

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 – 154
March 24, 2011

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OntarioWineReview: *Tank and Barrel, Take 1*

Sometimes I get invited to a winery and they want me to taste some of the wine they have in barrel or in tank ... these are not finished wines mind you, rather they are wines in progress, and it's fun to get a sneak peak at some of the wines that will be coming out, some sooner, some later. Now, by no means will the wines end up this way – what I am tasting is just a snap shot of what these wines are like on this given day in their evolutionary life on their way to bottle. Some wines are closer to bottling than others, but all are worth tasting to see where they came from, where they are, and where they are going. My mission, on these tank and barrel excursions, is to hopefully get an idea as to how they will be, are they something to look forward to or something that needs work? Over the past few months I have tasted wines from a few new wineries, two in Niagara and one upcoming winery to the Lake Erie North Shore, plus a little last minute bonus that I hope makes its way to market:

On this Barrel and Tank tour my first stop is a new winery called Between the Lines. I have reviewed a couple of their wines, including a [Cabernet Franc](#) and a [Riesling](#), but I also got a taste of what winemaker Greg Wertsch had in his barrel room: Lemberger. Not a usual grape variety you find in Ontario, nor is it one you would think of hanging your winery's future on in this vinifera-based-world. But that's just what Greg has planned. Lemberger, known in Austria as Blaufrankisch, is an interesting grape to say the least and can be found in cooler climates like Austria and Germany, and is known for making soft and easy drinking red wines. What I tried was a blend from 2009 made with Lemberger (60%) – Cabernet Franc (40%) that showed some great promise. The wine's colour was dark as night and had smoky, raspberry and cigar notes that were actually very appealing. In Greg's mind this is to be Between the Lines flagship wine and will always be in limited supply, with no more than 9 barrels being produced in any one vintage. This is definitely something to keep an eye on.

Sometimes you can't get to the barrels, so the barrel comes to you, that's just what Tom O'Brien did during this years 2011 London Wine and Food Show. Tom, along with Mike O'Brien, are soon to open Cooper's Hawk winery in the Lake Erie North Shore, and they thought it best to bring along a barrel sample of an upcoming wine so that this in progress winery could be part of the Lake Erie display that was set up in a special section of the show floor. The showcase wine was a 2008 Cabernet-Merlot (60% Franc / 40% Merlot) aged, so far, 16 months in French oak barrels. The wine showed good concentration of both fruit and colour with blackberry, vanilla and nice spice on the palate. I also tried a finished wine or two from Cooper's Hawk, but this barrel sample showed some good promise for their future.

My final stop, on this week's look at Tank and Barrel samples was to Pondview, where my previous

samples from barrel had been what would eventually become their award winning [Bella Terra Chardonnay](#). This tasting was during the wine and chocolate event put on by the wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Owner Lou Puglisi insisted, with very little persuasion needed, that I try a few of the new 2010 whites currently in tank. The first of these was a 2010 Pinot Grigio, which should see the light of day on the May long weekend (May 21), this is a first for Pondview and it's coming along nicely with lots of tropical fruit on the nose and a dry, along with good acid balance, finish (expected production: 500 cases). Their 2010 Riesling will rival their [2009 Riesling](#), with a nice balance of fruit and acid; currently there is pear on the palate with a lovely lingering finish, expected release is also in May and should yield between 400-500 cases. Finally, we have another first for Pondview, a 2010 Gewurztraminer; the last time they made one they blended it, but this time they're going to leave it as a straight varietal. Another wine set for that May long weekend release party, and this just might be the stunner of the group: lots of good floral and spice tones with some candied orange peel, yummy. There's a real pleasant acidity and lovely finish ... I cross my fingers that it's just as good in bottle (very limited production of only 150 cases). All these wines point to a very good spring at Pondview.

