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11/1/06-Tyler

State Law Allows New Winery To Sell Bottled Wine in Tyler



For the first time in more than 50 years, you'll be able to buy a bottle of wine in the city of Tyler and take it home.

The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission has approved the KE Cellars Winery which will open by Thanksgiving in the French Quarter Shopping Center at Broadway and South Loop 323 in Tyler.

KE Cellars will be able to offer wine by the glass for tasting on the premises, and sales of bottled wine for customers to take home. Of course, Smith County and Tyler are dry, but under this permit, wines can be sold so long as they're bottled in Texas and consist of at least 75 percent Texas grapes.

"We Texans are proud and we don't get an opportunity to serve in every one of our houses and every one of our functions, Texas products. I think this is the first step -- make it available for people to serve," said Pierre de Wet, owner of the new location.

He also owns Kiepersol Estates Winery near Bullard. That's where the grapes for KE Cellars wine will be grown.

You might wonder how all this can be done without a wet/dry election in Smith County. A new 2005 state law allows winery permits in any location in Texas as a way to promote the Texas winemaking industry.



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