

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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In this Edition

- **Ontario Wine Review:** *WINERY REVIEW – Cox Creek Cellars*
 - **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch:** *Pinot, a Dessert Apple ... and a Very Hot Tip*
 - **The Wow Factor:** *Besides the wine, check this out!*
 - **A Look At the State of Fruit Wine:** *We visit a Festival to see what's new*
 - **Uncorked and Decanted:** *Nifty gadgets, accessories and other things that enhance wine enjoyment*
 - **Wine Event Spotlight:** *Fiesta Buckhorn celebrates 10 Years – July 21- 23*
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OntarioWineReview: *WINERY REVIEW - Cox Creek Cellars*

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.

Now here's an interesting drive for you ... Guelph, yes, Guelph. There's a little winery on the outskirts called Cox Creek Cellars. They make *some* grape wines but they specialize in fruit, and they have some of the most interesting fruit wine combinations you'll ever taste ... but first let's take that drive.

“There's the sign.” Says my companion, as we pull off the 401 onto Highway 6 towards Guelph ... 10 minutes pass ... “Are you sure we're on the right road?” She asks.

“I think so, I haven't seen another sign pointing us in another direction, so we must be on the right path.”

“Feels like we're heading back to Toronto.”

“Let me see that map for a second ... I have a feeling I should turn left here,” I say, abruptly turning left across two lanes. My passenger is cowering protectively in her seat. “I did that because nobody was coming the other way,” I explained.

“Yeah, well warn me next time so I can close my eyes.” ... 10 more minutes pass ... “Are you sure we're on the right road?”

“I think so, though I haven't seen a sign for Cox Creek in quite some time now. We're looking for Wellington Road 26.”

“Well it seems that the numbers are going up not down – I think we're going the wrong way.”

“I'm going to give it another few kilometers then we'll have to figure it out by asking someone.”

“Where did you get this useless map?”

“Off their website ... wait I think I see a sign ... next right. Woo Hoo we made it.”

“Thank God.”

With thanks to St. Christopher (patron saint of travelers), we turned right off of Highway 6 onto Wellington 26 and then another quick right into a driveway ... and follow a lovely, languid trek down a seemingly endless one way single lane dirt road, past a few houses, then voila ... it opened up to reveal a cute little building hidden amongst the trees: Cox Creek Cellars.

A large dog met us in the driveway and seemed to guide us to a parking spot. Once parked, we exited the car, walked over to the wine store and entered: our dog/valet showing us the way.

A small hallway ending in a flight of stairs is immediately to our left; the rest of the medium-sized room is spread out to our right and straight ahead. Bottles fill the wine racks along the walls, and crate displays are scattered throughout the room, all with descriptive cards touting the wine. On the far wall, an eye-catching suit of armour stands guard over the door to the back room. From first glance, you'll notice this is not your average winery. The lady behind the tasting counter was friendly and happy to see us ... she poured a number of interesting and tasty wines including a delicious [Late Harvest Gewurtraminer](#), a chestnut aged Pinot Noir, a variety of fruit blends and an incredible spiced apple. With each pour, each taste and each nod of our heads she seemed to beam with pride. She even apologized for the lousy map, “the city doesn't let us put up anymore signage then

we already have.” Explained Jerry Trochta, the winery owner, as she took us on a verbal tour of the winery and its wines. Two of the most interesting you’ll read about in the pick of the bunch section – and as for the wow factor ... it came with an impromptu trip to the field.



Grape Guy’s Picks of the Bunch: *Pinot, a Dessert Apple ... and a Very Hot Tip*
Visit www.coxcreekcellars.on.ca for more details or to purchase these great wines.

