

Wine & Dine *Rob Lane*

Seeking the Cooling Waters

Even though the Finger Lakes region may be better known for its frigid winters, mid-summer in the area can be hot and sticky. Being a fair-skinned shade dweller myself, over the years I have discovered many ways to stay cool in the Finger Lakes. Here are some of my favorites.

With ample shade and nineteen waterfalls, a hike through Watkins Glen State Park will shower your senses with the sights and sounds of nature. After a hike through the gorge, it's time for a meal at Seneca Lodge (www.senecalodge.com). Just a short distance from the park, the rustic Adirondack-style building surrounded by towering trees is a cool spot to get a good meal at a reasonable price. In addition, they have a nice selection of Finger Lakes wines available to help you cool down.

If water is your thing, the Finger Lakes area has lakes, streams, and waterfalls galore waiting to refresh you. Seneca Lake is over thirty-five miles long and over 600 feet at its deepest. At its southern end, Watkins Glen's Seneca Harbor is a great place to stroll and enjoy the lake breezes or take a scenic boat tour or dinner cruise with Captain Bill Simiele and learn the history of the Finger Lakes while you float atop the cool waters of Seneca Lake (www.senecaharborstation.com). Also, at Seneca Harbor Wine Center (www.senecaharborwine.com), you can sample wines from Pleasant Valley Wine Company, America's first bonded winery, or enjoy a meal with some Finger Lakes wine while overlooking the lake at two fine restaurants on the harbor: Seneca Harbor Station and the upscale BluePointe Grille at the new Harbor Hotel (www.watkinsglenharborhotel.com).

At the south end of Keuka Lake, the quaint town of Hammondsport offers many ways to beat the heat, including cool treats at Crooked Lake Ice Cream Parlor, with the look and feel of an old-time ice cream shop that will take you back in time. Stroll the shaded streets, browse the shops, and feel time slow down. When it gets too hot outside, get out of the sun and enjoy the fine culinary creations of Chef Richard Lerman at the Village Tavern Restaurant and Inn, featuring a wine list composed of the most Finger Lakes wines in the area (www.villagetaverninn.com), or enjoy the fine fare of Chef Craig Wilson at Snug Harbor Restaurant and Inn (www.snugharborrestaurantandinn.com).

If you are near the town of Canandaigua at the north end of Canandaigua Lake, be sure to cool down at the New York Wine & Culinary Center and sample New York wine and food (www.nywcc.com). At the south end of Cayuga Lake, the college town of Ithaca offers a plethora of eclectic shops and eateries to take the edge off of summer. Just north of Ithaca, in Interlaken, is Cayuga Lake Creamery. Their homemade ice cream will hit the spot on a hot summer day. Also, just down the road in Trumansburg, Taughannock Falls, with its 215-foot drop, will give you chills when the temperature heats up.



© ROB LANE

Last but not least, more than 100 Finger Lakes wineries are always ready to quench your thirst. Just stop in for a tasting and discover the quality of Finger Lakes wine. Even when the mercury is rising, there are plenty of ways to chill out in the Finger Lakes.

Rob Lane writes a Finger Lakes wine blog, www.fingerlakesweekendwino.blogspot.com. Contact him at robl@mountainhomemag.com.

Finger Lakes Wine Review *Holly Howell*

Pinot Gris

Everyone knows that Riesling has become a signature white wine of the Finger Lakes region in New York State. However, there are some surprising new upstarts that are wowing the wine fans and claiming close seconds. One of those surprises is a grape called Pinot Gris. Better known as Pinot Grigio in Italy, this grape is now growing in many cooler climate regions around the world, producing versions that are richer and more full-bodied than their European counterparts.

Hunt Country Vineyards on Keuka Lake has become one of the trend-setters for this spectacular grape, and their current release has really hit the mark. Just one whiff of their 2008 Pinot Gris and you will want to dab some behind your ears. Floral and fruity, clean and crisp, this wine is a virtual glass of pure Finger Lakes *terroir*. It is a shoe-in for summer: ideal as an aperitif before dinner, great with any light hors d'oeuvres, yummy with goat cheeses, fabulous with fresh seafood, perfect with picnic chicken salad, a hit with vegetarian dishes of any type, and terrific with foods off the grill. What's not to like? Hunt Country's first vintage, 2006, won "Best New York Pinot Gris" at the New York Food & Wine Classic. The 2007 vintage garnered a "Gold Medal" at the Great Lakes Great Wine Competition. The 2008 has already picked up a gold and earned a 91 point rating at the Wine World Championships and will likely continue to do well in future competitions.

If you have not yet been properly introduced to the New York State Pinot Gris, then now is your chance. Pick up a Hunt Country Pinot Gris (\$16) and you won't be disappointed!

Certified sommelier Holly Howell teaches at Rochester Institute of Technology and the Seasonal Kitchen Cooking School. Contact her at wineanddine@mountainhomemag.com.

