PROUDLY CONTRARIAN

HERMIT WOODS WINERY

Wine Club Release

Spring 2025

Dear Wine Club Members,

As we welcome Spring 2025, we're filled with gratitude for how far we've come—and how much we've grown together. Since 2020, Hermit Woods Winery has undergone remarkable change. We've introduced new wines, meads, and ciders, transformed our deli into a full-service restaurant, and brought a longtime dream to life with The Loft, our intimate live music venue.

Our outdoor patio, created in response to the need for open-air gathering, has become a favorite spot for enjoying food, wine, and live music. Upstairs, The Loft has hosted over 160 performances and become a hub for creativity and connection. Downstairs, our partnership with Chef Kaylon "Sweets" Sweet has elevated our menu, from bold dinner plates to vinyl-spun Sunday brunches.

Through it all, we've stayed true to our mission: crafting world-class wine from local fruits and sharing it with people like you. Whether you've been with us since the beginning or just joined, your support means everything.

Here's to the music, the meals, the wine, and the memories still to come. Let's raise a glass to this moment—and to the story we're still writing, together.

With heartfelt thanks,
The Hermit Woods Team

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2023 Strawberry Rhubarb & 2023 Cirque du Strawberry

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 245 Cases Produced - 12.7 Alc & 125 Cases Produced - 12.7 Alc By Vol.

A Story in Every Bottle

Such a classic New England combination of a fruit and a vegetable. Both grow so well here and ripen around the same time. With our focus on local ingredients, it was a no brainer to combine these two and make wine out of them. For a more complex flavor profile and better color, we also add a few wild blueberries to the mix! This wine has grown to be one of our most popular wines, so we have struggled each year to make enough. Once again we make sure to have enough to share with all of our club members. Also included is the second batch of our new champagne-style version of this wine called Cirque du Strawberry. (There is also a sparkling version of the same in CANS - yes a convenient package of two glasses of wine in a recyclable can). Enjoy!

Wine Notes

A fruit-forward, complex, rosé-like wine of easy drinking character, yet surprisingly complex. Drink 2025-2027.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy chilled on its own or with just about any food. Especially delightful on warm summer days with lighter, summertime fare, such as soft cheese and fresh fruit or a summer salad.

Farmers Notes

The strawberries for this batch came from local NH growers, Hemingway and nearby Stillwater Farms. Our blueberries come from Merrill's Wild Blueberries 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.

Vinification

This, like many of our wines, is quite complicated to produce. Ripe berries are hand sorted and partially destemmed, then added to the fermenter along with the rhubarb and blueberries with just the right amount of water. Fermentation is initiated with the natural microbes on the fruit which helps create the wonderful aromatics. Fermentation is completed by adding a special strain of yeast, Lalvin DV-10, well known for clean fermentations that respect varietal character. Sugar is added during fermentation to raise the alcohol levels to that of wine. Bench trials led to the addition of 27 g/L sugar for balance. The champagne version is carbonated and bottled for us at Flag Hill Winery.

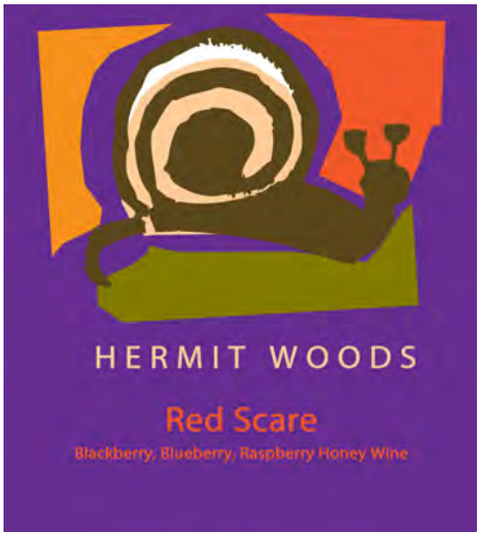
pH 3.53 RS 2.7% ABV 12.7

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2022 Red Scare

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 52 Cases Produced - 13.5 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

