

## 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 – 163**  
**July 28, 2011**

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### OntarioWineReview: *Blowing Smoke, Hot Air, or Whatever You Want to Call It*

Two weeks ago I sat down at my computer and opened my email to find a few links sent to me by my dear friend Dean Tudor (fellow wine scribe who fills my inbox with at least 35 emails weekly [Monday-Friday]) ... this one I opened had a link to another fellow scribe Rick Van Sickle, who had done a [special interview](#) with the leader of the Provincial Conservatives, and the man who will most likely be the next premier of Ontario (unless he totally screws up with a sex scandal), Tim Hudak. In a related article, Rick also wrote about California's threat to blow the Free Trade whistle on Timmy-boy if he goes through with plans to loosen up access to market for Ontario-VQA wines.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, I am not about to poo-poo the plan that most wineries would welcome with open arms, in fact I'm seriously thinking of voting Conservative in this election just to see how Tim will follow through on this promise. But the recent past tells me Timmy will have quite the fight on his hands, especially from a little place called the LCBO (funny that this government run retailer would give the government itself so much trouble), not to mention the whining Californians - who have achieved unparalleled success here in Ontario.

We all remember a guy named Mike Harris, a conservative and once premier of the province who had a Common Sense Revolution he shared with Ontarians - well one of the things Mike was going to revolutionize was the LCBO ... Turns out it is the only promise he did not fulfill. Mr. McGuinty also made noise about the liquor board and even followed through with a study and report ([BASR](#)) which told him there was money in them-there privatized hills, lots of money ... but the issue was scrapped and the report buried because nobody can stomach taking on the giant monopoly of the land.

Now, The Hud Man hasn't said he'll take on the Board, in fact all he's promising is greater access to market for local wines (being a Niagara-boy he's doing his riding proud) ... but the KGBO knows that would be the first step in losing control of the whole system, and if there is one thing the Board likes it's control, it's right there in their name Liquor CONTROL Board ... it's the Ontario part that seems to get lost in the equation. They are, afterall, suppose to be working for us but ...

So yes, I am 100% in favour of Tim Hudak taking his shot ... take on the Board and those whining Californians (who promise they'll file a formal complaint - but I ask you this: How many Ontario/Canadian wines do you think are in Californian liquor stores? Can we lodge our own complaint against them?). The question will be how far will Mr. Hudak get in his endeavour to bring VQA wines to the masses? History doesn't bode well for the soon-to-be premier of the province and that's too bad, because I, and many other Ontario vintners would love to see the marketplace pried open, but something tells me the LCBO will take the Charlton Heston NRA approach: you'll have to pry the control of booze out of their "cold dead hands".

Finally, let's look at something from an article written in a Globe & Mail article from July 6, 2011: "If Ontario wants to boost market share for local winemakers, then it should simply privatize alcohol sales and give fair treatment to all vintners, Mr. Jim Clawson [chief executive officer of JBClawson International, US industry's top trade consultant since the early 1980s] said, "You make it awfully difficult for consumers to buy a bottle of wine in Canada" ... Jim has said a real mouthful with that one statement, which now leads to my next question for our soon-to-be fearless leader: Why stop at VQA Tim? I think Clawson has given us a better idea; if you're gonna pick a fight, might as well be for the whole enchilada, not just for the cheese topping.



### **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Great Reds for the BBQ***

#### **Angels Gate 2008 Gamay - \$12.95 (W)**

[www.angelsgatewinery.com](http://www.angelsgatewinery.com)

After tasting this wine I had to wonder why such a good wine is so under-priced? On the other hand, I'm happy to see good value, so I'm not complaining. But back to the price. Is Gamay so under-rated, unrecognizable or little respected that \$12.95 seems almost over-priced? Let's hope not. Let's just hope this is aggressive marketing of a much maligned grape variety. This is a prime example of good Gamay: simple, supple and sippable. The nose is cherry loaded while the palate delivers a red berry bowl of flavour: cherry with a hint of raspberry; strawberry shows up just before the final swallow turns cherry and then lingers a long time. Nice acidity keeps everything clean and ready for the next sip. Chillable, sippable and so ready to enjoy. Criminally under-priced, so be sure to stock up before they realize an error had been made at the cash register. Price: 12.95 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+.

