

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 – 27
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News ... *We start this newsletter off with some news about OntarioWineReview and our website:*

OntarioWineReview celebrates its 1st birthday with the launch of our new on-line Forum, called The Cellar, a place to talk, gab, yak and ask about all things wine. So don't be shy, grab a glass, come downstairs, pull up a chair, sit around the barrels and let's talk wine.

For the first 3 months we are going to open the forum to all comers, so you can try it out ... after that it'll be open to registered users only, and best of all, it'll always be free to register – so, we'd love to see you in [The Cellar](#).



OntarioWineReview: *WINERY REVIEW – Harbour Estates Winery*

Our winery reviews are done blindly – the wineries have no prior knowledge of our visit and are not made aware until just before we leave their premises that they have been “spot-checked” – this ensures that we get the same level of service that anybody walking off the street would get.

Just off the QEW and, what seems to be, miles from nowhere (check out the wow factor), you'll find Harbour Estates Winery. From the front, it's nothing to write home about and if you blink you might miss the driveway because the winery itself is tucked in behind a house (one can only assume is lived in by the owners Darlene and Fraser). Parking spaces are limited (there is enough for 4 or 5 cars), and the only indication that you have arrived is the sign above the door: Harbour Estates Winery.

Walk in under the sign, and you'll notice wine-kitch is all over the place: a variety of napkins, hand painted glasses, wine holders/racks, wine glass charms, wrapped bottles, gift baskets, coasters, artwork, you name it. All scattered about on wrought iron shelves and wine barrels. You'll find most of this wine paraphernalia to your left, but there is also some in the right hand corner ... so take a look around.

Directly in-front of you is the reason you came, the tasting bar. The wine itself is stored in cubbies behind the bar for easy access by the staff. Laminated wine lists line the top of the bar and we are informed that most of the wines are open, so we begin our tasting. Some excellent whites are poured and some truly fantastic reds, including a thirty-six dollar bottle of 2002 Premier Vintage, which is a blend of Cab Sauv, Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Malbec. I will freely admit that many of the bottles which I have tasted over the 20 dollar mark don't live up to their price; but this one was truly something special, and because it was from the wonderful 2002 vintage, so it really had to impress to be impressive, if you know what I mean. Owner Fraser Mowat says they only make this blend during exceptional years, of which '02 was the last in recent memory.

Harbour Estates is the baby of three family members: Darlene, Fraser and their son Ken who has the distinction of being the youngest “head winemaker” in Canada. This pretty little winery has made a name for itself, not only for its exceptional quality and unique blends in wine, but also for hosting an annual Rock n' Ribs event in the late summer, where appropriately named Canadian rockers April Wine appear, and have for the past few years. As you look around, you'll see commemorative bottles designed and labeled specifically for the event: a festival of all-you-can eat corn and ribs – with live music and wine.

Harbour Estates is a great place to visit, with delicious and unique wines and wonderful atmosphere; but the next best reason to go is their backyard, where the late-summer concert takes place; during the rest of the year it is open to be seen and gawked at by visitors, like you.

Let's hang on to that thought while we look more closely at some of their wines:



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Unique Blend and Typical Blend*

Visit www.harbourestateswinery.com for more details or to purchase these great wines.

Harbour Estates Winery 2004 Petit Verdot/Malbec - \$18.95

This is the tale of two wines ... a wine that needs a little time in the bottle, a decanter, or a really good glass (see newsletter #23) versus a wine you pour straight into a standard glass and wonder why. In a standard glass it was tight, oaky, smokey, peppery and harshly tannic ... but in our Cabernet Spiegelau glass it opened up with luscious sweet fruit and smooth succulent tannins: so let's talk about that wine. The nose is still smokey, but now there's blueberries and blackberries with wafts of milk chocolate. In the mouth it's even more of a taste sensation: sweet red raspberries with hints of strawberries, a dusting of white pepper and some figs and plums get into the mix. This is quite a unique blend from Ontario. Owner Fraser Mowat says it's the only one of it's kind, and I could not find evidence to prove him wrong. This is also a limited quantity wine, so if you like unique as well as delicious – this is your wine.

A straight Petit Verdot from the same vintage is due to be released in May.

Harbour Estates Winery 2002 Cabernet - \$14.95

As we all now know the 2002 Vintage in Ontario, especially for reds, was blockbuster – and the wines are now starting to really come into their own. Case in point is this '02 Cabernet from Harbour Estates, with lots of pleasure for the nose and suppleness in the mouth. The smells are green pepper, black pepper, raspberry, plum and dark chocolate. The wine has a sweet entry into the mouth, smooth going through, but ends dry with some tannin grip. As it passes through you get the definite taste of raspberries and a hint of cedar. A warming sensation comes over you as it travels from front palate to back palate. This wine could still use a couple of years to develop more fully – but it has a great pedigree and is shaping up wonderfully. My advice is to buy a few and watch it grow.

These wines are only available at the winery.

Two more Harbour Estates wine reviews appear on our website this week: the 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, which has some great cherry flavours; and the 2004 Riesling, which is ripe with green apple tartness ... check them out.



The Cellar ... [the OntarioWineReview Forum](http://theOntarioWineReviewForum.com)

Grab a glass, come downstairs, pull up a chair, sit around the barrels and let's talk wine.

Hot Topics This Week: 1) Cork vs. Screw Cap; 2) The Dumbing Down of the Palate



The Wow Factor:

Every winery has a uniqueness to it ... be it the tasting bar, the barrel cellar, the gift shop ... something besides just the wine – it is here where we highlight another reason you should visit.

After your tastings, take a trip past the wine store down the driveway, hang a left, not a right – it turns into a laneway that traverses the right hand side of the vineyard – you'll notice on your left, row upon row of grape vines – now look to your right – there are trees growing all the way down the side of the hill, right down to the "harbour" below. The laneway twists and turns so if you want to marvel at the view, I would recommend stopping the car. Along this winding path you'll also find wood carvings carved right into the stumps or onto the side of trees – some great photo opportunities, especially the perched eagle. Stop for awhile to take in the beauty of your surroundings – vineyards behind you, water in front, and if you're lucky enough to catch the sunset you'll think you've died and gone to heaven. Harbour Estates brochure proclaims it to be "Niagara's

Estate Winery on the Water” ... and they ain’t just whistling Dixie. By the way, you’ll notice the symbol of Harbour Estates is the loon – Frazer has informed me “there’s a prize in it for you if you can spot the loon” ... good luck.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Mark this date on your calendar: Rock n’ Ribs*

The Rock n’ Ribs Event at Harbour Estates Winery is tentatively scheduled for September 16th ... a day long affair with all you can eat corn and ribs, wine and great live music. In the past Canadian rockers April Wine have appeared – will they again this year? Keep your eyes on the Harbour Estates website www.harbourestateswinery.com for updates ... cost for the day \$110 ... and it’s a sell out each and every year.

OntarioWineReview’s bi-weekly newsletter is devoted to the love, enjoyment and promotion of the wines of Ontario and the wineries that make them.



Psst, Pass It On ... keep the good wine flowing. Forward this newsletter to your mom in Milton, your son in Smith Falls, any other family member or loved one that you know needs good wine advice.

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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