

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 – 26
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OntarioWineReview: *The Pocket-Book Murder*

Winery touring is some of the most fun you can have on a Saturday afternoon. Driving around your area of choice, stopping at all the boutique and large scale wineries, sampling their wares ... tickling your tastebuds with buttery Chardonnay, green pepper scented Cab Franc, or sinfully sweet ice wine ... whatever your pleasure, the wineries have it. But have you ever noticed that as the day wears on, *everything* tastes good; and sadly, it all starts to taste the same. That's because your palate had hit an overload point, and for that matter, your brain has too – your senses have been dulled with an over-abundance of wine ... even if you don't swallow. And that's when murder occurs. At each of your first few wineries, you selectively bought one or two bottles of your favourites from the wines you tasted ... by the 10th winery everything tastes "good", your sense of taste is non-existent, so you end up buying more and more wine at each stop; and while that is great for both the winery and the local economy – your credit card bill is steadily rising and your cash on hand is dwindling. That is why it's called a "senseless" (death of your senses), or "centsless" (death to your money) murder.

Allow me to relay this brief cautionary tale to you, and see if you can relate. (I hope both my mother and the police are not reading – though I think the statute of limitations has passed on this transgression). A buddy and I went winery touring back in our university days. We traveled down to Niagara and had a grand old time sampling wine and buying bottles as we went. Truth is, we probably overdid it. Our last stop was a tiny boutique winery that was housed in a farm building beside the owner's home. Everything we tried was excellent. The Chardonnay, the Viognier, the Cab, the Merlot, the Late Harvest Vidal – everything. We each settled on a couple of bottles to purchase, price be damned (it was that good) and away we went. A few months later, we assembled for dinner and decided to relive that fateful day (and toast our luck at getting home in one piece) by opening one of those last-purchased bottles. It was horrible. (Thankfully we were able to use it as paint thinner or it would have been a real waste of money). Every bottle we tried from that winery was awful – 4 bottles of yuck, 60 bucks gone (remember that was a good 12 + years ago) ... and all we had left was the bitter memory of too much of a good thing.

Keep this tale of woe in mind the next time you're touring the wineries to save yourself from bitter disappointment, and, of course, worry from the law.

As a side note, the winery mentioned still exists, same location but in a different form. They are doing exceedingly well and have won a multitude of awards for their wines. And sooner or later my bitterness will subside from being taken advantage of – because of course we blame the winery, not our own stupidity.



Grape Guy's Pick of the Bunch: *Franc, Gamay and Cuvee*

Visit the winery or their website for more details or to purchase these great wines.

Coyote's Run 2004 Cabernet Franc - \$21.00
www.coyotesrunwinery.com

Let's forget for a moment the cute trotting coyote on the label and focus in on this delicious Cabernet Franc from, what many see as, a difficult vintage in Niagara, from one of Niagara-on-the-Lake's newer wineries. The nose of strawberry, raspberry and blueberry accosts the nose first mixing all the fruit up and blending them like

a smoothie ... then there's some vegetable in the mix, not the usual green pepper, something more subtle – celery. The taste is just as interesting. Smooth and velvety in the mouth, with just the merest hint of tannin – this wine drinks wonderfully right now with tastes of raspberry and sour cherry in the front palate and bittersweet chocolate and walnuts on the aftertaste – mmm mmm good! A dollar over our usual recommendation but well worth the investment.

Marynissen 2001 Gamay Noir - \$11.95
www.marynissen.com

You usually see Gamay in the Henry of Pelham style, which is low-to-no-oak and very fruity ... this one is the exact opposite – a wine of structure and style perfect for ageing and enjoying later. Don't get me wrong, I love both styles, but this one flies in the face of convention. Marynissen, a long time maker of high quality ageable wines, has once again crafted a wine of quality, ageability, and drinkability. The nose starts out with smoky oak then it opens up with smells of dark fleshy fruits like raspberries and plums, along with some currants that peak through. On the palate, you'll taste strawberries and woody notes, along with other dark fruits hidden behind the wood. In the glass, you'll notice harmless sediment forming and there's a tannin grip that's not usually found in Gamay. With wonderful depth and character and a potential for aging even further, this wine still drinks remarkably well right now. There's a limited supply of this wine left, so best you scoot right out, or phone, to get your hands on a few bottles before it's all gone.

Both of the wines above are available only at the winery.

