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## Walpole Mountain View Winery Wins Farm Distinction Award

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Walpole Mountain View Winery Vineyards overlooking the Connecticut River Valley

By Joe Milliken

WALPOLE - Located at Barnett Hill Vineyard in Walpole, the Walpole Mountain View Winery is indeed, a unique establishment. And not just because New Hampshire isn't exactly the most ideal climate for growing grapes. Although in recent years, more and more wineries "are" beginning to crop up throughout New Hampshire and Vermont.

When asked what the biggest challenge was as far as growing in the Northeast climate, Virginia Carter, owner said, "Determining the best grape cultivars for our unique "terroir" (i.e. the French word that encompasses the whole concept of climate, weather/rainfall, sun

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orientation, wind amount/direction, and soil/mineral conditions). These need

to be grapes that ripen early, have enough growing time to develop complex flavors, are disease resistant (we're trying to stay as "organic" as possible), and that cannot only survive, but thrive, through our cold winters."

In February, the Walpole winery was awarded with a prestigious "2012 Farm Distinction Award" given by the N. H. Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food. The award was presented to the Walpole winery by N. H. Commissioner of Agriculture, Lorraine Merrill, at the recent N. H. Farm and Forest Expo in Manchester, N. H.

Launched in 1997, the N. H. Farms of Distinction program recognizes those farms that make an effort to keep their farm stands neat and attractive. To date, the award has been given to 102 farms throughout the state, and each recognized farm displays a unique Farm of Distinction sign.

So, along with this great distinction, what else makes this quaint Walpole winery so unique in its own right? Why, it is the winery and vineyard owner, Virginia Carter, the "only" female viticulturist, (the cultivation of grapes) enologist, (the study of winemaking) and female-owned winery operation. What's more, every bottle of wine Carter sells comes directly from her own vineyard.

Carter and her family bought the Barnett Hill Road property in 2000, after first looking at the property and literally saying to themselves "If this land was anywhere else in the world, it would be a great vineyard." Little did they realize that indeed, four years later they would plant their first 250 vines in the spring of 2004, which produced their first harvest in 2006.

Carter went commercial with a 2008 vintage in 2009 and today, Walpole Mountain View Winery grows 32 varieties of French-American hybrid and cold-climate grapes. Four of which are seedless table grapes for farmers' markets and making raisins, while the other varieties are for wine.

In December, Carter learned that her winery would receive the 2012 Farm of Distinction Award, which is given each year to a farm that maintains its beauty and stays aesthetically pleasing. "It is very gratifying to win this award and a great honor to be recognized by your peers," Virginia Carter recently said. "We want to represent our state in a positive light."

To be nominated, a farm must be commercial, have proper signage and the view of the farm as seen from a public way or an invited approach must be attractive. Anyone may place a farm in nomination for the award by submitting a brief description (in writing) of the farm and why it is recommended the farm be placed in nomination.

Once a farm is nominated, a staff person from the N.H. Department of Agriculture, Markets & Food comes to take photographs of the farm. The photos are then sent to the selection committee, where they decide what farms are chosen for the award.

Any plans or events moving forward?

"We're in the planning process of expanding our tasting room and production areas. We've already outgrown the winery we built in 2009. As of last Thursday (3/1) the Town of Walpole Board of Selectmen has approved our building permit", informed Carter.

"We're also hiring more workers for vineyard, winery, and tasting room work, and we're expanding our days and hours this year.

"Starting May 25th, we'll be open Fridays 5-7pm, Saturdays 12-5pm, and Sundays 1-4 p.m., until Christmas, in order to accommodate additional tourists passing through and staying in our lovely part of the country," continued Carter.

Along with selling wine from their onsite tasting room, Walpole Mountain View Wines can also be found at Burdick's Walpole Grocery, Ingenuity Country Store and Hannah Grimes Marketplace in Keene, The Wine Crate in

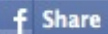
Hanover and both the Walpole and Keene Farmer's Markets. You can also order online at their web site at [www.bhvineyard.com](http://www.bhvineyard.com).

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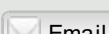
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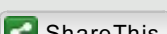
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