

The Maple Lake MESSSENGER *Extra*

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Maple Lake Wine and Spirits: Where holiday fun begins

By Brenda Erdahl

The holidays may look a little different this year, but Maple Lake Wine and Spirits off Highway 55 East in Maple Lake is open and eager to help you celebrate.

While there won't be any tastings or samples as there have been in years past, the store is still offering plenty of specials and new fun products in honor of its 10-year anniversary and the season.

Business Buzz



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Birthdays celebration and holiday favorites

On Saturday, Dec. 19 Maple Lake Wine and Spirits will celebrate 10 years at its new location with giveaways and "super specials." As the month goes on, so will the deals, including a new sale every week.

"One week we'll have a liquor sale, another week we'll have a sale on wine and one week we'll have a beer sale. Watch to see which sale is on which week," General Manager Ang Berthiaume said.

Maple Lake Wine and Spirits always stocks a vast variety of wines, liquors and champagnes that are sure to fit everybody's tastes. The store's expansive wine section includes holiday favorites like the always popular Reindeer Wines. These come with pictures of Santa's reindeer on the bottles, Berthiaume said. Donner, Blitzen, Comet, and Cupid are all depicted on these fun but limited-edition wines.

"These are unique wines that are fun to have at a party," she said.

The store also carries holiday eggnogs, Tom and Jerry batter, cordials, gift packs, shirts, and gift cards perfect for that hard-to-buy-for person on your Christmas list.

A great selection

Maple Lake Wine and Spirits carries a vast variety of Minnesota-made wines and liquors. Customers will find wines from Carlos Creek Winery in Alexandria; Crow River Winery in Hutchinson; Millner Heritage Winery in Kimball and Winehaven in Chisago City.

The store has also expanded its spirits portfolio to include a larger selection of liquor, whiskey, rum and cordials, and is always adding to its craft beer options for the craft beer lovers out there.

With everything from moonshine pickles to peanut-butter whiskey, Maple Lake Wine and Spirits has a "great selection for a small, hometown liquor store and customers like that we have such a wide variety," Berthiaume said.

If a guest can't find something they want, Berthiaume and her staff will order it, but she warned that due to the pandemic, some products are out of stock. "That's out of our control, but we'll try



Tom and Jerry batter, eggnogs and cordials are some of the items Maple Lake Wine and Spirits has available to make your holiday party the talk of the town.

our best to get it in," she said.

Rewards program

To make shopping at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits even more economical, Berthiaume and her staff have a successful rewards program called the Lucky Irish Rewards where every pre-taxed dollar spent earns customers a point. When they reach 500 points, they get a \$20 in-store credit.

Monthly specials on domestic beers, craft beers and wines, makes shopping at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits even more affordable.

Friendly, knowledgeable staff

Besides a wide selection of products, Berthiaume oversees a friendly, knowledgeable staff who will help you make the perfect selection then carry it out to your car for you. For those who don't want to enter the store during these times of COVID, they can simply call ahead with their order and Wine and Spirit's staff will bring it out to their car.

Berthiaume reminds the community that when you shop at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits 100 percent of the profits go back to the city for projects and up-keeps. Their slogan is "where shopping local makes a difference."

Wine Club

Maple Lake Wine and Spirits promotes the community in other ways as well. Berthiaume and Heberling organize a successful Wine Club that currently has 300 members and meets every six to eight weeks. Although the club is currently on hold due to COVID, members can still receive discounts in the store. Once the pandemic passes, they will resume their tastings. Non-members can also attend these for \$5 per person.

"It's a great way to try new wines or have a night out on the town and if you like the tastings, you can sign up to join the club," Berthiaume said

Fire Department fundraiser

In August and early September, the store was part of a fundraiser for the local fire department sponsored by the Municipal Beverage Association and Miller Coors. The store raised \$1,125 this year which was a big increase from last year when they raised \$750. Berthiaume was pleased with the increase. She had her doubts because of the pandemic, but patrons surprised her with their generosity. "We asked every customer if they would like to donate pocket change. We got donations from 50 cents up to \$100," she said. The fire department will use the money on safety equipment.

Maple Lake Wine and Spirits was also the winner of the \$500 drawing MBA/Miller Coors offers as part of this promotion. That money will also go to the Maple Lake Fire Department.

Your business is appreciated

"We want to say thank you to all our customers who stopped in and purchased items from us during COVID. We're trying our best to keep the store sanitized and safe. Thanks for shopping local instead of going to the big box stores. When you shop here, all the proceeds go back to city projects. It stays local and keeps city taxes low," Berthiaume said.



