

# Long Island WINE PRESS

## Beauty and the Bottle

By Miranda Beeson

When I'm standing in a North Fork wine store surveying a wide selection of Long Island wines, determined to "buy local," how do I decide? I have to admit, as a novice wine enthusiast, certain labels catch my eye. Someday, I hope, vintage, vineyard and winemaker will guide my choice but, for now, it's varietal and label design. Many vineyards are producing highly creative and personal labels for their wines. I talked with winemakers, owners, managers and artists about their approach to the winning combination of art and wine. This is the second in a series of articles based on those conversations.

### Pindar Vineyards

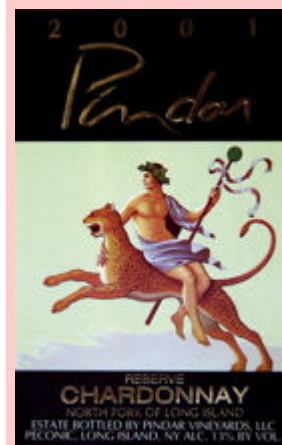
"I am a classicist at heart," Dr. Herodotus Damianos tells me before escorting me through the history of Pindar Vineyards as seen through the vista of the many labels that have ornamented his wine. That history dates back to 1980, when "Dr. Dan," as he is often called, planted his first chardonnay grapes, and farther back, to 518 BCE, when the Greek poet Pindar, after whom Dr. Damianos named his vineyard, was born in Thebes.

Dr. Damianos has worked with various artists to create labels over the years, but his most sustained collaboration has been with artist Lynn Curlee. Together they created (among many others) a classically themed series of wines and labels, commencing with the release of Mythology in 2001. I dig into a dusty old corner of my brain to try to remember whether the elegant gray column depicted on the Mythology label is Doric, Ionic or Corinthian. "Ionic," Dr. Damianos kindly reminds me.

Inspiration for the labels in the series came from classical sources, including a 250 BCE mosaic of Dionysus, the god of wine, which Mr. Curlee reinterpreted for Pindar's 2001 Reserve Chardonnay. Dionysus was also born in Thebes and, being a god, could dip his finger into a barrel of juice and miraculously turn it into wine, without any of the hard work required in real life.



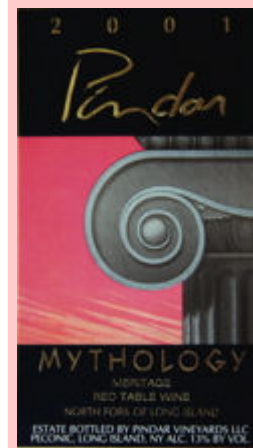
Pindar 1998 Reserve Merlot



Pindar 2001 Reserve Chardonnay

Pegasus, the mythological winged horse, flies across the label of Pindar's 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon on his way to the night sky where, he ended up as a constellation. The details on the prow and sail of the Argo on Pindar's 1998 Reserve Merlot may look like artistic inventions, but Dr. Damianos assures me this is not the case. "That's the beauty of working of Lynn Curlee. He's a classicist, so he knows the details. The serpent on the sail is exactly what the old sails were like and, if you look closely at the ship, you can see two eyes on the prow. These were painted on boats of the period to scare pirates away." Art, wine and mythology make for great conversation.

Miranda Beeson is a freelance writer based in Greenport. Her poems have appeared in various journals and anthologies. She's at work on a collection of essays about many landscapes, including the North Fork. Ms. Beeson teaches the delight of writing to East End children of all ages.



Pindar 2001 Mythology