

Ep 97: New York State: The Finger Lakes Part 4 with Richard Rainey from Forge Cellars



Janina Doyle 00:00:07 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just can not get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello to you all and welcome back to another episode and the last episode in the Finger Lakes series. So I'm joined again by Richard Rainey of Forge Cellars. So obviously be prepared for some ridiculous conversation and laughing. We are gonna go in far more detail on the Seneca Lake. So this is the biggest and deepest lake in the Finger Lakes. We're gonna talk about them being featured in The Wine Spectator, the most terrible vintages for him. Naming some of his vintages. That's, that's what he does. And he'll give you a very good explanation as to why he does it. talking about petrol in Riesling. So petrol or kerosene, this is actually a chemical compound. Well, I'm gonna tell you about that later in the episode, and we're gonna see what Richard thinks about the descriptor kerosene or petrol. And make sure you stay to the end because Richard's gonna talk with us about what I think is an incredibly interesting food pairing with Riesling, one that is now top of my list to try. So I am sure you're gonna love this episode. We'll be tasting more dry Riesling, and I promise you, of course the conversation is anything but dry.

Janina Doyle 00:01:54 Okay. Now what I wanna talk about is your naked bottles. I actually, I should have done a, I should have done a bigger pause. Your naked...bottles. Oh, I'm so funny. I'm a clown. Right, I love this. So you literally, there's no foil at all on the top is there. You know, this is lighter weight bottle, actually. In fact, do you know what, I can read it? It tells everybody on the back of the bottle, lightweight bottle, fewer carbon emissions, no capsule, no plastic waste, box 99% recycled material plus composable.

Richard Rainey 00:02:26 Yeah. Yeah. So now, um, here's where the wheels fall off is, um, if we ship them to France, they require us to put a plastic capsule.

Janina Doyle 00:02:37 Oh, those, I can't say anything.

Richard Rainey 00:02:41 Oh, your neighbors, your neighbors.

Janina Doyle 00:02:45 And we love them

Richard Rainey 00:02:46 And we love them.

Janina Doyle 00:02:47 They, they have good croissants... and wine.

Richard Rainey 00:02:49 Very good. Um, so in the States, um, I haven't used a plastic capsule since, uh, ever 2011. Um, and I never much like them being in the restaurant business and being in, in the wine business myself. My wife owns a wine shop. So we're in this business up to our eyeballs. And we're opening bottles every night and tasting wines from all over the world. And, and the one thing we all agree upon is having to cut a capsule off and throw in the trash is just an absolute waste of time and energy.

Janina Doyle 00:00:07 And you know what I love about, first of all, when I look at your bottles, it doesn't look like anything's missing. And if anything, it's more modern and you can see the cork. So I can see that you've printed on the cork, you know, your logo, Forge Cellars and, you know, Barroul and Rainey, last names of you and Louis, it kind of, it's nicer. You see more of actually what you're getting. I, I think a cork itself is quite romantic. So the fact that you can see it, I like it.

Richard Rainey 00:03:51 I'm going, uh, re I'm gonna get a recording of that from you. So I can send it to Europe because we have this discussion with my French friends all the time. And I say, guys, like, it's a, it's a pretty easy thing not to do.

Janina Doyle 00:04:06 I don't think anyone would not buy a bot, but I'm not French. So, you know, I think, you know, each culture is so different, but for me...

Richard Rainey 00:04:13 I've only had one person call me one person called me and said, I was gonna buy this for a gift, but it doesn't look fancy enough. And I said, no problem. Put it in a bag and put a bow around it. And, uh, I'm not sure if she got the joke, but, uh, I was, but no, it's just a simple thing, you know, I, listen, it's not gonna change the world. We know that, but it's, it's a simple little thing we can do. And we try to do it in the US. Unfortunately, I can't do it in Europe, but maybe one day we'll get there. You know? I mean, it all starts, it starts somewhere and then other people see it and they go, wow, that doesn't look so scary. Maybe I could try that. And, and you know, maybe we can make a little difference. If we added up all the capsules, right. That we haven't used. We figured it somewhere about 20 miles of capsules that we didn't use.

Janina Doyle 00:05:02 20 miles. Oh my God. That's that's impressive. Well, and it, would it be more if the Europeans had got their act together? What can we do? What can we do? So tell me, tell me about you ending up in The Wine Spectator's top 100. How was that?

