

Where they know you by name

► MAPLE LAKE WINE & SPIRITS

By Brenda Erdahl

The right beverage can enhance any meal and with Christmas right around the corner now is the time to start planning the menu for your next holiday feast.

Maple Lake Wine and Spirits off Highway 55 East in Maple Lake is the perfect place to begin. The local municipal liquor store carries a vast variety of popular, unique, and locally brewed products, plus its knowledgeable staff can direct you to the wine, beer or bourbon that will go perfectly with whatever dish you are serving.

Wine is probably the most popular selection when it comes to pairing with holiday meals. If you are looking to impress your guests with a fun, local wine, General Manager Ang Berthiaume recommends trying something from Carlos Creek's Minnesota Nice series. Their Hot Dish Red is the Alexandria winery's No. 1 selling label and is promoted as pairing well with holiday leftovers but goes well with everything, Berthiaume said. Their You Betcha' Blush is another popular pick with its fruity taste and rosé coloring. Then there is Wobegon White, which complements a variety of foods and is



Maple Lake Wine and Spirits staff remind you to shop local this holiday season. Pictured are Kate Heberling and Ang Berthiaume.

sure to please.

If you favor beer over wine but still want something unique Dangerous Man Brewing might be the ticket. Brewed right here in Maple Lake at the Dangerous Man production facility, their seasonal brews are as popular as their standard House IPA. Try their Peanut Butter Porter for a dark, nutty taste or their Hazy IPA for a juicier, smooth almost tropical flavor. MLWS also carries their POG Sour and Kolsch.

If you are looking for something that shouts tradition, Fireball has an eggnog on the shelves

called Yule Nog. New this season from Stella Rosa is a trio of cream liqueurs that may just provide the perfect ending to your holiday meal. Try one or all. They come in salted caramel, pistachio and chocolate hazelnut.

If you are looking for something completely different THC cocktails are becoming increasingly popular. MLWS also carries a large selection of non-alcoholic wines and beers.

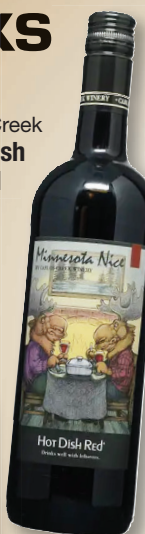
The Maple Lake liquor store is also a great

- Continued on page 2

Ang Berthiaume's

Holiday Wine Picks

Carlos Creek
Hot Dish
Red



Carlos Creek
You Betcha
Blush

Carlos Creek
Wobegon
White



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New Years Eve: 9am-9pm
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▶ MAPLE LAKE WINE & SPIRITS

place to buy gifts. Stella Rosa's new holiday gift pack, "Stellabration Assortment" consists of five refreshing and bubbly wines in Rosso, Stella Peach, Stella Berry, Lemon Lime and Black. Gift cards are also available for the hard-to-shop for people on your Christmas list this season.

Your hometown "muni"

Maple Lake Wine and Spirits isn't just another run-of-the-mill liquor store. It's a hometown "muni" owned and operated by The City of Maple Lake which means all the money you spend here goes back into local projects and works to keep city taxes low, but best of all, staff are legitimately happy to see you and serve you.

"You're not just a number to us. We know you by name," Berthiaume said.

The staff's devotion to friendly and honest service has earned them the loyalty and support of their customers, and it shows. This year alone, they raised more than \$4,500 through fundraisers and events they hosted to benefit the community, and every dollar went back into different, local organizations. For instance, every year MLWS holds an in-store silent auction fundraiser for the Maple Lake Fire Department to purchase needed equipment and every year the liquor store's patrons rise to the occasion. This year, they raised \$2,972 for that endeavor.

MLWS also collects donations for the local food shelf and the Maple Lake Public Schools' Backpack Buddies program. Backpack Buddies provide families in need with a holiday basket filled with generously donated essentials like toilet paper, soaps, deodorants, etc. plus all the fixings for a holiday meal and food to keep kids satisfied through the Christmas break.

Every fall, the liquor store participates in the local library fundraiser. This event is the biggest fundraiser of the year for the all-volunteer run Maple Lake Library and Wine and Spirits contributes by offering



Maple Lake Wine and Spirits is once again carrying Dangerous Man Brewing items. These locally brewed beers will make a unique and flavorful addition to your holiday gathering.

a 10 percent discount on any wines customers buy to donate to the event's wine pull, plus, staff sees that the wine gets to the fundraiser on time. Customers can also donate cash and liquor store staff will pick out the wine.

A great selection

Maple Lake Wine and Spirits offers a vast variety of items including many Minnesota-made wines, liquors, and craft beers. In addition to the Maple Lake made Dangerous Man Brewing, Carlos Creek and Crow River, you can also find products from Millner Heritage Winery in Kimball, Lupulin Brewing in Big Lake, Winehaven in Chisago Lakes, Crow River Winery in Hutchinson plus rums, vodkas, and bourbons from Little Round Still in Wadena. The store still carries all the popular brands as well, plus a large selection of off-the-wall drinks sure to spur conversation around the dinner table such as pickle flavored vodka, and Eggo brand waffles and syrup cream liqueur. Plus, it's that time of the year for all the seasonal flavors to make

their appearance, such as RumChata Peppermint bark cream and Mothers pumpkin pie liqueur. Maple Lake Wine and Spirits has a "great selection for a small, hometown liquor store and customers like that we have such a wide variety," Berthiaume said. "If you can't find something you are looking for, just ask and we'll order it."

