

## 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 – 70**  
**November 22, 2007**

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

Two nights left folks ... and these are the biggies – Reserve Cabernet Franc – a few tickets still remain for what is bound to be the piece-de-resistance nights: Tuesday November 27 and Thursday December 6. [Tickets can be purchased by phone or online get all the information of how to do so by clicking here or visit the website.](#)

I've been adding a few interesting tidbits about the Challenge to the Challenge's blog site, you can read about a wine disqualification and 2 wineries that had 2 spoiled bottles on the same night ... [check it out here.](#)

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### OntarioWineReview: *WINERY REVIEW – Maleta Estate 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.*

“In an old house in Paris, all covered with vines, lived twelve little girls in two straight lines ...”. Sorry about that thought I was writing a little something to my niece ... but you would forgive my little old house reference if you got a look at Maleta Winery. Maleta like so many of Ontario's smaller wineries Maleta is based out of a converted house, or at the very least, a structure that is homey in nature; but unlike in the story of Madeline, where something was “just not right” – there is a lot that is going right at this small winery.

Maleta is located on one of those quaint back road, residential streets in Niagara-on-the-Lake – not big city residential, small town residential, where their nearest neighbour is a few hundred yards away. First things first, the drive in: it's down this sloping driveway that leads to 3 parking spaces beside the front door ... during busy times, such as [Taste the Season](#) (held weekends in November) or any of the other wine festivals, you can find yourself parking on the side of the driveway alongside one of those steep embankments (watch out in the wintertime, these slopes can be treacherous for those who are not so nimble afoot, making the trek to the tasting room can prove to be a worry to some).

Walking through the front door, you step into a small rectangular room with a half bar in front of you (looks more like a bar you'd have in your basement), and the cash register is to it's right. The bar can accommodate 3 or 4 huddled around the outside. The room itself can hold no more than a dozen standing shoulder to shoulder. A few months back, I put up a fun little poll on the website looking for reader's opinions about the smallest tasting room in Ontario, Calamus was victorious (as I was pretty sure they would be) but Maleta might have come top five, had I remembered to add their name to the list of choices. Maleta's tasting room can start to feel a little cramped with 6-8 people in it, though during festivals, they open up a little anteroom to take the overflow; this room is no bigger than the tasting room itself and although it doubles the size and number of people that can come in – the tasting room here still remains an intimate affair for all concerned.

The wine store is a mish-mash of wine racks and cut case displays. You may find owner Daniel Pambianchi behind the counter, or Barbara Leslie, teacher at Niagara College Teaching Winery as well as the co-author of Canadian Wine for Dummies, or even Niagara's tallest winemaker Mike Komar, who towers over the tasting room with a jovial laugh and occasional quip – you have to be pretty quick to catch what Mike is saying because he'll quick to retract (nothing insulting to patrons I assure you, more self-deprecating, but he's good natured and lots of fun to speak with).

Maleta is a young winery, having opened its doors in 1998, but over the past few years it has released some pretty exceptional wines. As it finds its feet and the winemaking team becomes more adept at what it's producing and gels as a team (Daniel, Mike and Arthur Harder), you'll be seeing more great wines coming from their cellars, out their door and hopefully, to a table near you.



**Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch:** *Cabernets and a Riesling full of Bubbles*  
For directions and more information visit [www.meletawinery.com](http://www.meletawinery.com)

Maleta Winery 2005 Cabernets - \$19.95

As the 2005's roll out, I am noticing lots of heavily tannic, dark fruit dominated wines. One winery I was at, mentioned that the fruit they picked had high brix levels (sugar levels), thus allowing the yeast to create more alcohol in the wines and thereby giving us fuller bodied age-worthy reds. 2005, in my opinion, is going to be the year of the blockbuster – wines to lie down to enjoy later and so far I have been proven right. This Cabernet blend from Maleta is a fine example of something that is going to need some time. Dark, cooked fruit greet the nose with hints of blackberries, black currants and black raspberries. The palate follows through on the darkness-on-the-edge-of-fruit department and also throws in some coffee and heavy tannins. Still a little closed this wine will require another 2-3 years of bottle age to open up a bit ... then maybe a few more years to mellow.

Maleta Winery 2005 Old Vines Brut Riesling - \$25.00

Winemaker Arthur Harder seems to be everywhere these days ... or at least on everybody's radar. He's making some fine Riesling for the likes of Calamus, Ridgepoint, Maleta and even had a hand in the Cattail Creek three. But I know from speaking with him, that Sparkling wine is a passion of his. Pairing up with Daniel Pambianchi, owner of Maleta, who shares the same passion, the two decided to produce a sparkling Riesling in the traditional method using the oldest Riesling vines they could find (planted in 1969). The wine was left on its lees, in bottle, for 14 months. The result is a wine with incredible length, finesse and freshness. Typical Riesling nose of sweet peach and apples, but its in the mouth is where this wine shines. Fine bubbles carry the peach, apple and lemon citrus zing flavours that kick around playfully on the tongue. The beauty of this bubbly is that it manages to keep it's Riesling character within all that fizz, and then there's that great lasting finish. Only 90 cases of this spectacular sparkling were made. So hurry to Maleta and get yours. If it's sold out have no fear, I have it on good authority that more is on the way, passion like this does not die after the first go around ... so keep your eyes peeled for the next release.