Richard Rainey 00:05:20 Oh yeah. Oh, it was good. I mean, it's always good. The press is nice. I, I like, uh, James Molesworth he's, uh, he's a very, I think he's a great writer. Um, but, uh, it was good for the region, you know, uh, the first time was in 2015 and then the second time was the 2018 vintage. And oddly enough, it was 31 both times, but listen, we're a small region, we're all connected. And so when one of us, uh, gets a bit of good press, it helps us all. We're not a, we're a fairly new region. We're fairly small. Uh, we don't have massive amounts of investment. So we all have to work together to, to promote the region and to tell the story. So for me, it just brought more attention to the region and, and obviously for Forge. But, um, you know, it doesn't hurt. The wines are interesting. Customers enjoy the wines. They may not know about the wines, and this is one way to give some customers of Wine Spectator, a chance to, to experience the wines. They see them and they want to go out and purchase them and say, oh, wow, I never, I never thought about dry Riesling from the Finger Lakes. What a, what another cool thing I can drink on occasion. It was great.

Janina Doyle 00:06:39 And wasn't 2018, which you said was the, the last feature. Wasn't that like a horrendous vintage for you?

Richard Rainey 00:06:45 Oh my God. I'm still, I mean, I'm actually still in therapy from 2018.

Janina Doyle 00:06:52 What happened?

Richard Rainey 00:06:53 It was just, uh, we had this like once in 300 year rainstorm that parked itself on the east side of Seneca Lake. And I think it was 10 or 12 inches, something ridiculous in one day. And so, um, it was really hard on the vines. The vines just got, poor things got beat up. And, um, so you had a couple of choices you could either pick very early and be very conservative or wai, and which we did. And, uh, we, we pushed the boundaries. Uh, I don't really want to do that again anytime soon. But you have an expression of Riesling that, that frankly is, is, you know, it's from another planet. It's, it's quite, uh, exotic and Asian five spice and gingerbread. And, uh, it was really wild. Um, so it's, it's got a lot of the, the kind of the aromas and the feeling you would associate with a dessert wine, but it's bone dry. So it's a really crazy intersection of aromas. And every time we open one, we giggle because this was, uh, this was, this was naughty, naughty wine.

Janina Doyle 00:08:04 Because you survived, you survived.

Richard Rainey 00:08:05 We survived. Yeah, absolutely.

Janina Doyle 00:08:09 So what we haven't touched on is Seneca Lake itself. So this is the biggest lake. This is where you are. So can you tell me a little bit more and everyone listening, why Seneca Lake is different from, well, I guess the other two Lakes, cause as you've already mentioned all the other little Lakes, you can't really grow grapes, so it's very difficult. So how does Seneca Lake differ from Keuka and um, well they, they sound so similar don't they from Keuka and Cayuga.

Richard Rainey 00:08:39 Yeah. So you have Cayuga and you have Keuka and then you have Seneca, which was all part of the, these are the names that were part of the, the Iroquois nation, the natives that were here. Um, so this, the, the Lake, Seneca Lake, let's call it, you know, thirty eight, forty miles depends. Who's measuring long and it is it's deep, you know, it can be, uh, nearly 620 feet deep in its, uh, deepest area and about a mile and a half wide. And this was, uh, created. So what you had was this thing called the great upheaval where it dumped all the water off of this area to the north, into the great Lakes, uh, which are very, very important for the Finger Lakes, without the great Lakes to the north, lake Ontario. They're the big, big buffer for the cold air coming from Canada without, without them, it doesn't work. And then we have Seneca Lake, which, uh, is the final piece of the puzzle that allows us to grow grapes here. Now um, Seneca Lake is, is very deep, long, a massive body of water. Um, and it gives us protection, um, uh, a nice micro climate within about one mile around the edge of the lake. Um, and here the glaciers also when they receded, uh, left a lot of stuff. So, you know, when the Canadians come and, and we have these rocks that are not from this area, I always tell the Canadians, if you want to take these back with you you can, because they're, they're more related to, to Canada. So, so we have that. So when the glacier receded, you have these deposits of gravel and sand and rock, but then in addition, you have the, uh, above the lake, um, have all the water and the material that tries to find its way down, down the slope to the water and the lake has been at different depths. So what we are finding are these kind of alluvial planes where, uh, I, you know, I have vineyards that are planted on very deep gravel that are a result of the lake being at a, at a greater depth and material, uh, hitting the water, slowing down

and creating alluvial planes. So there's a lot here and it's why we, uh, have this addiction with the single vineyard sites, because every time we turn around, we, we find another site with another expression and it's, it's just, it's amazing. And this is why I kind of forget sometimes about Riesling because we're in such the habit now of, of saying, oh my gosh, you know, look at Breakneck Creek this year. It's so salty and amazing. Oh gosh. How about Railroad? Once again, it's full of apricot and this is how we, we think about everything, cause there there's so much here within these eight miles to experience. So Seneca Lake is just, uh, it's really an interesting place to make wine and it's so it's right on the cutting edge of where we can make wine in the Northern hemisphere.

