

**Raphael****2006 Grand Cru Chardonnay
(North Fork of Long Island)**

One of the greatest things about Long Island wines is their food-friendly attributes. Many are fruit-forward, but they almost never plunge into the overtly fruity, high-alcohol pool of New World wines. Alcohol levels usually hover around the 12-13 percent level as well--so you can have two or three glasses of wine with dinner and not need a nap. Cool nights and ocean breezes help growing grapes retain their natural acidity too - another great benefit for those who like wine with food. A move away from heavy new oak - or at least more judicious use of said oak - also results in wines ideally suited to table time.

A clean, refreshing new white, **Raphael's 2006 Grand Cru Chardonnay** (\$16) is made entirely in stainless steel tanks - the way winemaker Richard Olsen-Harbich thinks local Chardonnay shines most brightly. The nose is somewhat austere, but offers lightly fruity pear and melon aromas with a wonderful smell of the sea in the background. That almost-salty minerality carries through and drives the palate with the pear and melon character taking a step back. Medium bodied with substantial--but balanced--natural acidity, this would make a great house wine this summer. The finish even lingers longer than expected.

Reviewed August 23, 2007 by [Lenn Thompson](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Raphael](#)

Vintage: 2006

Wine: Grand Cru Chardonnay

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

Grape: Chardonnay

Price: \$15.00

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.