



Wines of the Finger Lakes

Featured Selection

2007 RAVINES SAUVIGNON BLANC

Though good wine begins with good grapes, it helps to have talent in the cellar. Case in point: French-trained winemaker Morten Hallgren, who owns five-year-old Ravines Wine Cellars in Hammondsport with his wife, Lisa. He has crafted a Sauvignon Blanc that should serve as a benchmark for other vintners in the Finger Lakes region.

Sourcing Sauvignon Blanc grapes from Jim Hazlitt's Sawmill Creek Vineyards in Hector and Hobbit Hollow Farms in Skaneateles, the Danish-born Hallgren vinified and aged the wine exclusively in stainless steel tanks. "Oak aging would be overwhelming," he asserts—especially with Finger Lakes grapes. Furthermore, as with all wines from Ravines, Hallgren employed lees stirring (mixing the sediment on which the wine rests) every week during November and December, biweekly in January

and February, and once a month in March and April. "It's a way to soften the wine without using sugar," he says. "It rounds and polishes it."

In a region where attempts with this variety have yielded variable results, the 2007 Ravines Sauvignon Blanc (about \$17), of which 375 cases were produced, is a revelation. Exceptionally clean and possessing a moderate level of acidity, the style is one of restraint—not as flamboyantly fruit-driven as, say, its counterparts from New Zealand. It's a dry white wine that features aromas and flavors of apples and pears, plus a subtle note of grapefruit citrus and a slight suggestion of peach. Versatile with food, it can be matched with lightly grilled seafood and shellfish, salad with goat cheese, raw oysters, or vegetarian dishes.

— Dana Malley

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



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