

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

With all the great wines Ontario has to offer, the newsletter was starting to be too small a forum to showcase them all ... even by expanding the category to two "Picks of the Bunch" and a "Hot Tip", there was still plenty of great wine left unmentioned.

Which is why I am pleased to introduce [The Grape Guy's Weekly Wine Notes](#) – now featured, appropriately enough, in [the Cellar](#) (the OntarioWineReview forum). Every Tuesday, a new wine will be posted for your viewing, reading and tasting pleasure ... so be sure to check it out. Enjoy!



OntarioWineReview: *Looking for a Good Home*

Limited Edition wine, Special Edition wine, Reserve wine, Special Limited Edition Reserve ... what does it all mean? Unfortunately, sometimes it means absolutely nothing at all, and sometimes it means everything. Never has there been a more apt use of the Latin words "caveat emptor" (Buyer Beware) – then when it comes to wines labeled with these monikers. The problem is there has never been a set standard for the word "reserve" in Canada. The moniker has come to infer a wine that has been aged longer, or held back from the regular bottling, but in truth it has no real meaning. A friend of mine, who worked for one of Canada's wine conglomerates back in the early 90's, once told me "[my company] holds back [that particular wine] for a month before bottling, calls it "reserve" and jacks the price by five bucks." According to VQA Ontario (and by extension Canada) "it's not a regulated term", it's up to the discretion of individual wineries how they use the term - in other words it's an honour system. This is where being a savvy consumer really comes into play, and where going directly to the winery is most beneficial. Here you can ask the important questions like: "What makes this wine a reserve?" "How long was it in barrel as opposed to your non-reserve wine?" "How does it differ from the non-reserve?" "Is it a different blend, if so how so?" etc. Best of all, you can taste the wines to see what you prefer. You are the ultimate judge, as to whether or not the wine is worth the extra few bucks.

Some wineries have shunned the word "reserve", because of its negative connotations to savvy consumers, and have given their reserve wines different names. Some examples of this practice are [Southbrook Winery](#) who ditched the "reserve" moniker for "Triomphe"; [Featherstone Estate Winery](#) has the darkly named Onyx (for their reserve Cabernet Merlot). And then there are wineries like [Stratus](#) that make nothing but reserve wines. In fact, the only way to get your hands on their non-reserve (to buy or taste) is to get it on-line or at a restaurant.

Meanwhile, there really are some truly unique wines being made out there that would, should, and could be classified as reserve, but get more fanciful names for better bottle appeal ... some wineries call these wines their 'experimental wines', and many are made in very limited quantity. [Creekside Estate](#) has the Lost Barrel and their Signature series; [Featherstone](#) has the Cherry Barrel Cabernet Franc; [Southbrook](#) has Triomphe; and [Chateau des Charmes](#) has Equuleus, just to name a few. These wines, more often than not, are made from a single barrel of the best grapes, and in some cases, from only the best vintage, and may be limited to as little as 25 cases or less (that's about 300 bottles). Some wineries even limit the amount you can purchase and don't sample the wine in store.

In some rare cases, there are some wines that are kept under wraps to the general public, allowing word-of-mouth to be their only advertising. In these cases, the only two people likely to offer you a taste will either be the winemaker or owner (your average wine store employee does not have authorization to open a bottle). They will make the determination as to who (for lack of a better term) "is worthy" to take home a bottle (read: serious collectors, or those truly interested in something extra special). I equate this practice to a friend of mine who runs an animal rescue and shelter ... she is very particular about to whom her animals are adopted; she wants to make sure her rescues find good, deserving homes, because each animal is like a baby she helped nurture back to health. The same can be said of these very special wines (ones that have been nurtured this far along): the winemaker/owner want to make sure their best wines are going to a good home; to someone who will baby the wine (not to one who will pop the cork at the next drunken bacchanalia). The only way to find out about these wines is to ask, show interest and listen. Blowhards, blaggards and the boisterous know-it-alls will rarely see these bottles.

Now a word to the wise ... before you go thinking you just weren't worthy of a special bottle, I will tell you truthfully that most wineries just don't have anything like that – so don't be offended if nothing is proffered. But do feel special if the winemaker or owner pulls out that "something special" from behind the counter; those are the winery moments you'll always remember ... and the bottle you'll cherish ... pulling it out for that very special occasion. Best of all, you'll have a story to tell that'll go along with it.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Two Late Summer Wines*

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

East Dell Estates Winery 2005 Summer Rose - \$9.95

www.eastdell.com

The dog days of summer are almost upon us, and you're going to need something to cool down with on those hot days. Always on the lookout for you, I have found that special something that you're sure to enjoy on the deck, dock or patio of your choice. This Summer Rose is a blend of everyone's favourite summer sipper, Riesling (70%), and a light Gamay (30%). There's a sweet smell when it first hits your nose: strawberries and cream or cotton candy, but in the mouth it's drier than what the nose suggests, with a definite taste of Bing cherries and raspberries ... which reminds me, if you want to try something fun, unique and interesting, freeze up some raspberries and use them as "ice cubes" to keep the wine chilled on those heat-filled days. Anyway you drink it, this is a delicious, light and refreshing wine.

