

true home of Finger Lakes wine. Forty-eight years ago, Frank's grandfather, an Austrian immigrant named Konstantin, arrived in the region and began a minor revolution. Rather than toiling away with the area's Concord grape—good for jelly, but it smacks about as subtly as a sledgehammer when it's bottled and corked—as most vintners were doing, Konstantin grafted European vines onto the tough local root, bringing old-world refinement to New York.

READERS' CHOICE
*Most beautiful wine region
 in the world*

Frank gives me the tour, and I buy a few bottles of his family's award-winning Riesling and then drop by Heron Hill Winery, not two minutes away (9301 County Rte. 76, heronhill.com, tastings from \$2). The interior is done up like the inside of a wine barrel, and I grab a place at the bar to try the chardonnay. "Lots of people in this industry are real self-important," pourer Dan Jimmerson tells me, "but not up here."

Jimmerson's words echo throughout the weekend as I sample the laid-back beer and burgers at the Market Street Brewing Company in Corning (63 W. Market St., 936-beer.com, burgers from \$7) and see the occasional Amish buggy rattling down the road. On my last day, I meet a couple who relocated from Modesto, Calif., to start Red Tail Ridge Winery in Penn Yan (846 State Rte. 14, redtailridgewinery.com, tastings from \$2). Vintners Nancy Irelan and Mike Schnelle looked all over until they found this land on the western shores of Seneca Lake, where they built their LEED-certified, geothermally regulated winery. "This place is still so young we can get in on the ground floor and be part of a great community," Irelan tells me over a glass of her pinot noir. What she's found is that the nature of this place is written in the land, like the grapes themselves. And by this measurement, the Finger Lakes are spectacular—perhaps, even, the most beautiful in the world.

Note: *This story was accurate when it was published. Please be sure to confirm all rates and details directly with the companies in question before planning your trip.*

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