

Upstate New York Brewery and Wine Tour

Niskayuna, Saratoga, Glens Falls, and Lake George, New York

By Christine Kingery

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This is a perfect tour for anyone that is visiting the Upstate NY area, or who is spending a weekend in the Lake George or Saratoga areas. I personally recommend doing this list in order, so that you end up in Saratoga Springs at the end of the day. You have a lot of great restaurants and bars to choose from in downtown Saratoga Springs to wrap up the day. Remember if you are going to do the tour, please drink responsibly and either hire transportation or get a designated driver.

Total Driving Time: 1 hour 41 minutes
(72.5 miles from the first location to the last location)
Total Est. Tasting Time: 4-5 hours

1. Coopers Cave Ale Company (microbrewery)

2 Sagamore Street

Glens Falls, NY

(518) 792-0007

<http://www.cooperscaveale.com/>

Opens at 11:30 a.m. every day and “open late.”

When we went, they had 12 beers on tap. For a sampling or a flight of beers, you can choose six beers for something like \$8 or so. If you go with a group, I recommend that you get a flight of six, and have a friend get the other flight of six, then share all 12. They have some fruity beers—a blueberry and a raspberry—that are very sweet. The Red had a great holiday smell to it. Coopers Cave also has a full menu so you can eat while you’re there or grab some homemade ice cream.

2. Davidson Brothers Brewing Company (microbrewery)

184 Glens Street

Glens Falls, NY

(518) 743-9026

<http://www.davidsonbrothers.com/>

Opens at 11:30 daily, noon Saturday-Sunday.

This brewery is located in the heart of downtown Glens Falls in a fantastic old brick building. I could have stayed here all day, laughing with the bartender (Rick Farmer), who was an absolute hoot! Eventually one of the owners stopped by and chatted with us. We ended up talking to other people at the bar, too—everyone was really friendly! The bar had a few tvs to watch sports. The place has a full restaurant, and I recommend taking a moment to have a quick lunch here. (Don’t dilly dally too long if you want to make Saratoga Winery later!) When we went, they had a lot of IPAs and bitter beers on tap and no wheat beers, which are my favorites. A sampling of six 6-ounce samples cost something like \$9. However, I suspect that the brews differ quite often. Davidson Brothers brews their beers on location, and if you want a tour (which they do), call ahead to schedule a time.

3. Adirondack Pub and Brewery (microbrewery)

33 Canada Street

Lake George, NY

(518) 668-0002

<http://www.adkpub.com/>

Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday at Noon.

This is a typical brew pub, but with a great sampling of Adirondack “rustic” architecture. A sampling of six beers cost about \$6 or so. When we went, they were out of two of their beers, so they gave us something else, but didn’t write it down for us, so we weren’t entirely sure what they were. Their Dirty Blonde wheatbeer was quite good, and their Coffee Stout was a great after-dinner beer. They offer tours on Saturdays “in season” (I think that means during the summertime) or by appointment, so give a call. This should be a quick stop, so keep on going with the tour! The next winery is just a little ways up the street.

4. Adirondack Winery (free wine tasting + cheese and chocolate samples, etc)

285 Canada Street

Lake George, NY

(518) 668-WINE

<http://www.adirondackwinery.com/>

Thursday-Saturday 11-6; Sundays 11-4. *Note: These hours will change in the summertime, so double-check the website.*

This winery left me pleasantly surprised for two reasons. First of all, I always expect northcountry wines to be on the sugary side, but these wines were actually well-developed and well refined. This is because they purchase their grapes from California at mature wineries. Secondly, they had an enormous selection of wines! They actually have more than 30 wines to choose from. Cost is \$5 to try 5 wines, and they are pretty stingy in the amount they pour. You do get to keep the souvenir glass. I highly recommend the Barbara and the Merlot (the regular Merlot, not the Reserve) They were delicious! They also have a variety of fruit wines and dessert wines as well as traditional whites and reds. No appointment is necessary to taste the wines.

5. Saratoga Winery and Tasting Room

462 Route 29

Saratoga Springs, NY

(518) 584-WINE

<http://www.thesaratogawinery.com/>

Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday, 12-6 p.m.; Friday 12-9 p.m.

