



LOOK SHARP//LIVE SMART

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Drink > I Can't Believe It's Not California!

Great wine made on the East Coast? *In New York?* You might as well tout the artisanal cheeses of Oklahoma, right? Wrong. The whites of Channing Daughters will make a believer out of anyone



It's all in the blend: **Vino Bianco's grape breakdown**

sauvignon blanc 22%

chardonnay (26% dijon + 18% musque) 44%

pinot grigio 16%

tocal friulano 18%

→ "I don't think anybody looks to Long Island for white wine," Paul Grieco, wine guru of N.Y.C.'s Insieme and Hearth restaurants, says. "But that's changing. There are few white-wine makers better than Chris Tracy at Channing Daughters."

And there are few American whites as accomplished as Channing Daughters' Vino Bianco, a blend of four varietals that Tracy's been producing since taking over as winemaker at the Bridgehampton vineyards in 2002. It's one of those wines that pull off the minor miracle of flattering almost anything you care to eat with it: It's a natural for shellfish, yet that same rapier-like acidity can cut through the fat of gnocchi with bacon. While Tracy credits the large part of his success to the terroir, the rest of it is owed to blending, a concept that's all but anathema to American winemakers. But where varietal wines, even very good ones, are like a solo singer,

Tracy's are the whole band—drums, bass, guitar, and vocals.

And slowly, winos not lucky enough to live near the Hamptons are picking up the tune, among them Renée-Nicole Kubin, a sommelier at Gary Danko in San Francisco. "Two years ago, Gary asked me why there weren't any New York wines on the list," she says. "So I got some, and when I tasted most of them, I thought, *This is why*. But then I tried Channing Daughters, and their quality was superior. They could have been from anywhere in the world."

"Long Island is not an easy place to make wine," says Tracy, "but neither is Champagne, Burgundy, or even Bordeaux. We firmly believe that Long Island is a world-class growing region." And even if few have coaxed such greatness out of Long Island's soil, after tasting the sublime fruits of Tracy's labors, you won't feel like arguing the point. —BEN PHELAN

