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MEDIA RELEASE

TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Tennessee Wines Win Awards Coast to Coast – But Visit Them At Home In October

NASHVILLE - Tennessee wineries have been racking up awards on both sides of the U.S. all summer, but now is prime time to visit them on their home turf, when the wine making process is underway at local wineries.

Depending on the grape variety, weather and vineyard location, the season's harvest begins about August and wraps up in October. That's when wineries start making the year's wines, and when visitors to local wineries can get a close up look at the process. Most local wineries offer educational tours of their facilities.

Going straight to a winery to learn about wines has practical benefits, too. In retail stores, wines are often bought based on the look of the label, the price, or recommendation of someone at the store who may or may not know the wine being discussed. At a local winery's tasting room, wines can be sampled before purchase. The vintner may even be on hand to discuss ways to serve and use it. The winery certainly will have an expert on hand whose whole purpose is to educate visitors about their products.

Tennessee has a fast-growing, international award winning wine country, with 40 wineries and 150 vineyards across the state. According to Dr. David Lockwood, fruit specialist and professor of plant science at the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, Tennessee's commercial grape production has grown from 650 acres in 2011 to "a modest estimate" of more than 800 acres statewide. Lockwood says that 97 percent of all commercial grapes grown in Tennessee are used for wine.

At September's 2013 International Wine Channel TV Awards in Sonoma, California, Keg Springs Winery in Hampshire took a rare "double gold" medal for their best of show fruit wine, M'Lady's Strawberry. To win a double gold medal, every judge at the event had to vote for that wine to receive a gold medal. More than 850 wines were entered in the international competition.

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At the recent Mid-America Wine Competition in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, Keg Springs Winery took home more gold, along with Beachaven Vineyards & Winery, Clarksville; Beans Creek Winery, Manchester; and Century Farm Winery, Norton. All four wineries also won silver and bronze medals. A complete list of their award winning wines and medals from 2013 competitions are listed at www.picktnproducts.org. Visit www.picktnproducts.org to find local wineries and food pairings of Tennessee wines with local and seasonal foods.

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