Like Adirondack Winery, this place left me pleasantly surprised. This is a new winery (opened in 2009 I think) with surprisingly sophisticated wines. Like Adirondack Winery, this place purchases their grapes offsite; Saratoga Winery gets theirs from one of the oldest and most well-established vineyards in the Finger Lakes region. They feature Melomel wines, which are sweetened with honey (and boy, they are sweet!). Saratoga Winery features music and food (for an extra price) on Friday nights. Cost is \$5 to try 5 wines (they are more generous with their pours than Adirondack Winery) and if you ask and they aren’t too busy, you can probably try an extra one. The wines from this winery will be featured at the Saratoga Race Track this year (2011).

6. Olde Saratoga Brewing Company

131 Excelsior Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY
(518) 581-0492

Monday-Friday 5-10 p.m.; Saturday 12-10 p.m.

In a lot of ways, I'm saving the best for last. For starters, the tasting room is open late, so kick back and relax after your day of beer and wine tasting! Let me tell you a little secret: *the beers here are free, all day, every day*. No kidding. They give you about 6 ounces of one beer you want to try. When you're done, you just ask for another beer. And another. And another. And it's free, for as much as you want to drink. Sound crazy? Yeah, I thought so too. If you prefer wine, bring your own bottle of wine and drink it on site; they're fine with that. The beers here were my personal favorites, but I'm not a bitter-beer kind of lady. Their Kinfisher Lager and Saratoga Lager were my two personal favorites. The tasting room has tvs to watch your sports games, and has free Wi-Fi as well. The room is pretty small, and often tour buses stop by, during which time it gets pretty crowded. They have live music on Thursday Nights, and they often have free food to sample, too. They offer tours of their brewery, but you need to call to book a tour.

