"HERMIT WOODS WINERY IN THE NEWS!"

PROUDLY CONTRARIAN

HERMIT WOODS WINERY

Wine Club Release
Fall 2025

Dear Club Members,

As we prepare to share our Fall Club Release with you, we find ourselves reflecting on the journey that has brought Hermit Woods to this moment. Nearly 15 years ago, the three of us made what seemed like an impossible choice: to craft fine wines without grapes, using instead the fruits, flowers, and honey of New Hampshire. It was uncharted territory – no recipes to follow, no guideposts to lean on – only vision, persistence, and the belief that something extraordinary could be created right here at home.

This year has brought humbling recognition of that journey. From being named Best Winery in New Hampshire by MSN, to features in the Boston Globe, Imbibe Magazine, and CBS's New England Living, the story of Hermit Woods has been celebrated far beyond Meredith. And closer to home, your continued support has helped us earn multiple "Best of the Lakes Region" honors.

But for us, the true reward is not the headlines. It's you – our members. So we raise a glass to you, the very best part of our story. We hope you enjoy our Fall wines.

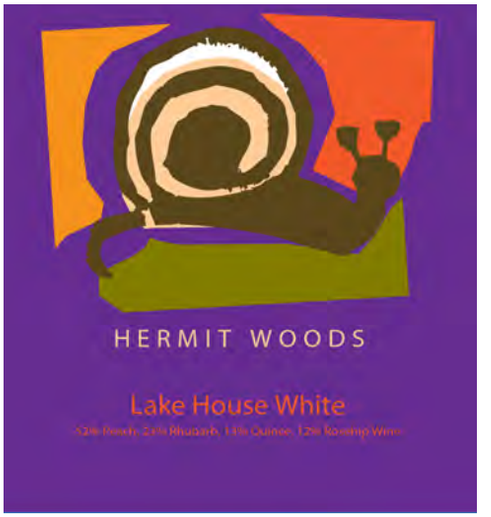
With gratitude,
Ken, Bob, Chuck & Sweets

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2021 Lake House White

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 145 Cases Produced - 12.5 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

Fine Chardonnay from Burgundy is one of my favorite wine types. I love the bright, fresh peach, melon, citrusy aromatics, delicate yet bold mouth-filling flavors, great weight, prominent acidity, and long finish. Our Lake House White approaches those characteristics, but with its own unique herbal aromatics and flavors because it is not made with grapes at all. This special vintage includes about one-third of the wine aged in French Oak barrels for greater depth and structure.

Wine Notes

This wine is a blend of four local ingredients, each contributing key components to the resulting harmony: peaches, quince, rosehips, and rhubarb. It is a complex wine with great aging potential.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy on its own or with anything with which you would pair a fine chardonnay with, such as quiche, cheese, white fish, and creamy soups.

Farmers Notes

The peaches and quince come from local farms; the rosehips are harvested from three local patches and along a shoreline drive in Rye Beach, NH; and the rhubarb (including some wonderful heirloom Whitney rhubarb) is from my garden and some friends' gardens.

Vinification

All the ingredients are combined with a small amount of water and undergo a cold soak maceration for greater aroma, fruit, and tannin extraction. After some initial fermentation by the natural yeast on the peaches, an excellent white burgundy yeast, Lalvin CY3079, is added to the primary fermentation of fourteen days, reaching a peak temperature of 65F. No pressing occurs, to utilize only the gentle free run fraction, then the wine undergoes secondary fermentation in stainless steel. Throughout fermentation and well into elevage, oak spirals (light toast French) are suspended in the wine for wood tannins, flavors, and enhanced structure. One-third of the wine is aged separately in French Oak barrels, and then recombined with the portion aged in stainless steel. The wine is kept on the fine lees (dead yeast), a sur lie technique to soften and enhance the wine. The wine is then gravity racked a few times during elevage and then filtered prior to bottling.

