

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.



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OntarioWineReview: *Do You Care?*

Where things come from used to be a big deal ... "American made", "Canadian made", "if it ain't homemade it ain't good". But, now it seems like the whole world is "Made in Korea, China or India". We get our canned goods with labels that say "Product of Thailand, Singapore or the Philippines". Our fruits and veggies are trucked in from places "down south" like Florida and California, and as far away as Mexico and Chile. *And nobody* seems to bat an eyelash anymore.

"I was vacationing in California one winter," a former Canadian farmer recounted to me, "and they were selling locally-grown head lettuce for \$1.69 packaged under the Dole name. When I returned home a week later, the same head of Dole California lettuce was selling for 69 cents at Loblaw's." We buy Maroc Clementines, Chilean grapes, Washington Red Delicious apples – all without thinking twice about where the products we put in our carts come from. While that is generally the case, there is still one product that we all search out religiously by country, and in some cases, specifically by region. "People don't care where their products come from anymore," said our aforementioned former Ontario farmer, "except for one: wine." I, for one, could not dispute him. "That's why we moved away from the locally grown country-market aspect of our business and into wine. Nobody cares anymore." He concluded sadly.

Of course, I am in the same boat, guilty of shopping for the best price on head lettuce, apples, pears, peas, cantaloupe, and countless other products, without paying attention to where they're from. However, whenever I enter the LCBO, I search out Australia, Chile, Italy and France. I think long and hard about South African wine and look skeptically at Bulgarian and other Eastern Block countries. The next time you walk through the LCBO doors take note, it is all set up by country, and not just the LCBO – every liquor store you enter from coast-to-coast, as well as those of our neighbours to the south ... there is not a red wine section and a white wine section. It's all separated out by country. Interesting huh? At the grocery store, all the apples are in one place – the sign tells you where they're from, but the writing is so small, it's almost non-existent. Now be honest, how many of you seek out the Ontario apples and are not swayed by this week's sale on Washington apples?

It's an interesting point our farmer friend brings up, and one I suggest floating at your next dinner party, just to see what comes out of it.

Here's something that was passed onto me about a month ago, I thought I would include it here for your perusal because it fits with the discussion above:

Oh Canada ...

Joe Smith started the day early having set his alarm clock (made in Japan) for 6am. While his coffeepot (made in China) was perking, he shaved with his electric razor (made in Hong Kong). He put on a dress shirt (made in Sri Lanka), designer jeans (made in Singapore) and tennis shoes (made in Korea). After cooking his breakfast in his new electric skillet (made in India) he sat down with his calculator (made in Mexico) to see how much he could spend today. After setting his watch (made in Taiwan) to the radio (made in India) he got in his car (made in Germany) and continued his search for a good paying CANADIAN JOB. At the end of yet another

discouraging and fruitless day, Joe decided to relax for a while. He put on his sandals (made in Brazil) poured himself a glass of wine (made in France) and turned on his TV (made in Indonesia), and then wondered why he can't find a good paying job in CANADA.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: A Couple of Summer Sippers

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

Jackson-Triggs 2004 Cabernet Franc Rose - \$13.95

www.jacksontriggswinery.com

As everyone knows Roses mean summer – and nothing says summer like this rose from Jackson-Triggs, it practically screams it from the glass. The first thing you'll notice is the pretty dark salmon colour, due to the 24-hour skin contact. Next, there's a fantastic nose that's loaded with strawberry, cotton candy, chocolate cherries and candied-kiwi. This is followed up by a drier taste than what the nose has let on. There's still noticeable strawberry, cherry and other red fruit, along with some citrus and a touch of fizz, but it finishes towards the dry side. This great, light tasting wine makes for a wonderful sipper on a beautiful warm day. Be warned though, this summer sipper won't be around long, it's already in fairly limited supply at the winery and at selected Wine Rack locations.

Palatine Hills 2004 Fume Blanc/Chardonnay - \$14.00

www.palatinehillsestatewinery.com

Here's one wine I consider a twofer – you can drink it, or you can play around with it to make something even more special. Let's start with the drinking part: a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay – yet the Sauvignon really has the upper hand over the Chard here, with a 73-27 split of the duties. Pouring it into the glass, you'll first notice a wonderful straw colour. Stick your nose in the glass and you'll get garden salad smells galore like fresh cucumber, carrots and celery, mixed in with some grass clippings, coconut, almonds, pistachios and hints of vanilla. The taste is much different, oakiness throughout, with toasted coconut and asparagus ... which ends with a little tartness and medium length. We then started playing around with the wine and found a delicious little summer refresher: a strawberry spritzer. Add sparkling water and a cut up strawberry – the sparkle helps aerate the wine and the strawberry cuts-through and smoothes-out the tart-ending giving it a more playful finish ... try it – we guarantee you'll like it.

Both wines are only available at the winery.



Oops, They Did It Again: Looking at past reviewed wineries and their new vintages.

