they do. One central question that emerges across the case studies is that of how student farmers and teachers negotiate the trade-offs among ecological principles, financial sustainability, curricular coherency, and teaching methods that allow for what Liska Clemence Chan calls "controlled uncertainty and [a] rare exposure to tangibility" (p.169). Laura Sayre is deft in her summary of the questions about learning and agriculture that the student farm movement raises: "At its heart, it asks, Who should be farming? Who will be farming in the future? Where will new farming knowledge come from? How will old farming wisdom be transmitted and preserved?" (p.17).

Well in line with its subject matter, *Fields of Learning* provides a kind of education. And it offers a rich genealogy of the thinkers who have cultivated (and sometimes ploughed up) relationships between agriculture and higher education—Liberty Hyde Bailey and Wendell Berry, André and Jean Mayer, and David Orr—but also of the less well-known student farmers and teachers who populate the book.

—Aubrey Streit Krug, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Seasons of a Finger Lakes Winery
John C. Harstock
Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011 200 pp.
Illustrations. $22.95 (cloth)

In a moment when the phrase "American dream" rings hollow, there is little enthusiasm for rags-to-riches stories of the Horatio Alger variety. For books about vineyards, the only thing less compelling would be a story of privileged descendants of medieval robber-barons extolling the melon and cinnamon hints in their vintage while bemoaning the commercialization of the wine industry. Happily, John Harstock's book *Seasons of a Finger Lakes Winery* falls prey to neither of these stock narratives.

Harstock uses vineyard activities of the four seasons (decanting in the winter, pruning in the spring, and so on) to chronicle more than a year in the life of Rose and Gary Barletta, two middle-class people who had a dream to start a vineyard; the book tells the story of the vineyard's life. For both, the idea began when they were children, drinking the mediocre wine of their Italian-American grandparents. If there is a vestige of the American dream in this book, it is in the idea that without either family tradition or wealth, you can create award-winning wine. The most important ingredients of success, the book suggests, are hard work and know-how.

Harstock writes for an intelligent but nonexpert reader. His journalistic background lets him use dialogue and scene development to carry the story forward, but his strength is in teaching the reader a great deal about vineyards and making wines without seeming pedantic. Tucked into these pages are short yet illuminating explanations of vine biology, the economics of small wineries, the chemistry of fermentation, historic and modern trellising systems, techniques of pruning, accounts of grape diseases, stories of ancient Greek wine parties, and even the ramifications of the modern wine bottle (which emerged in 1760).

I enjoyed Harstock's original similes: talking about burned-out corporate types who have applied to work in the Barlettas' vineyard, he writes: "It made me think of some outpost of the French Foreign Legion. Each has his own past that he's left behind—or would like to leave behind—having escaped the illusions he once chose to believe in" (p.136). Enjoyable too is Harstock's engagement with the subject: he writes not just about the Barlettas' experience but about his own "wine education," which includes experimentally stomping grapes in his kitchen and then fermenting them.

Another gratifying part of the book is Harstock's allergy to wine snobbery. When he talks about the flavors of wine, he explains why we smell, for example, green bell pepper (it's a volatile chemical called isobutylmethoxpyrazine). In the numerous descriptions of Gary having Harstock taste wine, the two are often at odds about what they smell: "You say plum. I say pineapple" (p.116). The semi-mythological concept of *terroir* (the idea that only a certain combination of soil, climate, and "cultural tradition" can create a great wine) is largely ignored, happily. In the only passage where Harstock discusses the concept more than in passing, he does so to describe a Cornell University research team that is trying to empirically evaluate why Riesling grapes do well around the Finger Lakes. This avoidance of wine mystification makes the book more accessible to the nonexpert, analogous to a wine-tasting at a friendly vineyard like Long Point, the Barlettas' winery.

Cornell University Press was careful about the book's appearance as well. I appreciated the grape-bunch fleurons that separated each section, and the font of the chapter titles. The suggested reading followed the tone of the whole book in not patronizing readers, but inviting them to learn more about the intriguing complexities of the winemaking craft and its history. This book has an ambiguous ending, but it leaves a pleasant aftertaste. Order a bottle of Long Point's Cabernet Franc, and enjoy it this summer with *Seasons of a Finger Lakes Winery*.

—Zachary Nowak, The Umbra Institute (Perugia, Italy)