



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Thomas F. O'Mara

O'Mara, Palmesano and colleagues host New York Wine Industry Association's 5th Annual 'Sip and Sample': Read and watch more

THOMAS F. O'MARA May 7, 2018

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This year's event featured wineries, cheese producers, food manufacturers, restaurateurs and retailers from the Finger Lakes, Capital Region, Hudson Valley, Long Island, and Central and Western New York.

Albany, N.Y., May 7—Since 2014, the **New York Wine Industry Association (NYWIA)** has welcomed spring in Albany with its annual "Sip and Sample" tasting event hosted by State Senator Tom O'Mara (R,C,I-Big Flats) and Assemblyman Phil Palmesano (R,C,I-Corning) along with several of their legislative colleagues.

The event has continued to grow over the past several years into one of the Legislature's top efforts to promote New York State-made wines, cheeses and other food products.

This year's 5th Annual NYWIA "Sip and Sample" on Monday, May 7 featured wineries, cheese producers, restaurateurs and food manufacturers from the Finger Lakes, Long Island, the Hudson Valley, and Central and Western New York.

In a joint statement, O'Mara and Palmesano said, "The New York Wine Industry Association's annual 'Sip and Sample' has become a rite of spring in Albany. It has grown to be one of the Legislature's primary tools to help keep our incredible wineries, cheesemakers, food manufacturers and other producers at the forefront of state government's attention. We are proud to promote their excellence and quality and we have long said that these sectors of the Empire State's agricultural economy represent an amazing story of cultural and economic success. These industries are economic engines for local communities statewide. They provide good, sustainable livelihoods for thousands of New Yorkers. We look forward to this annual opportunity every spring to show off locally produced wines, cheeses and other products, and we're grateful to NYWIA for its outstanding support and commitment."

[Watch Senator O'Mara address last night's attendees [HERE](#)]

In addition to O'Mara and Palmesano, the event is sponsored by the respective chairs of the Senate and Assembly Agriculture Committees, Senator Patty Ritchie (R,C,IP-Watertown) and Assemblyman Bill Magee (D-Nelson). Other sponsors are Assembly Minority Leader Brian Kolb (R,C-Canandaigua), Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I-Olean), Senator Rich Funke (R,C,I-Fairport), Senator Pamela Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua), Assemblyman Chris Friend (R,C,I-Big Flats), and Assemblyman Gary Finch (R,C,I-Springport).

The lawmakers said Monday's "Sip and Sample" complements the state's overall strategies to promote and support products grown and made in New York.

NYWIA President Suzy Hayes said, "'Sip and Sample' has become one of the favorite events for legislators and their staff because they get the chance to try wonderful New York products while meeting the producers themselves in a festive, informal setting. It is a showcase of New York's finest...the products and the people that make New York a 'grape' place to be!"

Julie Suarez, Associate Dean for Governmental & Community Relations at the **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences**, said, "New York's outstanding local wines are a product of our excellent soils, climate, and entrepreneurs willing to take a simple grape through the complex process of growing, harvesting, and winemaking. Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences is poised to continue to meet the needs of our grape growers and winemakers for life-changing research, teaching, and technical assistance to keep our wineries growing. The 'Sip and Sample' is an excellent way to truly showcase how far New York's wine industry has come over the last thirty years."

Sam Filler, Executive Director of the **New York Wine & Grape Foundation**, said, "'Sip and Sample' celebrates the quality and diversity of wine being produced by the State's wine regions in our State's Capitol. The Foundation is honored to partner with Senator O'Mara, Assemblymember Palmesano, and the New York Wine Industry Association on what has become an annual Albany spring tradition."

The NYWIA was established in 2009 by a group of grape growers, winery owners and other industry professionals as an advocacy, public awareness and education organization.

The following Finger Lakes wineries and cheese producers participated in this year's "Sip and Sample": **Anthony Road Wine Company** (Penn Yan); **Atwater Estate Vineyards** (Burdett); **Chateau LaFayette Reneau** (Hector); **Fox Run Vineyards** (Geneva); **Frontenac Point Vineyard and Estate Winery** (Trumansburg); **Fulkerson Winery** (Dundee); **Glenora Wine Cellars** (Dundee); **Hazlitt 1852 Vineyards** (Hector); **Knapp Winery & Vineyard Restaurant** (Romulus); **Lakewood Vineyards** (Watkins Glen); **Miles Wine Cellars** (Himrod); **Muranda Cheese Company** (Waterloo); **New Vines Bed & Breakfast** (Penn Yan); **Sheldrake Point Winery** (Ovid); and **Three Brothers Wineries & Estates** (Geneva).

The following producers, restaurants and retailers from the Capital Region, Hudson Valley, Long Island, and Central and Western New York regions also participated: **Dinosaur Bar-B-Que** (Troy, Rensselaer County); **Benmarl Winery** (Marlboro, Ulster County); **Brotherhood Winery** (Washingtonville, Orange County); **Galway Rock Vineyard and Winery** (Ballston Lake, Saratoga County); **Long Road Winegrowers** (Galway, Saratoga County); **Mercer's Dairy** (Boonville, Oneida County); **Merritt Estate Winery** (Forestville, Chautauqua County); **Saratoga Sparkling Co.**; and **Tousey Winery** (Germantown, Columbia County).

Also in attendance were representatives from the **College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Cornell University** (with samples of "Cornell Cheddar"); **Cornell Cooperative Extension**; **Finger Lakes Community College** (with samples of wine from their viticulture program); **Long Island Farm Bureau**; **Long Island Wine Council**; **New York Wine Grape Growers**; and the **New York Wine & Grape Foundation**.

The Wine & Grape Foundation estimates the state's grape, grape juice and wine industry annually generates upwards of \$13 billion in overall economic benefits to New York State.

For more information on regional cheese farms, creameries and other producers, visit the **New York State Cheese Manufacturers' Association** and the **Finger Lakes Cheese Alliance**.