

**Fiore Winery****2004 Chambourcin Proprietor's Reserve  
(Maryland)**

In cool climate areas, Chambourcin is the king of red French-American hybrid grapes. Without the off-putting greenness of its red hybrid cousins, Chambourcin is thought of as the most *vinifera*-like. If there is a criticism, it is that Chambourcin often lacks for complexity, and is sometimes maligned as a "doughnut wine" for its lack of mid-palate action.

After years of working with Chambourcin, the solution struck Mike Fiore like a ton of pomace. "Ripasso" is an Italian word used to describe the process of using the skins from one fermentation to add color, body, or flavor to juice from a lesser-bodied grape.

After harvest, Fiore cold soaks the Chambourcin grapes for several days, then crushes cold and discards the Chambourcin skins and stems. He puts the juice on top of Cabernet Sauvignon skins, which inoculate the new must and add complexity, acid, and structure. The fermented juice goes through 100 percent malolactic fermentation which concludes in hybrid barrels made with Missouri oak staves and French oak heads.

The result is a nose full of plum, black cherry, and mint. Pepper, herb and currant fill the doughnut hole nicely, swathed in blackberry. Tannins are comfortable, but firm, preceding a slightly tart finish. The following vintage, 2005, shows even more promise. With the ripasso technique, Fiore has picked the rustic Chambourcin up, brushed him off and given him a new robe.

Reviewed February 6, 2008 by [David Falchek](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Fiore Winery](#)

**Vintage:** 2004

**Wine:** Chambourcin Proprietor's Reserve

**Appellation:** [Maryland](#)

**Grape:** Chambourcin

**Price:** \$16.00

**THE REVIEWER****David Falchek**

David Falchek writes a weekly wine column for several newspapers in Pennsylvania, including the *Scranton Times-Tribune*. He also contributes regularly to trade publications such as *Vineyard & Winery Management* and

*Beverage Media*. David has judged regional, national, and international wine competitions where he likes to think he lauds outstanding Seyval or Foch just as readily as Cabernet or Riesling.