Cornell Cooperative Extension
Finger Lakes Grape Program

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**CORNELL NAMES NEW WINE GRAPE**

"Abundance"

Linda McCandless, Communications Services, NYAES, Geneva NY

[Since this article was written we have learned that the name 'Abundance' was previously trademarked by a winery in California. The variety will be renamed shortly. If you have any suggestions for a new name, please contact Bruce Reisch at birl@cornell.edu or 315-787-2239 – TEM]

BUFFALO, NY: The newest grape from Cornell University's internationally acclaimed fruit breeding program has been named 'Abundance'. Grape breeder Bruce Reisch named and released the red wine grape during the Viticulture 2003 Conference in Buffalo, NY, on February 20th.

"'Abundance' is vigorous, productive, winter hardy, and makes a very enjoyable wine," said Reisch.

'Abundance', formerly GR-7, is the latest release from the Cornell Grape Breeding Program

Grape growers and wine makers helped select a name for the new grape and also pushed Cornell to officially name and release the new variety because it has proven to be such a reliable producer in the Finger Lakes since industry testing began in the 1970s.

"This grape is the product of opportunity and circumstance," said Reisch. Normally it takes 15 to 25 years to test and release a new grape variety. With 'Abundance', it took many years for growers and researchers to discover that it remained productive in older vineyards while other red wine varieties succumbed to disease. "In the intervening years, wine makers also discovered how to make better wines with it," said Reisch. "Because sales of red wine have soared
in recent years due to reputed health benefits, wine makers need a good red wine grape to meet increased demand. 'Abundance' can help them do that."

"This was a grape the industry strongly encouraged us to release," said Station Director James E. Hunter. "It is a good example of the continuing relevance of the fruit breeding programs at the Experiment Station for New York State agriculture."

In its 125-year history, the Station has developed and released 243 different varieties of fruit for commercial and home garden use. Of those, 52 have been grapes. 'Abundance' is the sixth wine grape to be released.

'Abundance' is already under cultivation in Finger Lakes vineyards and used commercially for wine; particularly in red wine blends.

"'Abundance' makes dark red wines with a classical hybrid aroma," said Station enologist Thomas Henick-Kling, who helped in the grape's development. "'Abundance' has much improved viticulture and wine making characteristics over older red hybrid varieties. It makes a good quality wine with attractive cherry flavors."

"We find 'Abundance' has good color and moderate acidity," said Steve DiFrancesco, the winemaker at Glenora Wine Cellars. "'Abundance' is generally the first wine to complete malolactic fermentation, which we then use to inoculate our other red hybrids." Glenora has been using 'Abundance' in its Classic and Bobsled reds for over eight years.

Wines made with 'Abundance' from Wagner, Glenora, Pleasant Valley, and Canandaigua Wine Company were tasted during the name and release event. So were wines from three other wine grapes developed at the Experiment Station-'Cayuga White', 'Melody', and 'Traminette'-from Arbor Hill, Swedish Hill, Fulkerson, and Goose Watch wineries.

"Wine is a food to be enjoyed with other foods," said Jim Trezise, president of the New York Wine & Grape Foundation.

'A variety like 'Abundance' is the type of grape to make that happen because it is a reliable producer in the vineyard which makes a simple, friendly, and affordable wine to accompany other good foods on the table. The increasing popularity of red wines due to widely reported health benefits from moderate consumption just adds to its importance."

'Abundance', formerly tested as GR 7 and NY 34791 was selected from a cross of 'Buffalo' x 'Baco noir', made in 1947, and tested extensively in the Experiment Station grape breeding program under Richard Wellington, John Einset, Willard Robinson, and Robert Pool. Grower-advisor Seaton "Zeke" Mendall helped popularize the grape among growers. The Experiment Station plans to release three more wine grapes in 2006; a white Muscat and two other red varieties. 'Abundance' is available for public use. For a license to propagate and distribute 'Abundance', commercial nurseries should contact the Cornell Research Foundation at 607-257-1081. Vines are available to growers and homeowners through licensed nurseries.
For further information about the grape breeding program at the Experiment Station, see links at http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/reisch/.

**STATUS AND RECENT TRENDS**

*Bob Pool, Horticultural Sciences, NYSAES Geneva*

The most recent (2001) Survey of Orchards and Vineyards published by the NY Agricultural Statistics Service indicates that there are 31,745 acres of vineyard in New York state growing on 962 farms. The state's production is still dominated by Native American varieties and 65 percent of the acreage is planted to Concord (Table 1).

