

New business gets cheers from community

By **WHITNEY JOSEPH**
Editor

MILLERTON — South Center Street was hopping this past Saturday evening, as the opening of Little Gates & Co. Wine Merchants drew a crowd from around the Tri-State region to the tiny village of Millerton.

"People are curious when a new business opens to come out, but the sheer amount of people here is exciting," said Millerton Mayor John Scuteri. "People from all over are coming to spend time in the village. It's a good feeling. I'm impressed."

And so were the nearly 400 people who turned out to see both the shop and its owners: Will Little (also chairman of The Lakeville Journal Co., which owns The Millerton News) and Andrew Gates and his wife, Andrus. Little resides in New York City, with a weekend home in Lakeville, Conn., while the Gateses live in Salisbury, Conn. All three said they have come to love Millerton.

"I think this town is really interesting," Andrus Gates said. "It acts as a hub—you've got a grocery store, movie theater and many great stores—it's got a good vibe. And it's terrific because you're accessible from Millbrook to Lakeville. We'll just be one more reason to come to Millerton."

Andrew Gates, a partner and investor in the venture who is also a full-time broker with Sotheby's International Realty, said he's keen on the village of Millerton, too.

"We considered a number of locations from Connecticut to Massachusetts to New York, and we felt that Millerton has clearly emerged as the commercial heart of the immediate region and surrounding communities," Gates said. "There's an energy here and vibrancy that seems to be continuing on a real trajectory and we really wanted to be participating in that."

"We think there's a market for it, without a doubt," said Little, who reminisced about how the whole venture began. "Andrew and I got to talking about wine and eventually



PHOTO BY WHITNEY JOSEPH

Andrus Gates, Will Little and Andrew Gates all said they believe the Millerton location will work well for their new shop, Little Gates & Co. Wine Merchants.

we said we could do something like this, but we didn't want to do it in the town of Salisbury, because there are two well established shops there. Then Andrew said he found what he thought would be a very good location in Millerton and we thought this place would work."

From the looks of Saturday's opening, the location should work just fine. In fact, there are a number of other stores on South Center Street that also opened recently, some the same night, which are all hoping to draw the same clientele.

"I think we all have similar sensibilities as far as wanting to bring the same level of quality and style and sophistication to our own venues," said Betsy Zimring, of Pringle and Zimring, her new gift and home store. "It's been terrific because we're all coming to the street new. We're all excited to be here at the same time and we hope we add some new life and new variety to the things available in Millerton."

Aside from Pringle and Zimring, Babette's Kitchen and Sarah Blodgett Photography are also open for busi-

ness, all on the same street.

"I think it's great. Millerton itself has been a remarkable engine of sound development and has been a real destination point," said wine shop manager Warren Carter. "The town itself has been a model of what good development should be and our shop, though not on Main Street, should be a model of commercial success."

Those who wander into Little Gates & Co. will find wines ranging from \$7 to rare wines which are much more expensive. Some of those wines are from small producers or are even handmade, and many are "moderately priced," according to Carter.

"It's a welcoming environment for people where they can feel comfortable and learn a little bit about wines in certain areas and take advantage of the wines we're offering," he said. "We're not a traditional package store."

Little Gates & Co. Wine Merchants will be open Monday through Saturday from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Sunday from noon until 5 p.m. It's located at 56A South Center St., in the heart of Millerton.