

**Messina Hof Wine Cellars****2006 Gewurztraminer
(Texas)**

Messina Hof is owned by one of the most colorful couples in the world of wine. When it comes to outlandish outfits, Paul Bonarrigo is in a class by himself. When folks refer to him as “the Italian peacock,” he smiles with delight. To me, he resembles a New Jersey guy who fell in love with the outfits worn by Indian Maharajas. His wife Merrill is more conservative, but you can always spot her wearing a trademark western hat. The couple spends so much time attending Texas wine events, it’s a wonder Paul has any time to maintain his Physical Therapy practice.

Of course, none of this would matter if they didn’t make good wine. Here are a few facts: Their wines outsell most California wines in the

megalopolis of Houston. His wines raised over \$150,000 for charities last year. The big news is the awards they’re getting. At the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, over 100 professional wine judges picked a Messina Hof wine as the tops in Texas – a late harvest Riesling called “Angel” (which sells for only \$14!). But here’s the real deal: Messina Hof has won that award four consecutive years. Winning once might be luck. Four in a row shows something important is happening in Bryan, Texas.

Paul makes 58 different wines, so there’s a whole world of wine just trying his offerings. He delights in getting wine writers and connoisseurs in his tasting room. Then, instead of pouring his most expensive wines, he uncorks the cheapest wines he makes. That’s where I discovered this Gewurztraminer. I openly admit I’m snobby about Alsatian varietals. I like to have them from Alsace. I know California and Washington and ten other good states are taking stabs at perfecting an American style for Alsatian grapes, but you can almost always get the real thing for the same price. Messina Hof’s wine costs \$9.99 and for that price, you get a good hit of the narcissus, honey, white pepper and lychees found in the French wine. Granted, the style is lighter, but that makes it an easier quaffing wine.

Reviewed March 23, 2007 by [Wes Marshall](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Messina Hof Wine Cellars](#)

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Gewurztraminer

Appellation: [Texas](#)

Grape: [Gewurztraminer](#)

Price: \$9.99

THE REVIEWER**Wes Marshall**

Wes Marshall is the wine writer for the *Austin Chronicle* where his column turned into the inspiration for a book, “The Wine Roads of Texas,” which in turn has now become a three-part PBS documentary. His never-ending search is for value wines – be they \$10 a

bottle or \$100 – which he defines as tasting better than most other wines at twice the price. As wines become more homogenized, he has been a keen advocate of appellation-specific flavors and aromas, and always marks up for luxurious mouthfeel.