Maple Lake Wine and Spirits raised \$1,125 for the Maple Lake Fire Department this year with help from their generous customers. Pictured, from left, is Liquor Store Assistant Manager Kate Heberling and and Store Manager Ang Berthiaume outside the fire hall. Photos by Brenda Erdahl



Deer hunters! Check out the low prices on Busch Beer products at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits.

Hours

The municipal liquor store is open Monday through Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Thursday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Holiday hours will be as follows: Christmas Eve, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and New Year's Eve 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. The store will be closed Christmas Day and New Year's Day.



Have a hard-to-buy-for person on your Christmas list? Consider a gift pack or gift card at Maple Lake Wine and Spirits.

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How small businesses can prepare for a unique holiday season

When the famous ball dropped in Times Square on New Year's Eve and 2020 officially began, few people might have anticipated what

awaited the world in the months ahead. By the end of March, a global pandemic had changed the way people across the globe lived their

lives as governments scrambled to prevent a potentially deadly virus from spreading.

No aspect of life has been left untouched by the COVID-19 outbreak, including how people shop. Stay-at-home measures and government-mandated closures proved a formidable challenge for small business owners. Another challenge awaits such businesses this holiday season, when consumers are expected to do much of their shopping online.

Many small businesses thrive on welcoming customers into their facilities. While no one can predict how long so-

Some tips for businesses to prepare for the holiday season:

- Start early. Holiday promotions typically feature discounted items, and small business owners can hit the ground running by announcing sales well in advance of the holiday season. Consumers have adapted to lengthy delivery times during the outbreak, and retail analysts predict many will begin shopping earlier than ever before to account for potential delivery problems. By discounting items early, small business owners can put themselves in position to capitalize on early bird shoppers.
- Keep sales going. The Bureau of Economic Analysis noted that economic growth in the United States declined by 5 percent in the first quarter of 2020, and in June the Congressional Budget Office predicted that growth would ultimately decline by 38 percent. Such figures suggest that money will be tight this holiday season, and small business owners can expect to compete for every dollar. By starting sales early and keeping those sales going throughout the holiday season, small business owners can put themselves in the best position possible to capitalize on consumer spending, however limited that

spending may be.

• Apply past experiences. Small businesses have had more than a few litmus tests to gauge consumer behavior during the outbreak. Easter marked the first major holiday to occur while stay-at-home restrictions were in place, and since then retail holidays like Mother's Day and Father's Day have come and gone. Small business owners can examine consumer behavior during past retail holidays to inform their approaches to the coming holiday season. If consumers expressed a desire for gift packages that reduced their need to make multiple shopping trips, small business owners can design and promote gift baskets filled with an assortment of products available in their stores. Creativity figures to be a necessity to attract customers this holiday season, and past retail holidays can inspire a new approach.

Small businesses can confront the challenge of the coming holiday season by embracing a handful of strategies to attract consumers during what promises to be a season unlike any other in recent memory.

cial distancing measures will remain in place, it's reasonable to assume that consumers may be hesitant to visit stores en masse this holiday season. But the spirit of the holiday season will return, and that spirit will still compel con-

sumers to look for gifts for their loved ones. Small business owners looking to capitalize on the holiday shopping season can try these strategies as they prepare for what promises to be a unique final month of 2020.



Small business owners looking to capitalize on the holiday shopping season can try these strategies as they prepare for what promises to be a unique final month of 2020.

Photo submitted

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Holiday decorating ideas for the home

The holidays often involve purchasing gifts for close friends and loved ones as well as making a delicious meal the entire family will love. But nothing sets the holiday scene and overall mood more so than beautiful decorations and other seasonal accoutrements.

Many people leave no room untouched for the holidays, meaning color schemes or trinkets may carry through from top to bottom. Decking the halls this season can be made even easier with some of these handy ideas.

Holiday timeline

If you keep holiday photo cards each year, put them in chronological order and hang them from a piece of garland from the mantel or drape on a staircase banister. This can be a fun way to see how your own children or other members of the family have grown.

Make mini evergreen displays

Clip your favorite pieces of evergreen and push the stems into floral foam. Display in small vases or other containers and place in groupings to emulate an evergreen forest.

be overwhelming trying to visualize it all without a plan in place. Take a photo of the house and map out where you want lights and decorations to go. Then with your "map" in hand, you can more readily purchase supplies and start decorating.

