

# “Where to Wine” in Hammonton, New Jersey

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Driving through unassuming Hammonton, New Jersey, we thought we might be in the wrong area for Tomasello Winery. Hammonton is located directly between Philadelphia and Atlantic City which means the traffic is constantly flowing amidst orchards and farms on both sides of the road. We saw a sign for the winery and turned into a small parking lot in front of a large, white nondescript building. Are we sure this is really it? I glanced further behind the building and saw some grape vines. Yep, this is it. We hesitantly walked into the door marked by a small sign that said “Tasting Room” and were pleasantly surprised by what we found.

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The tasting room was elegantly modern and airy, recently remodeled in April 2015. The bar is tastefully done with granite countertops with contemporary shelving of glass, metal, and warm wood shelving holding their almost 40 different types of wine behind the bar. Fine art lines the walls of the tasting room

and the adjoining room where you can sit and enjoy a glass of wine or have a seated tasting. Wandering further down the hallway, I came upon their beautiful banquet area, known as The Vintner's Room, with crystal chandeliers, white linen covered tables, marble floors, and the promise of wonderful events to come. Tomasello Winery hosts weddings and wedding receptions for groups of 50-225 guests. Additionally, they host multiple upscale events through the year such as a Valentine's Dinner, The Opera Gala, and more.



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Tomasello Winery, a family winery operation, was founded in 1933 by Frank Tomasello. Frank was a berry farmer who also excelled at growing grapes and a passion for making wine. When his friends and family sampled his wine and loved it, he realized that he had become a skilled winemaker with a promising business. In February 1933, when Frank heard the federal government was repealing Prohibition and was ready to once again issue winery licenses he didn't waste any time. He jumped into his truck and drove through a snowstorm to Washington, D.C. to be one of the first in line for a license. Tomasello Winery was bonded that year, license number 68 for the entire country. Today, the winery stands in its original location in Hammonton, New Jersey, and has grown to become the largest winery in the Garden State.

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Contributing to its growth, the founder's sons Charles Tomasello, Sr., and Joseph Tomasello worked for many years to build a strong reputation for the New Jersey winery. Charles Tomasello's sons, John K. Tomasello and Charles Tomasello, Jr., currently operate the winery. As third generation winemakers, they have consistently produced award-winning wines. Today, Tomasello produces approximately 30 still wines and eight sparkling wines. They're much celebrated Sparkling Blueberry is made in the classical methods champenoise and only

uses the top blueberries from top growers in Hammonton, New Jersey, known as the Blueberry Capital of the World. Knowing this, we had to try their signature wine.

They offer several options for tastings, with the basic tasting costing \$5.00 for five tastes, and tastings with chocolate truffles and cheeses to pair with the wine. The tasting cost goes up accordingly with the different options. While the truffles were tempting, we opted for the basic tasting. One of our sample choices was Tomasello's Sparkling Blueberry. It is made with 100% Blueberry wine, wine actually made from fermenting the blueberries. If you've ever had a Jersey blueberry, they burst with juicy flavor and this wine exemplifies their qualities. A wonderful mouth-filling blueberry character, slightly sweet, but it doesn't veer into cloying territory. The bubbles are delicate and crisp. This wine is lovely as an aperitif or a perfect accompaniment to a light dessert or a creamy cheesecake.

Tomasello is well-known for their exceptional fruit wines, but they also excel at European varietals such as their Palmaris 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve. Not normally available for tasting, but it was our lucky day as they had a bottle open and let us sample it. Good thing they did, because we bought a bottle of it! It was intense with grippy tannins and rich blackberry, chocolate, and tobacco notes. Delicious now, but also cellar-worthy.

We thoroughly enjoyed our visit with Tomasello Winery and their knowledgeable staff and left with several bottles to add to our cellar. As the old saying goes, never judge a book by its cover! If we judged this winery based solely on their location and simple building on the outside, we never would have found such a jewel inside. If you do head out to Tomasello Winery, don't forget to carry your [VinGardeValise® Petite](#) with you! You won't be disappointed.

Kat Collins is a late bloomer in the wine world. Her religious upbringing believed wine was of the devil and promoted all sorts of sins. She's since discovered that there is a reason Jesus turned water into wine, it's heavenly! Okay...maybe it had more to do with the miracle thing, but still. Kat is the creator and author of [HumbleWineSnob.com](#), and has over 20 years writing and blogging experience. While her focus is on East Coast Wine in the United States, she's open to wine experiences from all over the world. You can find her on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).