



the agritourism business goes way beyond sales. Visitors get to sample up to a dozen of Duplin's 30 muscadine wines, sparkling wines and beverages in a tasting. "In my opinion, the single most important thing is getting people to come to your place, sample your product and see what you do," says Jonathan.

That plan, along with the well-publicized health benefits and simple drinkability of muscadine wine, has led to distribution in 11 states in retail outlets like Wal-Mart, Food Lion, Ingles and Bi-Lo. Pretty impressive, especially since David Sr.—who is still involved in the business—remembers the days when he drove loads of wine to distributors in converted hog trailers.

Sounds like a far cry from the massive wine impresarios on the West Coast that Duplin now, however improbably, finds as competitors. In 2009, Duplin was the only East Coast winery to be named a "Hot Brand" by beverage industry magazine *Market Watch*, and one of only three outside of California on the prestigious list. Go to wine country in California, and "there you talk to some mighty fancy people," says David. "Over here, we're just as country as they come, and we have been blessed to have these grapes growing here naturally."

Retailers across the country sold more than 330,000 cases of Duplin's sweet vino last year. Those are Napa-level numbers. So take that, cabernet. David says he "never dreamed" he'd see his family business on a list with the Gallos and the Mondavis, but concedes, "We do make some of the best sweet wines in the whole wide world." Critics agree. Duplin's Hatteras Red and Scuppernong White are multiple award winners. More importantly, sweet wine is trending upward, and even the California wine families are taking notice, producing their own "moscato" vintages.

Pretty sweet indeed. And definitely worthy of some respect. **FL**

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Vineyard manager Carlos Munguia is impressed with the maneuverability of the MF2615.

Compact Tractors For a Big Business

THOUGH THE COMPANY operates more than one brand of tractor, Duplin Winery has owned an older MF1220 for more than 15 years, and the quality of that machine led Duplin to purchase a MF2615 from White Tractor, Inc., in Burgaw, N.C., in 2010. "We used the 1220 for a little of everything," says Carlos Munguia, the winery's vineyard manager, including spraying, mowing and pulling trailers during grape harvest. "The durability of it, plus the convenience of having a dealer nearby" made the MF2615 an easy purchase decision, he says.

Once they had the new tractor, Munguia could compare it to the other brands of equipment on hand. "We have some Kubotas, and the thing you notice is the MF2615 has a much tighter turning radius," says Munguia, which is crucial when maneuvering around delicate vines. Getting as close to the vines with the tractor as possible is important

both for spraying, to avoid drift, and for mowing, to keep rows tidy for visitors.

Munguia says the quick availability of parts, even for the older MF1220, reduces any downtime drastically. "Just recently the 1220 broke a bearing," he says. "We had the part from the dealership, got it replaced, and were back up and running in 20 minutes."

Since 2010, Duplin has added two more MF2615s, both equipped with loaders and used in the production facility, to its fleet.

The formula for success at Duplin Winery, the largest muscadine winery in America, is comparable to the formula for Massey Ferguson's heritage of quality, says David Fussell. "We make great wines and people expect a certain quality from them, and I think that's the same as anyone who's out there buying a tractor. We've learned to put trust in Massey Ferguson to provide us with a quality tractor."