. Additional information about regional maple producers and events may be found on www.MapleWeekends.com and www.NYSMaple.com.