#### **Legends 2007 Petit Verdot Reserve - \$19.95 (W)**

[www.legendsestates.com](http://www.legendsestates.com)

Not a grape variety you see on its own very often, especially here in Ontario. Petit Verdot is usually used as a blending grape, primarily for colour and spice. The nose is a tad reductive and takes some time to open and lose that reductivity (something that winemaker Serge Papineau acknowledges about his too-tight-on-the-reins winemaking style in 2007), but all is forgiven on the palate: black fruit and spice with some black pepper backing. Juicy but also with potential for ageing (2-5 years). This is a really good wine and as you sip on it you'll also find some new leather and blueberry-skin-like tannins which helps bring the wine all together into a delicious lip-smacking package. Price: \$19.95 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+.

#### **Rosewood 2009 Cabernet Franc, Barrel 86 - \$36.00 (W)**

[www.rosewoodwine.com](http://www.rosewoodwine.com)

Hot diggity, dog ziggity, boom what you do to me ... good wine makes you want to sing, great wine make you want to sing silly songs (usually because you've had too much). This is a super example of a well made, limited edition Cabernet Franc from Ontario (only 22 cases made), from a single barrel that seemed to catch winemaker Natalie Spytkowski's attention. The nose is jammed full of aromas that Franc-Fans will swoon over: tobacco, cherry, raspberry, spice, vanilla and sunflower seeds (odd, but cool at the same time - no wonder it caught Natalie's eye). The palate is just as multi-layered as the nose: floral, tobacco, red currant, spiced raspberry, vanilla, ... this list could go on but I won't bore you. Nice texture and good tannins tell the final story on the finish with a fruit/spice mix ... this wine is ultimately sippable and silly song worthy so dig out the Perry Como albums take a swig and sing along: "hot diggity, dog ziggity ...". Price: \$36.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\* 1/2+

#### **Other BBQ Ready Bottles ...**

[Henry of Pelham 2009 Baco Noir](#)

[Karlo Estates 2008 Pinot Noir](#)

[Lakeview 2007 Syrah Reserve](#)  
[Thirty Bench 2008 Small Lot Merlot](#)

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

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**Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *Ottawa Life Posts, On the Road from PEC and more*

**Weekly Ottawa Life Blog Entries:**

[Did You Get the Memo](#)  
[Canadian Wine Laws Stink](#)

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

Trips, tours and tastings – join me as I review the highs, and sometimes, the lows

[Reh Kendermann Dinner](#)  
[52 Wines from 1 Fantastic Place](#)  
[New Zealand Wine Fair](#)  
[5th Annual 6 Barrels for 6 Chefs](#)

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

Wines that got "lost" in my cellar - some are Treasures others Trash ... Find out what happened

[Southbrook 2002 Triomphe Cabernet Sauvignon](#)

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

Find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the years

**Nothing New 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

[7 New Posts Added](#)

**including wines from BC, France, Germany, Argentina and more**

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

**Now Available:** [August 6, 2011](#)

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**Getaway lead by yours truly - The Grape Guy - Saturday August 27**

<http://www.winevirgin.com/getaway/>

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**OntarioWineReview:** *A Visit to Norman Hardie's*

[www.ontariowinereview.com](http://www.ontariowinereview.com)

A bi-weekly newsletter dedicated to helping you discover Ontario's best Wines and Wineries.

The passion Norman Hardie has for wine is palpable the moment you come in contact with the man. He has what some might consider a nervous stutter, but its far from nerves, you can see his mind working a mile a minute and his lips are just not able to keep up. What's even more apparent is that Norm knows more about wine than the average person, his personal experiences dictate it, though he continuously tries to stay relevant to his audience when he talks to them instead of going all wine-geek on them, using terms that would fly over the average-Joe's head and have them glazing over in less than a minute.