Janina Doyle 00:11:51 Okay. Do you think then that Seneca Lake, because it's the, the biggest and the depths of water has changed so much. It has actually the most variety of soils compared to say the other two Lakes?

Richard Rainey 00:12:05 Probably the most access because of the slope. Uh, in other areas you have, you know, cliffs. So you have these cliffs that, you know, don't enable you to have really access down to the Lakes. So maybe that would have a, a part, you know, something to do with it. But hey, listen, here's the other thing, uh, we're so young, right? This is a region that's just over slightly over a hundred years old, 120 years old for growing grapes. Um, as a Vinifera region, it's 70 years old. So there's still so much to know and to learn. So, uh, to say that I, I, I have my hands completely wrapped around. It is it's not true. We just haven't planted enough and we don't have enough, uh, data to understand what the soils and the impact of soils on other Lakes are gonna be in relation to the flavor of the wines.

Janina Doyle 00:13:04 Well, let's talk about these Lieu-dit. Now for anyone who doesn't know what a Lieu-dit is, it's basically a French term that refers to kind of a specific part of a vineyard, right. Based on its, based on its terroir, it's topography. So you, how many Lieu-dits have you got, did you say 13 or 13 wines that were released?

Richard Rainey 00:13:24 Yeah. In 2020 we made, uh, we, we made 13 different single vineyards and then Classique. Like, I, I need therapy. I need therapy. I really do.

Janina Doyle 00:13:35 Don't we all, well, okay. We, we haven't got time to talk about all of them, but what we could do is talk about the two that I happen to have in front of me. So let's go for the Breakneck Creek vineyard, which everybody, the bottle says, Alpine meadow, quince, and defined. So I'm rather excited about this and I can tell everybody already it's on gravelly silt, loam and shale. It's that shale everyone. If you're gonna remember one soil it's shale. On 784 feet elevation west facing and you've even put the harvest date October the 15th. Thank you for all that information. I actually really appreciate having all that. Super simple tasting notes rather than just, you know, a huge paragraph of absolute nonsense. And then I love the fact that you've actually given me some, some site specifics as well. So let's give, should we give this a go? Do you wanna tell me whilst I'm having a little sniff? A little swirl.

Richard Rainey 00:14:32 Well, I think, um, so about the tasting notes, you'll notice the last word defined what the hell does defined mean?

Janina Doyle 00:14:40 This wine? Sorry. Sorry. I carry on

Richard Rainey 00:14:46 No, it's, there, we have to have fun.

Janina Doyle 00:14:49 I've thrown you off now.

Richard Rainey 00:14:51 Oh no, no. I, throw me off? No, a little bit. Maybe. So, so when we do these notes, these notes, it was myself, Christina, who helps me run Forge and then Julia, who runs the cellar, Cellarmaster. And you know, we're tasting them, tasting and you know, we're all familiar with the normal tasting notes and we try to have fun sometimes. So defined. What does defined mean in terms of wine tasting? Um, sometimes it elicit some conversation and people scratch their heads, but this is for me, the great pleasure of wine, like to create conversation and say, does it feel defined to you? Not okay. Whatever. So Alpine meadow, quince, defined. I picked this, if I recall on the 15th of October.

Janina Doyle 00:15:36 You did, you did. It says it.

Richard Rainey 00:15:38 Okay, good, good. And, um, boy, I was pulling that date out of thin air. Um, but what, what is Breakneck Creek? Um, I think it's the wine that is typically the most saline.

Janina Doyle 00:15:51 Oh my God. You've already ruined it for me. I was gonna say it's like literally salt on peach. It's salted peach. I had salted, I had a very tiny little sprinkle of salt on grapefruit of the other one, but this one is actually really saline.