Ridgepoint Wines

www.ridgepointwines.com

Ridgepoint continues to surprise and delight me – located in the shadow of Vineland Estates (you can see the Vineland tower from Ridgepoint's parking lot), they never seem daunted by that monolith looming over the hill. In fact, it might just inspire them to make better wines. Going back to taste a couple of their new 2004's, I continue to be impressed by both the hospitality and the wines. The [2004 Merlot](#) is a lighter style than you'll usually find in an Ontario Merlot, still with some drying-tannins, but it's dark fruit make up and ready-to-drink-now style, suggests more Chilean than Ontario; a real winner. The [2004 Cabernet-Merlot](#) is Ridgepoint's first blend, and is ready for (and priced for) lots of quaffing over the summer. Plenty of blackberry in the mouth and on the nose, with a wonderful dark cocoa finish ... and at 14.95 it's a bargain.



Uncorked and Decanted: Nifty gadgets, accessories and other things that enhance wine enjoyment.

Taps Brewing Company

10 Walker Road in Virgil ... www.tapsbeer.ca

As we head into the hot months of the year, many of you are now thinking about taking those summer jaunts

down to Niagara to taste some wine. Others will be going to Prince Edward County to check out the newest Ontario wine region; while still others will trek there way to the Lake Erie North Shore area to taste Ontario Undiscovered Country. But for those of you heading to Niagara there's a special treat in store for you and a reason to drag along your non-wine drinking friends. Those beer-swilling-buddies of yours, who can't understand why we make the trek to wine country to sample "that sh*t" ... when they, of course can just go to the corner beer store and pick up their favourite 6 or 12 pack; and when necessary, they head to the nearest liquor store to grab some cheap plonk for the "wife". These folks can now be tempted to come along for the ride and try their own taste preference ... beer.

Taps Brewing Company, located in Virgil, just a stone's throw away from Niagara-on-the-Lake, has been open, and "rolling off kegs" since September 2004. The brain-child of five family members, Taps taps into a market that is sorely lacking in the heart of wine country; filling a void for those not so enthralled by wine. The nice part is that Taps gives out tastings, much as would a winery. They feature three full-time beers and a seasonal brew. They are also looking into remaking a beer from last year – one that incorporates wine and beer into the same mix. "We take used wine casks and soak beer in them – that way the taste of the wine gets infused into the beer. It's really very good. Problem is we can only use the barrels once, so we keep needing more unwanted barrels from wineries." said Chris Jeffries, one of the 5 managing partners in this family owned and operated business. Unfortunately, they have yet to get a license to sell this savoury concoction, but those who tried it last year, loved it. "Our friends who tried it out last year keep asking us when we are going to be making more. We gave it away too fast – should have held onto a few, we didn't realized it's popularity." Chris concluded. Behind him one of those friends nods his head vigorously, Chris turns and notices him there. "We also seem to have a lot more friends these days," he says with a good-natured chuckle.

Taps is a little tricky to find, but once you've been you'll become a friend too, because they have a beer to suit any taste. The Premium Lager is easy drinking, smooth and tasty. Medium bodied, it has a crisp dry finish. The Red Cream Ale is darker, more flavourful, with a robust finish. Finally the Charleston Lager is a work in progress – the version I tried from the tap/bottle has a slightly bitter taste and reminded me of Labatt's 50. The newer version, that was still in the tank at the time, was a newer formula – lighter, fruitier, easy on the palate and smooth going down. I liked both the Premium and Red Cream – but the newly formulated Charleston is a winner, especially for summer.

If you go: look for the Virgil Business Park sign, with the large peach logo on it ... that's Henegan Road. Take it to the end and turn right onto Walker Road. Taps is near the end, on your right, at #10. A great little side trip for you and a great way to coax your beer-drinking friends to come along for the day.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Toronto Taste 2006*

Imagine a party so big it takes an old army base and aircraft hanger to house it; that's Toronto Taste. A fundraiser for Second Harvest (who also put together Taste of the Season in Niagara-on-the-Lake), 70+ top chefs and restaurants cook up some of the best food, while top wineries from Ontario, as well as the rest of the world, provide the drink (beer and spirits are also up for tasting and sampling). This is one big party, and it all happens June 11th, starting at 6pm at Downsview Park. Tickets are \$225 (of which \$125 is tax receipted). Get more information at www.torontotaste.ca

Winners!

Congratulations to our winners. This time round they have won a pair of passports to the upcoming Niagara New Vintages festival courtesy of The Niagara Grape & Wine Festival and OntarioWineReview. To see more about the festival and what's happening check out www.niagarawinefestival.com.

Our winners Sylvia Davidson (Toronto); Sue Couch (Beamsville); Barry Wylie (Oakville); and Teresa MacDonald (Burlington); will be among the first to sample the new wines from the '04 and acclaimed '05 Vintages. Cheers and have fun – see you on the trail.



The Cellar ... [the OntarioWineReview Forum](#)

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

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. 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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