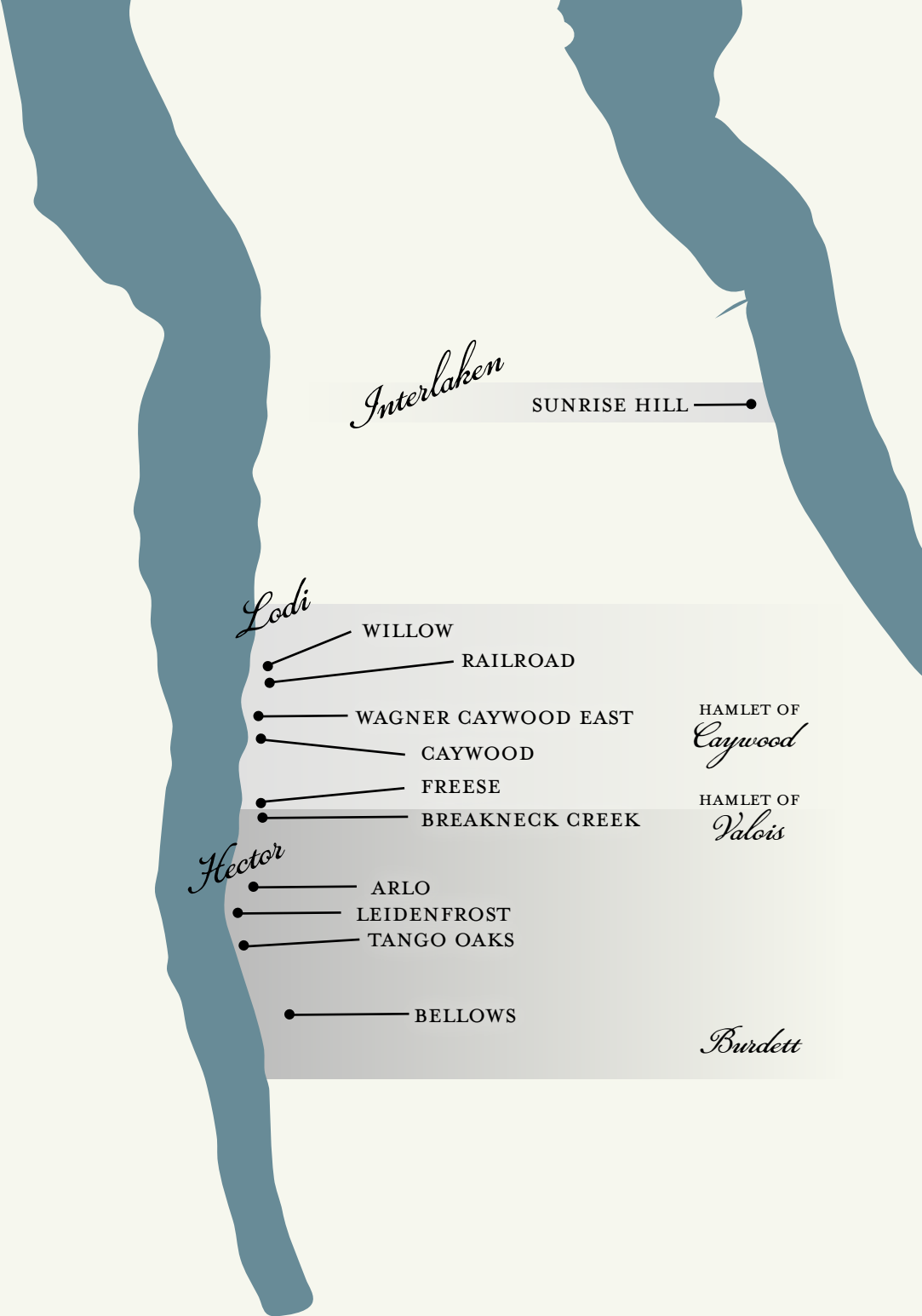


LOUIS BARRUOL ~ RICHARD RAINEY



Vintage Offering

Forge
C E L L A R S



“AS I ATE THE OYSTERS WITH THEIR STRONG TASTE OF THE SEA AND THEIR FAINT METALLIC TASTE THAT THE COLD WHITE WINE WASHED AWAY, LEAVING ONLY THE SEA TASTE AND THE SUCCULENT TEXTURE...I LOST THE EMPTY FEELING AND BEGAN TO BE HAPPY AND TO MAKE PLANS.”

- Ernest Hemingway, *A Moveable Feast*, 1964



KARL GUSSOW, 1882 "THE OYSTER GIRL"

Exploration, it's the lifeblood of Forge Cellars

When we sit back and recall the days when the winery only existed on pen and paper, it's incredible to see (and taste) the evolution of this wild endeavor. We have been steadfast in our commitment to go beyond the vine, to unearth the compelling geology of our region, to learn and honor the historical chapters of its life, develop meaningful relationships with growers, and produce wines that encapsulate the essence of all these things.

LEWIS CARROLL "THE WALRUS AND THE CARPENTER"
1871 ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN TENNIEL



For us, wine is everything. On the surface, wine gives pleasure, it enlivens sensory experiences, and makes a meal complete. WINE IS A BEACON OF COMMUNITY. People gather to drink in celebration, to

commemorate achievements, and sometimes just to simply enjoy the company of one another. There is hardly anything that can translate site or a sense of place more than wine. Opening a bottle is a journey to faraway places. It can give you the impression of warmth or coolness in the place where the grapes are grown, a snapshot of landscape and geology, and of idiosyncrasies of a particular time in this place (vintage variation). WINE IS TRANSCENDENTAL.

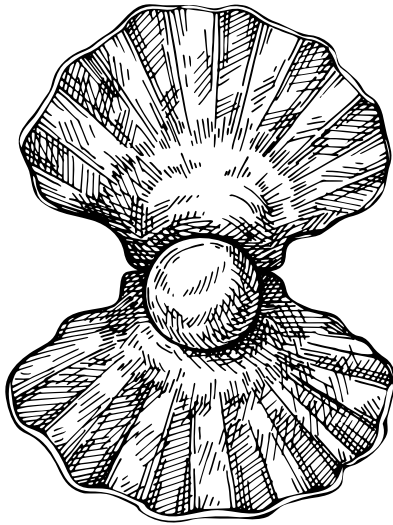
Since our first vintage in 2011, these offerings have accompanied our wines. They have provided the reader (who we hope is also the drinker) with reflections and musings from the year. What began as a very straightforward approach to sharing this information has developed into something that feels more authentically Forge. Beginning with the 2019 vintage, the thread of exploration seeped into the pages of our annual offering, which began to share the histories and lore of sites, introduce our grower partners, and give voice to the personalities of vineyards and their respective wines. While this certainly was not a new approach for us internally, it was truly the first time we began recording these notes to be passed down to our friends and consumers.

Every site acts as a chapter in our examination of this eight-mile stretch that we work in. We use Riesling as the vehicle to tangibly express these stories, and our words on paper to preserve them for years to come. As Louis has said, the most important piece of advice that his father, the late Henri Barruol ever gave to him was:

WE NEVER STOP LEARNING; WE LEARN
EVERY SINGLE DAY UNTIL THE DAY WE DIE.