Richard Rainey 00:16:05 It's amazing. And this is, um, a very deep Creek. It's a ravine, that's probably 120 or 130 feet deep. And, uh, it's a massive, beautiful, uh, Creek that runs down next to this vineyard and hence Breakneck Creek. And, um, what I, I think I, the first vintage we made of this was in 2016 and you know, it was, it was, it was a, it was so great. We were in the, in the wine, in the cellar and we put the wine in our glass and it was so different than anything else. And it had such a distinct personality that this was one of the catalysts for us to really start to concentrate on all of these individual sites, because we just kept seeing massive differences over the years. And so now we get to share this like little chapter, this little individual story, um, of this site with, you know, our friends and it's just been, it's been great.

Janina Doyle 00:17:06 Do you know, it's lovely. It's like when you smell it, you can get taken to the seashore. So you've got this salinity, but it just lovely freshness and a, a very slight kind of woody perfume. I don't want anyone to think actually it smells like wood, because it doesn't, um, maybe that's where you are getting this Alpine meadow from, because it's still floral, but there's something a little bit more, um, spicy and woody and certainly on the pallet, it's super salty and then beautiful peach, like really, really vibrant. Um, some might say defined.

Richard Rainey 00:17:39 Defined! What a tie in. What a pro you are. Uh, yeah. It, it, it, you, you feel, you do always taste a bit of the, the earth, you know, I think always, um, there's the sense of, um, the place, the wet stone, the rock, the soil. And I, I love this about Rieslings ability to capture that.

Janina Doyle 00:18:02 Mm. I have to say so far compared to the, the first wine we tried in this one, there's no petrol or kerosene, which is often very classic of Riesling. I haven't picked that up.

Richard Rainey 00:18:12 No. It's terrible. I hate that description.

Janina Doyle 00:18:16 Well, but it, it, but it is definitely something that is found in Riesling sometimes.

Richard Rainey 00:18:25 Agreed. And it's, it's a thing that, uh, a lot of people like to use when they talk about Riesling, because I think it, it, it says, Hey, look, I, I, I know something about Riesling, so I'm gonna use this descriptor. And, and, and you go great, because we need more people talking about Riesling and appreciating Riesling, because we all love it. But then a lot of people don't drink it because they've had, uh, inconsistent experiences with the understanding of what was dry and what was not. And it's, it's a bit of an issue in the world of Riesling. You have this amazing, uh, category of just brilliant varietal, but there's the, the consumer doesn't know if it's gonna be dry or sweet most of the time. And that's, that's, what's very difficult in the US. Uh, and so that's, that's, we can have another podcast just about that. Um, but for me, uh, what we find in these wines often is honeycomb, you know, the, the, the, the...

Janina Doyle 00:19:24 Yes, the sweet sort of, yeah, the hard, that you get stuck in your teeth. But yummy.

Richard Rainey 00:19:28 That gets stuck in your teeth. Right. And so we find more, uh, you know, beeswax and honeycomb than we would say, than we want petrol or, or these aromas. And I think sometimes the people will kind of confuse them, you know, which is understandable. Um, but yeah, hopefully you're finding those aromas in addition to all that other nice stuff.

Janina Doyle 00:19:51 Funny enough, you said honeycomb, I get honey suckle. So that was gonna be...honey suckle. But for anybody who wants to know, I guess then the honeycomb, the honey suckle, or the petrol that we're not allowed to use. Cause Richard doesn't like the term, um, comes from, I know it comes from a, it's a compound in the skins called TDN. I have no idea the actual, I can't ever remember the long format cause it's a whole load of numbers and scientific words, but for anybody who's interested in obviously quite clearly that specific, yeah, just, it's called TDN. Go with that. Give it a little Google and you can see whatever the, uh, long, long the, the full name is for it, but that is actually where you get that characteristic, but okay. This is absolutely stunning now. Now unfortunately I don't believe it's currently in the UK. Booooo. But for everyone listening in the US, I think you, you are selling, this is this \$25, \$26?

Richard Rainey 00:20:45 Uh, in the US. Yeah. Give or take \$26.

Janina Doyle 00:20:48 So not much. I mean it, this isn't, I don't think this is necessarily hugely better than the Classique, but I think it is more interesting.

Richard Rainey 00:21:00 Yes. And, and definitely, definitely. And that's the idea. The Classique is the value. The Classique is, and that's on that's, that's intentional, it's intentional so that, uh, restaurants can pour it by the glass and we can expose people to these wines. Um, and so it's, it's one of the great values and um, the, the, really the wines are, should be more in this price category as the single vineyards, as the production costs are very, very high. Um, but don't tell anybody I told you that Classique is always the best value.

