

## Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers Association (MMSPA)

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### **How Sweet It Is: Minnesota Maple Syrup Takes Top North American Honors**

Pure maple syrup produced in Hibbing, Minnesota has taken top honors at the annual international competition held by the North American Maple Syrup Council.

Entries from fifteen states and Canadian provinces were present in the 2023 competition, and a maple syrup produced by David Dahl, a hobbyist member of the Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers Association (MMSPA), was judged the North American Council's Best In Show.

Of the four internationally recognized maple syrup categories (Golden, Amber, Dark, Very Dark), Dahl's light colored Golden took first place in its class, and then went on to be judged Best In Show by a panel of US and Canadian judges. "With the contest hosted in New England (Massachusetts) this year, I had hoped for a learning experience and maybe a chance to bring home a ribbon for Minnesota. What a surprise to win the whole competition" said Dahl.

Dahl knew that he made good syrup, winning Best In Show last year at the Minnesota State Fair and Best In Show at the MMSPA competition this spring, but still, winning the international honor was unexpected. Dahl was especially pleased to win in the golden color/delicate taste category. "A good golden delicate tells you that things are working at top level in a maple syrup operation. To make it, every step from the tree to the bottle has to be dialed in, in order to preserve the delicate taste and light color." Golden, formerly known as Grade A Fancy, is an early spring syrup that typically makes up less than 15% of a seasons crop.

All four of the maple syrup classes have special flavors. The delicate taste of golden maple syrup pairs well with vanilla and dairy such as with ice cream or in butter sauces, or in light flavored cocktails. The richer flavor of the Amber class goes well in salad dressings and with pancakes, waffles and apple crisp. The more robust flavored dark maple syrup matches well with the heartier flavors of baked goods, salmon, and as a glaze for winter vegetables like squash, sweet potatoes, and carrots. And the very strong very dark maple syrup is a favorite with other strong flavors such as tomato, mustard and vinegar in barbecue sauces.

While Dahl taps about 100 trees each spring making his Cedar Valley Pure Maple Syrup for family and friends, larger producers often make their maple syrup available for sale year round. See [MinnesotaGrown.com](http://MinnesotaGrown.com) to find high quality locally made Minnesota maple syrup, or see the Producers Directory at [mnmaple.org](http://mnmaple.org), or search on Minnesota Maple Syrup.

The North American Maple Syrup Council (NAMSC) is an international network of maple syrup producer associations representing sixteen commercial maple producing US states and Canadian provinces. See [northamericanmaple.org](http://northamericanmaple.org) for more information about NAMSC.

Minnesota Maple Syrup Producers Association (MMSPA) serves both hobbyist and commercial maple producers, and seeks continual improvement in Minnesota's maple products crop through educational workshops, maple contests, development of maple grading and judging skills, and maple advocacy. Visit MMSPA at [mnmaple.org](http://mnmaple.org) for more information.

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