

**Wölffer Estate Vineyard****2003 Estate Selection Chardonnay
(Hamptons Long Island)**

As anyone who drinks wine with any level of seriousness knows, Chardonnay is a wine with many guises. There are steely, super-fresh steel fermented renditions, barrel-fermented, big-and-buttery Chardonnays, and there are wines that can fall anywhere in between those two extremes.

On Long Island, where a long, slow growing season and typically cooler night breezes help white wine grapes retain their natural acidity, there are tasty examples of Chardonnay in all of its iterations. One of the most consistent producers is Wölffer Estate, one of three wineries on the even cooler South Fork. Roman Roth, winemaker since the winery's inception, crafts

three different Chardonnays that run the gamut from every day white all the way to his flagship Chardonnay, the Estate Selection.

I used to eschew barrel-fermented Chardonnay, but wines like Roth Wölffer Estate's 2003 Estate Selection Chardonnay are the reason I don't anymore. It's fermented 100 percent in French oak (20% new) and it is among the best barrel fermented Chardonnays produced locally. The nose is toasty, as you'd expect, but ripe peaches and apricots are joined by marshmallows toasted over a bonfire, providing depth and complexity on the nose. Medium-to-full bodied, the stone fruit flavors are rich and mouth-filling with more subtle toasty oak and vanilla play beneath. Perfectly balanced by acidity, there is an intriguing kiwi note on a very lengthy finish.

Roth is the maker of the East Coast's most expensive and luxurious Merlot, **Wölffer's Premier Cru Merlot** (\$125). With Chardonnay like this one, can a Premier Cru Chardonnay be far behind?

Reviewed August 23, 2007 by [Lenn Thompson](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Wölffer Estate Vineyard](#)

Vintage: 2003

Wine: Estate Selection Chardonnay

Appellation: [Hamptons Long Island](#)

Grape: Chardonnay

Price: \$29.00

THE REVIEWER**Lenn Thompson**

Lenn Thompson writes about New York wines for *Dan's Papers*, *Long Island Press*, *Long Island Wine Gazette*, *Edible East End* and *Hamptons.com*. Two words describe his taste in wine — *balance* and *nuance*.

Lenn prefers food-friendly, elegant wines to jammy, over-extracted fruit bombs and heavy-handed oak. When reviewing, Lenn tastes each wine three times — alone right after opening, with food, and again the next day — believing that 90-second reviews are unrealistic and not how the average person enjoys wine.