



PHOTOS BY JOE RAY FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Sipping its famous broth in the front room of Lhardy; a barman at Taberna de la Daniela pouring a tiny draft beer.

NEW YORK

Island wine country

By Patricia Harris and David Lyon
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PECONIC — The specialists were skeptical when the first vineyard was planted on the North Fork in 1973. Yet less than 40 years later, this narrow northern finger of eastern Long Island has become one of the world's promising new wine regions.

Easily reached by ferry from New London, Conn., the region is perfect for a "Sideways" road trip from New England. More than 35 wineries along a 20-mile stretch between Southold and Aquebogue court tasters and buyers — handy, since many of the wines are available only through direct sales.

Manhattanites throng the wineries on weekends, but when we visited over several weekdays, the tasting rooms were subdued and staff had time to chat about their operations. Eric Fry emerged from the back room of Lenz Winery in Peconic with his shirt smeared with red wine sediment. He had been tuning up his temperamental Italian bottling machine. "What I like about the North Fork," he said, "is that we grow all these different kinds of grapes. It's exciting to have all this stuff in the region, not just chardonnay and pinot. And I like that there is no 'North Fork style.'"

Lenz was founded in 1978 and Fry has been its winemaker since 1989. His vinting approach is showcased in two tasting flights. The estate wines emphasize balance, fruit, and acid. The complex fruit flavors of the White



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A cluster of vineyards has taken root around Peconic, a hamlet on Long Island.

Label chardonnay, for example, result from picking and fermenting the grapes at different stages of maturity, then blending "to make a fruit salad," as Fry put it. The more expensive premium tasting includes his Old Vines wines, which he crafts in a Burgundian style.

But this is Long Island, not Burgundy, and the historic potato fields and sod farms have only recently been turned over to trellised rows of chardonnay and merlot grapes. The Old Field Vineyards in Southold exemplifies the agricultural evolution. Chris Baiz's grandmother farmed potatoes and cauliflower on the property until her death in 1993 at 101. Baiz and his wife, Ros, moved to the farm in 1996 and planted grapes the next year.

Since 1640, only five families have owned the 23-acre farm that sprawls downhill from

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BITE

BY BITE

ON LIVELY, ENDLESS DAYS, TAPAS IS THE PASTIME

BY JOE RAY | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

A taxi through the heart of town goes through an amazing architectural diversity, then down into

MADRID

herky-jerky underground sections with sharp corners and dropouts that are like navigating an abandoned coal shaft through the city's belly. You pass so many bars and restaurants, the idea of a tapas tour sounds both fantastic and naive.

Eating tapas — tiny, snack-like dishes that historically covered a glass of sherry to keep fruit flies out — is one of Spain's great pastimes, and sampling a few dishes in several places over the course of a few fun hours with friends is part of the game.

At Taberna de la Daniela, I try "salmorejo," Córdoba's thick gazpacho cousin. This one is topped with grated egg and tiny cubes of "jamón," cured ham, which give it a simultaneously healthy yet sinful feeling. We follow it with a quail egg and chorizo canapé, an electric jolt of spicy and silky.

Later, near the Plaza de la Puerta del Sol, we have a cup of Lhardy's signature broth, served from a silver urn and accompanied by a tiny glass of sherry. The combination is subtle but sublime, clearing my stuffy nose and making me rethink the difficulty of pairing wine with soup.

Things really hit stride when we meet Roberto Santos, former Barcelona restaurateur and Madrid native, at La Dolores, a century-old tavern known for its beer and certain tapas.

Santos is here to explain the tapas, and though his fiancée, Arantxa Uribe, gives us a kiss on the cheek when we walk in, he's all business.

"First, take a chip," Santos says in way of greeting.

"Next, put a mussel on the chip," he says, skewering



From top: Boquerones (vinegar-laced anchovies with olives, guindilla peppers, and potato chips on which to put them) at La Dolores; escargots at Casa Alberto; canned mussels and clams at El Doble.

one of the tavern's specialties — canned mussels in vinegar — and placing it on a fairly perfect potato chip.

"Now, pop it all in your mouth at once," he says, tipping his head back. "That way, you don't make a mess."

He knows how much I'm going to like it before I do.

"Maestro!" he says, flagging the passing waiter, "Boquerones!"

A similar-looking plate arrives — this one with white, vinegar-soaked anchovy fillets, along with a handful of olives and "guindillas," the Spanish cousin of what a Midwesterner would call "sport peppers."

"Spear the anchovy, take a chip, and follow with a guindilla," comes the command.

The anchovies are soft and fleshy, the chip gives crunch and salt, and the pepper is a spritz of heat. Coated with vinegar, our mouths and lips pucker and we smile.

Santos gives the signal and we head a few doors down to the bullfight-themed Cervecerias Dos Gatos for a house vermouth with a blood sausage and pine nut canapé that's earthy, slightly sweet, and gives me goosebumps.

From there, we head uphill along the calle Huertas to Casa Alberto for crackling crisp pork skin that makes my feet do their happy dance; "rabo de toro," beef tail, historically made with the tail of a bull after its fight; and "callos a la Madrileña," a punchy tripe dish with chickpeas and bits of chorizo. These last two dishes are "raciones," larger portions good for sharing with a group.

What's most intriguing is the specialization: something from one place, something else in another, then it's off to somewhere else, forming an erratic hopscotch pattern around town.

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