It is 2022 and we have just scratched the surface on what this region has to share and teach us. Our book of exploration will forever be evolving as we dive deeper into the storied past of the Finger Lakes, and as we continue to add to the history of it ourselves through our work being done today. To quote Louis once more, "it is a nice "human adventure," as well as an achievement at every step that we climb, simply because we began this project with almost nothing but clear and strong ideas."*

*Source: 2013 Vintage Offering, Forge Cellars



Vintage of the Oyster

“The semi-salt waters protect the oyster from other predators, and so long as there is a firm rocky footing to gain attachment; so long as the sea currents are not so strong as to destabilize the colonies; so long as the temperatures are not too extreme; and so long as no hurricane comes to muddy the beds, the oyster thrives.”

- OYSTER: A Gastronomic History

Each year, while a symphony of fermentation echoes in the cellar, hundreds of barrels are reverberating the collective feeling of the vintage. As we taste them one by one, their hum becomes more precise, until we can make out their hymnal tune as if it were whispered directly into our ears.

Our collection of stories from the 2021 vintage are symbolized by the oyster. These wines, like oysters themselves, grew out of precarious cultivation, under rain-induced disease pressure, and

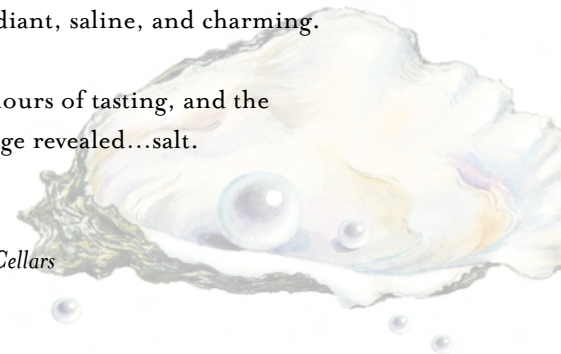
prayers from those who hoped to gain something from them. We think of the vintage itself as the shell: hard, impenetrable, one-of-a-kind. The reward bestowed upon those with patience, determination, and optimism is the ultimate treasure: the pearl, the wines.

Together with our growers, we rode the waves of beautiful weather followed by relentless rain and heat throughout the season. In the Finger Lakes, it was among one of the wettest growing years in the last 40-50 years. As we sat each morning, hearing the fading trill of birds as they began to take cover, we would watch storm clouds rise over the shores of Seneca Lake, covering the land like a blanket. In those moments, we began to calcify. We hardened ourselves to be able to prevail over these climatic circumstances. We were resolute in our quest to learn and overcome, to renounce our feelings of resentment for things that we cannot control, and to embrace the vintage that lay ahead of us.

It was in that moment on a beautifully quiet winter day that we stood together in the coolness of the cellar, venturing to take the first tastes of our wines when we realized our pearls. As we let the wine coat our palates, the euphoric silence of our group was eclipsed by the callused hand of a percipient grower wiping a tear from his eye. We were reminded of what we said about the 2020 vintage, “beauty is boundless, and even in the dimmest moments, it can be found in the simplest forms.”* Despite the pressure from Mother Nature, the wines are radiant, saline, and charming.

Hundreds of barrels, countless hours of tasting, and the undeniable hallmark of the vintage revealed...salt.

**Source: 2020 Vintage Offering, Forge Cellars*





Salt

“Oysters point to another crucial discovery for early man—salt. The shallow bays and inlets where the oyster flourished were necessarily tidal. The oyster’s sensitivity to the level of salt was a clear clue that here was man’s first preservation material for his own salvation.”

– OYSTER: A Gastronomic History

Conversations around the wines of Forge Cellars are often accented by the distinctive geology of the Finger Lakes, the dozens of vineyards we work with, and the storied histories of these sites and the people that farm them. As we’ve deepened our exploration of Seneca Lake, we have come to find that much of our own story aligns with the broader historical chapters of the region, and our wines are imbued with history that goes far beyond our eight-mile stretch of land and deeper than 2,000 feet... Salt, for example, is inextricably linked to wines of the Finger Lakes.

If we dial the geological clock back 400 million years, New York State was situated much closer to the equator and covered by warm sea water. The warm water allowed for exponential growth

of sea life. Marine life lived and died, casting their remains on the shallow sea floor, and contributed to the formation of large limestone deposits. In addition to the limestone formed during this period, the shallow sea left immense salt deposits.

On Seneca Lake, salt veins stretch 500-2,800 feet below the surface of the lake. When salt is combined with the lake water, it creates a brine that can be used to produce fine or coarse salt through two processes: evaporation or boiling. More than 300 million years ago, the Finger Lakes was covered by a vast sea. Through years of evaporation and the shifting of the Earth’s crust, a massive salt reserve was formed, spanning the distance from Canada to Pennsylvania. The depths of this reserve vary depending on location, increasing as you follow it further south.

During the War of 1812, salt importation came to a halt in the United States, leaving the market wide open for Syracuse (what would later be dubbed “Salt City”) to take hold of the salt trade. In the early 1800s, Onondaga Lake was a major source of salt mining and hugely important in exporting a vast majority of the nation’s salt. The completion of the Erie Canal was critical in the transportation of salt heading west by way of the Great Lakes, and many referred to the canal as “the ditch that salt built.”



(CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE)

By 1882, sufficient flow of brine for salt production was discovered at 1,500 feet below the surface in Watkins Glen on Seneca Lake, although the depth of salt extends far deeper. (On the northern edge of Seneca Lake, salt can be found merely 200 feet below the surface.) It was during this time that Watkins Glen and Seneca County to its north began seeing a demand for local coopers to create barrels to aid in salt transport to Syracuse and beyond. Salt is still being mined today on Seneca Lake, some turned into fine culinary salt that's available commercially around the region (even in The Salon at Forge Cellars).

So how does all this salty speak relate to wine? There is a lot to be said about the minerality of our wines, especially Riesling, considering that our "mother rock" in the region is shale. We have also found a common thread of salinity in these wines, which we have remarked about more and more throughout the years, prompting us to look a little deeper into the potential source.

As we know, the Finger Lakes were carved from a series of glaciers advancing and retreating, a period which began about 2 million years ago, and during which the landscape was mixed and torn, depositing a mosaic of soils along the hillsides. Given the expanse of salt veins on Seneca Lake, it is probable that during these long periods of shifting among the landscape, there was considerable influence on the soils we cultivate today, and thus, the wines we produce.

Additional historical information regarding salt production in Upstate New York can be found via the Onondaga History Association at cnyhistory.org.

The Handshake of Mother Nature

The handshake of Mother Nature at the beginning of a vintage can send chills down your spine and rattle the cage of anxiety. Some may say that to be beholden to a series of events of which you cannot control but *must* withstand, regardless of the outcome, is simply masochistic. For us, as vignerons and winemakers, the fate that is sealed at the start of each season marks an opportunity for growth, a time to be challenged and feel uncomfortable enough to dive deeper into what can be endured. This is the beauty of what we do. We are not afforded the opportunity to become complacent or comfortable, we must always be on our toes, prepared for whatever lesson is ahead of us, to make wines that tell the tale of climatic circumstances and vintage variation. We welcome the variability of vintage with open (albeit somewhat reticent) arms.