Before closing off, I must make mention of sipping on a tank sample at Legends with Serge Papineau this past week. He secreted me a small tasting of some Cabernet Franc he is hoping to make a single varietal bottling of, something that hasn't been done at Legends in quite some time (2003 rings a bell – but I might have heard wrong, I was that excited). The wine we sampled was from 2010 and has yet to see barrel, but the flavours were rich in red fruit with hints of cherry tobacco, I wish Serge luck in shepherding this to bottle – should be good if it makes it there, but this wine's saga has much more time ahead in which to unfold ... let's hope it makes it's way to barrel for another sample in a year or so.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: Cabs Franc and Sauv plus a Riesling

Southbrook 2007 'Whimsy' Cabernet Franc - \$34.95 (W)

www.southbrook.com

This is a delicious Cabernet Franc from the great '07 vintage taken from the 5 most interesting barrels of Cab Franc harvested and made at Southbrook ... basically, this is barrel selection at its finest. The nose is raspberry puree and vanilla with a nice sweetness coming from that nice ripe fruit smell. The palate shows the complexity and finesse within this wine: raspberry, cherry notes with hints of tobacco, good acid balance and fine tannins, finishing off with exotic spice ... very exciting and very tasty. This wine ain't no whimsy, it's a finely crafted, five-barrel beauty. Price: \$34.95 – Rating: **** ½

Coffin Ridge 2009 Vintner's Private Reserve Riesling - \$18.80 (W)

www.coffinridge.ca

A more traditional style of Riesling here from the Coffin... their Bone Dry Riesling truly is, while on the other hand this Private Reserve gives you all the taste and flavour expected from this grape. The nose is peach, apple and toned down tropical notes. The palate has fresh apple and peach with a sprinkling of lemon zest; the finish gives you the best of both worlds: tart lemonade flavours with just the right touch of sweetness; reminds me of those Country Time Lemonade ads, have I just dated myself? Price: \$18.80 – Rating: ****

Strewn 2007 Terroir Cabernet Sauvignon - \$33.00 (W)

www.strewnwinery.com

Of all the Strewn 2007 Terroir wines I've tried, this is my favourite. While I enjoyed the Franc, dug the 'Three' and hope for the best for the Merlot, the Cab Sauv (from Strewn's own vineyard) carries the day. The nose is a lovely mix of blackberry and spice, while on the palate you get chocolate,

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cassis, spice and black raspberry all with silky tannins and a good 13.9% alcohol – all this helps to coat the mouth with flavour. Delicious, something I could easily plow my way through quite happily in an evening, but sharing would be okay too. Price: \$33.00 – Rating: **** ½

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More: *Chile / Argentina, What I'm Drinking*

A new Ontario wine is reviewed every Tuesday ... take two minutes to listen to the [Podcast](#) or read the tasting notes on the [Blog](#).

[Weekly Wine Notes](#) (added to the Blog and Pod in the past few weeks):

Due to illness I was unable to record any these past two weeks

[On the Road with the Grape Guy:](#)

Trips, tours and tastings – join me as I review the highs, and sometimes, the lows
[Argentina and Chile Taste and Buy](#)

[Lost and Found \(blog\)](#)

Wines that got "lost" in my cellar - some are Treasures others Trash ... Find out what happened
Nothing To Report This Week

[Taste it Again Grape Guy \(blog\)](#)

Find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the years
Nothing To Report This Week

[What I'm drinking Tonight \(blog\)](#)

When it's not an Ontario wine, here's what I'm pulling out of the cellar
[3 New Reviews Added](#)

Including: Wines from Chile, Spain and the USA

[Vintages Release \(blog\)](#)

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Quick Sips: *Occasionally interesting things cross my desk that I would like to pass on*

March 2011

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This Just In - Grapes are not Having Sex ... as funny as it sounds it is also true. Turns out our current crop of grape varieties are more closely related than you think, which means diversity is at a premium. Here's an interesting parallel, think of the grape varieties of the world as the royal families of the world, all marrying one another and spreading the gene pool too thin. To get the scientific skinny click here: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/25/science/25wine.html?_r=2 - Maybe it's time other grapes varieties started leaving some money on the dresser when they leave.

