

God (S)willing

A beautiful, former church in Northern Westchester is now a wine paradise.

Sipping wine in a Catholic church is normally reserved for celebrating the Eucharist during mass. Not the case at St. George's Church, today **The Winery at St. George** (1715 E Main St, Mohegan Lake 914-455-4272; thewineryatst-george.com), a 1912, all-stone Normandy-style church building that was home to St. Elizabeth's Parish until 1982.

"My dream was to create a little bit of Napa Valley in Westchester County," says new owner Tom DeChiaro, who spent approximately \$1 million renovating the church and transforming it into a wine-lover's venue. Set to open this month or next, the immense (2,300 square feet) structure is surrounded by lush foliage and wetlands. "I had a vision of starting a winery in the Finger Lakes Region," DeChiaro says. "Then one day, I drove by and saw the 'For Sale' sign."

DeChiaro, a Mahopac resident, plans to serve 30 to 35 different wines, some from Hanover Farms in Yorktown, and rotate them on a regular basis. He intends to sell wines by the glass, but around 300 bottles will also be available. An avid traveler, DeChiaro intends to bring in bottles from as far away as China and Australia.

To honor the peacefulness and serene church ambience, DeChiaro has inscribed biblical verses and wine quotes celebrating

the growth of vineyards and their precious fruits on some of the massive wooden beams that stretch across the 20-foot ceiling. A gold crucifix hangs on one wall, a gift from the parish. Cast-iron circular chandeliers shed light from individual candle-like bulbs. The ambience maintains the element of quiet solitude.



The original building had LaFarge stained-glass windows, but those have been returned to St. Elizabeth's Parish and new stained glass has been installed to let the daylight through at opposite ends.

One of the modern touches: the grand piano placed at the end of the oak bar. "Anyone who is a musician and is visiting is free to sit down and play a tune," DeChiaro says.

// Dale Ann Deffer

Just a taste of what you'll find in Julia Sexton's EATER blog at westchestermagazine.com.

Eater Bite

Thank Zeus for Greek in Southern Westchester! (Picture our plates crashing to the floor with an "Opa!") We're over that Lefteris-Santorini conspiracy, where they opened practically right next door to each other. Our main man Rui Cunha—once behind Hartsdale's lamented Oporto—is seeking to amend our situation with Bronxville's new Eliá Taverna (eliataverna.com). This super-casual newcomer slips into the tired, ex-Babbone space, and will be slinging gyros, Greek salads and heavenly baklava in a space that's as face-lifted as Joan Rivers. Beer and wine are pending, though only moments away, while Rui Cunha's fabled sangria from Oporto is planned to make the pilgrimage south. (For more delicious bites from EATER, visit westchestermagazine.com.)