

Oliver Winery Balloons Attend Second Annual Speedway Event

The two Oliver Winery balloons participated in the second annual Centennial Era balloon event at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The Oliver Winery balloons are piloted by Bill Oliver and Warren Smith of Bloomington, Indiana. The balloons are two of more than six balloons that the winery has operated as part of a public relations program since the late 1970's. Oliver Winery is located north of Bloomington, Indiana and is Indiana's oldest and largest winery. The winery started in the 1960s as a hobby in the basement of Indiana University law professor William Oliver.



Professor Oliver was instrumental in passing legislation allowing for the creation of small wineries in Indiana. The Indiana Small Winery Act passed in 1971 and Oliver Winery opened to the public in 1972. Professor Oliver's son, Bill, took charge of the winery in 1983. He focused on enhancing the visitor experience by increasing wine quality and variety, establishing gardens and providing great customer service. Sales grew steadily in the 80s, reaching 25,000 cases by 1990. In 1993, Kathleen Oliver joined the winery as General Manager. This allowed Bill to focus on winemaking and viticulture and the new Creekbend Vineyard, which was started in 1994. Retail sales continued to grow and allowed for the construction of a new tasting room in 1997. By 2000, sales had reached 60,000 cases.

While retail sales marked the greatest growth prior to 2000, subsequent years saw tremendous growth in wine sold

through wholesale channels. Major facility expansions occurred in 2002 and 2007 making Oliver Winery one of the largest wineries in the eastern United States. In 2002, interstate expansion began as Kentucky became the first state outside of Indiana to offer Oliver wines. By 2008, they had distribution in 14 states and total case sales exceeded 270,000 cases.

The winery balloons have been seen all over the country but are commonly seen over the hills of Southern Indiana and the Creekbend Vineyards.

