

Fadden's wins Carlisle Trophy, again, for best maple syrup in New Hampshire

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NORTH WOODSTOCK — For the second year in a row, and seventh time overall, the New Hampshire Maple Producers Association has deemed that the best maple syrup in the state is being made by the Fadden family.

The Faddens have been making maple syrup for nearly 200 years, said Jim Fadden, the family patriarch, and have been selling the sweet stuff at the Fadden General Store and Maple Sugarhouse since its opening in 1896.

On Monday afternoon, Jim Fadden and his son James were at the store, basking in yet another award: the Lawrence A. Carlisle Memorial Trophy for excellence in the production of maple syrup, which the NHMPA — after reviewing the best syrups from three sugar houses in each of New Hampshire's 10 counties — bestowed upon them at the association's Jan. 24 annual meeting in Lebanon.

The Carlisle Trophy recognizes its namesake's service and devotion "to the welfare and development of the Maple Industry of New Hampshire" while also recognizing the best maple syrup in the Granite State. A silver bowl also comes with the blue ribbon.

The medium amber that kept the Carlisle Trophy in North Woodstock was produced by the Faddens in March 2014, said Jim Fadden, and was made possible thanks to the efforts of his family and employees, the kindness of Mother Nature, and finally, he concedes, by a smidge of ability from the cooks.

The 2014 maple syrup season was one of fits and starts, said Fadden, beginning slowly but nonetheless ending in an “average” year with the production of some 3,000 gallons of syrup. To make that much syrup, however, the Faddens used more than 100,000 gallons of sap, which was collected employing a reverse-osmosis system that tapped some 9,000 maple trees.

Fadden congratulated his fellow Carlisle Trophy contestants, saying “the competition was stiff.”

Fadden’s ships syrup to customers in just about every state in the U.S. and overseas to Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, Bermuda and England. Asked about what it takes to make an award-winning maple syrup that is in demand both nationally and internationally, Fadden replied that it begins with processing the sap “as quickly as possible.”

The processing, on commercial food-preparation-grade equipment, thrice cleans the sap before boiling reduces it down to syrup.

In considering the syrup for the Carlisle Trophy, the NHMPA judges check it for density, clarity “and most of all, for the flavor,” said Fadden, who speculated that what makes the flavor of the syrup from Fadden’s so appealing is the soil his sugar trees grow in, the water they are nourished by and “a little bit” of the cook’s experience.