Much like how our human experiences shape and change us, differences among vintages greatly impact the resulting wines. As people, the core of who we are is firm, however the way we perceive and understand certain things may be influenced by moments of jubilation, hardship, etc. For grapes, at their core is *terroir*, it's their DNA. The variability of vintage however, creates a unique, fluid dimension in wine that shifts with each year and presents itself in the glass.

In 2021, there were absolutely desperate moments of negotiation with Mother Nature, asking her to have mercy on us. (We're strong but we're also honest.) There are no words to capture the raw emotion during that first tasting of wines from a vintage that challenged every part of your being. It was a revelation and it solidified our belief in the gift of vintage variation.

When we began working with Riesling at Caywood Vineyard in 2015, it was as if we walked into a J.M.W. Turner painting. A bucolic landscape rolled open in front of us, a patchwork of light covered the slope, illuminating the flora that coexisted so harmoniously, it was barely discernible where one ended and another began. In many ways, this site was paradise. Whereas sometimes land can be exploited and stripped of its spirit after so many years of farming, Caywood laid before us like a well-preserved piece of art, a museum that held intact decades of stories. We pushed through knee-high grasses and wildflowers to discover vines with trunks the size of small trees, planted in 1972 by Charles Fournier*.

Throughout the years and in our relationship with the grower, Matt Doyle, we have struck a balance between retaining the wildness of Caywood while giving it the bit of refinement needed to uncover the brushstrokes of this rich site.

Vintage 2021 marks the fifth year of Caywood as a *lieu-dit*. It's an introverted friend that if given an opportunity, can show you the world in technicolor.

***As Prohibition ended, Charles Fournier, winemaker and production manager at Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin in France was recruited to work for Urbana Wine Company on Keuka Lake. Fournier was instrumental in the first successful plantings and bottlings of vitis vinifera grapes (Riesling and Chardonnay) in the Finger Lakes region. These momentous early plantings from the 1970s on Seneca Lake are jewels among the landscape, producing wines of depth and history. - 2019 Vintage Offering**

DRY RIESLING

WHITE PEPPER
DANDELION
PENSIVE

East side of Seneca Lake (Caywood)
Soils: Honeoye silt loam on shale
Elevation: 699ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: 1972
Harvest Date: October 19, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
Residual Sugar: 0.11% (1.1 g/L)
Total Acidity: 6.7 g/L
ALC: 12.8%
Production: 452 cases

As humans, when we are introduced to something new, our instinct says to categorize it, or compare it to something familiar for a better understanding. With this Chardonnay, it would have been natural for us to try to typecast it, making it easier to communicate the "Forge style" to a wider audience. However, throughout the years we have become more confident in the ways in which we can discuss the wines for what they are, pure translators of Finger Lakes *terroir*. A *terroir* that deserves to be celebrated in the context of what it is and not for the ways in which it is different from other regions (or styles).

There are no stringent rules in the Finger Lakes, no government enforced historic classifications to adhere to. We don't have any personal ancestral ties to our land that should we do something out of the norm, they would roll over in their graves. These are some of the very reasons that attracted Louis and Rick to the region—the possibilities are unbounded.

Riesling will always be the heart of Forge, but with the freedom to work as we please, introducing another noble white variety to our repertoire has been exciting. The opportunity to work with some of Charles Fournier's original Chardonnay plantings was certainly fortuitous. Since the early days, we've maintained an openness to the possibility of producing a Chardonnay with the stipulation that all conditions must be perfect: site, clones, age of vines, etc. In our eleventh vintage, the stars aligned.

There is no question that our Caywood Vineyard has a sparkle to it, a standout in our lineup with *Grand Cru* distinction. With exceptional freshness vis-à-vis herbs such as thyme, basil, wild carrot, this Chardonnay has a skilled ability to translate a sense of depth from mature vines alongside impeccable lift and vibrancy.

CHARDONNAY

CHAMOMILE
BASIL
ENIGMATIC

East side of Seneca Lake (Caywood)
Soils: Honeoye silt loam on shale
Elevation: 828ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: 1973
Harvest Date: October 14, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
ALC: 12.3%
Production: 230 cases

The vast majority of our collection of sites are situated on the downward slope closest to Seneca Lake, however, there are a few, such as Wagner Caywood East, that are nestled at the crest of the slope. Years ago, when Rick and grower, John Wagner were negotiating their partnership, John showed two plots that we could potentially work in. Of these two plots, we knew immediately that the one at the highest point of the slope, where the shale was most prevalent, would make an excellent addition to our collection.

Wagner Caywood East is a long, lean, wind-swept site with an extreme slope and bands of varied soils. The common thread among vintages from this site is a liveliness within the wine, an energy that the French would call *neruosité*.

This is the perfect example of how *terroir* transcends the varietal, and how Riesling can be used as a conduit of site expression. Winemaking practices among our Rieslings are exactly the same from site to site, yet there are stark differences between a wine like Wagner Caywood East and its slightly southern neighbor, Willow. Here, you have one site (WCE) with a much greater incline and more gravelly, shale-dominated composition, which tends to yield wines with a bit of tension and mineral focus, and another site (Willow) that sits on a softer grade with more moderating climatic factors from the lake, and finer sandy soils, which gives lift and grace, like a pirouette on the palate.

DRY RIESLING

THYME
STONE
CUT

East side of Seneca Lake (Lodi)
Soils: Lansing and Conesus gravelly silt loam on shale
Elevation: 978ft
Aspect: west-facing
Years Planted: 2005-2006
Harvest Date: October 21, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
Residual Sugar: 0.14% (1.4 g/L)
Total Acidity: 7.4 g/L
ALC: 12.7%
Production: 471 cases

Freese has shown great self-identity over the years in the sense that it chooses not to be defined. Yes, follow us for a moment...

This is one of our special chameleon sites that sometimes evokes elements from the others: the saltiness of the sea from Breakneck or the fruit of Peach Orchard, for example. It is one of the beautiful qualities of Freese, the ability to adapt and lean into whatever moves it to greatness in the vintage. We have seen the shy, sensual side in 2018, a more outward, hedonistic and ripe version of itself in 2020, and in 2021 we were intrigued by the charm and sophistication in which Freese carried itself. The wines from the 2021 vintage are unequivocally saline, but if there was an understudy for this show, it would certainly be florality, and Freese would play the lead part.

DRY RIESLING

JASMINE
CRYSTALLINE
GRACEFUL

East side of Seneca Lake (Lodi)
Soils: Conesus and Lansing silt loam on shale
Elevation: 768ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: mid-1990s
Harvest Date: October 12, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
Residual Sugar: 0.3% (3.3 g/L)
Total Acidity: 8.7 g/L
ALC: 12.7%
Production: 442 cases

More than just a pearl...

Beyond delectable culinary treasures, oysters have been used for their medicinal properties for ages. They are naturally high in vitamins, especially B12, zinc, calcium, as well as various antioxidants, and have been used to treat a host of ailments, including tuberculosis, catarrh, stomach aches, anemia, complexions, etc.