Janina Doyle 00:21:38 Mm. Nobody, nobody pay attention. Well, actually in UK we can only have this Classique. So I guess maybe lucky us. But actually quick question about America and Canada. Yeah. In terms of like volume production of Riesling, because I know Riesling is the main or key variety actually in Finger Lakes. Where does it come in terms of growing in America or Canada? Do you know what, what place it is?

Richard Rainey 00:22:03 Uh, if I don't know, I can make something up. That sounds fairly legit.

Janina Doyle 00:22:07 Let's go with that.

Richard Rainey 00:22:09 No, no, no. So let's, let's put it in perspective. Um, I love Ontario, which is, uh, the Niagara area. Niagara Escarpment. Uh, the Canadians by law have to be lovely people. They're so nice and so kind. So, by law, yeah. It's not often talked about, but it's the truth. So we go, we often go there. My wife and I will go there. If we need a quick getaway, we'll either go to Montreal or we'll go up to Niagara. And Niagara for me is about a three hour drive. If the border is, is, is, well, number one, if the border's open, but number two, if the border's not backed up, so a, a, a pretty quick drive. A lovely area, great architecture, great food scene and really good wineries. Um, up there. I think the last count I heard for Riesling was they made around 400,000 cases. And in the Finger Lakes, we're just shy of 250, maybe 240,000. So they make a bit more up there than we do in fact. Uh, but if, yeah, if your listeners, I mean, it's a good region to visit. I, I like it up there a whole bunch. It's, uh, it's very pretty and a good food farm to table scene, uh, some really nice wines and, and some nice countryside as well.

Janina Doyle 00:23:29 We talked about actually Ontario, just a few episodes ago, so you don't need to big up them. Everyone knows about that. We need to bring everyone back to Finger Lakes.

Richard Rainey 00:23:36 So, so like I was saying, I wouldn't go to Ontario. I wouldn't go to Ontario. If you paid me.

Janina Doyle 00:23:43 Oh, gross.

Richard Rainey 00:23:45 A bunch of mean people up there too. They're terrible. All they care about is hockey.

Janina Doyle 00:23:50 I hear by law, they have to be mean, that's what I heard anyway, but who knows? Who knows? Okay. So they probably are number one and I guess then in America you're so I would imagine you are number one, right? Because you can obviously get amazing Riesling in Washington as well, but I'm sure that's gotta be smaller than what you're doing.

Richard Rainey 00:24:08 Uh, I think Washington is probably bigger because they have bigger plantings and, and yeah, there's a couple big, big plantings out there that are, it's a completely different idea, you know, as far as the wines go. That's for sure. Um, and so, uh, yeah, I, I would think there's some big, big planting still on the west coast, you know?

Janina Doyle 00:24:31 Okay. Well, anyway, just let's bring it back to Finger Lakes. So let's go to the other one I have. The other single vineyard, which is the Leidenfrost vineyard.

Richard Rainey 00:24:44 Ooh.

Janina Doyle 00:24:45 Yeah. Okay. Again, everyone...

Richard Rainey 00:24:44 Saddle up. Saddle up.

Janina Doyle 00:24:45 Yeah, okay. Now these are all 2020, which I hear you've named. Hang on. What did I write down? Vintage of the sun.

Richard Rainey 00:24:57 Yeah. It's, it sounds funny when you say it. I don't know. And when I say it, it sounds, it sounds really serious, but when you say it, I go, oh my God, who in the hell came up with that?

Janina Doyle 00:25:08 You say it, you say it, you say it then. What is 2020?

Richard Rainey 00:25:13 It's it's it's vintage of the sun.

Janina Doyle 00:25:15 Oh my God. That's so serious. Absolutely. No, I believe you

Richard Rainey 00:25:19 I've got my serious face on.

Janina Doyle 00:25:19 Oh I believe you.

Richard Rainey 00:25:22 Well, I think, you know, you want to know where it came from. Why vintage of the sun? Um, what we do or what I do now, last few years, for me, the vintage always signifies something. And in 2018 it was, you know, peach, fresh, juicy, right before it falls off the tree peaches because of the vintage. '19 was all about these kind of mineral and wild flowers. It was a vintage, very much of the vineyard, of the earth. And then '20, um, you know, '20 came and, and covid was raging. And, and my team couldn't come, you know, Louis couldn't come from France. And, uh, we, it was just myself and Julia here. And I said, mother nature, if you could just do me this favour and give me a really...

Janina Doyle 00:26:11 Do me a solid.

