

**St. Julian Wine Co.****2005 ST. J Merlot
(Lake Michigan Shore)**

St. Julian Winery uses St. J as a brand tier, and purchases grapes for it from about 100 growers in southwest Michigan, within a 45-mile radius of the town of Paw Paw, where the winery is located, and within the Lake Michigan Shore AVA.

Merlot is one of the more adaptive-to-place reds and exhibits a lot of regional characteristics. When it's produced with restrained oak as this version was, Lake Michigan Shore AVA fruit shines as cherry, red berries and red plums with just a hint of vanilla from the French oak in a blend with some American oak. Medium body and weight are sensed by the wine's brick-red color. Flavors mirror aromas with added spice cabinet nuances.

Vintage 2005 gave Michigan producers a long and warm growing season, ensuring ripeness of red varieties such as Merlot. Thus, there's no sense of green bean or bell pepper characters in this offering with a high quality to price ratio. It's a good match with foods such as pasta with a spicy tomato sauce, pork, veal, roast chicken or pizza with gourmet toppings.

Reviewed October 24, 2007 by [Eleanor & Ray Heald](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [St. Julian Wine Co.](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: ST. J Merlot

Appellation: [Lake Michigan Shore](#)

Grape: Merlot

Price: \$10.00

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.