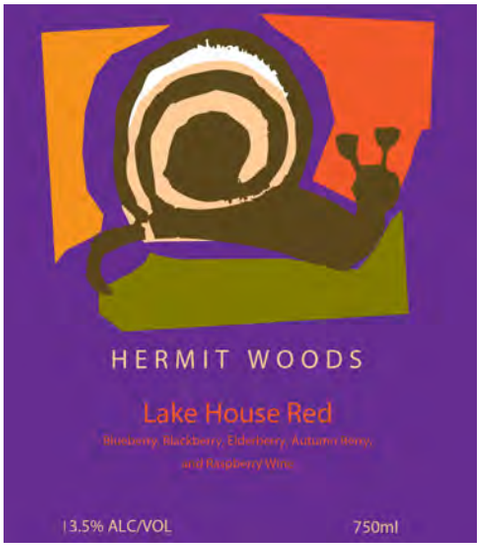
pH 3.55 RS 0% ABV 12.5

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2020 Lake House Red

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 173 Cases Produced - 12.5 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

We first started making wines many years ago, but the first time we blended blueberry, blackberry, elderberry and raspberry wines was in 2013. We called this wine Lake House Red. All but a couple bottles of that first vintage remain in our library; however, we are very pleased to share with you our latest vintage, 2020. We have found this wine age well, able to improve in the cellar over at least 5 years.

Wine Notes

As with past vintages, this wine is produced from wild, low-bush blueberries and blackberries, elderberries, and raspberries. Complex dark fruit notes marry with the oak from barrel aging, yielding a pleasing dry red wine experience like no other.

Pairing Suggestions

As a bright red wine, with plenty of acidity and good structure from the barrel aging, this pairs well with robust cheeses, quiche, and tangy fish preparations.

Farmers Notes

There are multiple sources of fruit for this vintage. The blueberries come from Merrill's Wild Blueberries in Ellsworth, Maine; the blackberries are from New Jersey; and the elderberries are from Arkansas. In the first few years of crafting Lake House Red, we used red raspberries, but that changed in 2019 when we used black raspberries for the first time. Those came from an organic grower in Washington state, but for our more recent vintages, we now have a local black raspberry grower in New Hampshire.

Vinification

In the 2020 vintage, we used our preferred Lalvin D254 and D21 yeasts, but we fermented each component separately, similar to our approach for our early vintages of Hermitage. This allows us to nail the ratio for the best blend and to see what each component brings to the glass for future creations. All four batches (blackberry, elderberry, blueberry, and black raspberry) were ultimately combined, underwent further barrel aging, and then bottled. Total barrel time was about 16 months in French Oak. The wine is unfiltered.

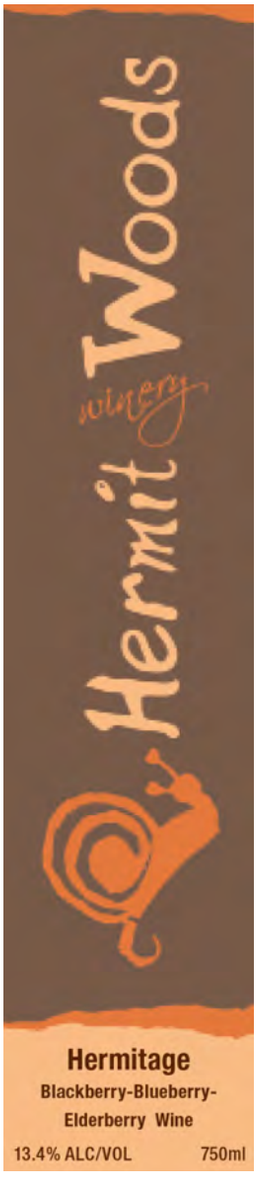
pH 3.62 RS 0% ABV 13.3%

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2020 Hermitage

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 85 Cases Produced - 13.5 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

In France, there is a famous hill on the east bank of the Rhone which is the birthplace of the Syrah grape. It is named Hermitage in memory of the knight "Henri Gaspard de Sterimberg", who decided, upon his return from the Albigenisan Crusades, to live as a hermit on the hill granted to him by Anne of Castille, the Queen of Spain. He replanted the vineyard that would first become known as Ermitage, and then Hermitage. We too have history with a different hermit, Joseph Plummer, who lived back in the 1800's near where our winery originated in 2010. As enthusiasts of Syrah and all wines of the Rhone, it is wonderful to produce a wine from the fruit that grows right around here, and that is reminiscent of the Syrah wines of France's Hermitage. Also, our federal government amazingly granted us permission to label the wine "Hermitage"!

