

**Black Star Farms****2005 Merlot Cabernet Franc, Leorie Vineyard  
(Old Mission Peninsula)**

In this wine, one gets a blend of the two most promising red grapes growing in Michigan. It's 75 percent Merlot, with the balance Cabernet Franc from one of the most heralded of Michigan's growers, Bill Janis, owner of Leorie Vineyard. A former gravel pit, now a 15-year-old five-acre vineyard, is proving to be a stellar home for Riesling, Merlot and Cabernet Franc.

Through extended barrel (new and second fill French, Eastern European and American oak) and bottle maturation, the marriage of these two grape varieties offers a signature wine with true site personality. A dark red fruit mélange showcasing black cherries, blackberries and currants in both aroma and flavor emanates from the Merlot portion. Chinon-like Cabernet Franc characteristics shine through with notes of wild mushrooms and dried leaves, enhanced by spice notes from the selected cooperage.

Although this blend of Merlot and Cabernet Franc pairs nicely with grilled rack of lamb or venison steak, we find its depth is highlighted better with long-cooked preparations, such as braised lamb shanks with a side of garlic smashed potatoes – comfort food.

Reviewed February 27, 2008 by [Eleanor & Ray Heald](#).

---

**THE WINE**

**Winery:** Black Star Farms

**Vineyard:** Leorie Vineyard

**Vintage:** 2005

**Wine:** Merlot Cabernet Franc

**Appellation:** Old Mission Peninsula

**Grapes:** Merlot, Cabernet Franc

**Price:** \$35.00

**THE REVIEWER****Eleanor & Ray Heald**

The Healds have been writing about wine since 1978 and have focused on appellation significance in many of their world beat writings. They value recognizing site personality (*terroir*) within an appellation's wines. They praise balance and elegance in wines styled to pair well with food and eschew over-extraction, high alcohol and heavy-handed oak. "Delicious" is their favorite descriptor for a great, well-made wine.