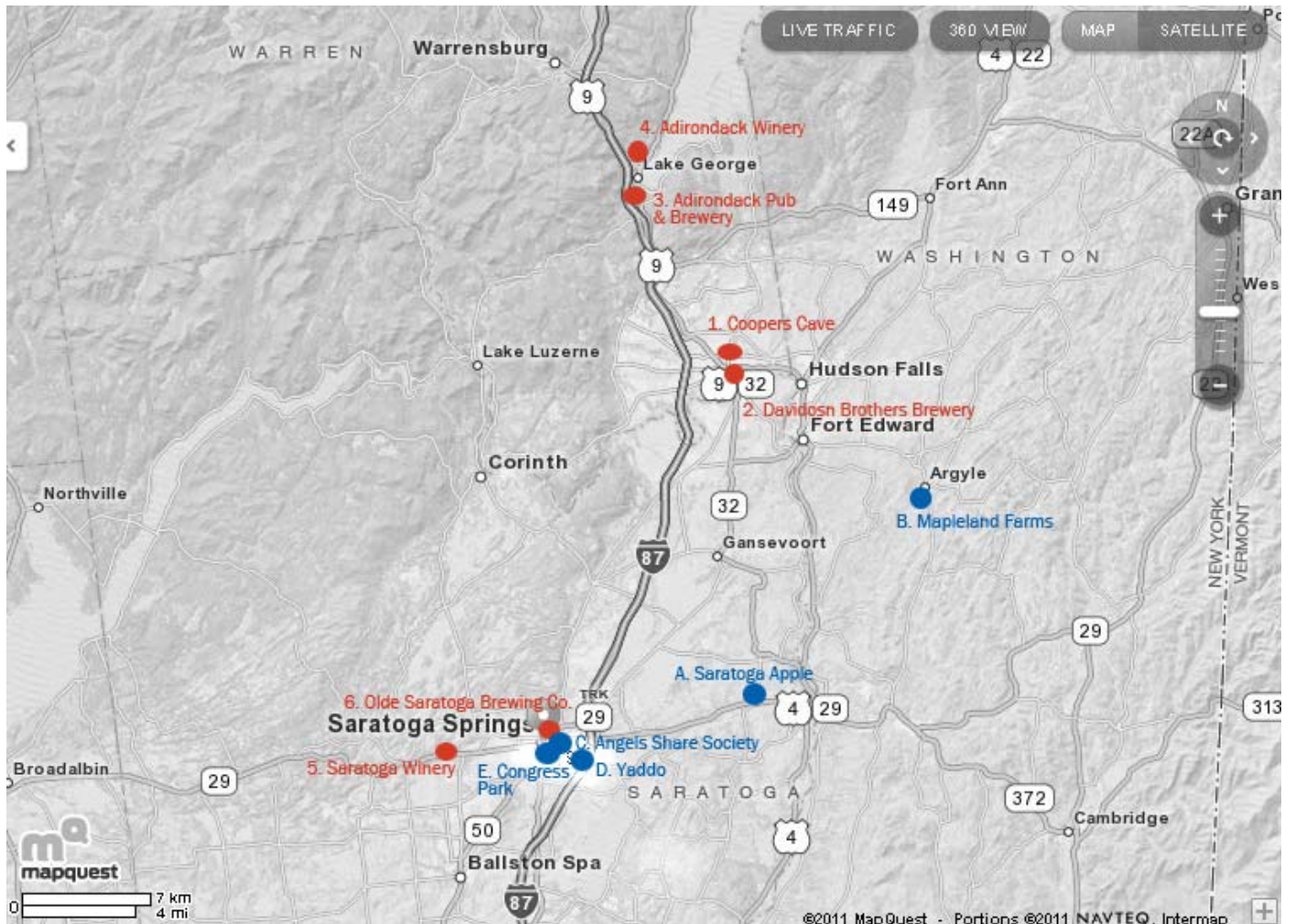
7. Capoccia Vineyards & Winery

2820 Balltown Road
Niskayuna, NY
(518) 729-6386

<http://www.facebook.com/CapocciaVineyardsWinery>

Thurs-Saturday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Sunday 12-8 p.m.

Cost is \$3 for a sampling of their seven wines. They are a new winery (just opened in July of 2010) but their wines are sophisticated and tasty. They have a range of whites and reds.



WORTH MENTIONING:

This is a pretty short brew/wine tour for me. It's not unusual for us to get 10 or more wineries into one visit when we hit the road for a tour. Since the first microbrewery doesn't open until 10:30 or 11 a.m., that gives you ample time to check out some other local places if you have time. Let me make a few recommendations:

Angel's Share Society

9 Maple Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY
9518) 583-CLUB
<http://9mapleavenue.com/?page=share>

There's a sampling society that samples single malts, bourbons, martinis, and Irish whiskeys. Cost of tastings is \$30. They meet the first Tuesday of every month at 7 p.m. This is a teeny-tiny bar (seats 40 people) that often has live jazz music. I personally love their martini menu, which has over 250 choices. Add this place to the end of your beer & wine tour and sample some of their specialty whiskeys.

Yaddo

312 Union Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY

This artist's community is on a private 400 acre wooded site. This is a private mansion where famous artists come to stay to get some work done. Some of the famous people that have graced these halls have included Truman Capote, Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein, Langston Hughes, and 64 Pulitzer Prize winners, etc. You can't get close to the mansion itself (you can see it though), but the beautiful gardens are open free to the public from 8 a.m. to dusk. If you're setting off on your tour on a beautiful summer morning, stop by Yaddo with some fresh mimosas to enjoy the scenery. You can't get a tour, so don't bother calling.

Saratoga Springs Congress Park

Broadway
Saratoga Springs, NY

Congress Park is located right in the heart of Saratoga Springs and is commonly known as the "City Park." (This helps to differentiate it from the State Park and the National Park that are nearby.) Congress Park features the Canfield Casino on the grounds, but has immaculate gardens, fountains, statues, and a beautiful working carousel. The park is free and is always open. Bring a picnic breakfast to enjoy before you start your day.

Saratoga Apple, Inc.

1174 Route 29
Schuylerville, NY
(518) 695-3131
<http://www.saratogaapple.com/>
9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

This is an apple orchard located in Schuylerville, just outside of Saratoga Springs. They have some fantastic apples (including pick-your-own, for a fee), fresh vegetables, and really delicious cider donuts. Stop by here for donuts and apples before hitting the beer and wine trail. While you're here, venture across the street and check out the Schuylerville Monument (it's very close, within walking distance really) to enjoy your donuts. Or, venture to downtown Schuylerville to the little park on the Champlain Canal. If you've never seen a canal lock in operation, this is a good place to watch it work, and the park is cute.

<http://villageofschuylerville.org/Areas-of-Interest/Saratoga-Monument.asp>

Mapleland Farms

550 Bunker Hill Road
Argyle, NY
9 a.m. - 1 pm

This place is in the middle of nowhere and will take a good 40 minutes to get to the first microbrewery. It's open early though, but it is only open during March, which is maple syrup season. Stop by to watch the syrup-master make some fresh maple syrup and pay \$7 for an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast that is, trust me, well worth the wait.