Wine Notes

A blend of four dark berry wines: blackberry, elderberry, black currant, and blueberry. For the first time with this vintage, we co-fermented the dark berries, resulting in better integration of flavors.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy on its own, or with anything with which you would pair a fine syrah or red Rhone blend, such as hearty meat dishes and rich cheeses.

Farmers Notes

We source our blackberries from commercial growers in New Jersey. The elderberries come from Dixieland Farm, an organic grower in Arkansas. The black currants come from a best-practices grower in New York. The blueberries come from Merrill's Wild Blueberries, a three generation family blueberry harvester in Ellsworth, Maine. Todd Merrill works closely with us to ensure we use only the finest quality berries, harvested at maximum ripeness.

Vinification

The blackberry and blueberry wines were fermented with Lalvin D254 yeast, a strain originally captured from a Rhone ferment of Syrah grapes. The elderberries and black currants were fermented with Lalvin D21. The wine underwent secondary fermentation in a stainless steel tank for a few weeks, and then extended elevage in French oak barrels. The wine was gravity-racked a few times during elevage; no fining or filtering occurred. The final blend ratio is approximately: 37% blackberry, 53% blueberry, 8% elderberry and 2% black currant.

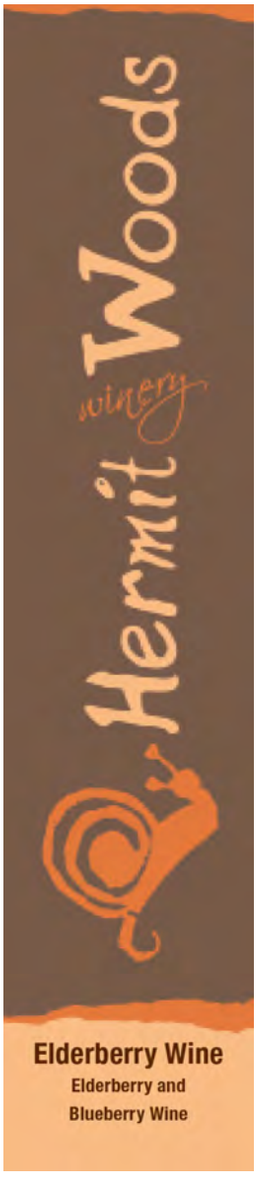
pH 3.44 RS 0% ABV 13.5

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2020 Elderberry

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 80 Cases Produced - 13.5 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

This fantastic fruit grows wild all over New England and there is even a song about elderberry wine, so we had to make such a wine! As you may know, our Hermitage wine is made of a blend of separate wines, including elderberry and blueberry. As we never know what proportions of these wines will be needed to make the optimal Hermitage, we always plan to have some leftover elderberry and blueberry wines. We then blend the remaining wines to find the best ratio for this dark, rich, dry red wine. However, 2020 was the last time we followed this practice, as we began co-fermenting the fruit for Hermitage in subsequent years. So, this is the last vintage of Elderberry wine!

Wine Notes

A blend of two dark berries: mostly elderberry and some blueberry. As with many of the great wines of the world, the wines are vinified and aged separately, then blended before bottling. This is done because different grapes and berries become ripe at different times, and we follow this practice to give us full control over the final blend.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy on its own, or with anything with which you would pair a fine Syrah or red Rhone blend, such as hearty meat dishes. I especially like the rich, earthy character of this wine with venison.

Farmers Notes

Our elderberries come from Dixieland Farm, an organic grower in Arkansas. The blueberries come from Merrill's Wild Blueberries, a three generation family blueberry harvester in Ellsworth, Maine. Todd Merrill works closely with us to ensure we use only the finest quality berries, harvested at maximum ripeness. Our blueberries are the wild berries that grow close to the ground across much of Downeast Maine; the smaller berries provide us with a concentrated flavor and higher skin-to-juice ratio in order to equip our wines with the soft tannins we enjoy.

Vinification

Two wines are first separately crafted and then later combined in a specific ratio. The blueberries are fermented with Lalvin D254 yeast (Rhone strains), and the elderberries with Lalvin Rhone D21. Both wines undergo secondary fermentation in stainless steel tanks for a few weeks, and then an extended elevage in French oak barrels. Each wine is gravity-racked a few times during elevage; no fining or filtering occurs. The final blend ratio for this vintage is 42% blueberry and 58% elderberry.

