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Cutchogue's Lieb Cellars Expands Its Reach with New Tasting Room, Wine Boxes and Kegs



The North Fork is home to some of the greatest wines in New York, and now, thanks to Lieb Cellars, you can get your North Fork fix right in East Hampton.

"We're the first North Fork winery to have a tasting room on the South Fork," says Lieb Cellars general manager Ami Opisso. Lieb opened its first tasting room in Cutchogue in 2001 and its second in Mattituck in 2012. "The Hamptons was the natural next step for us because of proximity," she says. "Our wines are served at a number of restaurants on the South Fork, and it's nice to have a place for our customers to go to buy the wines after they have them at Navy Beach or Topping Rose House." A presence in the Hamptons also translates to building awareness in New York City, which is one of Lieb's primary markets.



The new location, on Park Place in East Hampton, is both a retail store and a tasting room. "You can go in and buy bottles, or you can sit down and do a tasting or buy a glass of wine," Opisso says. Lieb created an atmosphere that combined elements of both forks. "We wanted to portray our farming roots on the North Fork, but we also incorporated a lot of Hamptons beachy colors and elements," Opisso says. "You definitely get a bit of the North Fork farm vibe, mixed with the Hamptons beachy-chic."

The shop/tasting room consists of a small seating area, wine displays and a long bar built from reclaimed wood. "It's bright, it's warm, it's clean—you just walk into that space and kind of feel good," she says. The site is available for use by groups. "We're going to be encouraging local businesses to consider that space for any type of business or corporate event that they're having," Opisso says.

In addition to a new shop, Lieb Cellars is also releasing wine, under their Bridge Lane label, in two new formats—a 3-liter box and a 20-liter disposable keg. "Those two formats really lend themselves to the Hamptons lifestyle, with the boxes being great to bring on the boat or to the beach, and the kegs being great for parties and weddings," she says. "I believe we're one of the first producers, if not the first, to sell wine in that format directly to the consumer."

The new formats are more than convenient. "We have a white blend and a red blend in the box, and the wine stays fresh for a month in there," Opisso says. The keg holds roughly 26 bottles of wine and can be kept in a kegorator or tapped with a regular party-style tap. The boxes are just the thing for an evening on the beach—no more risk of broken glass. The kegs have quickly become popular for weddings and other large gathering. A tasteful summer just got a lot more convenient.

This month Lieb Cellars began expanding its distribution to New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island. "We've doubled production. When you do that, you have to find new channels to sell the wine through," Opisso says. "We're in a growth stage, and we're looking to establish a bigger presence in the Northeast."