Fine Pinot Noir from Burgundy is one of my favorite wine types. I love the bright, fresh, dark berry aromatics, the delicate and bold mouth-filling flavors, and the soft, long finish. Red Scare approaches some of those characteristics, but with its own unique flavors. The name "Red Scare" came from a frisbee team that my son, Max, played on during his freshman year in college (2008). That same Fall season, I made a batch of wine from the dark berries growing wild in my yard, as well as honey from the beehives Max and I had set up in our backyard. I have made it nearly every year since then. When Max graduated, I gave Max a bottle from each year he was in college: vintages from 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011...rumor has it that some bottles from those years still exist.

Wine Notes

This is a multi-berry "melomel" (fruit mead) made from whole, wild blueberries, blackberries, black raspberries, and local raw and unfiltered honey in proportions to provide balance, structure, and long-deep flavors. This is a complex wine with great aging potential. Fresh berry aromas and flavors over a medium-weight, honeyed wine with a long, soft, dry finish...a hint of oak plays in the background.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy on its own, or with light meats, most notably pork.

Farmers Notes

Our blackberries are sourced from some commercial growers in New Jersey, although we continue to seek a local producer of this fruit. The special black raspberries come from a local farmer who planted black raspberries for us here in NH and which should supply us for all future batches. Our blueberries come from Merrill's Wild Blueberries in Ellsworth, Maine; a three generation family blueberry harvester. Todd Merrill works closely with us to ensure we use only the finest quality berries, harvested at maximum ripeness. The honey used for this wine is provided to us by our favorite local NH producer, Hall Apiary. We source only raw, unprocessed honey, straight from the hive and into our fermentation procedure. In addition to honey, we also used a small amount of sugar as part of the fermentables so that the wine could achieve the desired level of alcohol without having too many overpowering honey notes.

Vinification

All the berries are combined with a small amount of water and undergo an extended "cold-soak maceration" for greater aroma, fruit, and tannin extraction. A special yeast strain from the Cornas area of the Rhone valley in France is used for its ability to showcase the fruit. The fruit skins sat in primary fermentation for 12 days for full flavor and tannin extraction. After fermentation was completed, aging took place for 16 months in French Oak barrels with a portion held separately in a stainless steel tank.

pH 3.33 RS 0% ABV 13.5

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2022 Heirloom Crabapple TAMWORTH BRANDY

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 150 Cases Produced - 15.3 Alc By Vol.

A Story in Every Bottle

We discovered the delightful "Dolgo" crabapple when I took a bite of one of the little red apples growing on a tree in Bob's front yard years ago. The resulting experimental wine was outstanding, and it has quickly become our signature wine. Further research revealed that the Dolgo crabapple was brought to this country from Kazakhstan in the 1800's to add flavor to the cider being made at the time. Chuck has been busy connecting us with apple growers in our region that will grow and harvest Dolgos for us. One of Chuck's favorite wines is the sparkling version of our crabapple wine, called "Dolgo." Stone Mountain Orchard, a local grower in Belmont, NH, even planted trees specifically for us! This very special version was aged in VSOP Apple Brandy Barrels we received from our friends at nearby Tamworth Distillery.

Wine Notes

Produced from Dolgo crabapples and wild, low-bush blueberries. Bright, fresh apple aromas precede a lively, mouth-watering, cranberry-like and apple flavored tang reminiscent of a cranberry rosé. The aging in Brandy Barrels adds a beautiful brandy aromatic, spirit-lifting ABV, and a smooth drinkability.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy this dry wine on its own and with many different foods. This wine pairs especially well with roast turkey (Thanksgiving!) or chicken.

Farmers Notes

Four farms - Allison's Orchard, Saxton, Stone Mtn and Scott Farms - supplied us with Dolgo crabapples. These farms grow a wide variety of heirloom apples and other fruit, and they follow best management practices ensuring the highest quality produce. Chuck, our partner, has developed a close relationship with the orchard managers over the years, and enjoys the time of harvest. Our blueberries come from Merrill's Wild Blueberries in Ellsworth, Maine; a three generation family blueberry harvester. Todd Merrill works closely with us to ensure only the finest quality berries, harvested at maximum ripeness.

