

Wines of the Finger Lakes

Featured Selection

2007 VENTOSA VINEYARDS TOCAI FRIULANO

It seems fitting that a family of Italian descent should choose a northern Italian grape variety, Tocaï Friulano, for their vineyard in the Finger Lakes region. So it comes as no surprise that, in the spring of 2001, Lenny and Meg Cecere decided to plant twenty-three acres of these *vinifera* vines in a spot just south of Geneva on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake. Their winery, Ventosa Vineyards—which features Tuscan-style architecture and a stunning lakeside vista—now produces 3,000 to 3,500 cases of wine annually. (*Ventosa* is Italian for “windy,” an apt description of this site.)

Eric Shatt, who holds a BS in agriculture biology specializing in viticulture from New Mexico State University, has been working as Ventosa’s vineyard manager and winemaker for more than four years. He says the two main problems facing growers of



Tocaï Friulano grapes are birds (“they love to eat them”) and susceptibility to late-season *botrytis* bunch rot.

After fending off both the birds and the fungus, Shatt produced 344 cases of the 2007 Ventosa Vineyards Tocaï Friulano (about \$16 per bottle), a beautifully rendered, off-dry (0.9 percent residual sugar), medium-bodied white wine of moderate acidity. Its initial impression in the mouth recalls lime citrus, while the mid-palate kicks in with bananas and melons and the clean finish offers up a subtle note of nectarine. Shatt likes it with fresh fruit and brie, while the Ventosa tasting-room crew recommends it with Thai food or sushi with wasabi. To this list, one might also add prosciutto.

— Dana Malley

Dana Malley is a wine buyer and the manager of Northside Wine & Spirits in Ithaca.

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