

take note...

Owner Ben Fisk's father, Wendell, built the original Ben's Sugar Shack in 1993 with simple 8 by 8 beams and shiplap.



Life in the Country

The Sweet Spot

In southwestern New Hampshire, a sugarer taps into his passion for winters in the woods to create an award-winning maple business.

Starting in January, Ben and his team lay miles of pipes across 1,200 acres of woods, affectionately known as “the sugar bush.” His sugar houses collect between 650,000 and 700,000 gallons of sap from roughly 30,000 maple trees each year.

It’s rare to discover your life’s work at five years old, but that’s precisely what happened to Temple, New Hampshire, native Ben Fisk while visiting a maple sugar house on a preschool field trip. “I wouldn’t stop talking about it, so my parents built me a small sugar house,” says Ben. “We started with 13 taps, which made less than a gallon of syrup. I sold it alongside lemonade at a stand at the end of our driveway.” As Ben grew, so did his passion. In 2004, when he was just 15, he became the youngest winner ever of the Granite State’s Maple Producers Carlisle Trophy for best syrup. “I decided to graduate high school early to focus on making maple syrup for a living,” he says.

Now, 19 years later, Ben’s Sugar Shack operates in two locations: the original sugar house in Temple and a second an hour north in Newbury. (A new 16,000-square-foot sugar house is scheduled to open in Temple later this year.) Come sugaring season, which runs January through April, sap is turned into syrup via a reverse osmosis system then put through an evaporator and filter press. In early spring, visitors are invited to experience the process firsthand during free weekend tours.

Ben still savors each trip into the trees. “Heading out to the snowy woods for harvest, seeing the sap run from the maples—it still gets me as excited as it did when I was a kid,” he says.



BELOW: During the bottling process, syrup is assigned one of four grades according to color and density. Ben predominantly produces Grade A Amber and Grade A Dark syrup. The darker the syrup, the stronger the maple flavor.



ABOVE: In addition to syrup, Ben’s Sugar Shack makes other maple-infused treats, such as caramel popcorn, cotton candy, maple cream, and barbecue sauce. Shop products online at bensmaplesyrup.com.