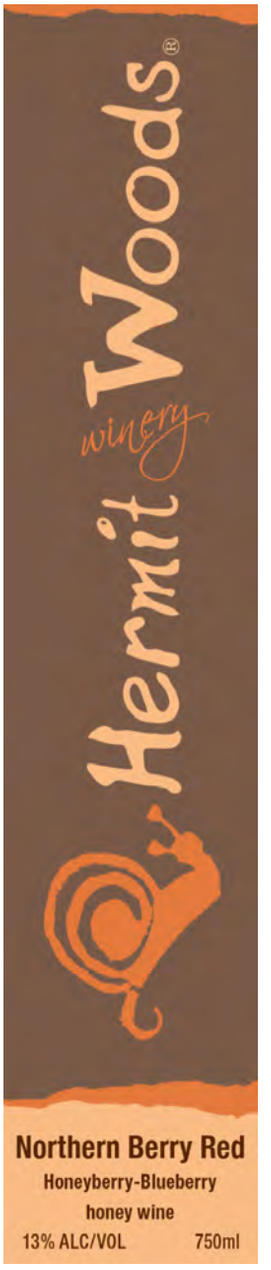
pH 3.6 RS 0% ABV 13.5

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2023 Northern Berry Red

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 105 Cases Produced - 13 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

Many years ago, while researching historic cider making in New England, I came across the description While researching local sources of strawberries, we met Ben at Wayside Farm and Great Northern Berries. Ben not only grows beautiful strawberries, he also introduced us to the honeyberry (or haskap), a fantastic fruit of a certain honeysuckle plant. These berries are typically deep purple-blue in color; oblong, barrel, or flattened bullet in shape; and contain high levels of antioxidants and vitamin C. There are many varieties, with names like Aurora, Keiko, Taka, and Blue Forest. Although we have produced a Honeyberry Wine from these berries for many years, this is the third vintage where we have enough to include it in our club release, and I feel this is our best vintage yet!

Wine Notes

A complex, tangy, deeply colored wine composed mostly of honeyberries, but also including some wild blueberries and local wildflower honey. I often think this combines some of the characteristics found in our Petite Blue blueberry wine and our Heirloom Crabapple wine. Drink 2024-2028+.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy this wine slightly chilled on its own; with robust cheeses; with a caramelized garlic, spinach and cheddar tart; or with leeks au gratin.

Farmers Notes

The honeyberries, which come from Great Northern Berries in North Sandwich, NH, are a blend of varieties and include a good percentage of Aurora, which has the most 'wine-like' character. The wild blueberries are from Merrill's blueberry farms in Ellsworth, Maine; a three generation family wild blueberry harvester. Todd Merrill works closely with us to ensure we use only the finest quality berries, harvested at maximum ripeness. The raw wildflower honey is from local producer Hall Apiaries.

Vinification

For the first vintage of this wine in 2020, three separate wines were made and then combined. This allowed for more detailed insights into the various fermentation combinations and gave greater control over the final blend. For the subsequent vintages, with knowledge on the best combination of materials, we co-ferment all the components to get better integration and benefits from cofactors. The blend of honeyberries, blueberries and honey captures the best of each and creates a very complex honeyberry-blueberry-honey wine. The blend was sterile filtered and 15 g/L of sugar was added before bottling for drinking balance.

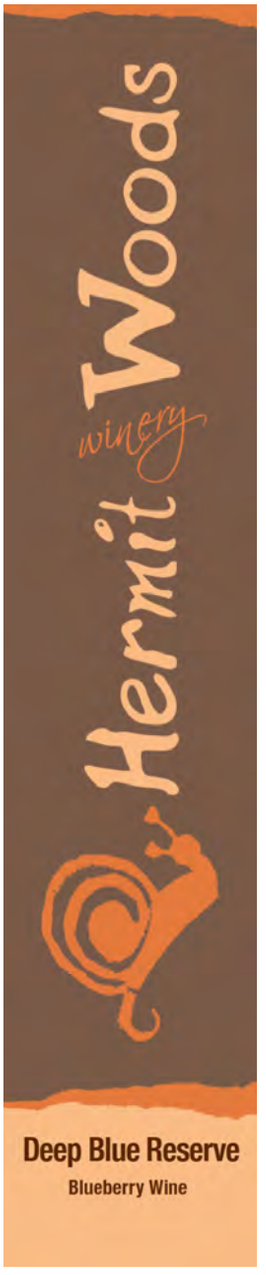
pH 3.05 RS 1.5% ABV 13

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2020 Deep Blue RESERVE - NEW VINTAGE -

