

WINES OF THE SEASON

---

# The Beauty of the Blend

Finger Lakes Red Blends in the Bordeaux/Meritage Tradition

WRITER LAURA WINTER FALK



**M**any wine drinkers value the purity that can come from a wine produced from single-vineyard fruit. Few would disagree that these wines provide a distinctive insight into the sense of place or the “terroir” in which the grapes were grown. Often when making these wines, winemakers will use a hands-off approach, with the ultimate goal of having the vineyard site speak for itself.

When blending wines from multiple grapes, in the traditions of French regions such as Bordeaux, Southern Rhone and Champagne, the goal becomes showcasing the ultimate expression of the entire estate through the eyes of the winemaker. Under this model, the “terroir” takes on an even broader perspective, incorporating the winemaker’s artistry, skill and perspective into the overall growing environment that creates the finished wine. This is the winemaker’s attempt to create the perfect wine—one that balances the structural elements of acids, tannins and alcohol, and creates an aromatic and flavor profile where the resulting wine is greater than the sum of its parts.

The traditional red blend in Bordeaux can contain up to six grapes that are indigenous to the region: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petite Verdot, Malbec, and sometimes Carmenere. Most of these blends will be dominated by the first three, with the others being used for finesse and fine-tuning.

In the United States, the “Meritage” brand was created by an alliance of American winemakers interested in showcasing the art of the blend in the Bordeaux tradition. Wineries throughout the country invest in the extra cost associated with using the Meritage brand on their label to convey a specific wine as their top-of-the-line offering. Many wineries choose not to use the nationally recognized branding and instead develop a reputation using their own proprietary name.

No matter what name is on the label, these blends typically speak for themselves as delicious examples of the best that a winery can offer. Here are some Finger Lakes interpretations of “the perfect blend” in the Bordeaux tradition on sale now either online or in the tasting room. 🍷

---

Laura Winter Falk owns Experience! The Finger Lakes, a touring and events company. She holds a PhD in food and nutrition, is a Certified Sommelier and an adjunct professor of wine at Tompkins Cortland Community College.

## *Suggested Wines*

---

### **Cayuga Lake**

Sheldrake Point–Reserve Meritage 2016–\$28.00  
Thirsty Owl–Meritage 2018–\$24.95  
Buttonwood Grove–Marnie Ann 2017–\$39.99  
Knapp Winery–Meritage 2017–\$22.99  
Swedish Hill–Optimus 2016–\$25.99  
Toro Run–Fiesta del Toro 2017–\$21.98  
Treleven–Meritage 2019–\$25.99  
Bright Leaf Vineyards–Reserve Blend No.1–\$22.00

### **Seneca Lake**

Damiani Wine Cellars–Meritage 2018–\$33.99  
Damiani MC2 2019–\$18.99  
Serenity Vineyards–Mirth 2015–\$23.99  
Seneca Shore Wine Cellars–Medieval Red–\$17.99  
Villa Bellangelo–Meritage 2012–\$40.00  
Hickory Hollow Wine Cellars–Cabernet Franc–Merlot 2017–\$27.99  
Bagley’s Poplar Ridge Vineyard–Dave’s Big Red 2019–\$17.99  
Silver Thread Vineyard–Blackbird 2018–\$32.00  
Red Newt Wine Cellars–Viridescens 2014–\$43.00  
Bloomer Creek Vineyards White Horse 2018–\$30.00  
Bloomer Creek Vineyards White Horse 2015–\$40.00  
Shaw Vineyards Keuka Hill Reserve–check vintage and price  
Ravines Maximilien 2017–\$24.95–*multiple library vintages available online*  
Ravines Meritage–*multiple library vintages available online*  
Le Petite Caporal 2017–\$34.95  
Atwater Vineyards–Cabernet Merlot 2017–\$28.00  
Boundary Breaks–Harmonic Red 2018–\$27.95  
Glenora Wine Cellars Meritage 2016–\$29.99  
Lamoreaux Landing 76 West 2016–\$60.00

### **Keuka Lake**

Dr. Konstantin Frank Meritage 2017–\$39.99  
Salmon Run Meritage 2018–\$16.99  
Heron Hill Eclipse Red 2017–\$19.99  
Heron Hill Ingle Vineyards Chosen Spot 2017–\$24.99  
Domaine LeSeurre Réserve Spéciale Barrel Select 2017–\$34.99  
McGregor Vineyard Rob Roy Red 2017–\$50.00, 2016–\$65.00

*Many of these wines are available at your local wine shop but several are available only at the wineries and on their websites.  
Check ahead before you start shopping.*