

“Forge is one of the more exciting new brands to come out of the Finger Lakes, and it is especially notable for being an international collaboration. It was begun in 2011 as a partnership between three men: Louis Barruol of Château de Saint Cosme in Gigondas, Rick Rainey, and local winemaker Justin Boyette. They focus exclusively on Pinot Noir and Riesling, and theirs are some of the most sophisticated and polished in the region. The Pinot Noirs almost approach an international style, and certainly the winemaking is some of the most modern I encountered in the Finger Lakes—fermentation is carried out in open-top Taransaud oak tanks followed by 10 months in 35-50% new French barriques. The Rieslings are a bit more unusual, being fermented via native yeast, partly in stainless steel, and partly in French oak. For the first several vintages the barrels for the white were formerly used by Saint Cosme but they have recently introduced some new large puncheons to the program. Whenever possible they work with acreage contracts in order to secure low yields, which accounts for the concentration of their wines. Very recently, they began developing their first estate vineyard and broke ground on a new winery nearby. While they currently produce around 3,000 cases a year, that figure is likely to increase in light of these developments.” —Kelli White

**2014 Riesling Sunrise Hill Vineyard      Score: 94 points**

“An electric wine that lights up the palate like fireworks. The nose is flinty and vibrant, with scents of bay leaf, oyster shell, kefir lime, and ash. The palate is tense and rocky with an acidity that vibrates in the mouth and extends forever into the finish. Gorgeous. 3 grams per liter residual sugar.” —Kelli White

**2014 Pinot Noir Classique      Score: 93 points**

“A beautiful wine that stands out as one of the best Pinot Noirs I tried from the Finger Lakes. The color is impressive for the region—a deep garnet that diminishes at the rim. The nose evokes Burgundy with its scents of sweet cherries, potting soil, and cedar. The palate displays a touch of the region’s hallmark austerity but balances that with a fair amount of polish. While there is certainly more tannin than you would see in a Burgundy, they are more suave than in most Finger Lakes Pinots. An oak signature is certainly present, and while it does not distract, I certainly wouldn’t want any more of it. Very nice, very well-made.” —Kelli White

**2014 Riesling Classique      Score: 93 points**

“Brilliant gold in hue. A low-toned, savory nose of white sage, lemon juice, oyster shell, and subtle flowers introduces this wine. The palate is dry but creamy, boasting impressive texture weight and balance. The acidity swells across the tongue, concluding on a rocky, smoky finish evocative of gun powder. 3 grams per liter residual sugar.” —Kelli White

**2014 Riesling Les Alliés      Score: 92 points**

“An exotic wine, with a nose of raw cashews, quince, lemon curd, papaya and the subtle stamp of oak. The palate is lively and layered, with great textural complexity and a palate-coating, lanolin-like quality that carries through into the finish. A unique, and interesting wine.” —Kelli White

**2014 Riesling Harvest Ridge Vineyards      Score: 92 points**

“Bright yellow gold in hue. An incredibly expressive wine, this Riesling offers a gregarious nose of honeycomb, chamomile, and roasted lemons. The acidity is quite driving in the mouth, despite the impressive palate weight. A powerful wine with a big personality and a long, salty finish. 3 grams per liter residual sugar.” —Kelli White

**2014 Riesling Sawmill Creek Vineyards      Score: 90 points**

“A riper-seeming Riesling from the Forge lineup, this wine offers a nose of apple cider, sweet smoke, golden apples, and fennel pollen. Despite the warmth of the nose, the palate is quite lean and focused, with an intense, mouth-watering acidity and pert finish. 3 grams per liter residual sugar.” —Kelli White

**2013 Riesling Les Alliés      Score: 91 points**

“The Les Alliés is effectively Forge’s reserve wine, assembled from select lots and aged for an extra three to four months in barrel. The nose is marked by scents of warm brown spices, butterscotch, white flowers, and hard cheese. The palate is lovely, with a punchy, expressive personality and a brighter acidity than the basic 2013 Riesling. A touch of flint comes through in the finish, as does a hint of oak. 3 grams per liter residual sugar.” —Kelli White

**2013 Riesling Classique      Score: 90 points**

“This compelling, sophisticated wine was fermented and aged in 65% neutral French oak and 35% stainless steel tank—a strategy that is quite unusual in the Finger Lakes, where most Rieslings see only steel. The result is a low-toned, complicated wine of impressive textural depth. The nose is warm and rocky, with scents of golden kiwi, fennel, wet stone, and a whiff of something industrial. The palate is dry but layered, with a soft cushion of flesh that wraps around the strident acidity. Some earth notes like baked clay come through on the long, chalky finish. With the 2014 vintage, this wine became labeled as ‘Classique.’ 3 grams per liter residual sugar.” —Kelli White