



Left Foot Charley

<u>Country</u>	United States
<u>State</u>	Michigan
<u>Appellation(s)</u>	Old Mission Peninsula, Benzie County
<u>Producer</u>	Bryan Ulbrich
<u>Year Founded</u>	2004
<u>Annual Production Total</u>	5,000 cases
<u>Farming</u>	Organic non-certified
<u>Harvest Method</u>	Manual
<u>Social Media</u>	Instagram; @leftfootcharley



In 2004 Northern Michigan viticulturist and winemaker Bryan Ulbrich was called by the new owner of one of his favorite vineyard sites to consult on bringing it back to health. It would be a big job as the overgrowth, neglected canopy and an impending powdery mildew attack were almost too much to handle. But Bryan, with the support of his wife Jennifer, cancelled an upcoming vacation and took up the task. In exchange they received a share of the Riesling harvest and Left Foot Charley, Michigan's first "urban winery," was born in Traverse City, just south of the Old Mission Peninsula AVA.

The zeal with which Bryan tackled bringing that vineyard back is typical of the entire Left Foot Charley project. Bryan doesn't own any vineyards but he personally farms or consults on every site that he sources and has planted many of them, choosing only the best sites to work with, and his sense of ownership over the quality of farming is total. Today, Bryan works with 18 different sites boasting the best terroir in Michigan. The climate this far North is marginal for viticulture and is enabled only by the tempering effects of Lake Michigan. The best sites reside mostly on the Old Mission Peninsula, a narrow, windswept, wild and hilly terrain that juts Northward for 19 miles out into the Lake. The vineyards here were tilled by ancient glaciers, creating a blend of sandy loam, clay, and gravel soils which are ideal for aromatic, cool climate varieties like kerner, riesling, and blaufränkisch.

Bryan works all of the vineyards within his guidelines for responsible farming; manually weeding, composted fertilizers, inclusion of row middle crops for diversity and soil management, and using only organically graded treatments for fungal control. All the fruit is harvested by hand to maintain the purity and freshness of these highly aromatic varieties as Bryan believes that the fruit naturally produced by this unique terroir and extreme climate should dictate the end results, and the hard work of the vines should speak through the wine.

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil</u>	<u>Vineyard Area</u>	<u>Production</u>
Kerner	100% Kerner	5 years	sandy loam and gravel	11.33 acres	340 cases
Riesling 'Le Caban'	100% Riesling	11-21 years	sandy	7.8 acres	338 cases
Blaufränkisch	100% Blaufränkisch	7 years	sandy loam, and clay	8.2 acres	430 cases

Kerner - From five year old kerner vines planted in the Island View Orchard in Old Mission Peninsula which is rich in sandy loam soils and is scattered throughout with glacial gravel. Hand-harvested and fermented in a variety of vessels; stainless steel, oval fermenters, and 30% in 500L neutral oak puncheons. Typically the Kerner is aged on gross lees for five months.

Riesling 'Le Caban' - From 11-21 year old riesling vines sourced from several Old Mission Peninsula vineyards where the soils are largely sandy. Hand-harvested and fermented in steel ovals. Aged on lees for five months.

Blafränkisch - From seven year old blafränkisch vines planted to sandy loam and clay soils in Benzie and Grand Traverse counties. Hand-harvested and fermented, typically for 14 days, in 3,000 liter truncated red fermentors with pump-overs 2-3 times daily. Pressed to all French barrels which are 20% new and 80% 4-6 years old.