

## PRESS RELEASE

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### MAINE TASTING CENTER LAUNCHES NON-PROFIT AND EXPANDS EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Maine Tasting Center, located at 506 Old Bath Rd in Wiscasset, is gearing up for a busy 2022 summer season, having significantly expanded their calendar of class offerings in the Learning Center. The business opened in July 2021 as a food and drink education center under the ownership of Andrew, Elizabeth and Sara Gross. Maine Tasting Center's campus currently consists of the Tasting Room, a brew-pub style space which serves up Maine-made food and beverages, and the Learning Center, a state-of-the-art classroom and demonstration kitchen. "During summer 2021, our Tasting Room took center stage; we're thrilled that so many people fell in love with our Tasting Room and the social experience it offers," says General Manager Sara Gross. "This summer we're really looking forward to elevating our Learning Center and introducing people to our classes."

The expansion of Maine Tasting Center's class schedule coincides with the launch of a new non-profit, Maine Food and Beverage Education Center [MFBEC]. The non-profit will serve as a sister organization to Maine Tasting Center and will be responsible for executing the company's educational mission: to provide meaningful, educational encounters between Maine's diverse food and drink producers and the public. According to company president Andrew Gross, "Maine Tasting Center has been a benefit corporation since day one, but our ultimate goal has always been to operate as a non-profit. We are excited to have the opportunity to move in that direction during our second season as we continue to expand our educational and community-focused efforts."

The educational offerings available in the Learning Center will include hands-on cooking classes, meet-the-producer events, tasting and pairing experiences, pop-up dinners and more. Over 30 class dates are already on the calendar, including a tasting class on Maine Tasting Center's opening day; *Artisanal Cheeses of Maine*, taught by cheesemaker Eric Rector of Monroe Cheese Studio, will be offered at 12:00pm on May 28.

In addition to more traditional class formats, the Maine Tasting Center team is looking forward to experimenting with some more unusual interactive formats this summer – for

example, an evening event set to take place on August 5 that will teach about iconic Maine foods within the setting of a Dungeons & Dragons campaign. “Our goal [at MFBEC] is to build bridges between our partners and the public, and to explore new and novel ways of doing that,” says Ana-Maria Bell, Director of Development at Maine Food and Beverage Education Center. “Food education is important - and it’s also such great fun.”

The high-quality educational programming at Maine Tasting Center is made possible by partnerships with local producers, industry experts and chefs across the state. “We have been working for more than two years to build these relationships and are so grateful to everyone who has reached out to us to offer their expertise! Thanks to them, we can offer classes on a wide range of topics: from wild blueberries to cheesemaking to Maine-made spirits to cooking with coastal ingredients, and more,” explains Sara Gross. Class instructors for the 2022 season include Jeff Mao (*Knead & Nosh*), Chris Toy (*Downeast Far East*), Christine Burns Rudalevige (*edible MAINE*), Kitty Broihier, MS, RD (*NutriComm*), and Jason Lilley (*University of Maine Cooperative Extension*), among many others.

The Tasting Room at Maine Tasting Center will be open seven days a week beginning May 28, 2022. Tickets for classes and pop-up dinners in the Learning Center are available with dates scheduled throughout the summer. Learn more and sign up for classes at [www.maintastingcenter.com/classes](http://www.maintastingcenter.com/classes).

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