

# The Derby Village Store



483 Main St., Derby • (802) 274-8569 • Store managers/owners: David and Beth Bouffard

If anyone needs anything in Derby, they usually head for the corner of Main Street and Route 111 – just as they have for more than 100 years.

That's where the Derby Village Store sits, and has since the days when customers would tie their horses out in front before heading inside for groceries, meat and in more recent decades, spirits.

"We've been on this corner for a long time," Owner/Manager David Bouffard says. "The previous owner remodeled it a few years before we purchased it, and we've done one since then, but you'd never know it's 100 years old to look at it now."

A visit to the coffee counter near the front reveals a display of three photos – one of the store in its earliest days, one from the late 1940s, and one of the store today. The grainy,



The Derby Village Store circa 1940s.

black and white photo from nearly a century ago shows a pair of horse-drawn carriages in front of the longtime town landmark, with smartly-dressed Derby residents posing formally just feet from the front steps of the store.

A lot has changed over the years – it looks quite different thanks to upgrades and refurbishments ("we remodeled the liquor store a year ago," Bouffard says), but the small town feel remains.

"We're basically in between a small supermarket and a country store," Bouffard says. "We're kind of something in between. It's very hard to distinguish – there are not a lot of stores like it."

At just under 2,500 square feet, it's on the smaller side, but every available space is packed with useful items: the store's specialty is its meat selection, but it also offers deli items, fresh produce, wine and a newly-installed growler station with six taps that feature Vermont-only brews. The focus on Green Mountain State-produced spirits is important for the Bouffards.

"We have a Vermont section in the liquor store," he says. "We carry Barr Hill Gin, the Boyden Valley products – the Vermont Ice Maple

Creme, Vermont Ice Apple Creme – the Vermont Spirits products, Whistle Pig, Smugglers' Notch Gin and Vodka, the Dunc's Mill products.

"We remodeled the whole store two years ago and changed everything – new shelving, cases, auto doors – we re-did the whole store. Phase two was the liquor store last year. We took some of the area of the back room and enlarged the liquor store made it easier to access everything. It came out really nice and made it all up to date."

The Bouffards have owned the store, which employs 25 people, for 17 years, and the town's residents have been supportive in part because it is a family business. The Bouffards three children – two sons and a daughter – all worked there through high school.

"It's a community store, and of course since we're from the area, we know a lot of the people that come in," Beth Bouffard says. "It's kind of funny – it's not a full-blown supermarket, but we can provide service just like a full-blown supermarket. It's small enough where you can find what you want quickly. People respond to that."

The secret to their longevity is the focus on service, the Bouffards say. While the store is priced competitively with the larger chains, their belief is that it all boils down to the quality of service.

"The store has always been run that way," David Bouffard says. "It's clean and we've got great people – probably the best people in the business. You have to have people who know how to take care of customers. If you don't take care of your customers, someone else will. We've always run the business that way and we've been fortunate to hire good people."

### Heads in the Clouds

When it's time to take a break, David and Beth Bouffard head for the nearby Newport State Airport where they hop into their Piper Archer and take to the skies over the Northeast Kingdom for a bit of perspective. David, a licensed pilot, will take his wife to Bar Harbor for lunch, on a quick trip to Burlington, or even to visit a son in Rhode Island. The couple's photography of the region can be seen on the store's website: [www.thederbyvillagestore.com](http://www.thederbyvillagestore.com). ☒