New Labels Coming ... as taken from WineLaw.ca – “Health Canada is adopting new labelling rules that will require the identification of potential allergens in various food products including wine. The new regulations come into effect on August 4, 2012 but manufacturers are being encouraged to adopt compliance earlier. The rules will apply to wine and will require the identification of potential allergens used for fining in wine such as egg, milk or fish products. See this press release for more information.” http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ahc-asc/media/nr-cp/_2011/2011_23bk-eng.php

Bunch of Boozers ... a new study shows that Canadians are set to out pace the world in wine consumption 6 times faster than the world average. Wine consumption was up in Canada between 2005 and 2009 by a whopping 22.5% and we are poised to buy even more as wine sales are set to grow 19% by the year 2014. All this was found in a study done by ISWR for Vinexpo. Stay thirsty my friends.

It's Getting Chile in the US ... Chile's very own Concha Y Toro has agreed to buy Fetzer Vineyards from Brown Forman for \$238 million. For years American wineries have been investing in Chile, now it is the other way around – how times have changed.

The USA beats France, Again ... for the first time ever the U.S. passed France as the world's largest wine-consuming nation. Wine shipments to the U.S. climbed 2% (to 329.7 million cases) in comparison to France's 320.6 million. Though the French still drink more per-capita the U.S.'s larger population (5 times that of France) helped push them over the edge.

The Brits are doing it Again ... in late February a British vineyard was named the world's best sparkling wine producer, beating out producers from Italy, France and Spain. Camel Valley Vineyard, near Bodmin, Cornwall was given the award at the Bollicini del Mondo wine awards in Verona, Italy. Their 2008 Pinot Noir Brut was hailed a 'sensation' when served with a specially designed Parmesan cheese souffle on a bed of mushrooms. This is not the first time this vineyard has been showered with accolades. Sam Lindo, the current UK Winemaker of the year, also holds the title for Best Sparkling Rosé in the world. The vineyard has previously won gold medals at the International Wine Challenge 2010 after beating competition from France, Australia and the United States. Quite impressive really, England making wine, I say it again, how times have changed.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Spring is in the Air*

Countylicious is back for spring 2011 ... Celebrate spring by treating your taste buds! If you love fine dining, plan on being overwhelmed during Countylicious (March 23 – April 16), when nine of Prince Edward County's top restaurants take part in the County's favourite culinary promotion featuring \$30 and \$35 prix fixe menus. Participating restaurants are: Amelia's Garden at The Waring House, Angeline's Restaurant and Inn, The Bloomfield Carriage House Restaurant, The Devonshire, Inn on the Lake, Blumen Garden Bistro, Clara's at the Claramount, Inn & Spa, East and Main Bistro, The Merrill Inn, and The View Dining Room at the Picton Golf & Country Club. For more information regarding Countylicious, visit www.countylicious.ca or call 613-393-2796 / 866-845-6644.

4th annual Ontario Wine Fair at Café Taste ... Here's a little advance notice on a popular event taking place at Cafe Taste. Once again the Cafe is hosting a day where Ontario wineries will be pouring wines for consumers. There will also be a cheese table featuring 30 Ontario cheeses to pair

with the wines poured. It all takes place Saturday June 4 from 1:00 to 10:00pm. Detail will be on the Café Taste website or call 416-536-7748 to get your advance tickets.

5th-Annual Ontario Consumers' Riesling Challenge ... This annual event is held at LCBO in Guelph (615 Scottsdale Drive, Guelph, On), Saturday, May 28, 2011, from noon to 4 PM (drop in style). If you are in or feel like making a day of it, travel to Guelph where 16 Ontario Riesling will be on display for your tasting pleasure.

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.



Socially Speaking ...

Follow Michael Pinkus, the Grape Guy's (almost) daily **Tweets** at <http://twitter.com/TheGrapeGuy>. You can become a friend on **facebook**: <http://www.facebook.com/?ref=home#!/mepinkus>.

"Linked In" folks can find Michael at <http://ca.linkedin.com/pub/michael-pinkus/14/704/4b8>

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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