Find another new East Dell wine reviewed on the website, the [2004 Reserve Pinot Noir](#) is simply delicious and worth knowing about.

Flat Rock Cellars 2005 Twisted - \$18.95

www.flatrockcellars.com

The tasting of this wine happened during the Father's Day 2005 BBQ at my parent's house. My sister-in-law, seeing a piece of paper in my hand, asked "are you reviewing this one" ... I answered "yes" ... "That should be fun," she exclaimed, plopping herself down on the couch beside me. The first word she uttered was "pleasant", but this wine was more than just 'pleasant', it had a complexity to its nose that caused some debate around the living room; but held little to no controversy on the palate. The debate was about the lemon vs. lime distinction on the nose, also, was the tropical fruit mango or papaya? And there were some floral scents causing some havoc too. In the end, we decided more lemon than lime, more papaya than mango; and definitely a sweet floral smell was present ... maybe rose petals (but none of us has the horticultural background to be definitive). The palate caused no disagreement at all. Adjectives like pleasant, delicious and tasty were thrown out around the room, almost in unison ... then again so were comments like "refreshing" and "surprisingly not too sweet." My sister-in-law summed it up best when she said "there was no surprise in the mouth – it tastes like it smells." "I couldn't have agreed more," I said, as I leaned over to show her my notes with the exact same phrase written down. "I like this wine" she concluded – and yet again, I agreed. For the record 'Twisted' refers to the blend – a "pleasant" melee of Riesling, Gewurztraminer and Chardonnay ... enjoy!

Two other new Flat Rock wines are reviewed this week on the website; the [2004 Gravity Pinot Noir](#) and the [2004 Chardonnay](#).

All of the above wines are available at the winery and the LCBO

Hot Tip on a Hot Wine: This week I bring you a twofer as the hot tip ... Chateau des Charmes has long been making high quality age-worthy Canadian VQA red wine. The last two I suggested, the [2001 Pinot Noir \(\\$17.95\)](#) and the ['99 Cabernet-Merlot \(\\$19.95\)](#), are still drinking well today and still have good cellar life left in them. Now I bring your attention to two more. Two Cabernet Sauvignons from the blockbuster '02 vintage. These two Cabs are grown in two different vineyards - located right across the road from one another - and show different characteristics, yet are equally lush. There's the [St. David's Bench](#) (grown on the winery side in clay soil) and the [Paul Bosc Vineyard](#) (grown across the road in sandy soil). These two amazing reds will undoubtedly impress further in years to come and should age very well over the next 10-15 years. These two will make great investments in your wine cellar's future.



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

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

The Grape Guy presents "Weekly Wine Notes"! A savoury selection of Ontario wines to impress, enjoy, or just plain drink! A NEW Wine Selection is added into the [OWR Cellar](#) every Tuesday!

Last Tuesday the first wine was added to the "[Weekly Wine Notes](#)" in the OWR Cellar - be sure to check out this inaugural wine: [2005 Lailey Vineyards Gamay](#).



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

13th Street Winery
www.13thstreetwines.com

On a rainy June afternoon, [13th Street Winery](#) had their new release party for their Spring releases ... 7 new wines in total, including two sparkling, a marvelous rose, a reserve Chardonnay, a [2005 Riesling](#) to die for, and two 04 reds including a [Cab-Merlot](#) blend and a straight [Cab Franc](#). A party done with all the typical 13th Street pomp and circumstance - a low key, come as you are, go when you want, BBQ. As for the wines, they showed good depth and great potential, considering they were all bottled in the last week and still had some bottle-shock to overcome, even so 13th Street continues to impress with their great tasting wines and the style in which they are made. This year, 13th Street announced that as an added incentive to visit, they have decided to expand their hours to include Sundays; that's good news for those who could not get there during their usual Saturdays only opening of previous years. Keep in mind, they make small batches of exceptional quality wines, so bottles do not stick around long; if you like it, buy it in a quantity you can handle - it is for that reason I must say in the immortal words of Shakespeare (and I paraphrase here) ... get thee to the winery ... get thee some bottles ... and get them into your cellar. Enjoy.



Wine Event Spotlight: Hops and Grapes Afternoon at Stonechurch

In these very pages I've talked about [Stonechurch Vineyards](#) and [Taps Brewing Company](#). Now they have teamed up to bring you a "Hops and Grapes Afternoon at Stonechurch" - samples of wine and beer with an assortment of appropriate nibbles. Just the thing for a summer afternoon. What's even better; it won't cost you a dime. It all takes place Saturday and Sunday August 5th and 6th from 12 to 5 each day. Have fun.

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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