Vinification

The fresh crabapples are crushed and added to the right amount of water and sugar in one of our large fermenting vessels. Then, Lalvin OKay wine yeast is added for primary fermentation at a temperature of about 65F. The wine is then aged in stainless steel tanks, with light toast, French oak staves suspended in the wine for 5 months, allowing for extraction of wood tannins and flavor, all while enhancing the structure. Following all that, a portion of the wine was aged in Brandy barrels for about 3 months, increasing the ABV and adding a beautiful bouquet.

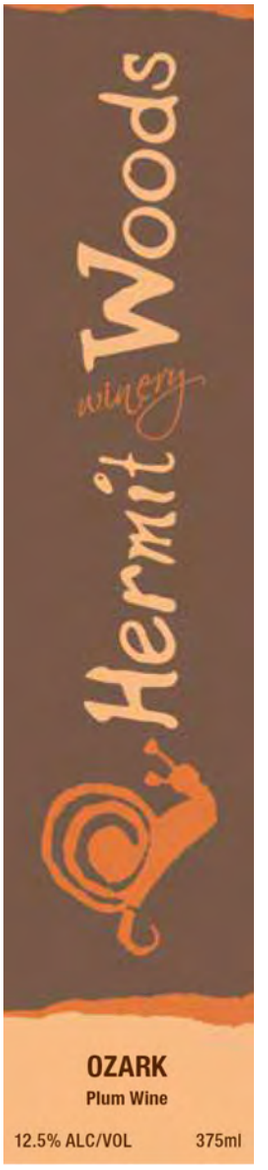
pH 3.33 RS 0% ABV 15.3%

Hermit Woods

WINE TECH NOTES

2024 OZARK

Winemaker: Ken Hardcastle | 63 Cases Produced - 12.5 Alc By Vol.



A Story in Every Bottle

We continue to seek out local fruit that will produce high quality wine. Many times, a combination of different fruits are required to create the depth and complexity and drinking enjoyment we desire from a good wine. There are a few rare fruits that create excellent wine on their own: to date, those include the Dolgo crabapple and the Wild Blueberry. After many years of trials, we discovered the Ozark Plum which is another of such fruits. We have made wine from these plums a few times and now we have a large enough vintage to share with club members.

Wine Notes

This wine is composed of the Ozark plum, and is a complex dry white wine. Much of this vintage was aged in French Oak barrels for a few months to add a complementary touch of oak tannins and flavor.

Pairing Suggestions

Enjoy this white on its own, or along with lighter fare, as you would a dry white wine like riesling or chenin blanc. With the plum notes, this wine is nice with sushi as well.

Farmers Notes

The plums are grown by Brookdale Farm in Hollis NH. We also get our peaches and nectarines from this supplier. In this special vintage, we included a few Toka and Alderman plums sourced from a non-commercial farm in western NH. These plums add a touch of depth to this vintage.

Vinification

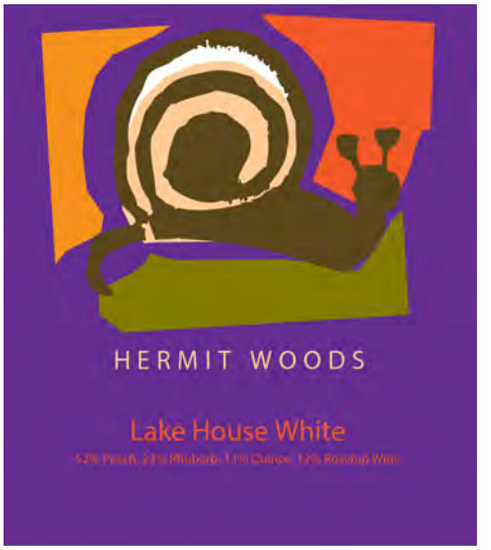
All the plums are allowed to reach full ripeness and then are added to the fermenters with just the right amount of water, sugar and CY-3079 burgundian yeast to achieve the wine profiles we desire. In this vintage, four separate ferments took place and were then combined into the final batch, allowing us to learn: three batches were in open fermenters with daily punch-downs; a portion of the ozark plums were fermented in our upright, French Oak Barrel, after going through a period of carbonic maceration. The small experimental batches of Toka and Alderman plums were separately fermented, aged, and then eventually added to the big batch of Ozark, allowing us to test the potential of these two new plum varieties. (neither is as good as the Ozark on its own). The wine is sterile filtered for brilliance just prior to bottling. pH 3.25 RS 0.3% ABV 12.5

