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Tasting Highlights: New York's Finger Lakes

The Finger Lakes continue to shine in the 2007 vintage

James Molesworth

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The warm 2007 vintage in New York gave upstate vintners a chance to shine with [their red varieties](#), which in most years typically produce rather crisp, lean wines. (New York Gewürztraminer and other white wines also fared well in 2007.) From my most recent tastings, the wines from Damiani stood out. The winery, which debuted in the 2004 vintage, has steadily climbed to 4,000 cases of annual production. Winemaker Lou Damiani and grapegrower Phil Davis are focusing on red vinifera varieties sourced from their 23 acres of vines on the eastern shore of Seneca Lake, a warmer spot known locally as the "[banana belt](#)."

DAMIANI Cabernet Franc Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 87 | \$23

Nicely rounded, with well layered black cherry, spice, tobacco and sweet tapenade notes. Stays juicy on the finish. Like a nice Saumur red. Well done. Drink now. 110 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

DAMIANI Meritage Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 87 | \$27

This is nicely ripe, with a mix of black cherry and currant fruit held together by integrated toast. Nice lingering coffee hint on the mineral-tinged finish. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Drink now through 2010. 273 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

DAMIANI Merlot Finger Lakes Barrel Select 2007 Score: 87 | \$35

Firm and rather smoky, but with a solid core of blackberry and currant fruit. Notes of cedar and toast frame the finish. Could use brief cellaring to stretch out. Drink now through 2010. 108 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

DR. KONSTANTIN FRANK Merlot Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 87 | \$20

Ripe, with a solid core of dark plum and currant fruit backed by well-integrated toast on the nicely smoky, tobacco-tinged finish. Drink now. 482 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

LAMOREAUX LANDING Chardonnay Finger Lakes Reserve 2007 Score: 87 | \$20

Ripe, but nicely focused, with a mix of butter, yellow apple, melon and light toast notes that ripple through the fresh finish. Nicely done. Drink now. 362 cases made. *White.* —*J.M.*

DAMIANI Merlot Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 86 | \$22

This is solid, with dark currant and plum notes backed by Maduro tobacco and a loamy hint. Slightly firm, but with good depth and muscle through the finish. Drink now. 154 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

HAZLITT 1852 Cabernet Franc Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 86 | \$19

Nice, fresh style, with a mix of red and black cherry fruit woven with a mouthwatering tobacco hint. Rounded, easy finish. Drink now. 475 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

HAZLITT 1852 Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes 2008 Score: 86 | \$15

Fresh, with nice spice, tangerine and lychee notes. Tangy finish. Drink now. 750 cases made. *White.* —*J.M.*

HUNT COUNTRY Pinot Gris Finger Lakes 2008 Score: 86 | \$16

Fresh and soft, with floral, peach and salted butter notes that linger on the finish. Drink now. 767 cases made. *White.* —*J.M.*

ATWATER ESTATE Gewürztraminer Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 85 | \$17

Taut, mineral style, with lime and pippin apple flavors backed by a fresh, mouthwatering finish. Drink now. 360 cases made. *White.* —*J.M.*

ATWATER ESTATE Pinot Noir Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 85 | \$17

Rather juicy, with a nice dusty, spicy edge to the red and black cherry fruit. Lightly toasted finish. Nicely done. Drink now. 350 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

HUNT COUNTRY Cabernet Franc Finger Lakes 2007 Score: 85 | \$18

Lighter-bodied, but persistent with red currant black cherry and herb notes that linger on the focused finish. Drink now. 500 cases made. *Red.* —*J.M.*

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