



Wines of the Finger Lakes

Featured Selection

2007 SWEDISH HILL CABERNET FRANC/LEMBERGER

Finger Lakes wineries are perhaps best known for their white wines, but recent years have seen the production of some credible reds—especially ones made from the *vinifera* grape varieties best suited to a cool climate. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Syrah may be the darlings of California, but varieties such as Cabernet Franc and Lemberger are more likely to ripen in the vineyards of Upstate New York.

In France, Cabernet Franc is grown in Bordeaux, where it generally plays a supporting role, and further north in the Loire valley, where it is the sole variety responsible for such wines as Chinon and Saumur-Champigny. Good examples exhibit crisp black-currant fruit and sometimes have an attractive hint of lead pencil in their aroma. Lemberger is better known as Blaufränkisch, as it is called in Austria. It is widely planted in the Austrian region of Burgenland as well as



over the border in Hungary, where it is called Kékfrankos. Wines made from this grape typically possess soft, raspberry-fruit as well as a slightly peppery finish.

Cabernet Francs can sometimes be a little too acidic and short on persistence, while some Lembergers lack liveliness—so a blend makes good sense. This Swedish Hill wine is a fine example. Made from 60 percent Cabernet Franc and 40 percent Lemberger, it was aged for sixteen months in French and American oak barrels. The resulting wine is quite attractive, with lots of red berry fruit and hints of mint and white pepper. While enjoyable now, it is likely to improve with a bit of bottle age. Try it with difficult-to-pair foods such as asparagus, goat cheese, fish cooked in red wine, or stews containing beer such as carbonnade.

— Dave Pohl

Dave Pohl, MA '79, is a wine buyer at Northside Wine & Spirits in Ithaca.

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