

**Leelanau Wine Cellars****2005 Vintner Reserve
(Leelanau Peninsula)**

These days, the hallmarks of balance, *elegance* and *finesse*, seem to be forgotten words when talking about Cabernet Sauvignon-based blends in the USA. Thankfully, not all regions have gotten the memo that says one must push ripeness to the extreme to make a wine with real character. And real character is exactly what Leelanau Cellars has on its hands with their 2005 Vintners Reserve.

The Jacobson family began farming the land and growing grapes in Omena, Michigan in the mid-1970's (one of only two vineyards in Leelanau County at the time). The Jacobsons released their first wines in 1977 under the Leelanau Cellars label, and father Michael and son Robert have been vintners ever since.

This type of experience with the land shows extremely well in this new premium offering from the winery. Previous Bordeaux-blend releases from Leelanau Cellars have been well-received. This bottling, a blend of estate grown, co-fermented Cabernet Sauvignon (39%), Cabernet Franc (39%), and Merlot (22%) is similar to the [2005 Meritage](#), only a longer barrel aging regimen of 16 months in new French oak, lives up to its "Reserve" billing, evolving things to the next level.

The wine wears a svelte texture, rich without being weighty, and is backed by a fine thread of acidity. Lush oak is pervasive, though integrated nicely. Notes of cedar, plum and black fruits are spread throughout. Possibly the most interesting element in this wine is the cigar-box / tobacco leaf aromas and power on the mid-palate, which is extremely attractive. The finish is medium-to-long with just enough tannic grip to round out an excellently structured wine. The alcohol and pH levels are a perfect symmetry (13.5%, 3.5) for this blend and portend excellent drinking over the next decade, if not beyond.

Reviewed March 1, 2007 by [Tasting Panel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Leelanau Wine Cellars](#)

Vintage: 2005

Wine: Vintner Reserve

Appellation: [Leelanau Peninsula](#)

Grapes: [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (39%), [Cabernet Franc](#) (39%), [Merlot](#) (22%)

Price: \$40.00

THE REVIEWER**Tasting Panel**

The combined experience and diverse palates of our editorial and reviewing staff. We are ever on the lookout for notable examples of wines of regional character to offer as a collective recommendation to our readers.