Cox Creek Chestnut Barrel Pinot Noir - \$14.95

I always like a winery that takes a risk and tries something new, even if it doesn’t work. Fortunately, for you and me, this little experiment does succeed. Cox Creek takes Pinot Noir and ages it in Chestnut Barrels, as opposed to the usual oak. The result is an interesting wine that takes on some of the natural nuttiness from the wood. The nose is wonderful with hints of dark chocolate covered cherries and strawberries along with some subtle earthiness. Even better is the taste, lightly nutty and woody with hints of strawberry. It’s a light, crisp, easy drinking Pinot that’s ready for enjoyment now. It can also benefit from a slight chill (if you wish), say about an hour in the fridge.

Cox Creek Cellars Spiced Iced Russet - \$13.70 (500ml)

Oh baby, is this ever good! Quite possibly one of the best dessert wines I have ever tried, certainly the best apple wine. Smells of apples and cinnamon emanate from the glass, and the taste does not disappoint. Those same flavours appear on the tongue with caramel and brown sugar ... I’d like to call it “baked apples in a glass”, but there’s so much more. How’d they do it? The wine is blended with a variety of spices (that remain a secret known only to the winemaker and his wife – both owners of Cox Creek). I was told there is cinnamon and saffron in the mix, along with 11 other spices ... all mulled and allowed to ferment with the wine to give it that unique and wonderful flavour. A delicious dessert wine that is not overpoweringly sweet, although its sugar code is rated at a whopping 26. Well balanced – with a fantastic finish, a great compliment to light desserts like biscotti, or just enjoyed on its own.

These wines are only available at the winery.

Check out the other Cox Creek Wines Reviewed: [Country Symphony #6](#) and the [L.H. Gewurztraminer](#)

Hot Tip on a Hot Wine: This wine is going so fast that I had to put it in this newsletter ... in fact they might be out of it already, but I just had to direct your attention to the new *Butler’s Grant Vineyard Riesling* from Creekside Estate Winery, it is to die for, and at \$15.95 it’s a steal. It’s available at the winery only and you might want to contact them to check availability www.creeksidewine.com.



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

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



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 our tastings, Jerry took us out past where we had parked the car. With her trusty dog, Gabby (having joined us from her lounging position near the garage/barn), following right along behind. She walked us into an open area that was completely surrounded by trees, a very private and secluded spot to hold an event. An apple tree in the far corner of the area hung heavy with fruit.

“This is where we have weddings and other functions,” she told us. “It’s very peaceful and people love the atmosphere.” Looking around at the open, out-of-the-way surroundings, she pointed out where people set up the tent, the dance floor, the wedding canopy. “And by night they’re partying under the stars.” She concluded. As she talked, we walked over to the apple tree in the far corner. Gabby, the dog, took her cue and picked up an apple, so did Jerry. She handed it to me and told me to throw it. I did. Gabby dropped her apple and sped off after the now flying piece of fruit – she caught it on the second bounce and brought it back with nary a mark on it. Her reward for this performance? With a word of praise or two from Jerry, Gabby got to keep and eat the apple. Cool.



Looking At Fruit Wine: *We visit a Festival to see what's new*

At this year's 7th annual [Archibald's](#) Fruit Wine and Food Festival, held in Bowmanville, I noticed some interesting trends emerging. First, there's the ready acceptance of fruit wines by the public: while not packed wall-to-wall, the turn out was excellent. Second, the variety of fruits and pseudo-fruits being used (liked goldenrod and maple) was quite extraordinary, in both winemaker's choice of ingredients and quality. Speaking of quality, the quality of foods being prepared was superb: herb crusted chicken, a variety of three different kinds of pork tenderloin, lamb meatballs and souvlaki – all made, or paired expertly with, fruit wine. Finally, there was an interesting willingness to experiment, with, of all things, chocolate. Three wineries in attendance had blended in chocolate with their fruit wine: Archibald's (cherry), Rush Creek (strawberry) and Kawartha Lakes (cranberry) all with varying levels of success. The best of these fruit/chocolate blends, that I have tasted, is made by Scotch Block Winery in Milton. Their "Truffle" series of chocolate fruit wines includes black currant, raspberry, and [strawberry](#). What does this all mean? Ontario fruit wines and wineries are showing great versatility and a willingness to experiment, which bodes well for their continued, and future, success.

