



LAKEWOOD VINEYARDS

4024 State Route 14, Watkins Glen, NY 14891 · Phone 607-535-9252

December 2023 · Volume 34 · No 1

Lakewood's 35th Anniversary Winter Dinners: Celebrating Time and Place

By Erin McMurrough



parts delicious and fun. Course one will have a nod to the 1980s when we opened, course two will focus on the 1990s, and so on, all the way to the 2020s. We're looking forward to featuring our 35th Anniversary Blanc de Noir, library wines, some nostalgic dishes and photos of questionable fashion choices.

Save the date for our decadent winter dinners, celebrating Lakewood's 35th anniversary. Our 2024 dinners are themed, "Celebrating Time and Place" and the significance is twofold. We craft over 20 wines at Lakewood and believe that each wine has a time and place to be enjoyed. And since we're celebrating the longevity with this anniversary, we're going to explore how the tasting room, cellar and vineyards have evolved over the years.

Our friends at Scratch Farmhouse Catering are creating a 5-course menu that is equal

Please join us at one of the 35th Anniversary dinners in March:
Saturday, March 16, 2024
Friday, March 22, 2024
Saturday, March 23, 2024
Each evening starts at 6:30pm

Reservations are required for these intimate evenings. To reserve your spot, please call the winery at 607-535-9252. \$90 per person and \$80 per person for Wine Club and current Rose Guild members.

Only 40 tickets are available for each evening.

From A Solo To A Chorus

Lakewood's newsletters have always been a collaboration amongst our Lakewood family. Editing, critique (lots of that) and layout are shared responsibilities. But, with few exceptions, the articles have all been written by our head winemaker, Chris

Stamp. With this latest edition, we're going to shake things up a bit by bringing in some new(er) voices. Ben, Abby, Erin and Terence have joined Chris in penning these pages. We hope you enjoy the added style and perspectives they bring.

Blanc de Noir

By Abby Wilkens

We at Lakewood believe sparkling wine should not be reserved for celebrations. That said, we also believe it isn't a celebration unless there are bubbles, and we plan on doing some celebrating in 2024. Luckily, we planned ahead. Way back in 2020, amid a global pandemic, we elected to create a special wine we could look forward to for years to come, and thus the 2020 Blanc de Noir was born. This traditional method sparkler was made from 100% free-run Pinot Noir juice from grapes we harvested weeks before those destined for red wine. From a vintage heralded for its ripe and concentrated reds, we strove to create a sparkling wine that captured the essence of the vintage while still offering a bright and lively palate. I think we succeeded. With hints of cherry and red apple on the nose, a ripe and plush mid-palate, and a fresh, lingering finish, the 2020 Blanc de Noir is much like Lakewood: built to last. We are so excited that we decided to start celebrating early. By the time you're reading this, the Blanc de Noir will be available to order. So raise a glass to 35 years of Lakewood Vineyards and to yourself, for supporting us throughout the years. We wouldn't be here without you.



Vineyard News

By Chris Stamp

The impact of last May's frost on farmers was widely covered by the media. Like everything reported by the media, unless you're living it, it's forgotten by the next news cycle. With this fall's harvest now snug in Lakewood's cellar, it seemed a good time to check in with Dave, our vineyardist, for the rest of the story. Please be warned, gentle readers, that while highly quotable, Dave is occasionally NSFW. Therefore, as a politically correct journalist, I've taken editorial privilege to sanitize this report without altering the intended message... much. In the interest of transparency, I've highlighted in red where this privilege is exercised.

On this chilly overcast November morning I find Dave unloading a truckload of new vineyard posts. "Are you putting in a new vineyard?" I questioned nodding toward the large pile of timbers he was moving. "No. These are just replacement posts." "That's a lot." He dabbed his index finger in the air for a moment. "There's 600 of them," he said confidently. "Considering we have more than 23 thousand posts in the ground, as a percentage, it's not that many. Some of our posts have been in the ground for over 30 years." "They expensive?" I asked. "Too **darn** expensive" he lamented. "Speaking of harvest" I awkwardly segued, "we came up a little short on grapes this year. What the heck?" Dave visibly bristled. "When I went to bed on May 17th," he recalled defensively, "we had a very nice crop in the making. By the next day many of the new shoots looked like limp **sprigs of old celery**. That **stupid** frost raised **holy heck** with the vines.

Fortunately many varieties recovered. But Niagara, Concord and Delaware didn't amount to **a hill of beans**. I really lost my **back side**. But what we did get should make excellent wine, provided you winemakers don't **mess** it up. Us growers are on the front line with Mother Nature while you winemakers get to shelter in your wine cellars and **gripe** about how you didn't get enough fruit." "Without us, you wouldn't have a place to sell your grapes" I forcefully countered. "Without me, you'd be making wine out of dandelions!" he retorted. "Have you ever eaten a dandelion? They taste like **something not good**." "Well **thank** you" I shouted, gesturing with my hand. "**You're forgiven!**" he gestured back. "**I love you, man**" I swore. "**I love you too.**"



A DeChaunac vine after the frost.

