

Tasting Highlights:

Finger Lakes Whites Gewürztraminer excels in 2007, Pinot Gris makes progress and Riesling continues to thrive

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By James Molesworth

Going forward, the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York will likely stake its vinous reputation on Riesling, which handles the area's typically cool, humid climate well. But as winemakers continue to experiment, other white varieties, including Gewürztraminer and Pinot Gris, are also increasingly in the mix.

"Gewürztraminer develops all its flavors right at the end of the growing cycle," explained Red Newt Cellars winemaker David Whiting. "So with our short growing season, that can get a bit tricky."

But the 2007 season was hot and dry in the Finger Lakes, and while some Rieslings show a slightly blowsy side, Gewürztraminer, in contrast, seems to have picked up the slack, ripening fully in the warmer 2007 season without losing any freshness. As always, vineyard location proved key in balancing the effects of the warm season.

"Our higher elevation vineyards on Keuka Lake were less affected by the hot, dry '07 season," noted Dr. Konstantin Frank owner and winemaker Frederick Frank, whose Reserve Gewürztraminer bottling earns an outstanding review for its combination of concentration and freshness.

In addition to the bottlings from the established Dr. Frank and Red Newt, there are some relatively new faces here as well, including Miles Wine Cellars, a separate label owned by Doug and Susan Hayes, grapegrowers in the region for 30 years who began to bottle their own wines in 1997. Their wines are made by winemaker Peter Bell at the Fox Run facility.

While most of the offerings here are from vinifera grape varieties, the Vignoles and Vidal Blanc hybrids are represented as well. Both grapes produce extremely high acidity, so dry versions can be a bit severe in profile. But when left on the vine late into the harvest season to either develop botrytis or shrivel naturally, these hybrid grapes can produce

some excellent dessert wines. Standing Stone's Vidal is perennially outstanding, a rare track record that makes it arguably the best wine made in the Finger Lakes, while bottlings from Anthony Road and King Ferry are also worth tracking down.



DR. KONSTANTIN FRANK Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes Reserve 2007 Score: 90 | \$25

Very juicy and forward, with enticing apple, anise, fennel seed, fig and spice notes that stay fresh and lovely through the finish. Mouthwatering acidity brings you back for more. Delicious. Drink now through 2010. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 387 cases made. —J.M.

RED NEWT CELLARS Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes Sawmill Creek Vineyards 2007 Score: 90 | \$36

Very tight still, this mouthwatering version offers racy acidity that keeps the watermelon, kiwi, green apple and fig notes rippling through the long, bright finish. Textbook bitter almond and bitter orange notes frame it all nicely. Drink now through 2010. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. A new bottling

sourced from longtime grower Jim Hazlitt's vineyard. 250 cases made. —J.M.

STANDING STONE Vidal Finger Lakes Ice 2007 Score: 90 | \$25 / 375ml

Ripe and sweet, with lots of maple, honey, ginger, persimmon and spice notes that are nicely rounded. Shows length on the finish, with hints of golden raisin and white chocolate. Delicious. This wine has a terrific track record. Drink now through 2012. 832 cases made. —J.M.

ANTHONY ROAD Riesling Finger Lakes Martini Reinhardt Selection 2007 Score: 89 | \$22

Very fresh, with a nice mouthwatering slate and green apple driven core that picks up fennel, anise and star fruit notes through the lengthy, vibrant finish. Delicious. Drink now through 2010. 105 cases made. —J.M.

ANTHONY ROAD Vignoles Finger Lakes Berry Selection Martini Reinhardt Selection 2006 Score: 89 | \$45 / 375ml

Frankly sweet, but focused, with maple, persimmon, blood orange and clove notes offset by a tangy green tea streak. Nice lengthy, juicy finish. Really solid. Drink now. 197 cases made. —J.M.



DR. KONSTANTIN FRANK Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 89 | \$18

Spicy, with an almost crunchy edge to the bright acidity, which carries delicious apple, fig, almond and orange zest notes. Stays delineated and mouthwatering on the finish. Drink now. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 1,330 cases made. —J.M.

RED NEWT CELLARS Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes Curry Creek Vineyards 2007 Score: 89 | \$42

Open-knit, with a tender feel to green apple, melon and pear flavors offset by a hint of lychee on the medium-weight, juicy finish. Very solid, with a nice twinge of bitter almond keeping it all honest. Drink now through 2010. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 230 cases made. —J.M.

BLOOMER CREEK Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes R 2007

Score: 88 | \$24

This is juicy and concentrated, with tasty lychee, almond, fig and cardamom notes backed by bitter almond and grapefruit rind hints on the finish. Drink now through 2010. 20 cases made. —J.M.

FOX RUN Riesling Finger Lakes Miles Wine Cellars 2006 Score: 88 | \$18

Tangy, with nice drive to the slate, pippin apple and green almond notes. Still a touch taut on the finish, with a hint of lanolin in the background. Drink now through 2010. 192 cases made. —J.M.

HAZLITT 1852 Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 88 | \$11

Bold, with spicy lychee, orange zest, rose water and lime notes that stay focused and pure through the bright finish. Nice mouthfeel and focus. Drink now. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 337 cases made. —J.M.

RED NEWT CELLARS Pinot Gris Finger Lakes Curry Creek Vineyards 2007 Score: 88 | \$24

Light and elegant, but with deceptive concentration to the yellow apple, blanched almond, honeysuckle and mineral notes. Nice length and freshness on the finish. Drink now through 2010. Tasted twice, with consistent notes. 200 cases made. —J.M.

BLOOMER CREEK Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 87 | \$18

Solid, with anise, apple, fig and lychee notes that stay juicy through the medium-weight, clove-tinged finish. Drink now. 80 cases made. —J.M.

IMAGINE MOORE Pinot Gris Finger Lakes Peace 2007 Score: 87 | \$17

Light, but pure and persistent, with nice sleek texture carrying the green almond, lemon and floral notes. Solid length too. Nicely done. Drink now. 200 cases made. —J.M.

KING FERRY Vignoles Finger Lakes Late Harvest Treleven 2007 Score: 87 | \$23 / 375ml

Nice mix of sweet and tangy, with candied lemon and grapefruit peel notes weaving through hints of pineapple, yellow apple and chamomile. Clearly sweet but stays refreshing enough. Drink now. 249 cases made. —J.M.



DR. KONSTANTIN FRANK Pinot Gris Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 86 | \$17

Light and floral but persistent, with green melon and watermelon rind hints that extend through the finish. Drink now. 367 cases made. —J.M.

HAZLITT 1852 Pinot Gris Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 86 | \$14
Light and fresh, with a spice hint to the honeysuckle, salted butter and white peach notes. Nice firm edge frames the finish. Drink now. 499 cases made. —J.M.