Rewards program

To make shopping at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits economical, Berthiaume and her staff have a successful rewards program called the Lucky Irish Rewards where every pre-taxed dollar spent earns customers a point. When they reach 500 points, they get a \$10 in-store credit. Monthly specials on domestic beers, craft beers and wines make shopping at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits even more affordable.

Wine Club

It's important for the staff at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits to promote the community, which is why they organize a successful Wine Club that currently has 300 members and meets every six to eight

weeks. They hold numerous wine tastings throughout the year that are open to the public but offer discounts to members. In September they hosted a Beers Brats and Bourbon night and in November they held a Minnesota Hotdish Night that paired four different types of hot dishes with wines from Winehaven Winery in Chisago Lakes.

On Dec. 10, MLWS will hold its annual Holiday Wine and Spirits Tasting. From 7 to 9 p.m. at the American Legion in Maple Lake sample a wide variety of items and find the perfect fit for your holiday get togethers. The night includes appetizers, door prizes and holiday gift ideas. Only 125 tickets are available for this event on sale at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits. As always wine club members receive a discount on the ticket price.

To keep up with all the fun activities the Wine Club has planned, watch the liquor store's Facebook Page or sign up for email notifications on the City of Maple Lake website under the Maple Lake Wine and Spirits tab.

"As long as our wine club members keep attending our wine tastings, and continue ordering wines from the tastings, we can continue to have these great events," Berthiaume said.

Your business is appreciated

"We want to say thank you to all our customers for shopping locally instead of going to the big box stores. We're friendly, we know you by name, plus, when you shop here, all the proceeds go back to city projects. It stays local and keeps city taxes low," Berthiaume said.

The municipal liquor store is open Monday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Holiday hours will be as follows: Christmas Eve from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Christmas Day closed; New Year's Eve from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; New Year's Day closed.



New this season from Stella Rosa is a trio of cream liqueurs that may just provide the perfect ending to your holiday meal. Try one or all of them. Stella Rosa's new holiday gift pack, "Stellabration Assortment" would make a great gift for the holidays.



Tips to keep *Holiday* Guests entertained

Gone are the days when extended families live in close proximity to one another. Ours is now a global society, and it is not unheard of for people to live on the opposite side of the country or even the globe from their parents and siblings. But come the holiday season, families often congregate at one place so they can spend time together. That means that out-of-town guests may be spending a few days with holiday hosts to maximize their visits.

According to Diane Gottsman, a national etiquette expert and owner of The Protocol School of Texas, a weekend is typically sufficient for a nice visit, while anything more than three days can be challenging for hosts, particularly if guests are not being helpful.

Hosting houseguests for a few days requires hosts to keep guests engaged. Although the actual holiday itself provides ample opportunity for entertainment, hosts may need additional ideas to quell boredom if visits stretch for more than one day. Here are some ideas for making spirits bright without having to stress too much.

Create a guest basket

Offer some in-house entertainment for guests. This can include best-selling novels, a book of word games, an adult coloring book, or some small craft kits picked up at the store. This option enables guests to self-soothe if boredom strikes.

Host a movie marathon

When guests visit, hosts can whip up some microwave popcorn and additional snacks and cue up a few different films. They can be holiday classics or movies that will bring back fond memories.

Take a trip

This time of year there are plenty of activities going on. Plan a drive over to a Christmas tree farm that may be offering rides through the fields or has a hot cocoa station. Walk down the main street of a quaint local town and savor all of that cozy flavor. Time



a trip to a tree lighting or another holiday-related special event, or drive around at night and look at neighborhood lighting displays.

Make an edible craft

Spend some time in the kitchen making gingerbread cookies or another relatively easy holiday treat. Guests can customize their desserts with colored sprinkles or other embellishments.

Set up Christmas karaoke

Get everyone in the holiday spirit by streaming instrumental tracks of favorite holiday carols and songs. Everyone takes turns singing a tune, whether they're great singers or not. The fun is in giving it a shot and laughing along the way.

Go on a crawl

Whether it's to visit area pubs, diners, dessert shops, or coffee spots, pick a few different places to stop in so everyone can get some fresh air and have a little fun.

Entertaining guests for the holidays requires some creative thinking and a willingness to have a little fun.

Walleye limit at three for winter on Mille Lacs

MN DNR Report

The walleye limit for ice fishing season on Mille Lacs Lake will remain at three fish longer than 17 inches, only one of which can be longer than 20 inches.

"Mille Lacs' walleye population is trending in a good direction for both adult and juvenile fish," said Brad Parsons, fisheries section manager for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "We're pleased to keep the current regulation in place for this winter and offer anglers this harvest opportunity."