Good For People and Pets

Many of you already enjoy the light refreshing taste of Lakewood's Sidekick (in the 375ml twist cap bottles) or the taut sweetness of our Full Monty Riesling. But these two wines offer more than just sensorial enjoyment. For every bottle of these two wines sold from our tasting room, we make a donation to a favored cause. Sidekick has generated over \$1400 this year for the local Human Society, while Full Monty supports two scholarships each year for winemaking and grape growing at Finger Lakes Community College. Students, dogs, cats, and all of us at Lakewood thank you for your support!

Reserve It Online

As Lakewood's 35th anniversary is just around the corner, our social calendar for 2024 is busier than an LA freeway, with new events being added every time you turn around. Don't allow the good times to pass you by. Let lakewoodvineyards.com be your on-ramp to good times throughout the year. And while you're browsing the itinerary, you can use our newly added online feature to make your reservations for anything from tours and tasting to our intimate winter wine dinners. This new, easy-to-use feature is slated to go live by the first of the year.

High Bred Hybrids

By Ben Stamp



A cluster of Vidal.

At Lakewood Vineyards, we know hybrids. I'm not talking hybrid cars like a Prius or hybrid animals like a liger (which may or may not be my wife's spirit animal) or a mule (which is almost certainly my spirit animal). I'm talking hybrid grapes; the descendants of intentional crossbreeding between native American *Vitis* species and European *Vitis vinifera* cultivars. This age-old practice, which has given us such mainstay varieties such as Cayuga White and Baco Noir, has taken on renewed importance as a way to meet some of the sustainability goals of modern viticulture. While the environmental impact of growing quality wine grapes is lower than many other crops, we are always looking for ways to improve our stewardship of the land. This process starts

with deciding what varieties to plant and what inputs will be necessary to bring those vines to fruition, literally. The promise of hybrid grapes lies in their potential resistance to diseases, cold, drought, and grumpy farmers. Disease resistance means less inputs; cold hardiness means less spring re-planting; drought tolerance means less irrigation (though all vines at Lakewood are dry-farmed anyhow). The less hassle the vines are to grow, the happier the grower, but it's not just grape growers that appreciate hybrids. The wine cognoscenti are taking notice of what we at Lakewood have known for a long time: hybrid grapes can make some truly wonderful wines. Take our Bubbly Candeo for instance, made from the Cayuga White hybrid, or our ever-popular Muscat made from the Valvin Muscat hybrid. Both of the above hybrids were bred at Cornell

University, right here in the Finger Lakes. In addition many other hybrids still deliver the goods for us here at Lakewood, like Leon Millot and Baco Noir, old French-American hybrids that create the backbone of our Long Stem Red. Don't be scared to try hybrids with funny names! Their quality may surprise you, and you can feel good about supporting progress toward a more sustainable future for wine.

Lakewood Vineyards wines made with hybrid grapes include Vignoles, Bubbly Candeo, Long Stem White, Long Stem Red, Muscat, and Port (not pictured).



ORDERING Just Got Easier

Historically we have always had an order form in our newsletter, but each year fewer of them were faxed or mailed-in as people transitioned to online ordering. We do not want the absence of a traditional order form to pose too great a hurdle, so we have included a QR code that will take you directly to the SHOP on our website. No need to type our web address to start selecting your favorite wines.

If you prefer to type it, here is the web address:
www.lakewoodvineyards.com

As always, we are happy to take your order by phone..
Just call: 877-535-9252

We are here to answer the phone:
Mon-Sat 10am-5pm &
Sun noon-5pm.

Please scan this QR code to shop for Lakewood Vineyards wines



How To Drink Everything

By Terence Lane

This time of year we delight in the traditional delicacies of holidays. Tables of abundant dishes run the gamut from sweet to salty and savory to spicy. One of the things I admire most about our vineyard is that our shelves hold something for everyone. Both sweet and dry wine drinkers can find bottles to suit their tastes. Bubbly wine drinkers and dessert wine aficionados will also be impressed by our dazzling array. But don't feel pigeonholed into choosing one style of wine or another, as the various dishes on your holiday table (not to mention various guests) will always call for a selection of different wines.

Bubbly wines, all too often under-utilized, make a stellar go-to pairing with a hodge-podge of different dishes. When in doubt, reach for a bottle of Bubbly Candeo and see how well it harmonizes with glazed ham, roasted veggies, and candied sweet potatoes. Bubbles have the effect of freshening the palate over the course of a big meal laden with heavy, powerful flavors. It's also celebratory, so make sure to keep several bottles chilled at all times, as it has a funny way of disappearing.

Chilled Riesling is almost as versatile as bubbly, and is always a mainstay at my Christmas and New Year's feasts. I like to choose various styles, oscillating between the dry and our classic Riesling. Both work so well with appetizer boards of cheese and fruit, playing into the bright, citrusy profile of the wine. Our Riesling 4-Pack is a great way to explore the range of one of the Finger's Lakes most acclaimed grape varieties.

Obviously, you'll need reds, if only to keep off the cold. There's no better time to raise the bar than with our Reserve Pinot Noir and Reserve Cabernet Franc. These are wines to impress even the most skeptical out-of-towner and will take a prime rib dinner to uncharted levels of greatness. Chosen from the revered 2020 growing year, our reserves underwent long macerations and extended barrel-aging. The resulting wines are powerful, brooding, yet elegant and refined. While they're drinking excellently right now, any additional cellaring at home will be rewarded, creating lasting memories farther down the line. Perhaps around your next holiday table. Or even the one after that.