

**Waters Crest Winery****2004 Merlot Reserve
(North Fork of Long Island)**

Home winemaker-turned-winery owner Jim Waters is well regarded on the North Fork for his small batches of hand-crafted wines. Still, I've always thought that the reds at Waters Crest Winery didn't quite stand up to his his dry, aromatic Riesling and Gewurztraminer in particular. Sure, Waters has always done nice things with a richer, cocoa-tinged cabernet franc and serviceable, if simple, merlots. But the whites made his tiny Cutchogue tasting room a must-stop destination—and with good reason.

Waters' 2004 reds, seem to hint that he's hitting his professional winemaking stride. The Waters Crest Winery 2004 Merlot Private Reserve in particular stands out. By far the best Merlot to come out of the winery, black raspberry, black plum, black cherry, smoky oak, vanilla, brown spice intermingle on a nose that fills the room given an hour in your glass. Though still quite young (the tannins are slightly astringent now) this full-flavored Merlot is driven by blackberry and black cherry flavors that are ripe, but not jammy with a faint chocolate-mint note on a lengthy finish. Patience will be rewarded here and I expect it to improve over the next several years in bottle. Every time I get sick of local Merlot, a wine like this jumps up and re-demands my attention.

Reviewed August 1, 2007 by [Lenn Thompson](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Waters Crest Winery](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Merlot Reserve

Appellation: [North Fork of Long Island](#)

Grape: Merlot

Price: \$35.99

THE REVIEWER**Lenn Thompson**

Lenn Thompson writes about New York wines for *Dan's Papers*, *Long Island Press*, *Long Island Wine Gazette*, *Edible East End* and [Hamptons.com](#). Two words describe his taste in wine — *balance* and *nuance*.

Lenn prefers food-friendly, elegant wines to jammy, over-extracted fruit bombs and heavy-handed oak. When reviewing, Lenn tastes each wine three times — alone right after opening, with food, and again the next day — believing that 90-second reviews are unrealistic and not how the average person enjoys wine.