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 46 Cases Produced - 17.7 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

Many years ago, while researching historic cider making in New England, I came across the description of 'apple jack.' This is a hard cider concentrated by freezing: put 6% ABV hard cider into a barrel, leave it outside during the freezing month of January, and a thick layer of ice forms on the inside of the barrel, concentrating the alcohol and flavor. Reading this, I decided to 'jack' our Petite Blue blueberry wine. The result was a highly concentrated, higher alcohol, intense and very delicious blueberry wine with port-like characteristics. Unfortunately, we were not legally able to commercially produce a wine this way because this is a cryogenic distillation process, not strictly a fermentation. Fortunately, we realized that instead of adding water to make Petite Blue and then removing it by freezing, we can make Deep Blue, legally, by not adding any water. To increase the alcohol, sugar is added during fermentation and is converted by the yeast. The result is similar (and legal for our winery to produce!).

Wine Notes

A complex, tawny port-like wine with deep rich flavors and engaging aromas. Drink 2025-2035.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy lightly chilled with dessert, such as chocolate, cheesecake, or blueberry pie with vanilla ice cream.

Farmers Notes

Our blueberries come from Merrill's Wild Blueberries in Ellsworth, Maine; a three generation family wild blueberry harvester. 2020 was one of the best years for blueberries: weather conditions were perfect for high ripeness, high sugar berries, perfect for wine!

Vinification

To preserve flavor, the little wild blueberries are carefully cleaned and then deep frozen at the Merrill Facility. So when we receive them, they need to thaw, which results in a nice slow cold extraction of the fruit flavors and nutrients. In fact, many grape wines start by cooling the fresh grapes so that they can go through such a 'cold soak' prior to fermentation for better fruit flavors. Once fully thawed, Lalvin D254 yeast is used to ferment the berries, as well as added sugar for greater alcohol. Once fermented the wine is stored in a French Oak Barrel for over 2 years without topping, partially oxidizing the wine to create a complex bouquet. A bottle of each previous vintage is also added. The wine is not filtered and was bottled straight from the barrel.

pH 3.40 RS 4.0% ABV 17.7

HERMIT WOODS

HARD WORK, LOCAL HEART, NATIONAL ACCLAIM: HERMIT WOODS IN THE MEDIA

In the world of wine, success never happens overnight. It's pressed, aged, and nurtured through years of vision, dedication, persistence, and grit. At Hermit Woods Winery & Sweet Mercy Kitchen, the journey has been no exception. Over the past year alone, our small but mighty team has been recognized again and again for the work we've poured our hearts into. From national media spotlights to local honors, from the shores of Lake Winnipesaukee to international magazines, the story of Hermit Woods has been shared far and wide.

These accolades are not just feathers in our cap. They are affirmations of the hard work, Yankee ingenuity, and creative spirit that have defined us since our beginnings. And while it feels good to see "Hermit Woods" in headlines, what matters most is the reminder that the vision we've carried since 2011 continues to resonate – not just with our loyal members and guests, but with writers, editors, and storytellers across the country.

A Defining Decision

When Ken, Chuck, and Bob founded Hermit Woods nearly 15 years ago, we made what would prove to be our most challenging decision: we chose not to use grapes in our wine production. Compounding this was our desire to produce wines that, unlike most fruit wines, would drink like the classic vinifera wines we were accustomed to enjoying from the great wine regions of the world.

Opening Day, June, 2011

Since then, Ken has worked diligently to crack that code – combining heart, art, science, and obsessive trial and error. The task we set for ourselves was unique. As far as we know, even today, there is no one doing quite what we are doing.

This meant there were no recipes to follow, no fellow winemakers to call, no reference texts to consult. And yet Ken demonstrated that, contrary to popular belief, you can make wines from local New Hampshire fruit that drink like the classic wines of the world. Wines that are dry, complex, food-friendly, and barrel-aged. Wines that not only hold up in the bottle, but often improve with time.