Oyster shells are incredibly beneficial. Treatments (usually in pill form) for osteoporosis have included ground oyster shells due to the abundance of calcium they contain. Shells also provide the raw material for lime and have been used to enrich arable land and improve soil health. If incorporated into their diets, ground oyster shells have been found to harden the eggshells of laying chickens.

Willow rests in the heart of 250 acres of grapes planted by five generations of the Wagner family. Along with the fascinating natural history of the Finger Lakes, we must not forget about the people that have brought this region to life, cultivating a community indebted to the hard work of these pioneers.

Willow is among three distinct sites farmed by John Wagner that we work with consistently: Willow, Railroad, and Wagner Caywood East. John is a fourth generation grape-grower, and it was his father, Bill Wagner who was among the first wave of farmers to construct a winery when the Farm Winery Act of 1976 was passed. In the middle of an old horse pasture, he dug a subterranean wine cellar and expanded his varietally diverse vineyards.

Without the ingenuity of native multi-generational farmers like the Wagners, we could not paint such a vivid narrative of Seneca Lake. Many of the stories shared throughout the region (and many that we share with you) are passed on from generations of families who helped give this land voice and care for it as kin.

Guardians of the water...

Oysters are known for their natural ability to filter and remove pollutants from water, and are said to be able to filter up to five liters of water per hour.

“Scientists believe that the Chesapeake Bay’s once-flourishing oyster populations historically filtered the estuary’s entire water volume of excess nutrients in approximately three to four days. Today, with the decreased oyster populations, that process would take nearly a year, and sediment, nutrients, and algae can cause problems in local waters. Oysters filter these pollutants, and either eat them or shape them into small packets that are deposited on the bottom where they are harmless.”

- OYSTER: A Gastronomic History

DRY RIESLING

Willow Dry Riesling is the quintessential starlet of our *lieux-dits*. There is an unabashed desire to impress, and a natural ability to garner attention without being overtly showy. For us, Willow maintains an unparalleled elegance every vintage. Owing much to the sandy soils at this site, this wine tends to have generous lift and deft agility on the palate.

CABERNET FRANC

Disciplined and studious, Willow Cabernet Franc is a master of its craft. Innately complex and imaginative, it continues to broaden and fine-tune its technique each vintage. In our third year producing this wine, we have witnessed it respond to three very different types of vintages with great poise: the hot yet moderately balanced 2019 vintage, the sun-drenched and rain-parched days of 2020, and finally one of the wettest years on record in 2021. As one of the plots newer to our collection, it’s a definite reassurance and sign of great vines tended to with care.

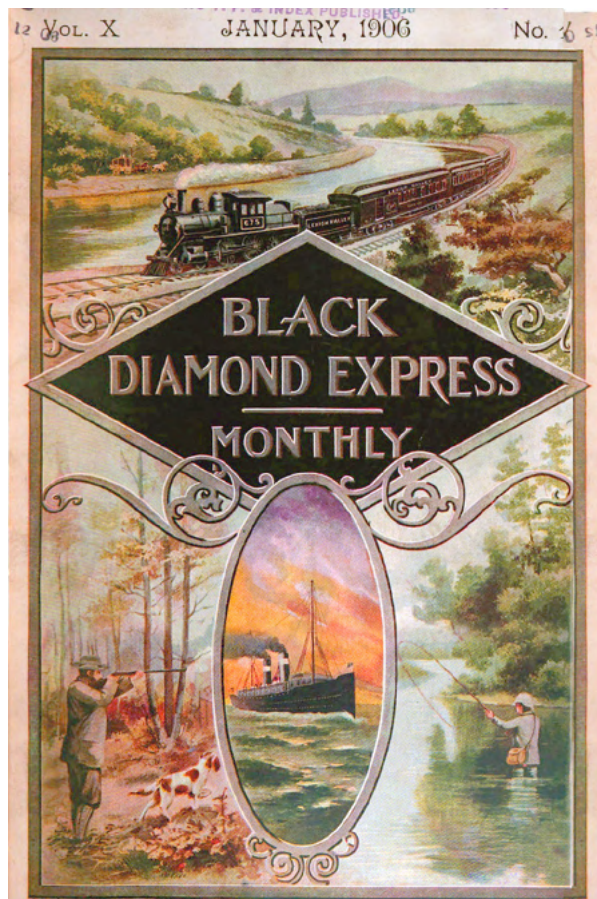
In comparison to our other Cabernet Franc *lieux-dits*, Willow is a bit more nimble and sultry on the palate in the way it tickles the senses, moving in a calm and calculated manner.

HONEYCOMB
MARMALADE
ABUNDANT

East side of Seneca Lake (Lodi)
Soils: Aurora and Farmington silt loam on shale
Elevation: 725ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: 2014
Harvest Date: October 14, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
Residual Sugar: 0.15% (1.5 g/L)
Total Acidity: 8.7 g/L
ALC: 12.2%
Production: 417 cases

BLUEBERRY
LAVENDER
LUMINESCENT

East side of Seneca Lake (Lodi)
Soils: Aurora and Farmington silt loam on shale
Elevation: 725ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: 2014
Harvest Date: October 24, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in wooden vat
ALC: 13%
Production: 286 cases



With few exceptions, most of our vineyard sites have been named by Forge Cellars. The naming process takes a few things into consideration: the history of the site (uses or family occupations), the location and physical attributes (Breakneck Creek, for example), and anecdotes from our conversations with the growers.

Stretched along a clearly defined bygone route from the Lehigh Valley Railroad, the dirt path and railroad ties continue to delineate rows of vines and woodlands in our Railroad Vineyard. The visual history here is undeniable, hence its namesake.

The construction of the Lehigh Valley Railroad (LVRR) was put in motion in the mid-1800s, first connecting Pennsylvania to New York then upwards into the Finger Lakes region in the 1870s. Initially, the route was designed to haul anthracite, a hard, black coal with a sub-metallic luster and few impurities, which gave rise to the railway's nickname, "Route of the Black Diamond." Prior to the construction of the LVRR, anthracite was transported via boat. The innovation of high-speed railways ignited a fervor of trade and economic growth for the Finger Lakes region, and soon agricultural products, livestock, and eventually people were on board. In 1896, the "Black Diamond," a premier express train

carrying passengers from the Finger Lakes to Buffalo commenced, and along with the bucolic scenery, riders could peruse the travel publication, Black Diamond Express Monthly."

In the years to come, the preference of automobiles to trains along with a myriad of economic insecurities and federal legislation forced many railways to merge or cease operations. By the mid-1970s, most of the Upstate New York LVRR tracks were abandoned, leaving relics as we know them today in vineyards and throughout the rural landscape of eastern Seneca Lake.

Often, we use the juxtaposition of our Railroad and Willow sites to demonstrate the power of *terroir* and the complexity of the soils in a very small distance. Located with less than a half mile span between them, the soils at Willow are finer and sandier than Railroad, whose soils are heavier and dense, dominated by gravelly loam. Both wines are farmed in the same way and treated equally in the cellar, yet what a contrast in the glass. The *terroir* of Railroad tends to give Riesling power, richness, and texture. It resembles the same sort of locomotion carried through the site in the days of the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

DRY RIESLING

LILAC
SEA SHORE
BUOYANT

East side of Seneca Lake (Lodi)
Soils: Honeoye and Lima silt loam on shale
Elevation: 820ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: 1995
Harvest Date: October 23, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
Residual Sugar: 0.21% (2.1 g/L)
Total Acidity: 7.5 g/L
ALC: 12.7%
Production: 303 cases

Consistent. Year after year, rain or shine, Sunrise Hill always delivers. Perhaps it owes its convivial demeanor to watching the sun climb over the eastern shore of Cayuga Lake each morning, or its scrupulous farming practices thanks to Bob Ruis, our sprightly grower. Whatever the source may be, Sunrise Riesling has certainly become synonymous with dependability.

