

Experiment Station Uncorks New Vinification and Brewing Technology Lab

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by Linda McCandless

GENEVA, NY: State Senator Michael Nozzolio and Dean Daryl Lund ushered in a new era of commitment to New York's wine making and beer brewing industries when they cut the red ribbon at the formal dedication of Cornell University's Vinification and Brewing Technology Laboratory at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, in Geneva, NY, on March 31. The 2,000 sq. ft. research and teaching facility represents the latest university/industry partnership on the part of Cornell and the Experiment Station. "I want to applaud and encourage this public-private-academic partnership," said Nozzolio. "As one who has two degrees from Cornell, I have always been proud of our pre-eminence as a research institution." Nozzolio praised the Experiment Station's commitment to industry in New York, and pledged continued support of the Station's efforts.

About 150 industry representatives and members of the Station family were in attendance, including James E. Hunter, director of the Experiment Station; Daryl Lund, dean of Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences; Kathy Russell, owner of Applied Filtration Company (AFTEK); Ann Martini, President, Seneca Wine Trails; and Richard



James E. Hunter, director of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station chats with an attendee at the dinner.

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Durst, chairman of Cornell's Food Science & Technology Department (FS&T) at Geneva. "This project couldn't have happened without state resources and a commitment from State Senator Nozzolio and Governor Pataki," said Dean Lund. He also acknowledged the vision of Mark McLellan, who was the chairman of the FS&T Department at the project's inception three years ago. Lund also explained how a donation of microbrewing equipment from Miller Brewing in Milwaukee followed him from the University of Wisconsin, to Rutgers, and now to Cornell, where it will be retrofitted and installed as the core piece of equipment in the brewing station in the east end of the facility.



Ann Martini, president of the Seneca Wine Trail, State Senator Michael Nozzolio, Kathy Russell, owner of AFTEK, and Daryl Lund, dean of the College of Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Science, cut the ribbon for Cornell's new Vinification & Brewing Lab on March 31 at the Experiment Station. CREDIT: R.Way/NYSAES/Cornell

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"As part of the Station's mission to serve industry, we have long made a major effort on behalf of the wine and grape industry," said Hunter. "With the development of this facility, we will be able to develop programs to help the brewing industry as well." In his comments, Jim Hunter addressed the growth of these industries in New York State. "With the 140 wineries in New York State comes related industries that prosper. We needed a larger and better facility to provide the research and training programs to serve these industries."

The laboratory builds on the Station's well-established programs in enology and fermentation science. Previously, the 10,000 sq. ft. Fruit and Vegetable Processing Pilot Plant at the Station was used for fermentation studies, but the wine and brewing industries in the state have grown to such an extent that the Station required a separate facility to properly serve their needs.

The new laboratory is specially designed for enology and brewing studies. The former machine shop at the west end of the Food Science & Technology building at the Experiment Station has been emptied, cleaned and painted. Flooring, drainage, steam lines and ventilation have been installed, and an outside delivery and grape crushing area added. Mashing and lautering vessels, a boiling kettle, and fermenters will be located at one end of the room and dedicated to brewing technology. Near it is the analytical laboratory and office. The other end of the laboratory holds 100 to 500 liter wine fermentation tanks. The central workshop includes de-stemmers, crushers, presses, filters, bottle fillers, and heating and cooling equipment for wine making, some of which has been donated by industry.

Thomas Henick-Kling will direct the wine making program in the facility. Karl Siebert will direct the brewing program, and FS&T chairman Richard Durst will oversee operations.

Fundraising efforts on behalf of the laboratory are ongoing. When the project was launched in 1997, the Station sought \$250,000 to \$500,000 in start-up funds, and hoped to establish a \$1 million endowment for staff and programming. So far, over \$210,000 in state funds have

been earmarked for the project, and \$70,000 in donations have been made by industry and local wine trails. An additional \$17,500 was raised for the facility at the Third Annual Gala Dinner and Premiere Wine Country Auction held at the Geneva Lakefront Ramada immediately following the ribbon cutting and open house on March 31.

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