That decision has defined Hermit Woods from day one. It is the reason we are where we are today and the thread that ties together every accolade we've since received.

IN THE MEDIA- HERMIT WOODS

Honored as the Best Winery in New Hampshire

MSN, November 18, 2024

One of the most meaningful moments of the past year was when MSN named Hermit Woods the Best Winery in New Hampshire. For a state with a growing wine scene and plenty of competition, being chosen as the standout felt both humbling and deeply gratifying.

The recognition highlighted our unique approach – crafting wines entirely from locally sourced fruits, flowers, and honey rather than imported grapes. To see that story honored on such a large platform reaffirmed that our nontraditional path is exactly what makes us special.

Yankee Ingenuity in the Spotlight

NEW HAMPSHIRE SUNDAY NEWS
Saturday/Sunday, June 14/15, 2025

Union Leader, June 14, 2025

New Hampshire's largest newspaper, the Union Leader, called our founders the "true definition of Yankee ingenuity." It's a phrase that couldn't fit better.

From the early days of converting a basement into a fermentation room and a master bedroom into a tasting room, to hand-building our first winery sign, to experimenting with fruits most winemakers would overlook, Yankee ingenuity has been the core of everything we do.

Hermit Woods Winery Featured on CBS's New England Living

June 22, 2025

That sense of connection reached a new level when CBS's New England Living came to Meredith to film a feature on Hermit Woods. Their crew spent two days capturing the rhythms of the winery – from tastings in our cellar, to meals prepared in Sweet Mercy's Kitchen, to intimate performances in The Loft.

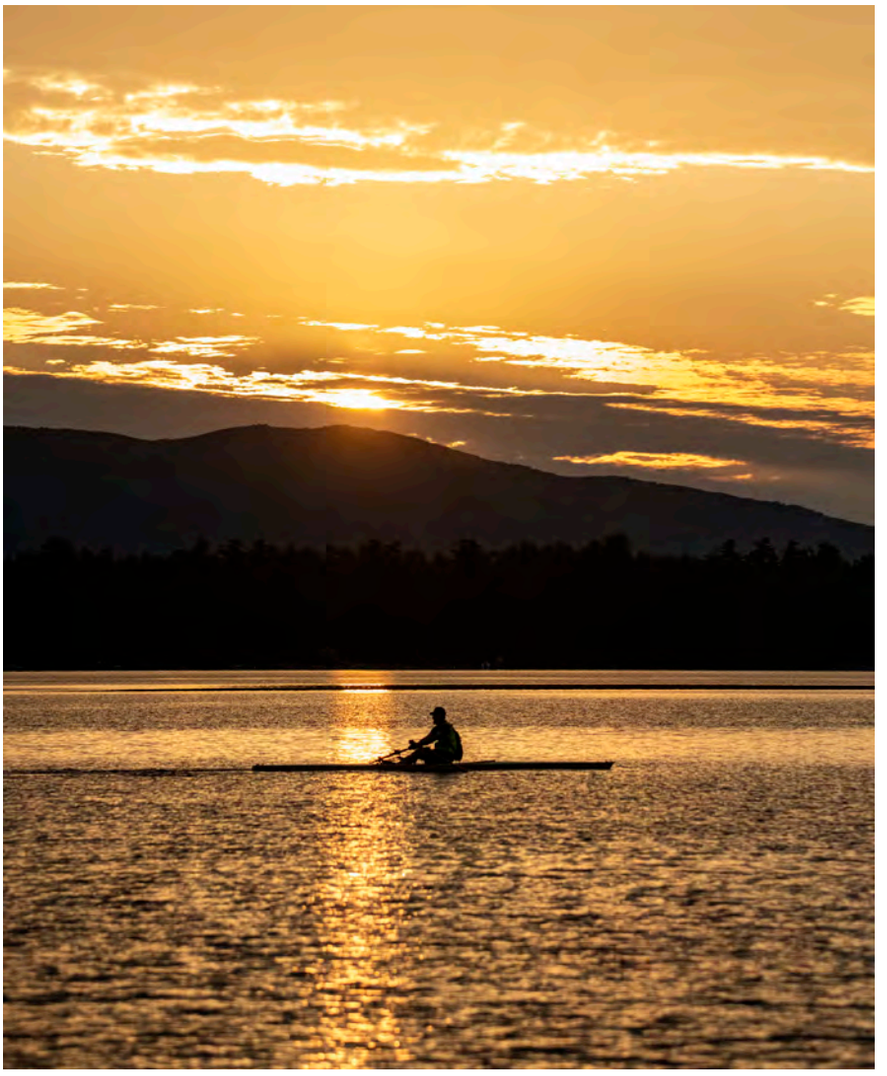
When the episode aired, viewers across New England and beyond were given a window into our world: the story of three friends who chose an unconventional path, and the community that embraced them.

