

## New York

6 Sep 2008 by Jancis Robinson

**In a nutshell:** Especially fine dry Rieslings.

**Main grapes:** Concord and hybrids giving way to the usual suspects.

New York state is an important wine producer with five quite different wine regions. Most important in terms of quantity of wine produced (as opposed to grape juice or table grapes) is the bucolic [Finger Lakes](#) region in the west of the state. The slopes of these deep lakes are sufficiently steep to keep cold air moving in winter while vines bud too late in spring for frost to be a serious threat. The Cayuga Lake is warm enough to ripen European vinifera vines, but most of the wine is still produced from earlier-ripening hybrid or American vines, of which red Concord is the most powerfully flavoured example. Some seriously fine Riesling is produced here, however.

The vineyards surrounding Lake Erie produce mainly grape juice, Concord jelly and table grapes but the relatively new Niagara Escarpment AVA on Lake Ontario is being developed in the image of the Niagara wine country just over the border in Canada.

The vineyards of the Hudson River due north of and not far from Manhattan are notable for their continuous existence over 300 years. Most of the wine, made from European, American and hybrid vines, is sold locally.

The state's newest wine region, the easternmost tip of Long Island, is only just in New York state. Thanks to the ocean which surrounds it, the climate is mild enough to allow vinifera vines to flourish in all vineyards. Cabernet Franc, Chardonnay and Merlot do particularly well here and have a finesse, natural acidity and delicacy that distinguishes them from most other American wines. The North Fork of the island, potato country, is the predominant wine region and considerable capital has gone into the region, even if New Yorkers themselves remain relatively impervious to the charms of these, and indeed all their state's, wines.

For more information on this region see [Uncork New York](#).