The day after tasting some of his barrel work at the [5th Annual 6 Barrels for 6 Chefs](#) event held at Huff Estates in late June, we (the missus and I) visited Norm at his own eponymous winery to taste some of his new wines and have lunch (more on that in a moment).

Norm started us off with is [2010 Riesling](#) - he knows my wife is a Riesling fanatic and a fan of Norm's last 3 endeavours, and he's pretty sure he's got another winner here with this one, and I think he does too ... but when it comes to Riesling my opinion doesn't count for much when my other half is around, she controls the thumbs and the wallet when the decision of purchase comes up (she opted for her maximum this time, 3 bottles). [ed. note: for those thinking of sending Riesling in for tasting, best you address them to my wife, Erica]

We switched gears to Chardonnay for a taste of the [2008 'Cuvee L' Chardonnay](#), Norm has found a nice mix between Niagara and County fruit here, allowing the flavour of the grapes to meld with the barrel instead of one taking over the other.

We switch gears again and now move on to Norm's pride and joy: Pinot Noir. I had a preview tasting of his [2009 Unfiltered County Pinot Noir](#) in Ottawa a few months back, but I went for a confirming sip or two here, now that the wine has gotten more use to its bottled home. This wine continues to get better as Norm becomes more comfortable with his fruit and his fruit more comfortable with the ground in which it is planted, the vines are now 8 years old and have had time to acclimatize themselves.

The piece-de-resistance, and Norm knows it, is the [2009 'Cuvee L' Pinot Noir](#), another blend of Niagara and County fruit that showcases the power of Niagara and the delicacy of County melding seamlessly together to create a wine of unequalled elegance. "She's still a baby," Norman says, "but she'll age gracefully."

We end our day on Norman's lower crush pad where he has constructed a wood burning pizza oven, now it seems to be all the rage these days to put an oven on your back patio and serve up some grub with your wines, but Norman seems to have something very special here. First he got lessons from two of the premier pizza places in Toronto (and no I'm not talking about Pizza Pizza). He also created simple pizzas on wafer thin crusts cooked to perfection (about the size of an LP record - for those that can remember that far back). We opted for the Marinara (tomato, basil, garlic, oregano) and the Margherita (tomato, fore di latte, basil, olive oil) and wolfed them both down in record time. When Norman came by to ask if we enjoyed them he added, "I trust you tried the Blanche [fore di latte, oregano, arugula], it's my favourite." We had not, so Norman twisted our rubber arms into having just one more. Now Norm's not just making great wines, but fantastic food too - though he's resisting the urge to start the road sign campaign of "Eat at Norm's". If you get the opportunity when travelling through the County, I implore you to take the side trip to Norm's pizza patio ... it'll only take about 10 minutes, but you'll wanna stay the afternoon to taste 'em all.



**Wine Event Spotlight:** *A Grape Guy Lead Tour in August and SWOVA Tasting*

**WINEVIRGIN.COM, VIP WINE TOUR & SHOPPING EXCURSION ...** includes pickup and departure in the morning from Burlington Go Train station, transportation via Deluxe Window Passenger Bus

accompanied by your host Michael Pinkus, The Grape Guy of Ontario Wine Review. The trip includes: WineVirgin T-Shirt; Three winery visits with a behind the scenes look from vineyard to bottling room and with wine samplings at each. [See all the details here for the August 27, 2011 trip.](#)

**SWOVA 17th Annual Vintage Tasting - August 07, 2011 from 1:00 5:00 PM is being held this year at Colchester Ridge Estate Winery ...** Special seminars and guest speakers Konrad Ebjich and Michael Pinkus will be highlighting the Lake Erie North Shore vintages! Food provided by Mettawas Station, Thai Palace, Tecumseh Roadhouse and Ducks on the Roof! Come and enjoy music provided by Just Jazz and the University of Windsor Quartet. Tickets are \$55.00 a person, are limited and by advanced sale only ... so hurry and get yours today! Call 519-738-9800 or email [info@colchesterridge.com](mailto:info@colchesterridge.com). Or for more details about the winery go to [www.colchesterridge.com](http://www.colchesterridge.com)

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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.



**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](mailto:michael@ontariowinereview.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

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