Counties bounded by Lake Erie (Chautauqua and Erie) and the Finger Lakes have more than 85% of the state's vineyard acreage. The two Lake Erie counties, Chautauqua and Erie, have more than half of the state acreage. These vineyards form the northern half of the "Concord grape belt" which borders Lake Erie in New York, Pennsylvania, and Ohio. The dominance of traditional Native American varieties is most complete in this region; almost 99% of the acreage is planted to native varieties with more than 90% of that being Concord.

Native American varieties also form a majority of Finger Lakes grape acreage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acre Rank 2001</th>
<th>Rank 1996</th>
<th>Variety</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Acres 2001</th>
<th>Tons 2001</th>
<th>% All Acres</th>
<th>% Non-Concord Acres</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>Native</td>
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<td>104,029</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Niagara</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>3,261</td>
<td>16,170</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>28.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Catawba</td>
<td>Native</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Chardonnay</td>
<td>Vinifera</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>2,698</td>
<td>3.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Merlot</td>
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<td>1,520</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Aurore</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
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<td>596</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Elvira</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>3,153</td>
<td>537</td>
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<td>4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>White Riesling</td>
<td>Vinifera</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td>411</td>
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<td>3.6</td>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>Vinifera</td>
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<td>341</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Cabernet Sauvignon</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Seyval blanc</td>
<td>Hybrid</td>
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<td>273</td>
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<td>Pinot noir</td>
<td>Vinifera</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Delaware</td>
<td>Native</td>
<td>623</td>
<td>207</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1.** Major grape varieties grown in New York State in 2001

![Figure 1. NY Grape acreage in 2001 by type and production region.](image-url)

are as dominant as Concord is in the Lake Erie region. The state's grape acreage reached a maximum in 1975, and thereafter has fallen (Fig 2). Grape farm numbers changed...
little between 1965 and 1975; it steadily declined until 1996 and has remained even since. Farm numbers declined more than acreage did, indicating a consolidation of farms and possibly elimination of acreage of marginal quality. Selective elimination of lower quality plantings, increased farm size and introduction of new technology has meant that, in spite of acreage reduction, the total production of grapes has remained almost constant between 1975 and the present (Figure 3).

Between 1990 and 1996 the greatest loss of farms was in the 5 to 50 acre range (Fig 4). Between 1996 and 2001 there was a greater loss in the 50 to 100 acre range. Cost of production studies indicate that the typical native American grape farm is too small to provide a full income for most families. The majority of farms falls in the 10 to 50 acre range, but economic analysis suggests that at least 100 acres are required to both justify the equipment investment and to provide sufficient income for most families.

Less than 7% of the farms presently meet the size. In 1990, the estimated minimum economic size was 50 acres and 16% of the farms were in that range. Of course many of the smaller farms do not depend entirely on grape production or even on farming to provide the full family income.

Table 2. Acres by variety class in different grape production areas in New York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Lake Erie</th>
<th>Niagara County</th>
<th>Finger Lakes</th>
<th>Other Western</th>
<th>Eastern</th>
<th>NY State</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% Region</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>% Region</td>
<td>Acres</td>
<td>% Region</td>
<td>Acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native</td>
<td>98.4</td>
<td>19,741</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>851</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>4,851</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hybrid</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1,611</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>1,031</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vinifera</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not specified</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>363</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>185</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>20,054</td>
<td>7,856</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>2,540</td>
<td>31,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2. Trends in number of grape acres and farms in New York, 1965-2001

Figure 3. Annual NY grape production, 1950 – 2001 (Thousands of tons)

Figure 4. Change in Farm Size for NY Vineyards, 1990-2001
Changes and Trends. As with any commodity, economics drives grape production. When consumer preference changes so do processor needs. Nationally, during the 1960s there was a large increase in US per capita wine consumption but it changed from a preference for dessert (fortified) wines to one for table wines. In the 1970s demand for table wine continued to increase, but most of the increase was for white table wine (in 1970 80% of US table wine was red). In the 1980s overall wine consumption dropped slightly, but total dollar sales continued to increase. Consumers were dropping out or trading up to more expensive wine. More recently favorable news regarding the benefits of regular wine consumption, especially red wine consumption, has enhanced the demand for red and more expensive table wines. These later trends have been intensified during the last few years.

NYS Dept. of Agric. and Markets is supporting the construction of a kosher grape juice processing facility in the Lake Erie area. Because a major eastern New York buyer of Concord grapes for kosher wine production may take advantage of this new supply, the market for Finger Lakes Concord grapes may be further reduced.

Figure 5. Percent change in acres of the major native American grape varieties (lines - 1966 base year) and actual 1996 and 2001 acreage of the same varieties (columns).

