

# BLOOMER CREEK VINEYARD



FLASHBACK



Archival photo (?!) of Bloomer Creek's "Pleasure Wheel" erected in celebration of our new spring releases...

...not really...

But what **IS** truly happening on Bloomer Creek's "Pleasure Wheel" this spring includes an exciting evening at the James Beard House in NYC where Bloomer Creek has been invited to host a "Winemaker's Dinner" on Friday, May 6, 2016. The five course menu will be prepared by four different chefs - Dano Hutnik (chef/owner) Dano's Heuriger on Seneca Lake, NY; Justin Paterson (chef/owner) and Matt Kelly (chef) The Hazelnut Kitchen in Trumansburg, NY; and Shaina Loew (chef) Prune, NYC. Our featured wines include Sekt - a non-vintage sparkling Riesling that will be served with passed appetizers. The first course features a wine from our library – *Tanzen Dame Riesling/2010 Vintners Select*, Morehouse Road Vineyard 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest. Course 2 showcases a 2013 reserve wine – *Tanzen Dame Dry Riesling/2013 Auten Vineyard (Clone 10) 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest*. Two of Bloomer Creek's library favorites - 2010 Cabernet Franc and 2007 White Horse accompany courses 3 and 4. The dessert course will feature our **2012 Tanzen Dame Gewurztraminer, Block 97, 2<sup>nd</sup> Harvest** - an exclusive bottling of two extraordinary barrels of late harvested Gewurztraminer. This wine is like ambrosia!

A link to the James Beard House website for tickets and further information is [here](#).

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## Bloomer Creek Vineyard in Wine and Spirits April 2016 issue!



# Speaking Francly

The Cabernet Franc Learning Curve in the Finger Lakes by Patrick J. Comiskey

One bright summer morning between rainstorms, Bloomer Creek proprietors Kim Engle and Debra Birmingham walked me through their new Barrow Vineyard, outside of Hector, New York. Vines are in their third leaf on this gentle west-facing slope overlooking Seneca Lake, and they've started with four acres of riesling. Since we think of the Finger Lakes as Riesling Country—its 850 acres dwarf all other vinifera plantings in the region—that is hardly a surprise.

But Birmingham and Engle believe that Barrow may be an even more propitious site for cabernet franc, a variety they find to be the most compelling red in the Finger Lakes. Depending on the vintage, they make a number of cabernet franc-based bottlings, most notably White Horse, a red blend named with a wink in the direction of St. Emilion. It's odd to think of St. Emilion from this vantage point in central New York State. In the past, growers' unfamiliarity with the variety's peccadilloes made for an uneven reputation for the region's cabernet franc wines, which were marked by a pronounced herbaceousness, a hallmark of the variety but an off-putting, overwhelming feature in lesser wines.

Experience, critical adjustments in the vineyard, and quite possibly an assist from global climate change have modified franc's more troublesome character flaws in the Finger Lakes. The best wines feel varietally genuine without being too ripe, characterized by supple and an understated generosity of red-fruited flavor, all with a mild herbal seduction. Moreover, for winemakers here, it's become a little easier being green. In overgrow-

ing members, consumers are warning to an edge, more than a mile of wine, a mile that's found here in Manhattan State, and in wine from Illinois to Fort Greene, not least because it resembles the verdant reds of the central Loire Valley.

All of this is a relief to Engle, who's worked with cabernet franc for nearly 30 years, and who's accented to what this prickly variety demands in the cool, wet, occasionally inhospitable Finger Lakes. "We probably get more heat than the Loire," he says. "The big difference is that it's much drier there and dry weather hastens ripening. Here we have to pull leaves, get sun on the fruit, create a careful balance between crop size and vine size."

Getting ripeness in the Finger Lakes takes more than getting yields low. Each vintage amounts to a pitched battle to knock back the vine's obstinate vigor in these fertile, gravelly soils, and to clear a path to ripeness. "Everything that can be done, you do," says Engle, "even when it sounds outlandish. You have no options."

Cabernet franc acreage in the Finger Lakes now stands at 230 acres, more than any other red

Bloomer Creek's Debra Birmingham and Kim Engle had a secret hand to be the most compelling variety in the Finger Lakes.

