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Johnson ESTATE Winery: Celebrates Spring with 2017 Limited Vintage “May Wine”

What does the TTB (Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau) Have to Do with It?

Westfield, (NY) *The answer to that question is found when you look at the label on the bottle of our newly-released 2017 May Wine. The label says “May” in big letters. Not May Wine. Not Vidal Blanc Wine. Just May. Why? Because the TTB said so. Because there is no official classification for “May Wine” – red and white wine, but not May. Every label used on Johnson Estate’s wines must be pre-approved by the TTB (Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau) which regulates the wine and alcohol businesses in the United States to “prohibit consumer deception and the use of misleading statements on labels and ensure that labels provide the consumer with adequate information as to the identity and quality of the product”. By the way, the TTB is also responsible for the approval of defined American viticultural areas - Johnson Estate Winery is in the middle of “Lake Erie East” AVA.*

Now We Know About the Label – Tell Us About the Wine

First released last spring, Johnson Estate’s May Wine is a slightly sweet and bubbly wine made from Vidal Blanc grapes, delicately flavored with an infusion of sweet woodruff. Winemaker, Jeff Murphy, was inspired by the annual celebration of May Day in Germany – where the festivities include “Maiwein” and punches, including one that often features white wine, strawberries, and the shade-loving dried herb, sweet woodruff. In this case, winemaker Jeff Murphy used these ideas to create Johnson Estate’s own May Wine, using estate-grown Vidal Blanc grapes and dried sweet woodruff.

But What is Sweet Woodruff (*Galium Odoratum*)?

In Germany, sweet woodruff is called “Waldmeister” or the “Master of the Woods”. It is a spring blooming deciduous perennial plant which thrives in moist woodland shade. In the Middle Ages, it was known as an herbal medicine since the dried leaves contain coumarin and infusions were used as a spring tonic. When dried, the herb has the long-lasting scent of freshly-mown grass and also vanilla. The dried herb has been used for centuries as a strewing herb, a pot pourri or perfume ingredient, a tonic in tea, and an ingredient in German May Wine or a punch made with white wine and sweet woodruff - to celebrate the coming of spring.

Winemaker’s Dinner April 29th & Other Spring Events

Johnson Estate will be celebrating the release of the new vintage of its spring wine on April 29th with a Winemaker’s Dinner, featuring the spring inspired five-course dinner catered by Elegant Edibles. Other spring events include: Wine & Cheese Pairing Night (featuring Reverie Creamery on May 20th), **Winemaker’s Dinner, Romance in France (May 27th)**, **Sunday Morning Vineyard Walks (commencing May 28th)**, and **French picnics in the Estate iris gardens**. Details may be found on the winery’s online Event Calendar.

Johnson Estate Winery is one of the founding members of the Lake Erie Wine Country Trail and is the oldest farm winery in New York. Its wines are sold throughout PA, NY, and northern Ohio as well as online to residents in 32 states. For more information please visit www.johnsonwinery.com, or www.facebook.com/johnsonwinery, or call 716-326-2191 or 800-Drink-NY.