New York planting trends followed these national ones. Figure 5 shows that Concord acreage was relatively stable until 1980s. During the 1960s Catawba, Delaware and, to a lesser extent Niagara, were planted to meet the increased demand for white table wine. These varieties produce palatable, although relatively inexpensive white table wines which carry a degree of residual sweetness. During the same period Concord acreage began to fall reflecting the reduced market share of dessert and sweet red table wines. Since 1990 Catawba and Delaware acreage have declined. This is because they are not well suited for the production of the dry, high quality table wines which are now most in demand.

Recently there has been some increase in Niagara acreage. Most is being planted for the white juice market. The demand for white juice has increased, and it appears that the processors perceive eastern Niagara juice to be of higher quality than that produced in Washington state. Planting incentives offered by National Grape Cooperative were responsible for the increase in Niagara acreage between 1996 and 2001. However, the same processors do not have the same appreciation for eastern Concord juice. There has been a distinct shift in Concord juice production from the east to Washington state where cost of production and pesticide load is lower and where higher sugar, lower acid Concord grapes are produced. These are cheaper to process, and better suited to the preference of consumers in the expanding markets of the Pacific rim. Most recently, bulk wine buyers of Native grapes have changed their preference from "low acid" varieties (Concord and Niagara) to "high acid" (Catawba and Elvira) grapes. This has caused the price for Niagara grapes to fall to near the average for Native varieties, and will probably result in reduced acreage of these two varieties in the Finger Lakes region.

Category and Price. The value of the different type of New York grapes reflects changes in markets. The above figure shows that, in constant (1984) dollars, the value of all grapes types has declined steadily since the mid-1970s. The change has been most dramatic for Concord and
hybrid varieties, but is also evident for vinifera varieties. Since 1997 prices offered for all grape varieties have been relatively high, but even so, only very efficient growers will obtain substantial returns on investment growing native American grape varieties. In comparing recent California (San Joaquin bulk varieties) and New York labrusca wine varieties, white labrusca (Native) varieties are priced higher than their counterpart in California. This suggests that NY growers should not expect substantial gains over the next few years. However, the price for some premium wine grapes is still substantially higher in California than in NY. Currently the demand for premium and standard table wines has resulted in a favorable price for hybrids, especially red hybrids, and demand exceeds supply for *V. vinifera* varieties.

![Figure 6](image)

It appears that the increased supply in California (and worldwide) has a negative impact on prices for New York grapes. Standard quality (San Joaquin valley) wine grapes were in great surplus in 2001. Prices for all varieties are expected to drop. Concord production was below average in 2001 due to inclement weather, but planting in Washington state will greatly increase national supply of Concord grapes. Expectations are that, in the near term, prices for grapes in New York will be stable at best.

**WHAT STRATEGIES DO THESE NUMBERS SUGGEST?** First, investment in new plantings of native American varieties should be considered carefully. Although the current supply of Concord is not excessive, planting in Washington state and preference for their fruit for juice production suggests that only the most efficient growers will be able to compete in this market. Growers who have existing vineyards or who do not depend upon grape production for their major livelihood may be in a better situation, but they should carefully examine their options. The outlook for Delaware is worse than that for Concord. Efficiency is a key for survival. Demand for Niagara seems a little more secure because of the quality differential between eastern and western product. Still, growers should be aware that recent news of the health benefits of red grape juice may affect change the relative preference for red and white juice in the same way that it has red and white wine. The market for "high acid" white Native varieties has been stable, suggesting that Catawba and Elvira demand may be somewhat more secure in the immediate future. However, the great excess grape supply in California, and changed management structure in a major buyer of Finger Lakes grapes, may well impact local demand of these two varieties.

The fact that, in spite of an apparent world wide preference for red wines, white hybrid variety prices have surged in New York is encouraging. Demand for quality table wines is up, and the premium wineries have a good market for quality white wines. The key is to produce quality grapes and wines. This means that the grower and winery must work together to produce fruit which will result in wines of competitive quality and grape values which reflect the grower’s investment.

Demand for *vinifera* varieties in New York continues to increase. Currently there is an impression that the number of sites suitable for expansion of *vinifera* production in New York is very limited, especially in the Finger Lakes and the Hudson Valley. It would be interesting to see to what extent the advances in knowledge we have gained about growing *V. vinifera* in New York might allow expansion onto sites which were formerly considered unsuitable for their production.
Some *vinifera* wine producers feel that the present favorable prices for *vinifera* are somewhat problematic. They mandate higher than average price points for their wines. The large national supply has caused drastic price cuts in other quality production regions. Although regional sales of New York wines is strong, future expansion into other markets will require more competitive pricing. Data from Dr. White's cost of *vinifera* production study suggests that, so long as yield targets are appropriate and attainable, modest reductions in price may not inevitably destroy profitability for grape growers. On the other hand, the same study shows that, when yields are moderate, the current prices are required to attain profitability.

