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**NEW YORK STATE AND VIRGIN ATLANTIC  
ANNOUNCE BRAND ALLIANCE TO OFFER 60 DAYS OF WINE TASTING**

*Recently Re-launched "I LOVE NY" Brand Continues Cutting-Edge Marketing Efforts  
with Wine Tastings at Virgin Atlantic's London Heathrow Clubhouse*

**NEW YORK – July 1, 2008** – Empire State Development ([www.iloveny.com/wine](http://www.iloveny.com/wine)), the lead economic development entity for New York State announced today a brand alliance with Virgin Atlantic. Virgin Atlantic will offer New York State wine tastings at its London Heathrow Clubhouse through August 31, 2008. A representation of wines from four of the State's six wine regions, including the Finger Lakes, Long Island, the Niagara Region and the Hudson Valley, will whet international travelers' palattes and raise awareness about New York State as a world-class vacation destination.

Joining efforts with Virgin Atlantic is the most recent installment of Empire State Development's multi-faceted media approach to reclaiming "I LOVE NY" for the State as it was originally intended 31 years ago. With a wealth of information and backing from the New York Wine and Grape Foundation, this alliance comes on the heels of the May relaunch of the iconic "I LOVE NY" brand where state officials pledged to focus on promoting New York State with targeted online incentives for today's traveler.

"Teaming up with Virgin Atlantic is such a natural fit for 'I LOVE NY'," said Thomas Ranese, chief marketing officer of Empire State Development. "We're confident this small taste of New York State wines will entice Virgin Atlantic's Upper Class passengers that are traveling to New York to explore the rest that the State has to offer, from our wineries and restaurants to our idyllic hiking and biking trails and cultural hotspots."

Part of the branding for Virgin Atlantic/New York State alliance includes a :30 TV spot that will run during in-flight announcements.

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The “I LOVE NY” ads that are part of the brand’s relaunch will also appear in monthly editions of *Seatback*, Virgin Atlantic’s in-flight publication.

Paul Dickinson, Director of Sales & Marketing for Virgin Atlantic commented:

“This will give passengers the opportunity to experience wines from one of the wine regions which is less well known here in the UK. We’re absolutely certain that it is going to be an educational and enjoyable experience”

The Virgin Atlantic brand alliance is a natural fit for New York State. As one of America’s largest wine producing regions, with over 240 wineries statewide, New York has plenty to offer oenophiles and consumers interested in a culinary getaway. The six wine regions of New York State include Central New York & Lake Ontario; Finger Lakes; Hudson River Valley & The Catskills; Lake Erie Chautauqua; Long Island, North Fork and The Hamptons; and Niagara Escarpment. Participating wineries in the Heathrow Airport Clubhouse tastings include *Wolffer Estate, Peconic Bay Winery, Millbrook Vineyards & Winery, Dr. Konstantin Frank Wine Cellars, Heron Hill Winery and Warm Lakes Estate*. All offer winery tours, tastings and the food product to match.

For more information please visit [www.iloveny.com/wine](http://www.iloveny.com/wine).

**About New York State**

*New York State features 11 beautiful vacation regions. New York’s attractions span from landmarks such as Niagara Falls and the Empire State Building to well-known treasures like the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown and the Museum of Glass in Corning. Whether it’s wide-ranging outdoor activities like fishing, hiking and boating, culinary wonders and farm-to-table fresh foods, or the rich history and culture of one of the 13 original colonies, New York State offers diverse activities for all travelers. For more information visit [www.iloveny.com](http://www.iloveny.com). Media can find press releases and more at [thebeat.iloveny.com](http://thebeat.iloveny.com).*

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