As an outlier of the bunch, Sunrise is our only site on Cayuga Lake. Its expression comes from a different range of soils and elevation than the rest of our collection of vineyards on southeast Seneca Lake. Akin to the slopes on Cayuga Lake, Sunrise Hill Dry Riesling approaches gently and relaxed, welcoming with ease. Clay is more prevalent in the soils and the composition is a bit denser, which in turn creates a more robust frame in the wine.

DRY RIESLING

TARRAGON
BERGAMOT
CONVIVIAL

West side of Cayuga Lake (Interlaken)

*Soils: Lima and Honeoye silt loam
on shale*

Elevation: 750ft

Aspect: east-facing

Year Planted: 1999

Harvest Date: October 20, 2021

Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel

Residual Sugar: 0.3% (3 g/L)

Total Acidity: 6.9 g/L

ALC: 12.7%

Production: 135 cases

Shale vs. Slate

Shale is a sedimentary rock that is formed by the compacting of muddy sediments (including minerals and clay). Slate is a metamorphic rock created by shale that has been buried deep and heated by the Earth's crust. Shale is dull, hard, and easily broken, whereas slate is harder and more difficult to break.

In the Finger Lakes, our "mother rock" is shale.

It's a very personal endeavor to watch the development of a vineyard from first vine to fourth vintage, comparable to witnessing your children grow before your eyes at a rapid pace. Seeing their unique personalities develop, doing your best to guard them from hardships, learning how they cope and reflect their environment, and then sending them out into the world on their own with the best of hopes. In many ways, for us, this is Bellows.

In the early days (we like to call them the "teenage years"), Bellows was fast-growing, eager to push shoots and leaves with a vengeance. Teaching restraint to such a tenacious site required a bit of trial and error as well as repeated consultations on nature versus nurture. Our approach to farming this site is regenerative, a method that allows it to grow organically (for the most part) with some gentle guidance from its elders (us). In some ways, it's difficult to "bottle up" Bellows, kind of like capturing a lightning bug in a jar. So much energy and electricity in a tiny space, it hardly seems fair to confine it. You must brace yourself for both Bellows Dry Riesling and Pinot Noir, widen your palate, give a pep talk to your taste buds...it will envelop you completely.

DRY RIESLING

LILY OF THE VALLEY
COMPOTE
EVOCATIVE

East side of Seneca Lake (Burdett)

*Soils: Conesus and Lansing silt loam
on shale*

Elevation: 1,000ft

Aspect: west-facing

Year Planted: 2016

Harvest Date: October 10, 2021

Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel

Residual Sugar: 0.1% (1 g/L)

Total Acidity: 8.5 g/L

ALC: 12.6%

Production: 50 cases

PINOT NOIR

CARDAMOM
BLOOD ORANGE
LITHE

East side of Seneca Lake (Burdett)

*Soils: Conesus and Lansing silt loam
on shale*

Elevation: 1,000ft

Aspect: west-facing

Year Planted: 2017

Harvest Date: September 21, 2021

Spontaneous fermentation in wooden vat

ALC: 12%

Production: 50 cases

Breakneck is a giant, a commanding figure of adventure and peril. During one of our first explorations of the site, we nearly lived up to its name, clinging onto the steep ravine, grasping at trees and rocks to steady our feet down the slope and not stumble to our demise (or break our necks). The creek itself is an unbelievable site with striated layers of rock that read like the rings inside a tree, demarcating periods of time when the earth was still shifting into place. There are few places as extreme as Breakneck Creek on southeast Seneca Lake, and nothing tells the tale of this specific *terroir* better than the Riesling grown here.

DRY RIESLING

MINT
ROSE
SPIRITED

East side of Seneca Lake (Valois)
Soils: Lansing and Conesus silt loam on shale
Elevation: 784ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: 1992
Harvest Date: October 15, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
Residual Sugar: 0.28% (2.8 g/L)
Total Acidity: 6.6 g/L
ALC: 12.8%
Production: 372 cases

Finely woven through all of the 2021 vintage wines is a saline quality, an unmistakable nod to the sea. Tucked behind this stentorian shadow of salinity are the flowers of the vintage, delicate yet perceptible in the glass. Perhaps this was most noticeable in the difference between the two clones of Riesling harvested at Breakneck, each vinified and aged separately, and each showing remarkably distinctive personalities. On the one hand, we had a clone that showed classic Breakneck features—salt, gravel, vibrancy—and on the other, we had a suave new persona filled with wild roses and lilies.

This was such a fascinating discovery that up until the final moments of blending, we had planned to bottle the clones separately. Ultimately, in the late hours of contemplation, we determined that the two personalities of Breakneck complimented each other in a way that made the final wine feel more “complete,” and in all honesty, more interesting to drink (the juxtaposition on your palate makes for an exhilarating game of cat and mouse).

With complete candor, we can admit that our fascination with “collecting sites” can sometimes seem a bit crazy. Despite the possibility that we truly are a bit mad, the utter joy of watching people discover and connect with different vineyards is unparalleled. Certain sites speak more deeply to some people than others, favorite bottlings are born, and fond memories are recounted. This is the beauty of bottling up such a diverse region, in all of the wines we produce, you can be transported to many places, feel nostalgia from a particular flavor or smell, and experience the thrill of finding “the one” in the lineup.

After our experiences with Willow Cabernet Franc in 2019 and 2020, our collective interest in expanding our work with this grape was without question, and when an old friend and farmer came to us with an opportunity to procure Cabernet Franc grapes from him, we leapt. Arlo Ringsmuth’s family farm is located in Hector, between Leidenfrost and Breakneck Creek. Planted in 2016, it’s a site that reveals a deep, dark, voluptuous side of Cabernet Franc.

CABERNET FRANC

VIOLET
PLUM
VELVET

East side of Seneca Lake (Hector)
Soils: Burdett and Appleton silt loam on shale
Elevation: 824ft
Aspect: west-facing
Year Planted: 2016
Harvest Date: October 28, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in wooden vat
ALC: 13%
Production: 316 cases

Truth or Pearl...

“True” oysters do not contain pearls and are eaten typically eaten half shelled, raw, smoked, boiled, baked, fried, roasted, stewed, canned, pickled, steamed, broiled (grilled) or used in a variety of drinks.

“Pearl” oysters contain precious pearls, which are formed when a foreign substance slips into the oyster between the mantle and shell. This irritation causes the oyster to attempt to protect itself, producing nacre (the material lining the interior of the oyster shell) to cover the foreign substance. Over time, these layers form a pearl.



