

## 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 – 173**  
**December 16, 2011**

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**OntarioWineReview:** *The Must Pile, December 2012*

It's the last newsletter of the year and I always find myself torn as to what to put in it.

I have done meaningful topics at the end of the year, but those just seem a waste of everyone's time. This is the time of year for happiness and light, not for thinking thoughts about how the LCBO is screwing Ontario, small wineries are getting the shaft and how Cellared in Canada wines should be the Bain of your existence. Those kind of topics require a level of thought that you're just not ready for this time of year - this is the time of year when who's coming to dinner, who's sitting with whom and wondering if world war three will break out over Christmas dinner when you introduce your new gay partner to your parents (not that there is anything wrong with that) are all top of mind.

This year I decided to throw my must-pile into the end of the year newsletter, and here's why. I get to taste a lot of wine throughout the course of a year and not all these wines make their way to my Picks of the Bunch section of the newsletter ... Many of them do, but sometimes it's the best-laid-plans policy: another wine comes along and sometimes that bumps the other wine to a future newsletter because it is more relevant to the topic I'll be writing about next time - then that topic gets bumped (and they tell two friends, and so on and so on and so on) - I trust you get the picture. So every six months or so I assemble those lost reviews and put them up on the website; I call it my "must pile" - it has a double meaning. First "must" is the remnants of crushed and pressed grapes, so it seems only fitting for this semi-annual pile of reviews I put out to be called that ... but have no fear these wines are far from left-over, throw-aways or also-rans ... this brings me to my next interpretation of the word, "must" because these are wines I feel you must try ... they are all good wines that just never found their place in the pages of the newsletter.

Enjoy the holidays everybody ... see you back in these pages come January.

### Cabernet Sauvignon ...

[Colchester Ridge 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon](#)  
[Legends 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve](#)  
[Pelee Island 2008 Vinedressers Cabernet Sauvignon](#)  
[Pillitteri 2007 Exclamation Cellar Series Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon](#)  
[Spucewood 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon](#)  
[Thirty Bench 2007 Small Lot Cabernet Sauvignon](#)

### Chardonnay ...

[Colaneri 2008 'Paese' Chardonnay](#)  
[Cooper's Hawk 2010 Unoaked Chardonnay](#)

[Rosehall Run 2009 Cuvee County Chardonnay](#)  
[Tawse 2010 Chardonnay Musque](#)

**Dessert ...**

[13th Street NV 13 Below Zero Riesling](#)  
[Colaneri 2009 Cabernet Franc 'Dolcezza Rosso'](#)  
[Ice House 2008 Late Harvest Cabernet Sauvignon](#)  
[Sunnybrook 2010 Chocolate Embrace](#)

**Red Blends ...**

[Inniskillin 2008 Select Vineyards Shiraz-Cabernet](#)  
[Strewn 2007 Terroir 'Three'](#)  
[Strewn 2008 Meritage](#)  
[Viewpointe 2006 Cabernet-Merlot](#)

**Riesling ...**

[Calamus 2010 Vinemount Ridge Riesling](#)  
[Fielding 2010 Estate Bottled Riesling](#)  
[Greenlane 2010 Riesling](#)  
[Hinterbrook 2010 Riesling](#)

**Rosé ...**

[Huff 2010 Rosé](#)  
[Karlo Estates 2009 Frontenac Gris Rosé](#)  
[Peller Estates 2010 Private Reserve Rosé](#)

**Sauvignon Blanc ...**

[Legends 2010 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc](#)  
[Nyarai Cellars 2010 Sauvignon Blanc](#)  
[Peller Estates 2010 Andrew Peller Signature Series Sauvignon Blanc](#)  
[Riverview 2010 Sauvignon Blanc](#)  
[Tawse 2010 Sauvignon Blanc - Laundry Vineyard](#)

**Other Grapes ...**

[Between the Lines 2009 Merlot](#)  
[Colio 2007 CEV Cabernet Franc Reserve](#)  
[Del-Gatto 2010 Vidal](#)  
[Lailey 2009 Syrah](#)  
[Lailey 2010 Vidal](#)  
[Mastronardi 2010 Viognier/Pinot Blanc](#)



**Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch:** *Icewine, Pinot Noir and a Viognier*

**Riverview 2010 Buona Notte Icewine - \$99.95 (W)**  
[www.riverviewcellars.com](http://www.riverviewcellars.com)

The one question that will come to mind is why is this wine so expensive ... my answer to you would be, because it is just that good. This is an absolute delight. Made from a mix of Vidal and Riesling, but the special part is that the Riesling has all been botrytis affected, so it has that special aroma and flavour. Then it is barrel aged for 8 months in 100% new French oak - which takes a lot of courage because you don't want to mask those beautiful aromas and flavours that botrytis can give. Peach, apricot, honey, toffee greet the nose and with so much sweetness you expect it to be cloying and fat in the mouth, sure there is a creaminess to it along with some vanilla honey but it leads to a lovely fruity pear, peach and spice that lingers on the tongue and an acidity that seems to dry

instead of being sticky sweet. If you buy only one icewine all year, this might be the one you'll want to put your hands on. Price: \$99.95 - Rating: \*\*\*\*\*

**Lailey 2010 Pinot Noir - Niagara Peninsula - \$25.00 (W)**

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

This is one of those Pinot with little in the way of surprises. Pinot is a grape that you can make some pretty horrible wine with, but consistently, year-after-year, winemaker Derek Barnett shows his passion for the grape by producing a number a very good Pinot Noirs. When others struggle Derek seems to bring his A-game to the making of his Pinots. His are but a handful of Pinots from Niagara that I would rate amongst the most consistent year-to-year. This one is full of what you'd expect in a Pinot Noir: a nose of cranberry, sour cherry with some earthy character which all follows on the palate with just enough spice, tannins and acidity to keep it fresh and lively. This is a perfect wine for the turkey dinner you'll most likely be having over the holidays, but will also accompany ham and anything else you deem worthy of Pinot Noir's finesse. Price: \$25.00 - Rating: \*\*\* 1/2+

**Nyarai Cellars 2010 Viognier - \$20.75 (OL)**

[www.nyarai cellars.com](http://www.nyarai cellars.com)

When Steve Byfield started his own label a few years ago, everybody thought he was crazy to focus his attention on Sauvignon Blanc as his flagship wine; afterall Riesling and Pinot Noir were the stars of everybody else's pet projects. But after winning a few awards and raising more than a few eyebrows, nobody thought he was crazy anymore ... until he announced his next varietal white: Viognier. But Steve has quieted his critics once again by winning gold at the Ontario Wine Awards with this new offering. Lots of pear and apple blossom on the nose lead to a really great palate. It enters with a bag of fruit over its shoulder - then there's distinct apple and peach pit notes on the mid-palate, then it mellows on the finish where both the acidity and the pleasant lingering finish takes over. Now we should all be looking forward to Steve's next varietal experiment, because now we know he really is crazy, crazy like a fox. Price: \$20.75 - Rating \*\*\*\* 1/2

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



**Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *On the Road posts and Taste it Again wines*

**Weekly Ottawa Life Blog Entries:**

[Monterey, California - Part 2](#)

[How a Trip to California Opened My Eyes - Part 1](#)

[How a Trip to California Opened My Eyes - Part 2](#)

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

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

**Look for Updates over the Holidays**

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

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

**Nothing New This Week**

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

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

**Look for Updates over the Holidays**

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

When it's not an Ontario wine, here's what I'm pulling out of the cellar

[4 New Posts Added](#)

including wines from Tasmania, some Ontario and a BC wine

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

[Mini Release for December 17, 2011](#)

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### **OntarioWineReview:** *Upcoming and Newly released: Lailey & Riverview*

A few weeks ago I visited two wineries hosting special open house celebrations for the holiday season. Lailey, who was showing off their futures (an event that only happens during exceptional harvest - of which, in their estimation, 2010 was one of those occasions) and Riverview, who were showing off their past and their present.

