

# In good spirits



At left, Don Wilson, owner of Wilson Wine and Beer Supplies, holds a mug of beer made from one of the beer making kits he sells. Below, Wilson shows a bottle corker for sale at his business, which he runs from his Gilbertsville home.

Photos by Daniel P. Creighton/  
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## Business caters to home beer brewers, wine makers

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GILBERTSVILLE — For many, a glass of wine with dinner or a cold bottle of beer is a satisfying way to cap off a hectic day. For others, that sense of satisfaction is even greater because they crafted the beverage themselves.

Amateur and expert beer brewers and wine makers have relied on Wilson Wine and Beer Supplies in Gilbertsville for more than six years, and if the fact that the shop's inventory has tripled since its debut is any indication, the hobby has taken off locally.

Don Wilson, who runs the business from his home with some help from family, sells wine, beer and champagne making kits, bottles, corks, corking machines, bottle cappers, label makers, fruit purees, recipe books and just about everything else home brewers and wine producers could need.

He got the idea about seven years ago when a friend visited and brought him a bottle of homemade wine.

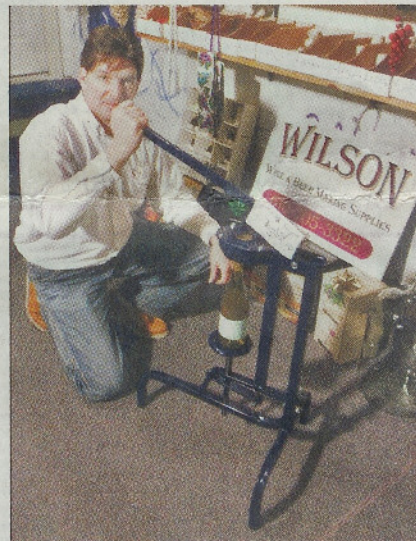
"I was impressed with the idea and said 'How do you make that stuff?'" Wilson said.

Wilson bought a wine-making kit, and with his friend's help, he made his first bottle of wine. He visited a local shop, and when he inquired about buying equipment in bulk, he learned the store was for sale, purchased all of its inventory and opened his own home business. The low overhead of running the operation from home, Wilson said, has helped the business succeed.

In addition to selling supplies, Wilson teaches fruit wine making classes. The classes are typically offered after the September fruit harvest and contain 15 to 20 students. The class lasts 1½ hours, Wilson said.

"It goes over pretty well," he said. "People get to try the wine, and it's a lot of fun. I became interested myself because we'd go out to dinner, and when I tried a new wine, I wanted to teach myself more about it."

When Wilson opened his shop, he



entered some of his creations in competitions at the Kimberton Fair and garnered several awards. His riesling, a German sweet wine, took first place in the sweet wine category, and his Wilson Lager Light finished first in the beer field. His Wilson Rules Red Ale took second in the beer competition, and his merlot was judged the second-best wine, overall.

"It just shows what you can do with a \$50 kit," Wilson said.

Wilson said he draws customers from Reading to the Main Line and

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