

WHITE CAPS WINERY: New Chaumont business opens after five years of hard work



Gail Miller stands in the tasting room Thursday at White Caps Winery in Chaumont. She opened the winery after five years of preparation.

Family farm develops into winery

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CHAUMONT — Gail W. Miller joined the local wine industry when she opened White Caps Winery in June after years of planning and construction.

Ms. Miller, a Chaumont native, said she and her staff were busy during their grand opening last weekend serving wine as fast as they could to several customers who visited the tasting room. Ms. Miller's soft opening for the winery was June 20.

"We had just tremendous, tremendous support," she said. "The community seemed very excited by the fact that there was a new business here

that supported the community."

Ms. Miller's endeavor to build a winery on her 178-acre family farm, Cedar Grove Farm, began five years ago when she started planting her 1,200 grape vines.

Ms. Miller, who is also a Realtor with Lake Ontario Realty, said she wanted to pursue a modern agricultural market that was both productive and manageable. While she previously thought about opening only the vineyard and selling only grapes, she said she learned that selling wine made from her grapes would earn more revenue.



Beth A. Smullen and Freddy C. Grahn of North Carolina visit White Caps Winery on Thursday in Chaumont.

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Gail Miller opens up White Caps Winery after five years of preparation on Thursday in Chaumont.

Winery

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"The ultimate decision about opening a winery versus opening a vineyard alone is a matter of economics," she said. "It's the whole value-added concept."

In order to open her new winery, at 11544 County Route 125, Ms. Miller had to have a new tasting room and barn for processing and storage built on the property.

The tasting room features an 18-foot-long bar with bar stools, couch seating by the fireplace, a cathedral ceiling, porthole windows and nautical-themed decor. Ms. Miller said building and decorating the tasting room along with construction for the processing and storage facility was a two-year-long endeavor following years of planning her supply and a layout that allow possible expansion.

"The (tasting room) was built to be as charming in the winter as it is now," she said, adding that she plans to operate White Caps Winery year-round.

The themes surrounding White Caps Winery and its seven wines were inspired by the history of Cedar Grove Farm



Kathy A. Tripoll of Frankford picks out the wine she will try on Thursday at White Caps Winery.

and the village.

Ms. Miller said a few of her wines and the stories that inspired them include her Red Sails, a red wine inspired by Crescent Yacht Club members who built dinghies with red sails at the Antique Boat Museum in Clayton, and her Red Neck Yacht Club, her sweetest red wine, named after a group of boaters who spent Sundays sailing to Cherry Island. The Tug Hill Vineyards made six

of Ms. Miller's wines with her grapes and additional juice she purchased. Her Pinot Noir was made by a vineyard in the Finger Lakes region.

Like her wines, Ms. Miller said she wanted her winery to embody a history communal waterfront activities and local farmers helping each other by providing a space where her customers can relax, try wine or explore the trails around her vineyard together.

"It makes it more than a business," she said.

Ms. Miller said her plans for the future include hosting weddings, building a bridge between the small pond near the parking lot and the entrance to her winery and to landscape her waterfront lot across the road to allow customers to travel to her winery by boat.

The winery is open all week from noon to 6 p.m.

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