

# PRESS ALERT

*This article appeared in Germany's most respected newspaper, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung in November 2016. The internationally known British wine writer Stuart Piggot wrote it after visiting Gino Razzi and his daughter Carley Mack at Penns Woods Winery.*

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## **Possible, impossible and crazy!**

**Red wines made in the style of the great Bordeaux Chateaux are also made where they are not really expected.**

In the world of wine, experts try to explain many things that seem impossible. For example, it is often argued that wines such as the noble and expensive wines from Bordeaux, Burgundy, Piedmont or Tuscany cannot be replicated outside the countries of France and Italy. This sometimes sounds as if God had carved these rules in stone. Looking at the scientific doctrine quite soberly, however, a completely different reality arises.

To make a great wine, you need perfect, ripe grapes. For each varietal, there is a certain amount of sun needed during the growing season and optimal temperatures for the maturation of the grapes, as well as an adequate supply of water and nutrients. Where these conditions are met and the vineyard is diligently worked, perfect grapes can be harvested in autumn and a great wine can be produced. This means: Great wines are possible in surprising places!

Hardly any wine expert would suspect that in South East Pennsylvania, on the American east coast, fascinating red wines can be made in the style of the best Bordeaux Chateaux. In 2002, Gino Razzi of WinesU, one of the most important importers of Italian wines in the United States, began to produce red wines from vineyards near Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, using the Bordeaux varietals of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. The first vintage of the new Penns Woods Winery was produced in small batch, open top fermenters and the result was very encouraging. Now, Penns Woods produces about 50,000 bottles a year.

Often it is claimed that wines made with Bordeaux red varietals grown in other places might taste good when they are young, but do not age well. It's not impossible, since Mr. Razzi's Penns Woods Merlot "Reserve" and "Ameritage" Cuvée from the 2005 vintage, which I tasted recently, were sensational after 10 years. These enormously concentrated, but perfectly balanced wines, have a subtlety, as one expects only from the very best red Bordeaux wines from the best vintages. They are still very vital and can be left in the cellar for a long time.

The Penns Woods reds from the 2013 vintage are just as good and will improve with some bottle age. Expensive they are not, given their world-class quality. (\$36 for the 2013 Merlot "Reserve" and \$52 for the 2013 "Ameritage" Cuvée from the tasting room.)

These friendly prices are somewhat based on the fact that the wine critics around the world stubbornly ignore these wines, because they appear impossible from afar. This unfortunately means that not only are these wines not available in Germany, they cannot be bought either in New York or in Washington, D.C., both nearby major cities.

Mr. Razzi cannot understand that. **If the Penns Woods wines were from Bordeaux or Italy, they would have long been famous and expensive.** Sometimes the world of wine looks very orderly, but it is actually completely crazy.