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 12.5v

HERMIT WOODS

HERMIT WOODS WINERY: GROWTH, COMMUNITY, AND CRAFT SINCE 2020

In the years following the pandemic, Hermit Woods Winery has undergone a remarkable transformation. From new wines, meads, and ciders to expanded food offerings and the addition of a music venue, we've embraced change with open arms–and many of you, our valued wine club members, have been with us every step of the way. What began as a humble passion for wine over fifteen years ago has evolved into an award-winning winery, a full-service restaurant, and a thriving live music venue.

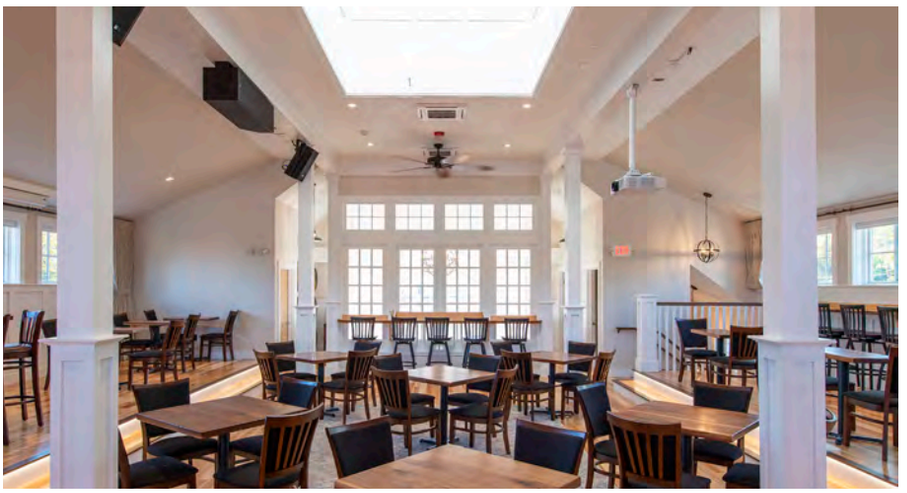
(We're proud to be named one of Food & Wine's 500 Best Wineries in America and the 4th Best Tasting Room in the country by USA Today.*)

At the heart of every new venture–whether it's a performance in The Loft or a farm-to-table dish in our restaurant–has been our community. You've supported us through turbulent times, and for that, we raise a glass in gratitude. Let's take a moment to reflect on some of the most exciting developments and how far we've come–together.

A Patio with Purpose: An Outdoor Space Born from Change

One of the most significant changes to come out of the pandemic was the addition of our expansive outdoor patio. Built in response to the need for open-air gathering spaces, it now adds over 30 seats, allowing guests to savor wine and food in the fresh air of Meredith. This new space quickly became one of the most beloved parts of the Hermit Woods experience–and it's easy to see why. It's the perfect place to linger on a warm afternoon with a flight of wine and good company.

We now also bring live music to the patio every Friday and Saturday from Memorial Day to Columbus Day, adding a vibrant soundtrack to summer evenings.



The Loft: Bringing Music to Our Wine Family (2022)

The pandemic also gave us the time and opportunity to realize a long-held dream–The Loft, our intimate listening room upstairs. For years, co-founders Ken, Chuck, and Bob envisioned transforming the unused third floor–once a storage room–into something truly special.