For yellow perch, the daily and possession limit will be 10. The change is a shift from last year, which began with a perch daily and possession limit of 20 that had to be reduced to 5 after the state in early March, exceeded its harvest allocation. The daily and possession limit of 10 is intended to provide state anglers the opportunity to harvest a meal of perch while also keeping the state within its harvest allocation.

Each year the state and the Ojibwe nations who retain harvest rights in the 1837 Treaty Area jointly set the harvest amounts for different fish species in Mille Lacs for the year. Fall netting data informs where harvest levels will be set when the state and Tribes meet in January. Once harvest levels for the year and the state's winter harvest are known, the state may need to adjust regulations for the open water season that begins on May 9, 2026.

With northern pike increasing in abundance over the past two years to the highest numbers ever measured by the DNR, the possession limit will increase from three to five fish. This regulation retains a length limit of 30 inches that has been in place since 2020, which protects Mille Lacs Lake's trophy-sized pike, while the possession limit increase is intended to encourage additional harvest.

Winter fishing regulations for walleye will be in effect from Monday, Dec.

1, through Sunday, Feb. 22, 2026. Yellow perch regulations will be in effect from Monday, Dec. 1, through Friday, May 8, 2026. Northern pike regulations will be in effect from Monday, Dec. 1, through Tuesday, March 31, 2026.

Winter regulations for Mille Lacs Lake are set after completion of the DNR's annual fall netting assessments. The 2025 assessment found a slightly lower adult walleye abundance than in 2024, along with strong numbers of year-old walleye that have good potential to contribute to the fishery in the future.

Forage species such as young yellow perch and tullibee also are currently abundant, allowing medium to larger walleyes to fatten up over the summer and be in good condition heading into the winter.

Complete regulations and additional information about Mille Lacs Lake are available on the Minnesota DNR website (mndnr.gov/millelacslake).



Happy Holidays



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Community Calendar | 2025 December

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Annual Festival of Trees, Wright County Historical Society, Mon.-Fri. 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m and Saturdays 9 a.m.-3 p.m. All Month Long Annandale Conservation Club- 7:30 p.m. South Haven City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m.	3 Maple Lake Chamber Meeting, 12 p.m.	4 Full Moon Legion Riders Club at The Legion Club, 7 p.m.	5 Christ Child Luncheon, St. Ignatius Church, Annandale, 10:45 a.m.-1 p.m.	6 Christmas in Maple Lake, 10-2 p.m. Deck the Halls, Buffalo, 3-5 p.m. St. Tim's Craft & Bake Sale, 9-6 p.m. Santa at Bertram Park, 9:30 - 1:30 p.m. Christmas Bake Sale, Silent Auction and Christmas Luncheon, St. John's Church Annandale, 9 a.m.-1 p.m.
7 Pearl Harbor Day Sunrise- 7:43 a.m. Sunset- 4:33 p.m. MN Vikings vs. Washington Commanders, 12 p.m.	8 Annandale City Council Meeting, City Hall, 7 p.m. Maple Lake School Board Meeting 7 p.m. AHS Choir Concert, AHS Auditorium, 7 p.m.	9 Chatham Township Meeting, 7 p.m. American Legion Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Club	10 MLWS Wine & Spirit Tasting at American Legion 7:00 p.m. Hasty-Silver Creek Sportsmen's Club Meeting, 7 p.m. Annandale Chamber Meeting, TBD, 11:30 a.m.	11 Sons of the American Legion, 8 p.m. at the Legion Club Maple Lake Lions, 7 p.m. at The V by HH	12	13 Main Street Holiday, Annandale, 8-5 Maple Lake Boys Irish Basketball @ Benson High School, 7:30 p.m.
14 MN Pioneer Park Pioneer Christmas, 11-2 p.m. Hanukkah Begins Sunrise- 7:49 a.m. Sunset- 4:34 p.m. MN Vikings @ Dallas Cowboys, 7:20 p.m.	15 Annandale School Board Meeting, 7 p.m. AHS Jazz Tunes & Treats, Commons, 7 p.m. Holiday Train, Buffalo 6 p.m. Holiday Train, Annandale at 7:30 p.m. Holiday Train, Eden Valley 9 p.m.	16 Maple Lake City Council Meeting, 7 p.m. Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. Maple Lake Township Meeting, 7 p.m. Albion Township Meeting, 7 p.m. Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. M.L. VFW Post 7664, the The V, 7 p.m.	17	18 Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. M.L. Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m.	19 December New Moon	20
21 First day of Winter/Winter Solstice Sunrise- 7:53 a.m. Sunset- 4:37 p.m. MN Vikings @ NY Giants, 12 p.m.	22 Annandale Christmas Break Begins	23 Maple Lake Christmas Break Begins Wright County Snowmobile Association Meeting - American Legion, 7:30 p.m.	24 Christmas Eve	25  Christmas Day MN Vikings vs. Detroit Lions, 3:30 p.m.	26 Kwanzaa Begins	27 Annandale Cardinals Boys Basketball @ Buffalo, 2:30 p.m.
28 Sunrise- 7:55 a.m. Sunset- 4:42 p.m. MN Vikings vs. Green Bay Packers, 12 p.m.	29	30	31			

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