The most interesting winery of the day, and newest, was [Moon Shadows Estate Winery](#) of Haliburton. By law classified as a fruit winery, they are Ontario's, and quite possibly the world's, first maple syrup based winery. Each wine is made with a varying percentage of maple syrup, but only 3 wines from their vast list, actually have noticeable maple flavour: [Golden Maple](#), [Cran Maple](#) and [Maple Sugar](#). Others I tried that were winners: the black current and [Strawberry Shortcake](#). Thus, proving that Ontario fruit wines and wineries are leading the way with innovation, experimentation and a fine quality of product.



Uncorked and Decanted: *Nifty gadgets and accessories that enhance wine enjoyment.*

Drop Stop

Anyone who has been to the Wine and Cheese Show; Gourmet Wine and Food Show or any other major wine event has seen these handy little devices in action. They're the silver spouts that flash at you while the wine is being poured. When not in a bottle they are silver discs and they have been around for years. They were invented by a Danish inventor who was tired of finding wine-rings and drops on his tablecloth after dinner parties. It's a simple concept really – a thin disc made from durable, yet pliable material that can be rolled up and inserted into the top of the bottle. The "cutting edge" created actually cuts the drop off before it gets a chance to roll down the neck and side of the bottle – saving your tablecloth, or whatever other surface the bottle gets put down upon after pouring. Over in Europe they love these things – at most major wine events the European winemakers search out the Drop Stop booth and beg for samples so they can use them during their pourings, or they bring their own and are themselves the ones being harassed for their extras. Most of these wineries swear they are the best and simplest invention ever conceived, and they last for years – just wash, wipe and they're ready to use again.

In North America we seem less enthralled by these stain-saving discs – but maybe now there's a reason to get more hopped up about them. For years Drop Stops have come as a solid silver disc. Now, through [Cairde Enterprises](#) you can have logos, pictures, words, whatever you like, printed right on them; and they make great wedding mementos, or tasting room giveaways. The real chance here is as a marketing tool using something more prestigious than pens, pads or ISO glasses. They make great giveaways for restaurants, wine related businesses (as business cards even), holiday gifts or gifts with purchase. And the best part of these Drop Stops is they're re-useable and durable, so it's something people will keep and use for years to come, and of course they'll remember you. Here at OntarioWineReview, we had a few made up with our logo on them to test the product and the process, and we were over-the-moon about how they turned out. The service, the delivery time, and especially the finished product were all top notch.

If you are interested in ordering for yourself, your company, your next corporate event, your tasting room, or where ever else you need a long lasting, durable and useful memorable giveaway or unique memento, check out www.canadianwinepromo.ca for more details.



Wine Event Spotlight: Fiesta Buckhorn – July 21- 23

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of the Fiesta Buckhorn, an event just North of Peterborough that brings the world of wine, beer and food together in a fantastic park-like setting. Booths are set up inside the Community Centre as well as in the out-buildings scattered along a path on the property. More than 80 exhibitors are planning to be on hand this year, offering their wares for sampling such as regional cuisine, fruit and grape wine, craft beers and other great goodies. There's also live music, informative seminars and plenty more to keep you entertained. The Fiesta runs from July 21 to 23 ... admission is \$12 and trust me, it's an event well worth the price of admission. Check it out on line at www.fiestabuckhorn.com.

TICKET GIVEAWAY: OntarioWineReview would like to thank Fiesta Buckhorn organizers for donating a pair of passes to the event. The usual rules apply: I need your name, full address with postal code, and a 250 word essay (just kidding about the essay) – sent to michael@ontariowinereview.com with “Fiesta Forever” in the subject line. All entries must be received by 11:59pm Friday June 30 ... Good luck.

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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