

Red Feet Wine Market
HANG TIME “Finger Lakes Stars”
Thursday, May 22, 2008

PRICES ARE FOR:

1 BOTTLE – 6 BOTTLES – 12 BOTTLES (Mixing is OK!)

Hermann J. Weimer Gewurztraminer 2006

\$20 each - \$18 (6) - \$17 (12)

Very aromatic with rose petals and tropical fruit on the nose. This medium to full bodied wine continues with flowers, pear and melon on the palate. The finish is long with hints of apricot and pear. Top quality for the Finger Lakes and internationally competitive. Give one as a gift and you'll be loved.

Ravines Cabernet Franc 2006

\$20 each - \$18 (6) - \$17 (12)

This wine smells like a berry bush with fresh blackberries and tart currants. The palate has smoky wood spices and cherry and a little vanilla in the finish. This medium to lighter bodied wine reflects a cooler year in the Finger Lakes.

Damiani Wine Cellars Dolce Bianco

(Vignoles, Cayuga and Vidal grapes, 2% RS)

\$9 each - \$8.10 (6) - \$7.65 (12)

The nose is filled with honeysuckle, rose and lime. The palate follows with juicy acidity, lime, and light mineral with spice. There is sweetness; however, it is balanced by the acidity, creating a very refreshing summer white. Try with spicy food.

Damiani Wine Cellars Cabernet Franc

\$18 each - \$16.20 (6) - \$15.30 (12)

The grapes for this come from Lou Damiani's vineyard on Seneca Lake. Due to the lighter vintage of 2006, there is some acidity, as well as a light brush and vegetal character in the nose. Fruit of tart blackberry and plums is structured by obvious oak and vanilla. It is aged for 11 months in American oak of various ages. Spice and leather are also quite prominent.

Standing Stone Vineyards Riesling 2007

\$13 each - \$11.70 (6) - \$11.05 (12)

The grapes for this wine come from estate vineyards planted in 1972 on Seneca Lake. The residual sugar is 2.5%, but again, it does not seem so, due to the excellent acid structure. Stone fruits such as peach and apricots, along with citrus, pear, and floral notes are quite rich and juicy. Medium bodied with some roundness and minerality at the same time.

Standing Stone Vidal Ice Wine

\$23 each - \$20.70 (6) - \$19.55 (12)

This ice wine is a heavier style with apricot and tropical fruit combining with honey and caramel flavors. It is unctuous in texture with lighter acidity.

FINGER LAKES STARS

There are new or expanding wineries popping up in the Finger Lakes every time one gets out to wine country, it seems. We have about 100 wineries at present and hundreds of acres of vines are being planted with grapes each year. So, who are the real stars and what's the future situation for wine growing? Well, we know that Dr. Konstantin Frank and Hermann J. Wiemer are the two most well-known pioneers of fine wine in the area. They broke us out of the stage of growing grapes primarily for grape juice and jelly, and using only native American varieties for wine. They led us to

planting “vinifera,” or noble European varieties. Both of these wineries continue to be leaders today.

What we have going for us in this region is our lakes (which moderate our weather) and soil of schist and shale which are conducive to raising high quality grapes. We are still figuring out what grapes we think grow best in our climate, soils and topography. So far, cool-climate grapes such as Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir seem best. After all, they originally come from places like Germany, Burgundy and Alsace, which share our short, cool and variable growing season. Additionally, researchers at Cornell University have created several hybrids that seem to thrive in our conditions and to be able to withstand the deepest of winter freezes. Although these are widely planted, they're destined for more local consumption. Our wine growers continue to experiment with international grapes such as Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah and these have met with mixed results—some have been excellent and typical of the varietal and others seem to be disappointingly light, over-oaked or share little resemblance to their counterparts in warmer climates or traditional growing regions.

We are still figuring out the best sites, farming methods and clones to use, as well as which grapes can survive the occasional brutal winter cold snap. Our vines are still very young compared to those in Europe (older vines tend to make more complex wine). Only the most committed wineries have densely planted and then strictly controlled their yields (lower yields produce more concentrated wine). While some wineries focus on the tourist trade and on selling more mass-produced wines, there is also a great deal of passion and spirited interest in improving the region's wine quality so that we can compete on a global level. It's an excellent sign that many Finger Lakes winemakers meet regularly to taste wines from all over the world “blind,” as well as to evaluate one another's “works in progress.” This all bodes well for the area's wine future as information-sharing, education and goal setting take place among the key players. Some wineries currently grow their own grapes while others specialize in wine-making and purchase grapes from growers. Much has been learned and many improvements are underway from using less and better oak to re-planting the right grapes in the right spots, to doing less manipulation of the wine in the winemaking process. A few wineries are even trying to go organic or to practice sustainable viticulture, which is difficult in our cool, damp climate.

Today we feature a few favorite wineries, although we strongly recommend all the wines in our store as stars of the Finger Lakes. Check out www.fingerlakeswineguild.com for some of these. If you haven't lately, try our local wines. We are subject to intense vintage variation in the Finger Lakes and our wineries are constantly improving, so it's important to stay tuned and to taste annually. The 2005 reds and 2006 whites are drinking terrifically right now and are still available in stores.