Richard Rainey 00:26:13 Do me a solid. Give me a good vintage that is dry, relatively disease free and make my picking life easy. I would really appreciate it. And she did.

Janina Doyle 00:25:15 So you were like, I don't mind a bit of disease. You weren't even saying like, I want disease free. You were just like a little less disease, which actually is really fair. That's a really fair ask.

Richard Rainey 00:26:35 Right. I'm reasonable. I'm reasonable. And she, she delivered, she gave us a great vintage and it was a vintage of the sun. But you know, it was really great because everybody had to be outside around here. So you had all these wineries that, you know, didn't have outdoor seating, so they cobbled together, whatever they could to put people outside. So for a host of reasons, I mean, not only viticulture, but it allowed a lot of people to survive. I'm quite convinced because people could sit outside and still drink wine and they had their social distancing and so forth. So it helped us on many, many fronts. But, um, so it's, it's a vintage that you really do feel the sun. Now, over time, I think this initial, I call it kind of baby fat. The, the, the influence of the vintage will fall away. And then you will really feel the mineral and the salinity over time. This has been my experience. So, uh, vintage of the sun.

Janina Doyle 00:25:15 Okay. Right. Well, I love that. I really do. That was a really good story actually. Now I'm excited because the description on the back everybody is lemon verbena. Actually, that sounded terrible. I didn't, hang on. I was try again, lemon. I dunno. What am I doing? I'm trying to be too posh now. This is ridiculous. Lemon verbena, lavender, intense. Okay. I love it. And this is on Lordstown chanery silt loam over shale. I have never heard of Lordstown chanery silt loam. What the hell is Lordstown chanery silt loam. Do you even know?

Richard Rainey 00:28:11 Its uh, it sounds very, it sounds very English. Doesn't it?

Janina Doyle 00:28:16 It does a little bit. Something from Bridgeton.

Richard Rainey 00:28:19 Yeah. It sounds as if it should be like a custom shirt company on like Savile Row or something. Lordstown, I'm going to get my button down from Lordstown chanery. It's uh, it's really almost inconsequential because there's very little of it. It's mostly shale. It's mostly shale. Uh, I mean there's probably six or eight teaspoons of this, uh, chanery silt loam on this slope. I mean it is so shaley there. It's a great, it's a magnificent site. Um, my buddy John Liedenfrost, who is just, he's a true cartoon character. He's amazing. He has hands that are like baseball mitts. I think he's about, he's about 80 right now. And he works still every single day of the year. He's a brilliant, brilliant person and I love him. And uh, this site is magical. It's it's steep. It's very difficult to farm and it makes wines, uh, if we had to give it a grand cru, a premier cru, a village level status, this probably is a grand cru. It's a wine that's made for aging that will develop over time. That will give lots of, uh, lots of pleasure. But here's the thing I want you to pay attention to, is the midpalate and the length. Right now, the wine's probably a little on top of itself. It might, aromatically it's it's it's great. But when you put it in your mouth and you have this mid palate and this length, that to me is like, whoa. Um, a lot of people drink Riesling with one pinky in the air. And I say, when you drink Leidenfrost you have to put the pinky down, put the pinky down.

Janina Doyle 00:29:57 Because this is serious.

Richard Rainey 00:29:58 Because it's it's, it's legit. It's really legit.

Janina Doyle 00:30:02 Oh, so you said about midpalate, like a really lovely waxiness there's a, it's all of the wines are textural as we've already established, but this one seems to be the most mouth coating with this very definable slate minerality. Now, interesting obviously you said this is really, really shale like in the soils that maybe is why I'm picking up. And I get a lot of actually melon and Kiwi notes. So this really bright, fresher fruits, rather than there's still, you know, some blossom in there, florals there's this peach and apricot, which I think actually is, has definitely been in both of these two single vineyard wines, but I'm getting that kind of fresher style. Maybe even like a little bit of lemon meringue in there. Um, and your, so I get the, this lovely lift of violet. So in terms of flowers, I get real violet. And then you say lavender on your tasting notes. And I think it's this herbal floral spicy nature that I get on the finish, which effectively is, it's lavender. You're you are spot on there. Um, it is really beautiful. Um, I like the intensity.

Richard Rainey 00:31:12 Now, are you available to come over to help us with the tasting notes in the '21s? Because you're, you're good. You're really good. Yeah. We're gonna, we need, we need some, uh, we need some fresh eyes always, so we appreciate it.

Janina Doyle 00:31:26 Well whether I can come over or not, you can send me a pallet. You know its...