First stop was Lailey, where guests were invited to "taste the passion". The self-guide tour through the wines was held in the barrel room where you were greeted by a pair of currently released wines: a Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, from there you moved deeper into the cellar to try the future releases of the winery. First up are a pair of wines that reflect winemaker Derek Barnett's passion for Pinot Noir: the 2010 Old Vines and the 2010 Lot 48, both set for release at the end of March 2012. For the sake of describing these wines it is actually best to compare them, as they are very different from one another and, because they are still in barrel, will change even more through the winter, so this is but a snap-shot of what the wines are like right now (the same can be said for all these wines in a futures tasting). The Old Vines that go into this wine were planted in 1974 and the ageing of them was done in 100% French oak (30% new) barrels: earthy, sour cherry, cranberry are all present and accounted for, it's the stuff that Pinot lovers have come to expect in their Heartbreak Grape wines, there are also some spicy notes with good acidity and a finish that shows a certain amount of delicacy on the palate. The Lot 48 Pinot is made from fruit sourced "on the bench" from the K. Whitty property and only 2 barrels were produced. The wine is one of those that only gets made when "Derek feels [the vintage] is truly exceptional." This one has bigger fruit and a whole lot more umph than the old vines version: more cherry, more raspberry, more acidity, more spiciness .. it's powerful yet elegant at the same time, the old saying of " an iron fist in a velvet glove" comes to mind. (release price will be \$60)

The next two wines tried were the 2010 Syrah and the 2010 Impromptu blend ... both wines are scheduled for release in the spring or summer of 2012 - these wines need more time to meld together, I found them a little awkward at this time but the track record for both these wines is excellent, so I am expecting good things to come out once released, sometime in 2012.

Which brings us to the Bordeaux reds ... when one talks about an "exceptional vintage" one looks primarily at the Bordeaux red varieties as bellwether: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Bordeaux style blends. The 2010 Merlot (retail: \$30), scheduled for release in early summer, was full of fruit: black raspberry and ripe cherry with hints of vanilla, blueberry and spiced-cherry notes ... but it's a powerful Merlot with pretty raw tannins that need time to soften and I believe it will - quite nicely.

The 2010 Cabernet Franc stole the show (retail: \$30 - 150 cases produced) ... this beauty had lots of lovely Cab Franc character without any of the greenness that many associate with Franc: spice,

tobacco, cigar box aromas with an approachable palate now or one that could easily lie down for later enjoyment (3-5 years) ... plus there's a lovely hint of coffee on the finish. Now, everybody know my penchant for Cabernet Franc, so I try to remain neutral when trying it, but it's hard to not crow when one is this good, I even put my order in for a few bottles, and I wasn't alone: half the wine had already been sold only an hour into the 4 hour tasting

The last two wines were the 2010 Cabernet Sauvignon (retail: \$30 - summer release) and the 2010 Meritage, Canadian Oak (retail: \$40 - unknown release). The Cab's another age-able red that's powerful on both the nose and palate, lots of tannins and cedar notes right now but that fruit is peering around the corner and is just waiting for its time to shine. The Meritage, a 33.3% blend of the three biggies is dark fruited on the palate with vanilla and spice backing it up: plum, cedar, vanilla and raspberry all make an appearance on the finish.

From what was tasted here at Lailey today there is a bright future ahead for the 2010 reds and those fans who like visiting the winery are in for a treat come the summer.

My other visit was to Riverview (just along the parkway a few kilometres from Lailey); they were tasting new stuff and some wines from the cellar. Three Chardonnays, three reds and three icewines. The Chardonnay of choice this afternoon was the newest in their line-up: [Angelina's 2010 Reserve](#) (\$19.95), this really was a delicious number that showed more fruit than wood, which is something I enjoy in my Chardonnays. The three reds consisted of a Cabernet Franc, the first ever Riverview Syrah (2010) and a back vintage of Salvatore's 2007 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon ... this is made from a 3 acre planting, of which only 1 acre is used for this special bottling, because "It just seems to ripen differently every year". Only one barrel gets made and the wine retails for \$49.95 - but this one shows something real special that you might want to check out. Finally, the icewines were mostly red in nature - a 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon, an excellent [2010 Cabernet Franc](#) and an outstanding [2010 Riesling Vidal](#) that is just the cat's meow, barrel aged and made with botrytis affected Riesling - if you buy only one icewine all year, this might be the one you'll want to put your hands on.



### **Wine Event Spotlight:** *The season continues*

*If I were to list all the goings on in wine country it would take up the whole newsletter ... so let's just say this: Check your favourite winery on the internet, it seems the Open House season is in full swing. From the Lake Erie North Shore to Prince Edward County (with Niagara sandwiched in-between) it would seem that every winery in every region is throwing open its doors in some way or the other to welcome you for the season and get you in the festive mood that December brings with it. Harvest is over (for most) and it is time to celebrate the season. So get in the car and take a trip to your nearest winery and see what fabulous wines and wine paraphernalia is available for gift getting and receiving this holiday season.*

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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**:

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

<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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