Rowing Across Lake Winnipesaukee: A Founder's Triumph

The Boston Globe, June 29, 2025

Accolades don't always come as awards. Sometimes they take the form of personal milestones that ripple into the wider community. This summer, co-founder Bob Manley rowed the entire length of Lake Winnipesaukee – a dream years in the making – and the Boston Globe put the story above the fold on its front page.

The row symbolized the same persistence, patience, and grit it has taken to grow Hermit Woods from the ground up, while also raising awareness and funds for the Lake Winnipesaukee Alliance.



National Acclaim in Imbibe Magazine

July/August 2025

When Imbibe Magazine – one of the country's leading publications on the culture of liquid refreshment – featured Hermit Woods, it felt like validation on a whole new level. For a small winery in New Hampshire's Lakes Region, to be profiled alongside some of the most innovative producers in the country was exhilarating.

"No Grapes, No Problem" – National Attention Again

By Paul Vigna, August 29, 2025

Wine writer Paul Vigna spotlighted Hermit Woods with his piece, "No grapes, no problem: East Coast winery making the most of a non-traditional path." He emphasized our deliberate choice to forgo grapes in favor of fruits that thrive here in New Hampshire, proving authenticity comes from working with what the land provides.

Hermit Woods in the Spotlight!

Rhode Island Monthly, September 21, 2025

Rhode Island Monthly featured Hermit Woods as part of the New Hampshire Wine Trail, praising our barrel-aged, locally sourced fruit wines and highlighting Chef Kaylon Sweet's inspired dishes at Sweet Mercy Kitchen.

IN THE MEDIA- HERMIT WOODS

Best of the Best: Local Honors

Alongside national press, Hermit Woods was celebrated closer to home with multiple Best of the Lakes Region Awards:

Eat & Drink: Winery – **GOLD**

Eat & Drink: Wine Selection – **GOLD**

Things to Do: Event Venue – **GOLD**

Things to Do: Live Music Venue – Intimate – **GOLD**

Eat & Drink: Outdoor Dining – **GOLD**

Eat & Drink: Sandwiches – **GOLD**

Eat & Drink: Salad – **GOLD**

Eat & Drink: Lunch Spot – **SILVER**

These awards reflect the full Hermit Woods experience: the wines, the food, the music, and the atmosphere.

The Team Behind the Accolades

Awards and headlines are wonderful, but they don't tell the whole story. Behind every article, every tasting, and every glass poured is a team of hardworking, passionate people:

Our founders, who dreamed big and never stopped building.

Assistant Winemaker Ben Martin, who works alongside Ken to craft wines of depth and character.

Our hospitality staff, who greet every guest with warmth and knowledge.

Our kitchen team, led by Chef Kaylon Sweet, pairing food and wine in unforgettable ways.

Our event partners and musicians, who fill The Loft with sound and soul.

And of course, our **members and guests**, who sustain us with their loyalty and enthusiasm.

Each accolade belongs to all of us.

Looking Ahead

So where do we go from here? The same place we've always gone: forward. There are more wines to craft, more meals to serve, more music to share, and more stories to tell. Recognition is wonderful, but it's not the end goal. The true reward is in the work itself – in creating experiences that bring people together and celebrate the beauty of this place we call home.

As we raise a glass to the past year, we do so with gratitude. Gratitude for the honors, the press, and the features. Gratitude for the chance to show the world what a small New Hampshire winery can achieve. And gratitude for the team whose hard work has made it all possible.

To all of you who have supported us – thank you. These accolades belong to you as much as they do to us. Here's to the journey ahead, and to the next chapter in the Hermit Woods story.

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