

**Lakewood Vineyards****2005 Port
(Finger Lakes)**

Growers in the east have a love-hate relationship with the French-American hybrid grape Baco Noir. Prone to rot and splitting and a favorite of birds and deer, growers often harvest Baco Noir early and are lucky to get more than 21 degrees Brix of sugar at harvest. But when Baco ripens, it develops rich, distinctive character of raspberry and dried herbs. After 1998's long, warm Fall, Chris Stamp, an owner and winemaker at Lakewood, had lovely, fully ripe Baco Noir, picking it at 26 Brix and fermenting it dry. This highly extracted red was a bit awkward, and alcoholic, and after experimentation it became a Port. He made Port again in 1999, 2001 and 2005. "If you force yourself to make a wine like this every year, you are

begging for disaster," Stamp says.

He fortified with a combination of distillation from Lakewood fruit and high-proof spirits. Stamp likes the raspberry nose Baco has when fully ripe. Baco Noir, he says, is New York's Zinfandel. Mr. Stamp is in the minority. In the last decade, Baco has been removed replaced in many quarters by vinifera grapes or better performing hybrids varieties such as Chambourcin.

Although he vintage dates his Port, he does so for inventory rather than identification purposes. The wine is really a ruby Port. Every year, Mr. Stamp said his Port take one step closer to the fine ruby Oportos. Having tried the 2001 about two years back, I'm inclined to agree. The wine kicks off with overripe raspberry, dried cranberries with toffee aromas and shows bright, easy-to-like fruit flavors gliding across the weighty palate. The fruit and body of the wine easily holds up to the 18.5 percent alcohol. A slightly sweet finish, brush of tannins, and no residual alcohol burn makes this all Port and no pain.

Reviewed March 12, 2008 by [David Falchek](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Lakewood Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Port

Appellation: [Finger Lakes](#)

Grape: [Baco Noir](#)

Price: \$14.99

THE REVIEWER**David Falchek**

David Falchek writes a weekly wine column for several newspapers in Pennsylvania, including the *Scranton Times-Tribune*. He also contributes regularly to trade publications such as *Vineyard & Winery Management* and

Beverage Media. David has judged regional, national, and international wine competitions where he likes to think he lauds outstanding Seyval or Foch just as readily as Cabernet or Riesling.