CUVEE BONUS REVIEW:

In honour of the Cuvée awards, which were handed out at the beginning of March, we bring you this year's winner for best general list red:

Creekside 2002 Cabernet Merlot – \$12.95 ... 13%

When the awards were announced, we ran out to buy a bottle of something you could get pretty readily to see what the hype was about. Combine the award with the fact that it's from the stellar 2002 vintage and we expected something really good from this wine, and we got it! With definite smells of strawberry, blackberry and raspberry intermingled with some oak and hints of green veggie in the background; namely green pepper (but it is so mild that it is easy to overlook). Raspberry is the predominant taste in the mouth along with some good oak and blackberry. Through the mouth it went down smoothly, and only in the aftertaste did we get the bite from the slightly tannic finish. This wine would be excellent with a nice steak or even a hamburger topped with the cheese of your choice ... and at 12.95, it's gonna go quickly, so run out there and grab what's left on the shelf - this will be drinking even better when we're full-on into BBQ season.

Wine available at the LCBO #669424.

Two more wine reviews appear on our website this week: the 2004 Flat Rock Cellars Rusty Shed Chardonnay; and a Chesslawn 2003 Chardonnay/Vidal blend ... check them out.



The Grape Vine : *Submit your opinion and become a part of the OWR tasters circle.*
Should either of these wines be a candidate for our Ontario Wine Review Crystal Cork Awards?
Chime In!

Contact us at michael@ontariowinereview.com



Ask the Grape Guy ...

On occasion I get asked questions when I attend events, visit wineries, or through email. Other times I overhear things in liquor stores, at dinner tables, or at the odd festival that just don't ring true. It's at these times I like to step in, so that wrong information and rumours don't get started and spread. Herewithin we lay rest to some of those half-truths and answer those nagging questions.

What's the Best Wine?

Toughest question ever asked ... easiest to answer, yet people think you're skirting the issue and shirking your responsibilities as a wine educator when you answer. The answer: what kind of wine do you like?

Let me explain: no two person's tastebuds, or palate, are exactly the same. Some people like light and fruity; while others like more robust, full-bodied, young wines. You'll meet people who love a well aged oak-soaked Chardonnay, and others that dig a fruit forward stainless steel fermented "naked" number. There is no "best" wine ... there's the "best" wine you've ever had; and the "best" wine I've ever had – and even if we drank the same wines, we would probably come to completely different conclusions as to the "best". Case in point, a dear friend of mine, with whom I often drink wine, swears that the 2001 Peller Estates Cabernet Sauvignon Private Reserve is the best wine she's ever had; she hordes her bottles while coveting mine – on the other hand, I really enjoy(ed) a 1999 Chateau des Charmes Estate Bottled Cabernet Merlot as one of my all-time favourites.

To find your favourite, I would recommend experimenting with different kinds of wines to discover where your tastes lie. If you enjoy something fruity and light, stick with Beaujolais and Gamay – don't try a young oak Cabernet Sauvignon or Zinfandel as your introduction to red wine. If you like your wine with some kick, don't think you're going to find your "cup of tea" in a Beaujolais Nouveau, instead, you'll enjoy the heartier Cabs, Zins and well made Shirazes. But remember, these are not hard and fast rules, some Gamays have bite; while some Shirazes are light and fruity. The best way to find your wine is by exposing yourself to different wines, the more you try the more you will know what you like ... and then you'll be able to answer this question for yourself.

To quell or confirm rumours, half-truths or misnomers – or to ask your question, email me at grapeguy@ontariowinereview.com



Wine Event Spotlight: Toronto Wine and Cheese Show

The 23rd annual Toronto Wine and Cheese Show (and who doesn't love wine and cheese) is taking place March 24th to the 26th at the International Centre in Mississauga. Wine and cheese, along with other gourmet foods will be available for tasting. Wines that are both on the LCBO/Vintages lists and those that are coming soon will also be available. Admission is \$18.00 with free parking. Want to know more? Then check out www.towineandcheeseshow.com.

Going to the Show: This time we have 4 winners going to the Wine & Cheese Show ... they are: Joe Connell (Toronto); Stephanie Wallcraft (Toronto); Nick Merola (Grimsby) and Julianne Decarle (Markham) – Congratulations and enjoy the show.

OntarioWineReview's bi-weekly newsletter is devoted to the love, enjoyment and promotion of wine – not just any wine, the wines of Ontario and the wineries that make them.



Psst, Pass It On ... keep the good wine flowing. Send this newsletter to a friend, family member, loved one, the woman in the next cubicle, your buddy from Bobcaygeon ... you get the picture.

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

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