

Wine Spectator

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THINGS WE LIKE

ICE, ICE BABY

We've seen plenty of grape-based products over the years -- grapeseed oil, wine-grape jellies, vinegars, even cosmetics. But this is a new one: syrup made from the juice of ice wine grapes.

Steve Murdza is a farmer and cofounder of Coyote's Run Estate Winery in Niagara, the ice wine-growing region just across New York's border with Canada. He noticed that during the pressing of the frozen grapes from which ice wine is made, someone would invariably say, "It looks like syrup". So he decided to make something like maple syrup from the juice.

Years of trial and error later (traditional reduction by cooking destroyed the complexity), we have his ice syrups in two varieties: Vidal Blanc and Cabernet Franc (www.icesyrup.com).

They are both sweet, but with a pretty sound acid frame too. The Vidal is the lighter and more tropical-flavored one, with a fresh sorghum sweetness and slightly floral character.

A quick sauce of the syrup and some minced ginger in a pan used to sauté scallops brightened that dish and gave it some depth. The red was good simply drizzled on pan-fried pork chops. Think of it as a less-complex, but also less-tart, balsamic vinegar; char, whether from pan or grill, likes a little sweetness.

Then again, you could do worse than pouring it over ice cream. And since it is not fermented, you can even have it on your pancakes.

-Owen Dugan

