

SUNDAY, JULY 8, 2007

Shaw Vineyard – Newest Winery on Seneca Lake

SHAW VINEYARDS, owned by Steve Shaw, has just opened (west side of Seneca Lake, near Hermann Wiemer) but already has impressive credentials. Steve has been growing wine grapes in the Finger Lakes for many years and the wineries that have purchased grapes from him are solid proof of the quality of his grapes (Do Dr. Frank or Hermann Wiemer ring a bell to anyone?). Steve's meticulous attention to the grapevines has now evolved into his lifelong ambition of owning his own winery finally bearing fruit.

The parking lot and tasting room are still works in progress (you might even miss the turn into the driveway (like me) if you are not paying attention, but the wines are Very Ready and well worth the visit. With Morten Hallgren (owner and winemaker of Ravines) as his mentor, consultant, and winemaking partner, Steve Shaw has hit the ground running and ready to join the ranks of a growing number of Finger Lakes wineries committed to the difficult task (with a short growing season and the potential of harsh winters) of crafting world-class red wines in the Finger Lakes. Shaw & Hallgren use innovative whole cluster pressing techniques and a commitment to letting the wines age properly before releasing to craft elegant food-friendly wines. Here are my tasting notes:

2002 Chardonnay, 1.2% RS, \$15.99, 12 months in French Oak & Pennsylvania Fine Grain Oak (200 to 300 year old trees!), bright fruit with fresh clean acidity, long finish with hints of white pepper and smooth oak.

2005 Semi-Dry Riesling, 1.2% RS, \$16.99, clean and fresh on the attack, bright fruit with a solid backbone, with a touch of botrytis lending honeyed citrus notes, very food-friendly.

Non Vintage Merlot, .4% RS, \$12.99, Grapes from Long Island North Fork (Martha Clara/Entenmann Vineyard), 28 months in French Oak, Lots of fruit, abundant raspberry with hints of smoke and pepper, very soft rounded tannins, And at \$12.99 a great value!!! Also, a 2004 Merlot (same grape source) that was barrell selected is available for \$17.99

2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, \$19.99 deep ruby color, elegant soft fruit with medium tannins and perfect balance, in my opinion, one of the best Cab Sauv's in the Finger Lakes. Cab Sauv is difficult to do well in the Finger Lakes and '02 was a particularly difficult growing season, but Shaw & Hallgren have crafted a winner with this Cab Sauv. And again a great value at \$19.99, Gee, Patience really IS a virtue!

Keuka Hill Reserve, Merlot/Cabernet Franc/Cabernet Sauvignon, Shaw's Meritage, nice fruit with hints of pepper, beautiful tannins, needs a little more time, will age nicely.

Shaw Vineyards tasting room summer hours are Fri., Sat., Sun., & Mon. from Noon to 5pm with Steve Shaw Jr. manning the tasting room operations. Future Summer & Fall New Releases include Cabernet Franc, Dry Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Cayuga, & Sauvignon Blanc. Current Annual Production is 1700 cases.