Richard Rainey 00:31:33 Happily, happily, that's great.

Janina Doyle 00:31:35 Oh no. They're delicious. Now I want to talk about some food pairings with Riesling. Right now, obviously you've got you know, shellfish. You could do them with prawns. They're great with, um, pork.

Richard Rainey 00:31:46 Don't you, don't you say, don't you say spicy Asian?

Janina Doyle 00:31:50 No, because spicy, I, because I would've put that if it's an off dry Riesling, because we want a sweeter Riesling to go with the Asian food. So no, that is off the table. So more pork

dishes maybe with some lovely apple puree or anyway. Um, and as I said, you know, crab, prawns, these kind of things. However you like to pair your Riesling with tinned fish, which I think is curious and super, super interesting. Can you talk us through these bone dry Riesling with tinned fish please?

Richard Rainey 00:32:25 Sure. So, um, at the winery, uh, you know, we created this little thing called The Salon and The Salon is some, it's where the grownups come to hang out, you know, they sit and they...

Janina Doyle 00:32:38 Oh, so I can't go.

Richard Rainey 00:32:42 We have a very, it's a very open definition of grown up by the way. Um, uh, you are in Hector and Hector the rules are very loose. And, and here we've set up some nice chairs, uh, very comfortable and you're in the winery or you're out on the press deck where we receive the grape. So you're really in the heart of the beast. And I, for, for myself, I'm not very interested. Um, and I don't enjoy drinking wine on its own unless it's champagne, but just to have a glass of white wine, most of the time, ah, I'll have a cocktail or a beer. So I've always liked to have a snack. So when, uh, we had, we had, uh, covid, a lot of our customers, the Forge customers would say, Rick, we love hanging out at Forge. We're up on the hill. Uh, we don't even have a sign in front of the winery. It's, we're kind of off...

Janina Doyle 00:33:33 Oh how exclusive.

Richard Rainey 00:33:34 Oh, I'm not a very good capitalist. I'm not very smart in that respect. So it's a big black building up on top of this hill. It's quiet. It's, you have a great view of the lake. It's really peaceful. So we put some nice chairs and I said, boy, you know, we have to have snacks. So cheese is easy cause we have some really nice aged goat cheese and we put a bit of honey.

Janina Doyle 00:33:57 Oh goats cheese and Riesling. Yes, yes.

Richard Rainey 00:33:59 Yes. Goat cheese, uh, aged three months with a bit of honey and sea salt. When you put the honey, the salt and the cheese together it's magical. That was easy. Then I said, well, we need a bit of ham. So we have three year old Pata Negra from Spain. So yummy ham. And then I thought, well, the, the, the, the influence of the sea here is, is still here even though we're nowhere near the water. And I've always enjoyed Conserva and growing up in Florida, my grandfather and I, uh, he worked in construction and often for lunch, we would have smoked oysters with salting crackers and a Coors beer, you know? And I, and, and I thought, my gosh, wouldn't it be fun to have this Conserva because there's so much amazing Conserva available nowadays. Um, and have it with these, with these crisp dry salty wines. And so we started playing with tasting a bunch of different Conserva from all over the world and the fattiness of the oil, the fattiness of sardines or anchovies or, or shellfish, uh, work so incredibly well with this salty, fresh, dry white wine.

Janina Doyle 00:35:17 Do you know, I've never thought about it before because I, I just don't, I've never, I don't have tinned fish. It's just not something I've ever done. And I, and I agree with you that there are some high, high quality tinned fish out there. Um, and it's actually inspired me that with my other set of wines, I'm gonna have to go and get some, some high end tinned fish and give this a go so I can feel like I'm there.

Richard Rainey 00:35:39 Oh, it's it's really. Um, and, and now, you know, you have so many Conserva, uh, that are being made that are being made in Michelin star restaurants that are chefs that,

that have, you know, gotten, because of covid maybe, uh, jumped outta the restaurant business and started doing these handcrafted conservas. I mean, we have stuff from Washington, from Canada, from France, from Spain, from Portugal, uh, Denmark. I mean, there's, it's it's and what's great about it is it's it's the fish at its peak, you know, so it's when the fish is abundant are when they are harvested and canned. So you're getting the freshest interpretation unless you went right to the market and you cooked it that day. So it's, it's a hell of an interesting thing. And you can crack open a very good can with some crackers and a good glass of dry wine. And, and it's a meal it's lovely.

