

Muscat Love

Finger Lakers wineries make the most of Old World grape

WRITER LAURA WINTER FALK

Ask someone on the street if they have ever heard of wine made from Muscat grapes and, chances are, they would respond “Moscato, of course!” Moscato is a general name often used for a wine made from a Muscat grape. However, the Muscat Blanc grape used in Italian Moscato is just one of over 200 varieties in the Muscat family that have been used in winemaking around the world for thousands of years.

The Muscat family of grapes are known for their intense “grapey,” citrus and floral aromas, which lean towards winemaking styles that celebrate the natural aromatic and flavor characteristics inherent in the grape. With such a long winemaking history, specific Muscat varieties from regions around the world are associated with different techniques and styles. As a result, Muscat wines range from the dry, aromatic and crisp Muscat d’Alsace of Alsace, France, to the sweet, effervescent and low-alcohol Moscato d’Asti of Piedmont, Italy, to the fortified and fresh Vins Deux Naturel

of southern France, and to the concentrated ambrosia of Constantia South Africa—the wine of emperors and kings of the 17th and 18th centuries.

In the Finger Lakes, you can find Muscat wines made using one of two varieties in a number of different styles. The French vinifera variety, Muscat Ottonel, is most often produced to make classic wines of aromatic and flavor complexity that are delicate and dry to off-dry on the palate. The Cornell University hybrid Valvin Muscat (released in 2006), often serves as the basis for creating fruity, affordable, sweet wines in both sparkling and still versions. Though they often fly under the radar in the Finger Lakes, these are wines definitely worth exploring to find the style that pleases your palate.

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

Muscat Ottonel

Fulkerson Muscat Ottonel: \$17

Sheldrake Pont Muscat Ottonel: \$16

McGregor Traditional Method Sparkling Muscat: \$35

Dr. Konstantin Frank Muscat Ottonel: \$20

Casa Larga Muscat Ottonel Petillant Naturel: \$20

Lamoreaux Landing 42 North: \$15

White Springs Muscat (medium dry): \$12

Ports of NY White Meleau (semi-dry, fortified): \$48

Bubbly Valvin Muscat

Heron Hill Lady of the Lakes Bubbly Moscato: \$16

Bellangelo Can Do Moscato (canned 4-pack): \$5.50

Penguin Bay Moscato: \$13

Fulkerson Moscato: \$13

Swedish Hill "Mooscato": \$13

Still Valvin Muscat

Glenora Moscato: \$17

Hunt Country Moscato: \$15

Lakewood Valvin Muscat: \$11

Montezuma Moscato: \$15

Prejean Moscato: \$14.49

*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.*