

OntarioWineReview

A bi-weekly newsletter dedicated to helping you discover Ontario's best Wines and Wineries. Enjoyment comes from understanding - Passion comes from understanding more.



OntarioWineReview Newsletter – 06
June 9, 2005

In this Edition

- **Ontario Wine Review:** *Chill or not to Chill? That is the question*
 - **Grape Guy's Pick of the Bunch:** *Southbrook 2001 Cabernet Merlot*
 - **Savory Sounds:** *Music to set the mood*
 - **Wine Event Spotlight:** *Niagara New Vintages Festival*
-



OntarioWineReview: *Chill or not to Chill? That is the question*

Was it Shakespeare or Marlow who asked the age-old question: to chill, or not to chill? That question not only plagues me, but it also causes quite a stir at family gatherings. For example: my brother is a "not-to-chiller"; my girlfriend's a "chiller", while my mother doesn't care either way – she just wants it to be good, smooth and not too tannic, a firm believer in "Life is too short to drink bad wine". I myself am a "chiller" and fiercely proud of it – be it red or white, I'll put a chill on it, and not because, as my best friend put it: "If you chill it to death and hold your breath you can drink almost anything"; but because chilling adds something to the wine that can, thankfully, be taken away.

As most of you know, it has become the norm to chill white wine ... red on the other hand seems to have developed into a room temperature wine. That was fine in olden-day France when nobility kept wine in their wine cellar located in the sub-sub-basement of their chateau (which was considerably cooler than our current 68 degree room temperature – probably about 10 degrees cooler, if not more). There is nothing worse than ordering a bottle of wine that has been sitting near the kitchen in a restaurant, and is as warm as what it will eventually turn into after you drink it. Wine was meant to be drunk with a slight chill, not at the tepid warmth at which we drink it today. That is the reason why I chill all my wines ... that and I just like the taste better! Of course it's your wine – you decide – there is no right or wrong answer.



Grape Guy's Pick of the Bunch : *Southbrook 2001 Cabernet Merlot*

Visit www.southbrook.com for more details or to purchase this great wine.

Holy quaffable wine Batman have we got one for you! Over the past few years the OntarioWineReview staff has been keeping it's eye on this family-owned winery north of Toronto. Some wineries that win lots of awards with their high-end wines make value priced drinkers that are stinkers – but not this one. This 2001 Cab-Merlot hits all the right spots ... smells of fresh red pepper in the glass which delivers equally on the palate – and there's a hint of tannin backbone that makes this one ideal for the coming BBQ season or quaffing on its own (one of our panel even mentioned that they would like to see what happens to the wine in 6 months to a year). Head to Southbrook and buy a case, or two, cause this one is definitely a crowd pleaser.



The Grape Vine : *The Tasting Room Dilemma*

Every so often we'll have a commentary like the one below - we ask you to "chime-in" and give us your opinion. Feedback will be printed in an upcoming edition.

Last edition we visited Inniskillin Winery and while we enjoyed both the wine and the ambiance of the place our major complaint was the "pay-for-tasting" that was strictly enforced. Now don't get me wrong, I understand the need for the winery to re-coup it's money from opening a bottle, and I know that if wineries gave "free" tastings then you'd have a bunch of drunken sods stumbling around wine country all day ... but what I'm advocating is for the serious wine tasters and buyers – not wine-snobs - people like you and me who enjoy visiting the wineries, tasting the wine in order to decide what to take home and enjoy there. I have noticed an alarming fact – the bigger wineries seem to charge for tasting, while the little guys do not.

Perhaps we should model our tasting rooms after those south of the border in New York State. There you pay for your tastings – some priced by the wine, some a flat price for 3 samples – and at the end of your tastings you are given a voucher or coupon in the amount of your tasting ... if you buy their wine, the amount is deducted from the sale price. To most wine tourers and buyers that I have spoken with, most agree this is a fairer model than what we have now. If you are going to charge for tastings, this policy would make sense. There are many ways wineries could work this out, and in turn I see this model boosting sales: because everybody loves a discount – even if it's just perceived.

Contact us at michael@ontariowinereview.com



Savory Sounds : *Music to set the mood*

The Perishers – Let There Be Morning

They say that the appreciation of a band comes from seeing them live – but in the case of the Perishers it was buying their album that gave us a greater appreciation for their music. Now I know that summer is right around the corner and usually it's the upbeat albums that dominate – but this mellow group sets the mood for a quiet night up north ... imagine late in the evening by a roaring fire with the crickets chirping - you crack your favourite red or even a nice late harvest sipper as daylight gives way to darkness ... sit back and enjoy this band's mellow Coldplay-style sounds – songs like Weekends, Nothing Like You and I, and Sway – are standouts amongst the ten solid tracks. This album also has great replay value, which means you'll be humming along with the second, third and fourth go around. Let the wine and music perform their magic to mellow you out after a tough day on the water.



Wine Event Spotlight : *Niagara New Vintages Festival*

You still have time to check out what's new in Niagara at the New Vintage Festival June 4 to 12 ... the New Vintage Touring Passport gives you access to all the wineries and their special events. More information and touring passports (cost \$20) are available through www.niagarawinefestival.com



Contact Michael Pinkus Grape Guy

OntarioWineReview's Newsletter is designed to enhance the appreciation of wine, in particular Ontario's wines and wineries and to develop a better understanding about how best to enjoy both.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to other wine lovers!

To contact us with feedback, article ideas, comments, concerns or questions – email michael@ontariowinereview.com We look forward to hearing from you!