

South Shore

- The South Shore Wine Company was established by William Griffith and Smith S Hammond in 1864 (Erie County's first commercial winery).
- 1850 - Purchased over 100 acres and planted grapes (Catawba and Isabella), and brought in William and Henry Lester to form the business.
- Built the stone wine cavern in the 1860s, one of very few in the US using stone from the nearby river and Lake Erie.
 - A mound of dirt was formed first, then the walls and arched ceiling stones were placed on top of the dirt mound. More dirt was placed on top of the stones, and then the wine cellar was dug out.
 - Uncommonly used Arched Soldier design used for the archway between the main area and barrel storage room - Does not utilize a keystone
- 1864 - Contacted Col J Condit Smith seeking investment - Smith in turn contacted his former chief quartermaster John W. Foll to join him.
 - Smith was rarely at the winery, leaving Foll and Griffith to do much of the work. Foll was in charge of that first harvest pressing, from September and into November.
- Dec 10th, 1864 - a beam gave way in the wine cellar and dropped over a dozen casks of wine down into the cellar - around 5000 gallons of wine lost (\$15,000). Thankfully no one was harmed. You can still see the repaired stone ceiling
- 1865 - Col Smith hired John E. Mottier to oversee the growing and pressing of the grapes.
- 1869 marked the start of the national prohibition party, and 1873 was the start of the women's Christian temperance union, followed by the panic of 1873 led to low prices for grapes.
- 1875 - South Shore Wine Company failed, and Col Smith purchased the entire holdings at a sheriff's sale and started again.
- 1885-93 - The economy balanced and fruit was profitable again, especially concord with its growing popularity, leading to a boom in the area (basket companies, sawmills, canning companies, railroad, etc to support the growing grape industry).
- 1881-85 - Griffith, Col Smith, and Mottier passed away, passing the winery on to Marvin A. Caldwell who was very successful at growing South Shore till he passed in 1897 and his family retained ownership of the winery.
- In 1893 the temperance movement turned into a political activist group, as well as the growth of many other anti-alcohol groups. Then followed a four year depression that affected table grapes more than wine.
- 1897-98 - Things got worse with an unusually large grape harvest that drove prices down even more due to abundance
- John A Foll continued to run the winery even at 79 years old in 1900, and passed it to Katherine Davidson when he finally retired.

- Prohibition was going to shut down alcohol sale and production in January 1920, so in 1918 the Caldwell estate sold the winery to George J Messler and they no longer made wine (marking South Shore as one of the longest running wineries in PA).
- 1922 - Messler sold the building to George O Smith with plans to convert it into a summer resort hotel with its access to Lake Erie, beautiful vineyards, and location between Buffalo and Pittsburgh.
 - The inn had a tennis court, verandas, sleeping porches, bedrooms, table service and music in the dance hall.
 - The inn closed in 1986 and sat untouched for years
- Mazza purchased South Shore in 2005 and began restoration and reopened the wine cellar in 2007
- 2025 marked the release of Midnight Herring - A unique bubbly that did its champagne fermentation submerged in Lake Erie for a year.
- Upstairs houses a rentable banquet hall, cafe, original bar, patio, screened in porch
 - Restoration is underway of the old dance hall, as well as the inn rooms upstairs.