1. This is one of many stream beds cut through shale as east-west streams flowed into the lake. That is young Donald J. Wickham of Peach Orchard Point sitting on the log.

refrigerated train cars would station in Hector so the family could load their produce to be transported and sold in New York City.

Tango Oaks is known for some of the earliest written histories of the region. Fred Wickham's ancestors were among the first to settle in Hector following the American Revolutionary War after having been granted 600 acres of land for military service. Along with another founding family, the Wrights, they presided over the local general store and post office, and the Wickhams cultivated acres of native grapes and fruit trees. During the days of the Lehigh Valley Railroad (see our notes on Railroad Dry Riesling, page 17), frequent

Tango is a site built on collaboration and dynamism. Together, Rick, Louis, and Fred Wickham planted roughly five acres of vines on one of the warmest slopes of southeast Seneca Lake. There's a playful charm to Tango, an attribute that is still coming alive since our first harvest at the site in 2017. In both the 2020 and 2021 vintages, Tango Oaks Dry Riesling has been consistent in its ability to emanate the sights of the landscape and paint a scene with such vivid detail that you feel as though you exist within the place instead of just merely tasting it: a mélange of local fruits, wildflowers and herbs, fresh lake breezes, and balmy summer days. This is part of its appeal, its generosity and capacity to unite.

Like its Riesling counterpart, the Pinot Noir from Tango Oaks is altruistic. It's a gatherer of place, a storyteller to those who pause to listen, and a partner that you can rely on. There's a spellbound nature that is unique to Tango, felt in the ways it balances wildness and restraint, a sort of rugged elegance—like wild berries squeezed in a silken scarf.

DRY RIESLING

WHITE PEACH
BOXWOOD
DYNAMIC

East side of Seneca Lake (Hector)

Soils: Hudson gravelly silt loam on shale

Elevation: 725ft

Aspect: west-facing

Year Planted: 2014

Harvest Date: October 13, 2021

Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel

Residual Sugar: 0.12% (1.2 g/L)

Total Acidity: 9.2 g/L

ALC: 12.7%

Production: 195 cases

PINOT NOIR

PINE
FRUIT DES BOIS
SLEEK

East side of Seneca Lake (Hector)

Soils: Lansing gravelly silt loam on shale

Elevation: 725ft

Aspect: west-facing

Year Planted: 2014

Harvest Date: October 2, 2021

Spontaneous fermentation in wooden vat

ALC: 12%

Production: 105 cases

One of the stark features of Leidenfrost Vineyard is the gravelly shale-laden terrain, the lack of topsoil, and the dramatic angle at which it hangs over Seneca Lake. There is nothing delicate about this site. The crunch of soil underfoot rescinds any opportunity for a quiet, meditative stroll; instead, it is defiant, commanding attention at every turn. The power of the physical landscape is a window into the soul of the wines that come from this site. They are not discreet in their approach, they do not keep you guessing, they tell you what they are with conviction and sincerity.

PINOT NOIR

Leidenfrost Pinot Noir is a lesson in humility and strength. It knows its power and how to harness and release it with impeccable precision. Muscular by nature, lean and defined by practice.

BLACK CURRANT
LAUREL
SINEWY

East side of Seneca Lake (Hector)

Soils: Angola silt loam on shale

Elevation: 760ft

Aspect: west-facing

Years Planted: early 1990s

Harvest Date: October 1, 2021

Spontaneous fermentation in wooden vat

ALC: 12.7%

Production: 216 cases

CABERNET FRANC

In lieu of a Leidenfrost Dry Riesling in 2021, we welcome a Cabernet Franc from this site. It represents everything that we have come to expect from Leidenfrost—grit, verve, and breadth. Another red from this site built for the long haul.

GRAPHITE
JUNIPER
LONGEVITY

East side of Seneca Lake (Hector)

Soils: Lordstown channery silt loam on shale

Elevation: 760ft

Aspect: west-facing

Years Planted: early 1990s

Harvest Date: October 22, 2021

Spontaneous fermentation in wooden vat

ALC: 12.8%

Production: 118 cases



Creating the Pinot Noir Classique is always so enjoyable because you can clearly feel a sense of the individual sites layered in this wine. With Pinot, our catalog of vineyards is much lighter than Riesling, which makes it easier to discern particular characteristics from 3-5 sites (rather than 10-15). We admire all of the Pinot *lieux-dits*, both for their conviction to transcribe the land and their ability to coalesce so harmoniously in the Classique.

This is the opportunity for each site to have their moment center stage while being fully supported by the rest of the cast. Take the intensity and wildness of Leidenfrost for example, which is softened by the supple figure of Bellows. Tango Oaks, our own beautiful version of Chambolle that provides lift and generosity of fruit.

Our Pinot Noir Classique is an open door to the possibilities of cool-climate Pinot grown on shale in our region.

PINOT NOIR

GARRIGUE
MARASCA CHERRY
CAPTIVATING

*Soils: Lansing, Angola and Conesus
gravelly loam on shale
Harvest Date: October 2-11, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in wooden vat
ALC: 12.4%
Production: 715 cases*

Our Classique is our most important wine because it reflects our work on a larger scale. Sixteen different lieux-dits, each vinified separately, are the basis of this wine and represent the DNA of Classique. This wine is like you and me—we are individually unique, but we represent all of our ancestors at the same time. We carry their traits.
—Louis Barruol, 2018 Vintage Offering

This wine reflects the substance and diversity of southeast Seneca Lake.
—Louis Barruol, 2018 Vintage Offering

Our intent with Classique is to harmonize all of the snapshots of terroir provided by the lieux-dits, to create a balanced representation of the small (eight miles) yet complex region that we work in, to communicate the idiosyncrasies of the vintage, and to create a tactile narrative of place. —2019 Vintage Offering

The Classique acts as an annual celebration of our work. It commemorates the efforts and dedication of our growers who take each vintage in stride by receiving each day with vulnerability and leaning into the gifts of Mother Nature. Our Classique is an imprint of our diverse and geologically rich region. For us, it represents the potential of Bone Dry Riesling on southeast Seneca Lake.

DRY RIESLING

FRANGIPANI
CUMIN
RADIANT

*Soils: Lansing, Hudson, Angola and
Conesus gravelly loam on shale
Harvest Date: October 10-24, 2021
Spontaneous fermentation in neutral barrel
Residual Sugar: 0.19% (1.9 g/L)
Total Acidity: 8.2 g/L
ALC: 12.7%*

*Birth of the
Salt Potato*

The famous Upstate New York Salt Potato was born in Syracuse (dubbed "Salt City") in the late 1800s. During this time, thousands of German and Irish immigrants were at the helm of the salt blocks and kettles, which boiled brine to cultivate salt. Workers would bring potatoes in their lunches and one day tossed a few into the boiling salt water and voilà, the delicious Salt Potato was born. (If you give it a go, don't forget to be generous with the butter.)

Kaizen & Corks

Kaizen, or rapid improvement processes, focuses on eliminating waste, improving productivity, and achieving sustained continual improvement in targeted activities and processes of an organization.

One of the guiding tenets of Forge Cellars is the concept of Kaizen. If you have been following us since our first vintage (2011), perhaps you have noticed the many changes in our packaging: wax-dipped closures, case sizes (6/12 bottles), bottle style, etc. Nearly every vintage we have made changes to help with efficiencies, health of the wine, and to better convey the story of Forge.

