

From: Jirehsr@aol.com [mailto:Jirehsr@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, April 22, 2015 11:22 AM

Subject: Re: F H Gillingham & Sons General Store

F. H. Gillingham & Sons

16 Elm Street

Woodstock Vermont

My family has owned and operated F. H. Gillingham & Son's general store in Woodstock Vermont for 129 years. I have been working at the store since 1981. One of my first jobs was to be in charge of our wine department which has grown into a very large department in the store. We work very hard to have wine from all over the world and would be very interested in adding the fortified wines to our selection. Because of our location we have been able to win a lot of business from New Hampshire due to our great selection and knowledge of our products. The existing wholesale wine distribution works well to allow us to provide the great varieties we carry. If the fortified wine is to be made available to stores like ours it is very important that we have the largest selection to pick from. We have worked closely with the wholesalers to reach producers and get new wine added to the wholesaler's lists; this is why we sell so much wine.

Many of our customers are from out of state, they come from areas where they generally have more selection than Vermont stores have available to them. It is being able to offer the special wine not found everywhere that sets us apart. If we are forced to buy only from the state stores I am sure our sales will be less than if we can buy from our existing wholesale system. Fewer sales will amount to less tax revenue collected. Please consider how hard it is for Vermont stores to compete in wine already and pass a bill that will give us the largest selection and the state the most tax revenue.

Jireh Billings