

CANADA SIGNS UP FOR THE CULT OF FUZION

NEAR RIOT SITUATION AS STOCKS REPLENISHED

Reports filtered into the UK late last month from the usually quiet corner of Canada that is Ontario, of dramatic measures being taken to track down an elusive new cult wine taking the province by storm. One radio station even instigated an on-air phone-in to locate unsold bottles of this mysterious 'cult wine' that sells in the UK for just £3.99.

It seems the insanity continues over the Atlantic, with reports in Monday's Ottawa Citizen of 'near riots' as new stock arrived to replenish empty shelves, and the prediction of **"a frenzy once word got out that FuZion was available"**.

So which wine is it that has turned the usually conservative Canadians *coco loco*?

It was radio presenter Rita Celli, host of *Ontario Today* - which broadcasts weekdays on CBC Radio One, who fuelled the flames of the wildfire reception given **FuZion Shiraz Malbec 2007**. Celli called on her listeners to help fellow Canadians find unsold bottles by phoning in with their 'sightings' of FuZion, late September. Her call to arms followed reports of shoppers buying up large volumes of the wine at LCBO stores as soon as the delivery trucks rolled in. Callers jammed the radio phone lines, reporting the occasionally obscure LCBO outpost not yet plundered of its FuZion Shiraz Malbec, as others rushed to their cars. Callers from locations as diverse as Toronto, Montreal, Ontario, Quebec and Ottawa phoned in as the hunt hotted-up. One caller even described driving several hundred miles to buy FuZion. But the news in general was that if you hadn't hit the shops already, you were out of luck. *"Run to the stores"*, Celli urged.

To quote from the www.cbc.ca radio website:

"It's a big fat, elusive red. FuZion, the Shiraz Malbec from Argentina, is wowing wine experts and amateurs alike. But just try to get your hands on a bottle of the stuff. We'll tell you why it's so hard to find and we'll open the lines to hear about your hunt for a bottle."

And with new deliveries flying off the shelves in early October, it seems the obsession is far from over.

Said Zuccardi Ontario agent Alex Patinios of Dionysus Wines & Spirits, today:

"Sales are getting even crazier. We sold out of 4 containers in just two days – that's 5,488 cases!!!"

"Customers were fighting over cases in stores on the weekend and in one store they nearly had to call the police! With our Ontario sales, FuZion Shiraz Malbec will now be the number one wine in Canada."

Canadian retailer LCBO, one of the retailers which carry FuZion Shiraz Malbec 2007, had to instigate a **waiting list** across their entire chain to satisfy demand. But what is it about FuZion that has struck the Canadian palate so?

Rita Celli was joined on air by wine writer Natalie MacLean to discuss why Canada has gone into FuZion meltdown in what the presenter described as *'a tempest in a wine glass'*. Reporting on the astonishing sales, the only conclusion the wine commentator could draw was that this represented **one of the bargains of the decade on price point, and quality** - stating that Canadians would usually expect to pay three times the \$7.45 price tag for this wine. Following the on-air discussion, LCBO reported jammed telephone lines as callers phoned to ask that their names be added to their waiting lists. The retailer was forced to issue a policy of no more FuZion waiting lists.

UK consumers, however, can rest easy. FuZion Shiraz Malbec 2007 is readily available for just £3.99 at Waitrose and Somerfield. Well, for now anyway.

Notes to the Editor

- **FuZion Shiraz Malbec** was launched in Canada in March 2006 through SAQ stores in Quebec. In the first 12 months, it sold 280,000 cases. In August 2007 it was launched in Ontario through LCBO stores. In only five weeks the total allocation of 5,000 cases of wine had sold out. LCBO are reported to have a further allocation of 40,000 cases due in the country before December 2008; with an additional 10,000 cases ear-marked for the Christmas market. The retailer confirmed that they would be keeping the wine at the same price point at which it was launched, meaning the store has a potential to sell ½ million bottles by the end of the year - an

unprecedented volume for a new wine brand on the Canadian market where a new wine might hope to sell between 1,000 and 2,000 bottles, in its first year.

- **Familia Zuccardi**, the third-generation family-owned winery which produces FuZion, will be exporting more bottles and expanding the coverage to Alberta, Manitoba and British Columbia from next month.
- **Ontario Today** is CBC Radio's midday hour news and current affairs program, broadcast Monday-Friday across the province from 12:00p.m-2:00p.m.
- **LCBO**, also known as the Liquor Control Board of Ontario, has more than 600 stores across Ontario.
- **SAQ**, also known as Societe des Alcools du Quebec, has more than 400 stores across Quebec Province in Canada.

8th October 2008



What all the fuss is about

For more information, please contact Ian at R&R Teamwork 020 7384 1333 ian@randr.co.uk