

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

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Ang Berthiaume's  
Holiday Wine Picks

Carlos Creek Hot Dish Red

Carlos Creek You Betcha Blush

Carlos Creek Wobegon White

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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.

STELLA ROSA  
STELLABRATION ASSORTMENT

Refreshing delicious and bubbly

STELLA ROSA  
ROSSO

STELLA ROSA  
STELLA PEACH

STELLA ROSA  
STELLA BERRY

STELLA ROSA  
LEMON LIME

STELLA ROSA  
BLACK

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.

STELLA ROSA  
SALTED CARAMEL CREAM LIQUEUR

STELLA ROSA  
PISTACHIO CREAM LIQUEUR

STELLA ROSA  
CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT CREAM LIQUEUR