

## Tasty Tastings and Good Peeps

In case you haven't heard, our wine and beer tastings have been very popular lately. Now, not only can you sample great wine and locally crafted beer, but you can also sample the taste sensation that is Harvest & Home Catering. Our last couple of tastings have left the General Store packed full, so be sure to get there early, because you'll be sure to want to stay the whole afternoon. Check out this month's sidebar for tastings in April, as well as great deals from local businesses.

Speaking of local businesses, the New Salem General Store is happy to carry fine spirits from Berkshire Mountain Distillers for sale. We are also happy to feature BMD's founder Chris Weld in our spotlight interview this month. So drop by for a bottle of local rum, gin or vodka today!

*Rick*

Rick Oliver, Proprietor



*Local Vendor Spotlight:*  
**Chris Weld, Berkshire Mountain Distillers**

**'We're pretty stringent about what we put into our bottles.'**

**By Jake Ware**

With the booming popularity of drinking local beer, have you ever considered the benefits of drinking locally distilled spirits? We had a conversation with Chris Weld, owner and operator of Berkshire Mountain Distillers, Inc., and found out some interesting differences between brewing and distilling, as well as the difference between big time distilleries and distilleries that are a bit closer to home. Visit [www.berkshirermountaindistillers.com](http://www.berkshirermountaindistillers.com) and check out the rum, gin and vodka, as well as a link to rave reviews about their gins from Tasting Table.

**What got you interested in distilling?**

Well, I've always been interested in the biochemistry side of distilling. My wife and I moved back to the east coast from California. About six years ago, I bought an old apple farm, and we thought it would be great to make some Calvados type apple brandy. You can't call it Calvados if its made in this country. We thought it would be great to make some stuff with the fruit on the property, and kind of played around with idea for a couple of years, and we finally committed to it about three years ago, I guess, when we started. *(Continued on Page 2)*

## News & Events

### Beer Tasting

***Boston Beer Works***

**Thursday, April 8**

**4:30-6:30pm**

Boston Beer Works presented by Justin from Craft Brewers.

### Wine Tasting

***Tempra Tantrum***

**Thursday, April 29**

**4:30-6:30pm**

Spanish red wines, poured by none other than Rick himself!

*Both tastings catered by Harvest & Home Food Co.*

### Sunflower Sprouts



Organic! \$3.50 a container

### Dean's Beans

**Coffee of the Month:**

**Chocolate Raspberry**

Fresh brewed daily!

### Coca-Cola On Sale:

**2-liter bottles – get 2 for \$3**  
(Plus deposit)

### Store Hours

Monday-Saturday 6 am – 8 pm  
Sunday 7 am – 6 pm



It's spring! I am so happy to feel the warmth of the sun, to welcome back the seasonal flora and fauna. I woke to a whole flock of robins on my lawn this morning! So, I was going to write about gratitude today and then I opened my email this morning and found this:

*Begin your day by feeling grateful. Be grateful for the bed you just slept in, the roof over your head, the carpet or floor under your feet, the running water, the soap, your shower, your toothbrush, your clothes, your shoes, the refrigerator that keeps your food cold, the car that you drive, your job, your friends. Be grateful for the stores that make it so easy to buy the things you need, the restaurants, the utilities, services, and electrical appliances that make your life effortless. Be grateful for the magazines and the books that you read. Be grateful for the chair that you sit on, and the pavement that you walk on. Be grateful for the weather, the sun, the sky, the birds, the trees, the grass, the rain, and the flowers. ... Thank you, thank you, thank you!*

Hey ! That's what I was gonna say!!

Thank you to Rick and the staff at New Salem General Store for hosting these wonderful tastings and for graciously hosting Harvest & Home Catering as we begin our New Food Venture! See you at the next tasting!

– Karen Powers, Harvest & Home Food Co. [www.HarvestAndHome.blogspot.com](http://www.HarvestAndHome.blogspot.com)



### Local Vendor Spotlight: Berkshire Mountain Distillers (Continued from Page 1)

#### Do you find that there is a big market for local distilleries and spirits?

I think it's probably, hopefully, getting a little bit better. The craft distilling revolution is certainly a long ways behind the home craft beer revolution, you know, that sort of happened 25, 30 years ago, and I think we're starting to follow in their footprints, though the nature of the beast has changed a bit. It doesn't quite have the traction that the craft brewing industry has, but it will be more commonplace, and hopefully people will realize the benefits of trying local spirits. It's not just the fact that good local spirits are made with local stuff, but that when you buy local you help support the environment that you live in and the tax bases stay in the area vs. buying from across the pond.

#### What's your business philosophy – or your reason for doing what you do?

Well, the reason is sort of a passion I think. It's a love, it's a great amalgamation of different things I like to do. It's working in the environment, it's out pruning apple trees, it's talking with local farmers, but there's also a lot of biochemistry involved in the fermentation and distillation. And there's a lot of building involved as well, in terms of setting up the plant, and building the still, and stuff like that. My philosophy is (A) provide a great product, and (B) allow people to drink locally without having to make a sacrifice in quality. They can be altruistic in supporting something from their region without sacrificing the quality of the stuff that they're drinking. In this instance, the trickle down effect really works, because when I build a new brick house it's local workers building it. It's a nice way to take advantage of what's called "the local multiplier effect." It dictates that for every dollar you spend on something from a local company, it's like injecting three bucks into the economy, as opposed to if you were to buy from a chain store.

#### How do you distinguish yourself from your national and international competitors, since being local becomes less important in that market?

Well, the local aspect is huge. Let's say you had two vodkas, one from Europe and one from here, why would you support an outside economy? Not that I've found a vodka equal to ours yet, but... A lot of these big guys are dictated by bean counters and number crunchers. They have a bottom line that they are always having to meet, and they need to make those numbers. When you look at a fermentation that goes into a distillation, there's a lot of product that's made that you could certainly throw into a batch, but if you left it out, you might have a nicer product. There are three fractions that come over during a distillation: the heads, which is the more volatile stuff, you know the very beginning stuff is the worst and smells like nail polish remover, and then you get into the hearts, which is sort of the king of the cut, and then the tails, which have a lot of fatty acids in it and amyl butyl alcohol. You need a little bit of heads, and a little bit of tails, to round out the flavor, especially with whiskeys and rums. We usually throw out about 25% of the distillates we make, because we don't want them in our product, and when I taste a lot of other products, I think that they put in stuff that we would not. Ours is the cleaner product.

#### So they put in more heads and tails than you do?

Right, you know, because if you're tossing out 25% of the stuff you make, it's not 25% of your profit margin, but it's certainly a good chunk of it. We're pretty stringent about what we put into our bottles.

