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LONG ISLAND VINES

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Excitement in a Bottle

By HOWARD G. GOLDBERG

Channing Daughters aptly names one of its white blends Envelope. The Bridgehampton winery's Web site explains, "We will continue to push the envelope of what is possible in our vineyards, our cellar and our region."

Its grape-growing, grape-buying and experimental cellar work has made Channing Daughters the East End's most cutting-edge estate. Its winemaker, James Christopher Tracy, who is also a partner, brings his sensibility as a trained chef to blends that are exciting when they succeed and interesting even when they do not.

Although I last wrote about the winery in December, I could not ignore the latest releases.

The appetite-whetting 2007 Mudd Vineyard sauvignon blanc (\$20), named for the fruit's source in Southold, is lightly herbaceous and delivers a kiwi-like bite. It consists of 97 percent sauvignon grapes and 3 percent chardonnay musqué grapes. (Musqué is a strain that yields a seductive muscatlike scent.)

Though disjointed, the brass-colored 2006 Envelope (\$40) is provocative. Its 30 percent gewürztraminer overwhelms its 70 percent chardonnay. The wine is splashy, spicy and raisiny.

Channing Daughters takes inspiration from the zippy, fruity whites of Friuli-Venezia Giulia, a region in northeastern Italy. Mr. Tracy's Meditazione (\$40) mimics vino da meditazione — meditation wine, designed to woo the intellect as well as the digestive system. The 2006 edition, a liquid fruit salad, is a masterly feat of blending. Consider these percentages: tocai Friulano (36), pinot grigio (25), sauvignon blanc (17), chardonnay (10.3), muscat ottonel (9.5), viognier (1.2) and malvasia bianca (1).

Mr. Tracy has written that Meditazione smells and tastes of dried apricots, citrus oil, crushed rocks, white flowers, light caramel and brown spice, with notes of chamomile tea and cider. That might be an understatement.

Channing's wines sell out fast; walk-in customers are limited to two bottles of Meditazione.