The biggest change in the 2021 vintage is the incorporation of micro-granulated corks that are bound together with a food grade binder made from 100% vegetable polyols. Polyols are naturally occurring sugar alcohols found in a range of fruits and vegetables. Grapeseed oil is one of the largest components of the binder in our new corks, which is a natural by-product from the wine industry—how cool is that? Because these corks are molded together from smaller pieces (of cork), they are able to undergo more precise and rigorous testing for TCA. This means that the chances of having a corked bottle of wine, nearly impossible!



FRENCH OYSTERS ON A MARKET STALL, DEAUVILLE, NORMANDY, FRANCE





FAMILY OF OYSTER MERCHANTS IN PARIS, FRANCE. C. 1900

Sustainable Practices in Packaging



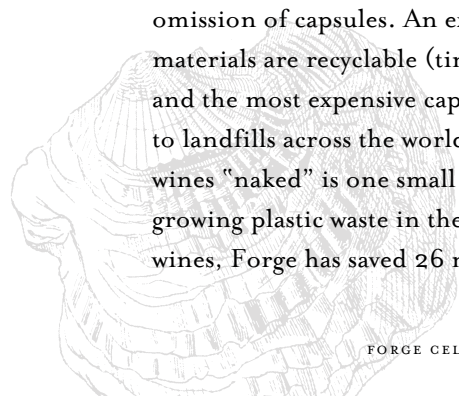
LIGHTWEIGHT BURGUNDY BOTTLE
Beginning with the 2019 vintage, we decided to part with the traditional “hock” bottle, instead, transitioning to a “Burgundy” bottle. Our customers prefer this shape as it is easier to stack on shelves and in the cellar. We prefer this shape as it is more in line with our thinking. The environment likes this bottle because it is 15% lighter than the previous, which results in less carbon output (a savings of approximately 400lbs per standard pallet of 60 cases). A win-win all the way around.

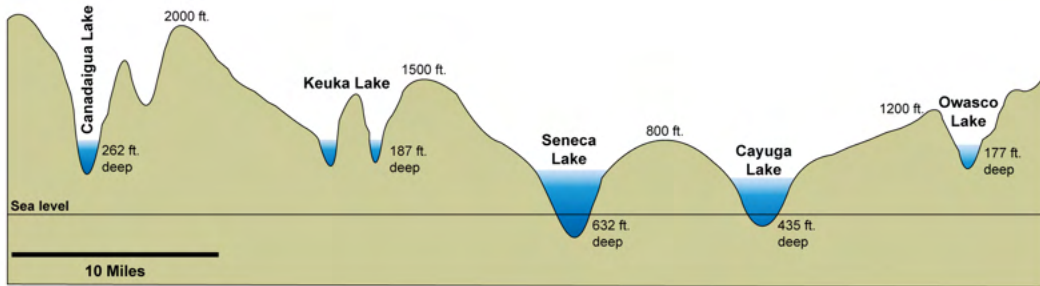
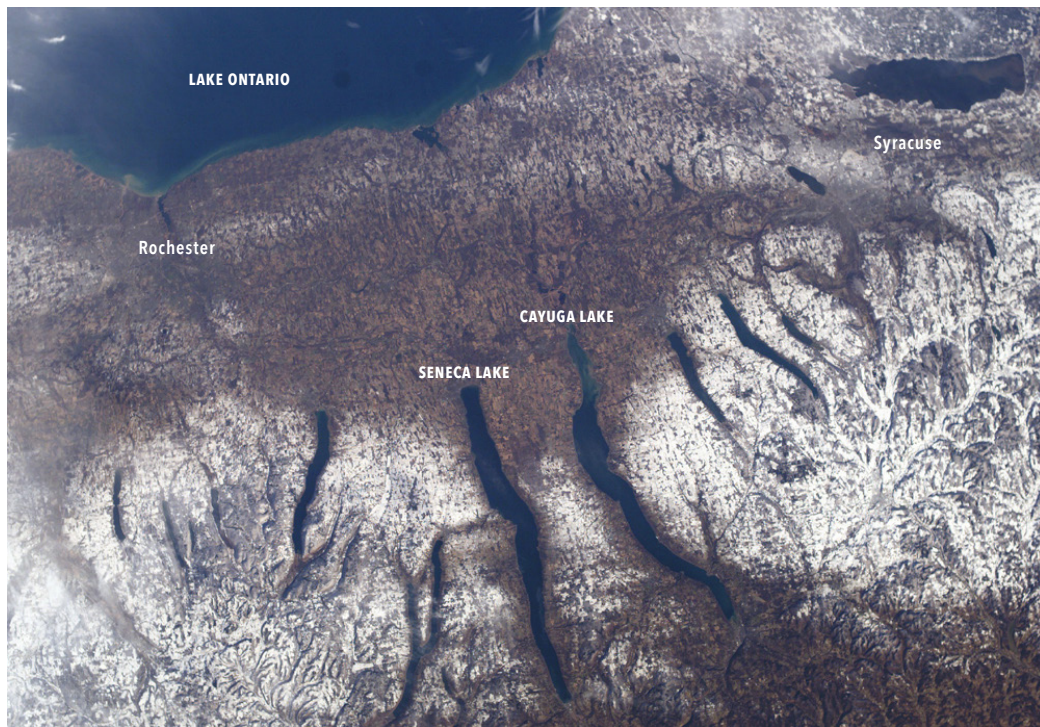
GREEN BOXES

We use brown cardboard boxes with minimal dye to allow for a higher percentage of recyclable content in our packaging. Boxes are recyclable and compostable.

26 MILES OF CAPSULES SAVED FROM LANDFILLS

Since our first vintage in 2011, we have firmly maintained the omission of capsules. An extremely limited number of capsule materials are recyclable (tin being the primary recyclable material and the most expensive capsule material), and many contribute to landfills across the world and pollute our oceans. Leaving our wines “naked” is one small way try not to contribute to the ever-growing plastic waste in the world. Including the 2021 vintage wines, Forge has saved 26 miles of capsule waste.