Janina Doyle 00:36:34 Well, I would say thank you for bringing that to me because it's just not something that has ever been, uh, on my radar. So thanks for that. Appreciate that.

Richard Rainey 00:36:44 Well I'll give you a list of recommendations.

Janina Doyle 00:36:46 Oh, perfect. Please do now, just to finish off, obviously people can come and visit you, but they might not be able to find you, as there is no sign?

Richard Rainey 00:36:56 No it's GPS, GPS, come on.

Janina Doyle 00:36:59 Okay. So people need to go to the website, get your, I was gonna say post code, but you obviously call it probably something else in America. Your, what do you?

Richard Rainey 00:37:08 Zip code.

Janina Doyle 00:37:08 Zip code. That's it. That's it take your zip code? Um, and I dunno why I said it with that voice, cause that wasn't even American.

Richard Rainey 00:37:15 I think you were, I think you were, I think you were trying to mimic me right then. I think that was your...

Janina Doyle 00:37:20 Wait, hang on. Your zip zip code. No, I can't do an American, zip, zip code. Anyway, uh, moving on from that. So they put the zip code in, they will come to you. There's obviously The Salon where they can drink some wine and eat some sardines, maybe, uh, then you do winery tours?

Richard Rainey 00:37:39 Uh, yeah, sure. Uh, we do a sit down. Yeah, no, we do a, uh, a sit down tasting three times a day in another lovely building called The Summer House that, uh, is, is a super high level, really fun, informative, uh, tasting of five or six wines, uh, takes about an hour. And, uh, it's a great view and you'll learn a lot and you'll taste a bunch of wines and it's, it's, it's really, it's quite nice. Uh, we call that the classroom and then they come to recess. Recess is The Salon. So, uh, it's a, it's a 1, 2, 1, 2, you come and you get some learning and then you come down and you have some fun all in one fell swoop.

Janina Doyle 00:38:20 Well, thank you very much, Richard, because I feel like I've had some learning and now I'm gonna take these wines into my salon. And have some fun. Well, you know, you know, it would be a waste, wouldn't it? So, um, you've been brilliant. You've been absolutely informative. Everybody go to the Finger Lakes and if you can't go to the Finger Lakes, buy some Finger Lakes, and specifically get some Forge Cellars.

Richard Rainey 00:38:42 Hey, I'm coming your way. Uh, hopefully. Yeah. So, uh, when I come your way, I'll make sure to let you know, and maybe we can please, we can in person taste some of these wines together and have, have a laugh or two.

Janina Doyle 00:38:56 Absolutely. That sounds like a plan. Well, let's not make other people jealous. Let's stop recording now so we can plan it without people listening. They'll be following us. You know, we won't tell them where we're gonna be. Right. Thank you. I'll speak to you soon, take care.

Richard Rainey 00:39:08 Lovely, take care.

Janina Doyle 00:39:13 So that is it with Richard Rainey. But I wanted to clear up something where we didn't fully clarify statistics on Riesling grown in America. And of course I quite clearly embarrassed myself by even assuming that Finger Lakes would do more than Washington. If I was actually using my brain, I would realize how large a region Washington State is over on the west coast. So just to give you guys some statistics. In Washington State, first of all, it's the second largest wine producing state in the US. So yeah, should have figured that one. Over 60,000 acres of vines are planted there. And 5,307 of those acres are Riesling. Now just to compare acreage, New York state that's the whole of New York state only has 35,000 acres and Finger Lakes specifically is 9,393 acres. So when we are looking at that one region, Finger Lakes, I was shocked to realize it's just a sweet 849 acres planted to Riesling. Well, now when you go and get yourself a bottle of Riesling from the Finger Lakes, you know how special it really is. Now keeping on the food theme as Richard has really inspired me with that Conserva and Riesling pairing, I have found a quote from Clifton Fadiman. So he is an American author radio personality, television star. And he said:

“If food is the body of good living, wine is the soul.”

Yes, it is. Thank you everybody for listening as always. Do make sure you have shared the podcast with your wine loving friends. Have you subscribed? Have you liked it? If you can and if you're listening on apple podcasts, as I always say, I'm sorry, repetition, repetition, repetition. It really helps the podcast become more discoverable. So do leave me a little review and maybe some five stars. Thanks. Uh, I will see you again next week. I will be talking about viticulture. Have you ever thought about all of the different elements you need to think about if you are gonna plant a vine and all the different aspects that could affect that vine's growth? Well, I'm gonna go through it all next week. So until then, cheers to you.