Go for a specific natural color scheme

If you desire an overall holiday feel but aren't interested in Santa figurines or kitschy elements, decorating with color in mind can be key. It's easy to tie things together with some natural elements in your desired palette. For example, white, gold and green may look beautiful. Put boxwood clippings and white amaryllis flowers together. Pine cones, twigs and holly pieces also can add touches to mantels, doorways and table centerpieces.

Who says ornaments only have to go on a tree? Display antique or favorite ornaments by hanging them from beautiful ribbons throughout the home.

Scent the scene

Hang something aromatic on the tree to mingle with the pine. Fresh cinnamon sticks tied with twine or ribbon can be nestled among the boughs. Another scented idea is to make pine cone candles and use pine or cinnamon scents to make them smell just like the season.

Holiday decorating gets a hand from some creative ideas. Always follow safety precautions, especially when using candles, hanging lights and plugging in multiple items to electric sockets. With ingenuity and safety in mind, holiday decorations can be extra special.

Plan the outside

Exterior illumination and other exterior decorations share the holiday spirit with others. It can

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Help isolated loved ones this holiday season

A phenomenon called “cabin fever” tends to set in around late autumn or in midwinter. Long hours of darkness coupled with cold, inclement weather often is a recipe for increased time spent indoors. For people who live alone, the effects of cabin fever might be more pronounced.

In addition to seasonal cabin fever, this year another

factor comes into play: social distancing and voluntary quarantine as a result of the novel coronavirus COVID-19. Even those who may venture outside to socialize, particularly around the holiday season, may be hesitant or unable to do so to help prevent the spread of the virus. In these instances, friends and loved ones can mitigate feelings of isolation in various ways.

Here are some ideas to reach out to isolated loved ones during the holidays:

- Schedule video chats. Video conferencing apps have become the communication vehicles of choice during the era of social distancing. Different applications and services continue to evolve and help people stay in touch. Plan regular chats, either once or twice per week with isolated or vulnerable people. Try to organize a large group chat on the holiday itself so no one has to spend Christmas or Chanukah alone.
- Drop off supplies. Even though supermarket shop-from-home and other delivery services have normalized somewhat since the start of the pandemic, treat individuals who may be isolated to some personalized attention. Put together care packages of supplies or holiday treats and deliver them in person so you can see the smiles that result from being able to visit with someone familiar.
- Send uplifting messages. Children or even adults can make personalized cards and mail them to loved ones at home or those who may be in long-term care facilities.

Send new mailings every week or two so that residents always have something to look forward to in the mail.

- Start a virtual club. A book club or another shared interest can be the catalyst for more frequent communication. A club puts everyone on the same page and enables them to come together, via phone or video chat, for a discussion.
- Ask for help learning a new skill. Along the same vein as a virtual club, lessons on everything from woodworking to crochet to making favorite holiday recipes can be conducted online. Give an isolated individual daily purpose and distraction by engaging him or her with online lessons.

Isolation and feelings of loneliness can affect anyone who normally suffers from cabin fever. However, this year it may be more pronounced, as it could be coupled with social distancing precautions that have already been in effect for some time.



Even those who may venture outside to socialize, particularly around the holiday season, may be hesitant or unable to do so to help prevent the spread of the virus. In these instances, friends and loved ones can mitigate feelings of isolation in various ways. Photo submitted

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December 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maple Lake Chamber of Commerce Meeting, 12 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legion Riders Meeting, 6:30 p.m. at Legion Club 		
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chatham Township Meeting, 7 p.m. American Legion Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Maple Lake City Council Meeting, 7 p.m. Late Start 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hasty-Silver Creek Sportsmen's Club Meeting, 8 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sons of the American Legion, 8 p.m. 		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Albion Township Meeting, 7 p.m. Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. Maple Lake Township Meeting, 7 p.m. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. Maple Lake Legion Auxiliary, 7 p.m. Lions Club Meeting, 7 p.m. at The V by HH 		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wright County Snowmobile Assoc. Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at Legion Club 		 <p>Christmas Eve DECEMBER 24</p> <p>Christmas Vacation No School</p>	 <p>Happy MERRY CHRISTMAS Holidays</p> <p>Christmas Vacation No School</p>	
27	28	29	30	31	<p>All events posted to this calendar may be affected by COVID-19. Please check with these events by calling or visiting their website.</p>	
	<p>Christmas Vacation No School</p>	<p>Christmas Vacation No School</p>	<p>Christmas Vacation No School</p>	 <p>Happy New Year</p> <p>Christmas Vacation No School</p>		

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