GROWTH, COMMUNITY, AND CRAFT SINCE 2020- HERMIT WOODS

We had a passion for wine, so we opened a winery. We loved food and beer, so we created an eatery. And now, with our shared love of music, The Loft completes the vision.

Despite hurdles–including a pandemic pause–the space was completed in 2021, featuring tuned acoustics and a stunning Yamaha C3 grand piano. By spring 2022, we opened The Loft's doors and began welcoming guests into an entirely new kind of Hermit Woods experience.

The Loft feels like an intimate house concert, with just 60 seats and everyone close to the music. Thursday nights quickly became a community favorite with our Loft Listening Room Series, showcasing jazz, blues, folk, and classical artists. Saturdays bring a relaxed piano bar vibe with live performances filling the room.

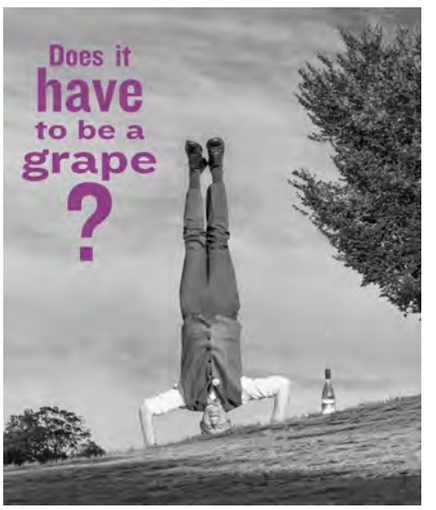
In 2023, we introduced Katie Dobbins' Songwriter RoundUp on the last Wednesday of each month–a Nashville-style music-in-the-round event that's brought talented singer-songwriters from across the country to our stage.

Since opening, The Loft has hosted over 160 performances and drawn audiences from across New England and beyond. We often joke: "Keep coming to our shows, and we'll keep bringing great music–as long as Bob's around (which he hopes is for a long time)."

More than just a venue, The Loft has become a gathering place–where familiar faces reconnect, new friendships form, and music, wine, and laughter mingle in the air.

Reimagining Our Brand (2022)

After over ten years, our original brand and website were ready for a refresh. We had the great pleasure of working with Deb Lucke, Paul Hartzell, Steve Marsel, and a host of other creative talents to redefine who we are and how we present ourselves to the world. From updating our iconic snail logo to rebuilding our website from the ground



up, the process was a true transformation.

We captured dozens of new images to reflect our evolving identity and elevated experience. It was an exciting time–after all, we've come a long way since our first days in Bob's master bedroom, and we wanted our brand to reflect that growth.

GROWTH, COMMUNITY, AND CRAFT SINCE 2020- HERMIT WOODS

From Deli to Full-Service Dining (2023)

While The Loft was gaining momentum upstairs, transformation was also happening downstairs. In 2022, we officially changed our name to Hermit Woods Winery & Eatery, marking the evolution of our once-simple deli into a full-service restaurant.

By 2023, what had begun as a self-serve sandwich counter had become a polished, full-scale dining experience. Our founders–driven by a shared love of fine food–began planning this shift as early as 2017. In 2022, we expanded the kitchen, trained a new team, and developed a menu that blends comfort with culinary creativity.

Full-service dining launched with seasonal flatbreads, a gourmet cheese board, and more–each dish thoughtfully paired with a recommended wine. Whether relaxing on the patio or dining in The Loft, our guests are invited to stay, savor, and celebrate.

The response was immediate. In 2023, our eatery received glowing praise from the Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce and local media, who noted how our "farm-to-table menu" enhances the wine-tasting experience. For many wine club members, Hermit Woods has become the go-to spot for hosting family and friends–whether for a casual lunch or a celebratory dinner.

"Sweet" Partnerships and New Flavors (2024)

In 2024, our kitchen came to life in an entirely new way. We welcomed Chef Kaylon "Sweets" Sweet and his Sweet Mercy's Kitchen to Hermit Woods–a partnership that's delighted longtime members and new visitors alike.

