



The Wines of Long Island

By FREDERICK THURBER | Published: AUGUST 17, 2014 | [Leave a comment](#)

Although I look to our local wineries for white wines, I have been curious about red wines from the Long Island wineries. Red wines can be grown locally, but many times it is a struggle to get the grapes to properly ripen. Long Island has a hotter climate and longer season than our area which should allow proper maturation of red wine grapes. The wineries of Long Island has been getting a lot of press lately so I have been very curious to try their wines.

Long Island wines can be difficult to find locally, but Lieb Cellars markets a brand called Bridge Lane that is available in Massachusetts. This summer I got two wines from Bridge Lane, a Chardonnay and a Red Blend in a 3-liter box. The rustic labels on the whites and the the box of generic-looking red had me worried, but my fears were unjustified.

I took the white, the Bridge Lane Chardonnay, to a BYOB gathering of some friends. I was not expecting much, but when I opened the bottle and tried it, I was pleasantly surprised. It was tart and fruity and delicious. I only got a couple of half glasses before the guests gobble up the rest, alas.

It was the red wine that really had me interested; is it possible to do a good red wine on the East Coast? The Red Blend contains Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, and even a touch of Malbec. Cab and Malbec are almost impossible to grow locally so I was curious to see how it did on Long Island. I brought the box to a going-away party last weekend and plunked it down on the wine table where it was to compete against some solid Portuguese reds. When I first produced the box wine, I got some gentle ribbing, but the murmurs turned to oohhs and aahhs when the guests tried the wine. The Bridge Lane Red Blend was fruity, bold, and oaky. This Big Wine was the most popular wine at the party, and the least expensive.

A 3-liter box of the Red Blend is the equivalent of four bottles of wine so its price of \$48 is outstanding. This is the ideal party or picnic wine. Its bold taste will stand up to barbequed meals, the price is low, and it has enough muscle to appeal even to the casual wine drinkers. There is a lot to like about boxed wines; the container is recyclable and since there is no air inside the inner container, the wine will last a lot longer than bottled wine. If you are having one last summer party and need a Big Red wine, consider the Bridge Lane Red Blend box (or even cask).