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Patrick J. Comiskey's article features our new **Barrow Vineyard** overlooking Seneca Lake and focuses on the potential for Cabernet Franc in the Finger Lakes.

"And then there's Bloomer Creek's White Horse, a blend of Cabernet Franc and Merlot – the Merlot, says Birmingham, serving to 'tame' the wildness of the franc. There is nothing particularly wild about White Horse. Instead, it's elegant and firm, with a cool-weather clarity that seems both delicate and precise..."

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## *Spring*

March 14, 2016

Barrow Vineyard field notes:



Now, as we walk to the vineyard, we can hear Peepers, those tiny frogs whose chorus rises from the hidden pond at the top of the hill. Along the hedgerow next to the drainage ditch, a Mockingbird sings us to all afternoon while we work. It sits on a small cherry tree whose blossoms are only just beginning to swell. Yesterday, at the end of the day, the dogs stirred up a migrating shorebird by the ditch. It was small, with a long thin beak like a Sandpiper, but it was too dark to know for sure. The pruning is finished on “Barrow Vineyard.” Now it has to be tied.

In a month we will plant 4 more acres of grapes – Cabernet Franc; Merlot; Riesling; and a small amount of Chenin in honor of our friends from the Loire.

In our Auten/Morehouse Road Vineyards, the Bluebirds are back. On the south end of Auten Vineyard, Kim and Katy have replaced rotten end posts – all except for one, the larch post where Bluebirds nested...



...maybe they will come back this year – they do that sometimes.

(2 years ago, there was an Osprey nest on top of a utility pole at the foot of our hill. Three young Ospreys successfully fledged. That winter a utility crew removed the nest and installed a platform on top of the pole away from the wires. The platform even had a long board jutting from the side for a perch. Unfortunately, the new platform stayed empty all last year – but this spring a collection of sticks is beginning to cover the base of the platform – the Ospreys are back!)

Christmas Eve 2015 a stray puppy showed up on our doorstep unannounced and now we have Pete...



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## Bloomer Creek at The Big Glou!

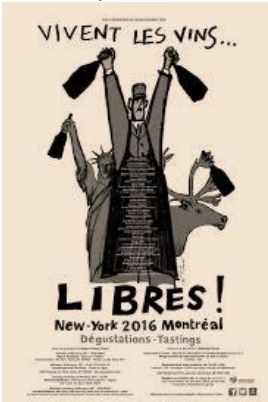
February 27, 2016 at the Wythe Hotel, Williamsburg, NYC



## Vivent Les Vins... Libres!

February 28, 2016 at Racines, NYC

February 29, 2016 at Ten Bells, NYC



At the end of February, Bloomer Creek was invited to participate in two different NYC natural wine events – “The Big Glou” and “Vivient Les Vins.. Libre!” European producers were featured, along with a few American wineries, including Bloomer Creek!

“The Big Glou” – a French term for the sound of wine as it is being poured *liberally* into a glass, took place at the Wythe Hotel in Brooklyn. On Saturday, as part of the 90 natural wine producers presenting wine to a sold out crowd, Kim, Debra and Katy shared four newly released Bloomer Creek Wines.



Sunday and Monday, Bloomer Creek became part of “*Vivent les Vins... Libre!*” – a more intimate group of 20 natural wine producers from France. Originally, seven friends made up the core of this group. Their ringleader, Gilles Benard owns the Parisian bistro “Quedubon” – the venue for their natural wine tastings. Their goal is to mentor younger producers as well as offer a wonderful setting for all *Vins Libre* members to showcase their wines. This past year they decided to cross the ocean in search of a new venue – NYC and Montreal.

So much wonderful wine and so much fun... but now back to the vines...



(Before ***Vivent Les Vins... Libre!***, Bloomer Creek took inspiration from the natural wines of France. After ***Vivent Les Vins... Libre!***, this inspiration has only grown stronger!)

## RARITIES, ODDITIES and CURIOSITIES from the past year:

Kim discovered that our new dog – Pete - looks just like...



Selections from Kim's "Fall Collection"...



Debra dreams of beaches in St. Tropez...





VIVE LA FRANCE!