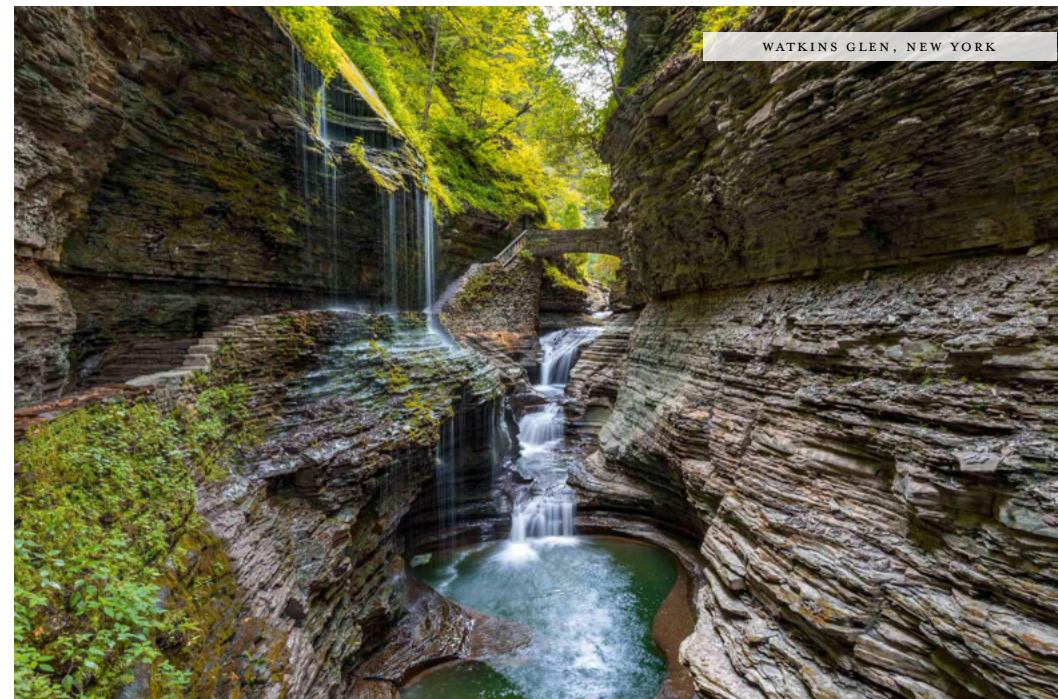
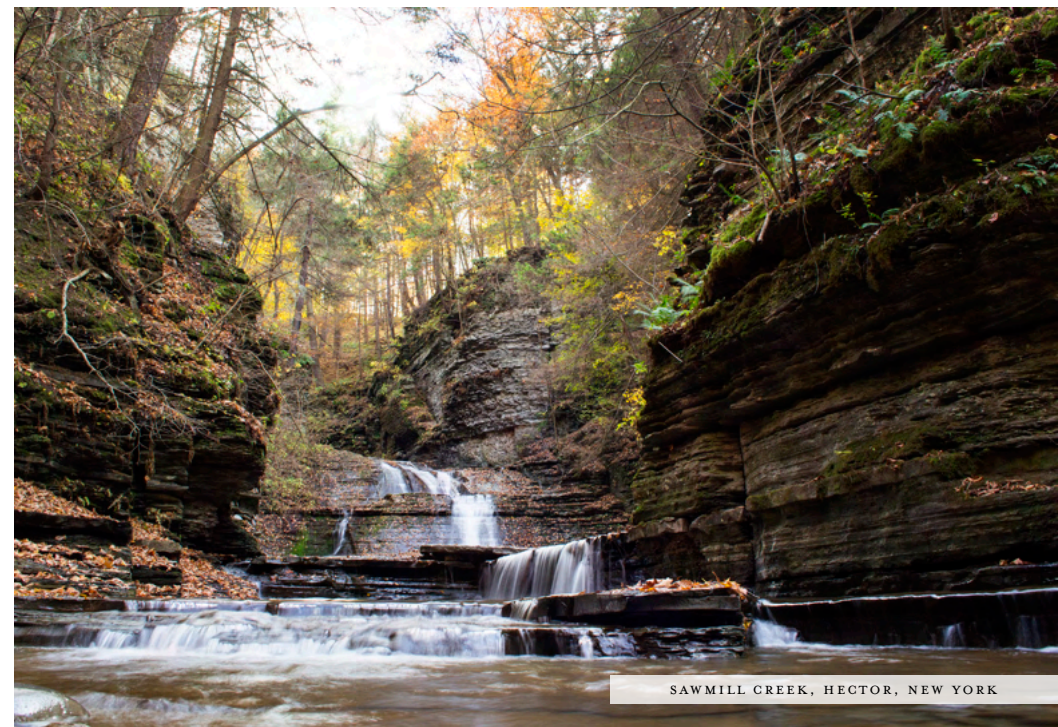




SENECA LAKE: 632 FEET DEEP, 38 MILES LONG
 This glacial lake is the deepest of all the Finger Lakes.

A FAIRLY SHORT COMMUTE

Forge Cellars is located approximately 1.5 hours from Rochester, NY, only 4.5 hours from NYC and Philadelphia, and 6 hours from Boston.

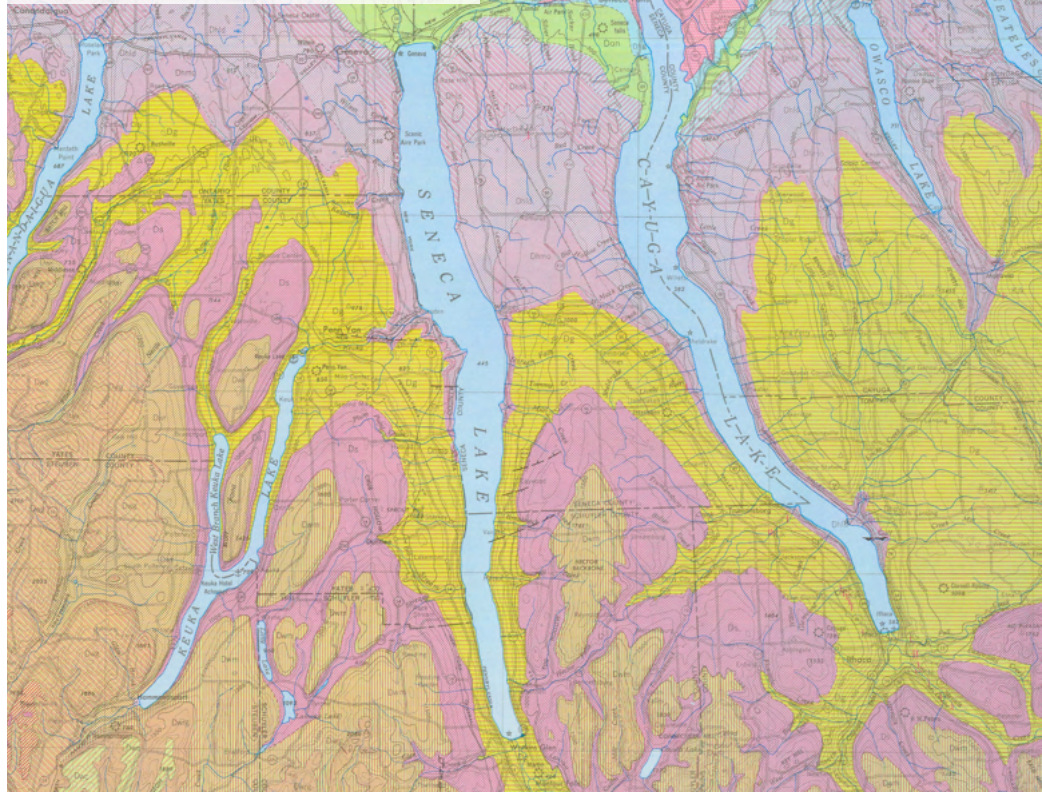


FORGE CELLARS PARTNERS: RICK RAINEY (LEFT) & LOUIS BARRUOL (RIGHT)



- 1: WINERY / THE SALON
- 2: WAREHOUSE
- 3: SUMMER HOUSE
(pictured below; tastings by appointment)
- 4: BELLOWS VINEYARD

BEDROCK MAP, FINGER LAKES, NEW YORK





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