What if you have neither the site, nor the desire to plant other than native American grapes? The solution would seem to be finding a way to increase the value of your grapes. Options include producing organically grown or table grapes and direct retail marketing through farm stands, regional farmer's markets or the New York city green markets.

**Viticulture 2003 Thanks**

While final figures are not yet in, approximately 500 registrants (from 24 states and Canada) at Viticulture 2003 attended 15 different sessions featuring 78 speakers, and visited 105 trade show booths, representing 120 vendors and organizations. A new grape variety, Abundance (aka GR-7) was launched, breakfast, lunches, and dinners were served, awards were announced (many to businesses and growers from the Finger Lakes), and somehow everyone found a place to park in downtown Buffalo, eventually. The list of people to thank is too long for this space, but I would like to express my gratitude to all the vendors and organizations (NY Wine and Grape Foundation, Nelson Shaulis Fund) who made this possible, to all the growers and industry people on the steering committee for all the ideas they contributed towards developing a first rate program, and particularly to chair Ron Guzzetta, financial and logistical wizard Susan Spence, and events coordinator Charlene Ryder for their key roles in making it happen. And thanks to all of you who attended! A special thanks to all our vendors and sponsors.

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lenewa.netsync.net/public/IPM/Home.htm
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Viticulture 2003

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SURVEY OF WINERIES AND GRAPE PROCESSING PLANTS NEW YORK

Note: The following articles and data are from press releases by the New York Agricultural Statistics Service.

New York grown grapes delivered to wineries and processing plants (both in and out-of-state) in 2002 totaled 153,000 tons (see Table 2). This represents an increase of 3 percent from the 148,000 tons delivered from the 2001 crop. The tonnage received from the Chautauqua-Erie-Cattaraugus Region was up 4 percent from the previous year. Grapes received from the Finger Lakes Region were also up 4 percent from the 2001 receipts. Tonnage originating in Niagara County was down 23 percent from a year ago. New York grapes grown by variety, major growing area, and varietal prices paid by processors are accounted for in Table 2.

Wineries and processing plants located in New York State crushed a total of 121,065 tons of grapes in 2002, down 13 percent from the 139,006 tons processed from the 2001 crop. Receipts from New York growers accounted for 86 percent of the total with the remaining 14 percent coming from other states and Canada. Wine crushings in New York plants decreased 5 percent from last year to 48,465 tons and accounted for 40 percent of all grapes processed. Tonnage utilized for juice and other products decreased 18 percent to 72,600 tons. Data for this publication was provided by New York and out-of-state wineries and processors who crushed New York grown grapes. Their cooperation is greatly appreciated.

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<td>Delaware</td>
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<td>Ives</td>
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<td>729</td>
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<td>121,065</td>
<td>50,091</td>
<td>48,465</td>
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Table 1. GRAPES PROCESSED IN NEW YORK STATE WINERIES AND PROCESSING PLANTS

Tonnages Received by Variety and Primary Use, 2001 and 2002

1/ Total receipts includes the following amounts received from other states and Canada:
   2001-23,025
   2002-16,573
2/ Included in "Total."
**Viticulture 2003 Proceedings Available**

Our office has copies of the 209 page proceedings for Viticulture 2003 available from our office for $15. Please call Brian at our office 315-536-5134 to order a copy, or contact the NY Wine and Grape Foundation 315-536-7442 for additional copies.

**SHAULIS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS SOUGHT**

The Nelson J. Shaulis Fund for the Advancement of Viticulture will be awarding a $2500 scholarship to a Cornell University student in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for the Summer of 2003. The goal of the award is to encourage students to enter the field of viticulture as a career by exposing them to viticultural research and extension. The award funds independent study, under supervision of various research and extension personnel at Cornell, for a period of 12 weeks. Please let all interested applicants know about this award. Deadline for application is April 16, 2003. Contact Dr. Alan Lakso, Horticultural Sciences, NYSAES, Geneva, NY 14456 315-787-2399 or anl2@cornell.edu for information and applications.

**CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE**

The New York State Agricultural Statistics Service has recently sent out surveys for the 2002 Census of Agriculture. This survey, like the vineyard acreage survey, is one that determines baseline information on the state of agriculture in the US. It is used by national and state legislators to allocate funding to commodity grants programs, Cooperative Extension, and other programs that affect agriculture. It is personally important to every grape grower and to agriculture in NY to have a good response to this survey. I urge you to take the time to fill this one out, so that the grape industry and New York agriculture as a whole is counted. This baseline information matters to NY agriculture.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**March 16-19. Wineries Unlimited, Lancaster, PA.** It features a new grower program on Sunday and triple sessions on Monday and Tuesday covering all matter of viticulture and enology topics. Syrah, Viognier and red hybrid varieties will be the focus of wine produc-
tion sessions. An advanced seminar on Winemaker's Management will be offered on Wednesday. Of course, a giant trade show with over 200 exhibitors is offered on Monday and Tuesday. This year, Long Island wines will be featured.

Registration information and forms are available at: http://www.vwm-online.com/Events/WineriesUnlimited/2003WineriesUnlimited.htm

March 17. Trade Show Features Regional Cuisine. Food and wines produced in the Finger Lakes will be paired at the third annual Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty Trade Show coming up on Monday, March 17-St. Patrick’s Day, at the Holiday Inn in Seneca Falls-Waterloo on Route 414, between Route 20 and the Thruway. The trade show opens at 10 am and will include Finger Lakes farm and food producers with everything from meats to produce to processed specialty items, wines and other beverages. Over 40 exhibits are planned.

The theme of the event “Wine-inspired Cuisine” will be prominently highlighted during the Local Foods Luncheon involving eight local chefs making dishes prepared from local ingredients. And it’s not all corned beef and cabbage, the traditional food for St. Patrick’s Day, but will showcase a variety of local meats, cheese, fruits, vegetables and sauces. Wines from the Finger Lakes will be paired with each of the menu selections. Some chefs participating this year include Deb Whiting of Red Newt Cellars Bistro, Arthur Kelly Jr. of Veraisons, Jack Carrington, chef at Sheldrake Point Winery Café, Chef Stan from Port’s Café, and Chef Mike from the Ramada Pier House Restaurant. All dishes will be made predominantly from local foods.

The luncheon will begin at 11:30 with a presentation by Jim Tresize, Executive Director of the NY Wine & Grape Foundation who will talk about bringing NY wines to NYC restaurants. Deb Whiting, President of Finger Lakes Culinary Bounty, will report on FLCB activities and plans and introduce the luncheon chefs, producers and wineries. After the luncheon, the trade show continues until 3 pm.

For trade show information and reservations, call Monika Roth at 607-272-2292 or email mr55@cornell.edu. The fee for exhibitors is $35 per person and for attending the event it is $25/person for the luncheon. Trade Show reservations are requested by Wednesday, March 12, others attending the show and luncheon should make reservations by Friday, March 14.

April 2-4. New York Wine Industry Workshop The annual Wine Industry workshop is coming up. This year's workshop has a new feature - on the second day of the conference, Hans Justrich and Thomas Henick-Kling have organized a trade show at the Vinification and Brewing Laboratory, including demonstrations of winemaking equipment and special educational tastings. The program this year will focus on Red Wine vinification, wine microbiology, and an Atypical Aging update, featuring a tasting of wines with vineyard and winery treatments (ascorbic acid) designed to reduce or delay ATA symptoms. The annual Wine Gala Dinner also will be held this year in conjunction with the Wine Industry Workshop on the evening of 4 April 03.

The complete program is posted at: http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/fst/faculty/henick/wiw

May 4-13. Loire Valley (France) Study Tour Leslie Weston, Pascal Durand, and the Finger Lakes Pinot Noir Alliance have organized a tour of the Loire Valley, with departure from Syracuse on the 4th and arrival on Monday the 5th, and departure from Paris on 13th. From the tour's itinerary, here is a general description: "Terroirs" of river "Loire". We will focus on ideal sites for Chenin blanc, Sauvignon blanc and Cabernet Franc in a Northern French Valley. The "terroirs" of this valley are considered as the most spectacular for these three varieties, mostly because of their northern location, with a moderate river and oceanic influence. If the Cabernet franc grape can be used successfully at Bordeaux as a small % of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot blends, the "terroirs" of Loire allow the producers use 100% Cabernet Franc with great results. It's the same for the Sauvignon blanc grapes which are common in Bordeaux but splendid at Sancerre or Pouilly Fume. And the great Chenin blanc from Vouvray or Coulée de Sarran are almost considered the equivalent of the top Sauternes. The group will stop in a few selected places and meet with key producers, touring vineyard, tasting wines at the cellars and sharing experiences with French colleagues during lunches and tastings designed to encourage interaction with French producers each day. For more information, please contact Leslie Weston at law20@cornell.edu, or 607-255-0621.