Kaylon, previously the chef-owner of Osteria Poggio in Center Harbor, brought his creative team and signature style to our winery. His soulful, bold flavors and deep local roots have transformed our menu into a true culinary adventure. With a flair for sophistication and a touch of irreverence, Kaylon continues to challenge expectations–in the best way.

From HONEY IF YA LOVE ME (honey-glazed duck breast) to THE BEAR (braised short ribs paired with our Red Scare), every dish

is crafted with heart. Dinner is now served Wednesday through Saturday. We're also proud to offer Sunday brunch, and if you time it right, you can catch Brunch on Record, where guests enjoy vintage vinyl spun live by NH Vintage Vinyl.

Yes–we still serve lunch and small bites Wednesday through Sunday, plus ready-to-go fare when the kitchen takes a break.

GROWTH, COMMUNITY, AND CRAFT SINCE 2020- HERMIT WOODS

During the summer, lunch is served seven days a week.

The collaboration began with a packed "Welcome Sweets" celebration that filled the tasting room with excitement and familiar faces. As Kaylon said:

"Connecting with guests was always the best part of Osteria. I hope my friends and followers find their way to Hermit Woods."

They certainly have–and you've welcomed him with open arms (and empty plates!).

Staying Connected, Staying True

Through all this growth, our mission remains the same: to craft world-class wine from local fruits and share it with as many people as possible.

Winemaker Ken Hardcastle and Assistant Winemaker Ben Martin–who joined us in 2023–continue to innovate while honoring our core values.

The pandemic also reminded us just how important it is to stay connected. In 2020, we launched Monday Night Live on YouTube and Facebook, offering behind-the-scenes glimpses of winery life–from canning line installations to interviews with artists and team members. Though the series is currently on pause, we're reimagining its return and look forward to sharing more soon.

Meanwhile, our social media has become a vibrant reflection of the Hermit Woods family. Whether celebrating a team member's work anniversary or toasting a club member's wedding (with our bubbly in hand), every snapshot tells part of our shared story.

A Community at Heart: Raising a Glass to the Future

Looking back, it's incredible to see how much has changed since 2020. We've built a stage where music fills the rafters, transformed our kitchen into a culinary destination, and welcomed new collaborators who've helped us reach new heights–and this merely scratches the surface of the amazing transformation that has taken place in just a few short years.

Through it all, you–our wine club members–have been the heart of our story. You've cheered from the front row, shared meals with loved ones, offered thoughtful feedback, and spread the word about what we do. Thanks to your support, Hermit Woods has grown from a local treasure into something truly extraordinary.

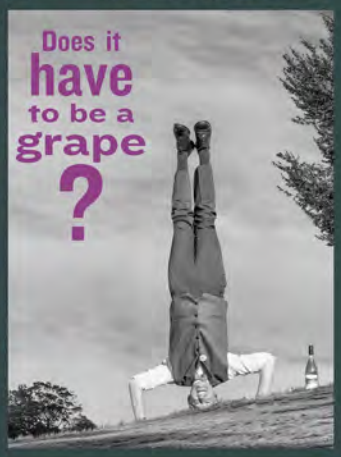
Yes, we've earned awards and accolades, but the real achievement is the community we've cultivated. Bob, Ken, Chuck, and now Sweets still greet you by name, pour your favorites, and lead cellar tours just as they always have. We've grown, but we've never lost sight of what matters most: connection, authenticity, and hospitality.

Whether you joined the wine club at its founding in 2015 or just this past year, we are deeply grateful for your support. Your enthusiasm fuels us. Your stories inspire us. And your presence makes Hermit Woods what it is today.

So here's to what's ahead–more musical nights, new culinary adventures, an expanded Loft series (maybe even a music festival?), and more unforgettable moments together.

But before we dive into what's next, let's take a moment to celebrate now.

Because this moment, this community, this story we've built together since 2020–that's something truly worth toasting.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