*All wines above are available at the winery only.*

**Cabernet Franc Preview:** We are now in the middle of the Cabernet Franc Challenge - I thought it only fitting to give you a preview of one of the wines we have by now tasted in the hopes of sparking your interest in attending one of the last two nights ... [ticket information is available here.](#)

[Vineland Estates 2006 Cabernet Franc - \\$12.95](#) ... (W, L)

**Holiday Sweeties – checking in with the newest sweet stuff:**

As we get closer to the holidays our thoughts turn to sweet wines and luscious desserts – here are a few suggestions to make your holidays that much sweeter:

[Cattail Creek 2006 Select Late Harvest Vidal - \\$20.00](#) ... (W)

[Vineland Estates 2004 Cabernet Franc Icewine - \\$42.00](#) ... (W)

[Willow Springs 2003 Vidal Icewine- Testa Limited Reserve - \\$9.95 \(200ml\)](#) ... (W)

*Availability legend: W (Winery) – L (LCBO/Vintages) – WTH (Winery to Home).*



### Weekly Wine Notes and More

The Grape Guy presents the "Weekly Wine Note"! A savoury selection of Ontario wines to impress, enjoy, or just plain drink! A NEW Wine Selection is added to <http://ontariowinereviews.blogspot.com> every Tuesday or listen to the Podcast at [www.ontariowinereview.libsyn.com](http://www.ontariowinereview.libsyn.com)!

Here are the [Weekly Wine Notes](#) that were added to the Blog over the past two weeks:

Angels Gate 2005 Gamay Noir ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

Huff Estates 2006 Wismer Vineyard Riesling Reserve ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

There are some new report in the [On the Road with the Grape Guy](#) section:

[Italian Wine and Grappa Tasting](#)

[Caliber – Cantina Tollo Tasting](#)

And, just in time for the holidays ... [Bubbles and Sweets Tasting](#)

The November 24<sup>th</sup> LCBO Vintages Release report is available here:

[Ontario "Vintages" Releases: Saturday November 24, 2007 Vintages Release](#)

[And a look at the Beaujolais Nouveau for 2007](#)

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### 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.*

Stan Maleta, a car enthusiast, started Maleta in 1998. Stan created a garagiste feel to his winery that still resonates today in its small look and feel, complete with production facility (seen from the parking lot) that looks like a makeshift garage you'd see at any Indy race. But when and if you get a chance, take a look at those old labels, if you can still find them. They're beige bordered with a water colour interior picture of a mechanic's shop; an inspired parallel allusion to the small winemakers of France (called garagistes) and a tribute to one's passion for cars. Those labels are being phased out for a more modern look, but some old posters of Niagara wine labels still show Maleta's inventive early branding.

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### Advertisement

**Cruise for Food and Wine Lovers!** In early 2008, The Globe and Mail and the Food Network will be hosting an exclusive ten-day Caribbean luxury cruise. From cooking classes, to wine tasting with Beppi Crosariol from the Globe, every day will be a gourmet experience for food and wine lovers on this unique once-in-a lifetime cruise adventure. Special excursions and activities planned for each port of call. For full details: <http://www.globeandmailcruise.com/odyssey/index.cfm> As a bonus all attendees to the Ontario Wine Review Cabernet Franc Challenge will receive a free wine tote bag compliments of The Globe and Mail.

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### Wine Event Spotlight: *Wrapped Up in the Valley and an Open House not to miss*

The 20 Valley is at it again ... this time all the wineries are on the same page with a wine and cheese weekend, [www.20valley.ca](http://www.20valley.ca), still called "Wrapped up in the Valley" ([read last year's review](#)). This 2-weekend event (November 24 and 25; December 1 and 2) includes 12 wineries and a whole lotta cheese. Passports are \$20 each and by visiting just 4 wineries you'll pick yourself up a 4-bottle re-useable cloth tote bag.

Noticeably absent from this year's list of 20 Valley winery participants is [Featherstone](#) ... one winery you do not want to pass by this time of year ... owner and goodies-chef extraordinaire Louise Engel pulls out all the stops and makes this annual Holiday Open House an event to remember. Not only will they be pouring fabulous Featherstone wines but you'll sample delicacies like: blue cheese shortbread; mushroom-ricotta tartlets; walnut-cranberry stuffed brie laced with Fabiana's pepper-berry blast; marinated olives; and seasoned nuts. They are not part of the tote-bag giveaway, but you can walk away with some great recipes (if you talk nicely to Louise) that will wow everybody at your own holiday get together – just remember, these goodies go better with the wine from the winery that gave you the recipe - know what I mean. The [Featherstone Holiday Open House](#) runs one weekend only: Saturday November 24, 11:00 am-5:00 pm, Sunday November 25, 11:00 am-5:00 pm.

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



**What can the Grape Guy do for you ...** Michael Pinkus (Grape Guy) provides a variety of wine related services that you might be interested in taking advantage of: he gives lectures, leads seminars, conducts tastings, sets up tours; consults, selects and judges. He also gives interviews, broadcasts, podcasts and writes. [Contact the Grape Guy if you require any of these services or have any questions.](#)



**Psst, Pass It On ...** keep the good wine flowing. Forward this newsletter to your mom in Mimico your uncle in Uxbridge, your great aunt in Grand Bend or 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](mailto:michael@ontariowinereview.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

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