

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 – 180
April 26, 2012

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OntarioWineReview: *Failed Marketing Ploy*

Every so often I have a personal axe to grind and I end up ranting to you dear readers, about things that make my teeth itch (which is way beyond head-scratching, trust me). I actually get the most interesting feedback from these articles and it's time that I share another of those moments of itchy teeth.

Three weeks ago I received a post card in the mail announcing the release of a new wine from a new winery here in Ontario, one I had never heard of - the wine and/or the winery. The wine had a fanciful name and was a white blend of Chardonnay (77%), Chardonnay Musque (12%), Gewurztraminer and Sauvignon Blanc. Three days later another postcard arrived in the mail, from the same winery, announcing yet another wine; again with one of those proprietary names that is suppose to make you interested in the wine ... history has proven that on most occasions it'll be a one time affair. This time it was their red blend made up of Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon - the difference between card-one and card-two was that on card-two there was a description of the wine itself: "Merlot is the star in this blend, lending a smokiness and elegance ... harmonized by the backbone of Cabernet Franc and brute force of Cabernet Sauvignon." There was nothing else on either card ... not a price ... not a remark that it was coming soon to the LCBO ... not a way of how to get it ... and nothing telling me that there was a bottle on the way for me to taste. It was the wine equivalent of a Hello My Name Is badge.

Now, I am not sure what these cards were suppose to do for me - maybe they wanted me to write about these wines, but that's a hard thing to do considering I don't have the wines to try. Sure I'm writing about them now, but more to document the stupidity of the marketing campaign then to tell you about the wine itself. Sending a wine writer a postcard announcing a new wine without giving 'em the opportunity to try it is like paying for a full page "For Your Consideration" in Vanity Fair magazine as part of an Oscar campaign and not sending out screener copies to voting members of the academy. It's like emailing Chef Gordon Ramsey the menu of your failing restaurant and telling him to fix it on Kitchen Nightmares without stepping into the establishment. And it's like trying to teach a wine class without the benefit of trying the wines you are talking about ... it's not a good idea, and neither was this postal campaign.

But I can hear you thinking, "ah, but he is writing about it" ... but you will notice I am refraining from giving you the name of the winery or the wine; because a bad marketing campaign deserves to be pointed out and a light shone upon it, but that does not mean the company who did it should benefit from their lack of foresight. Don't get me wrong, I love getting mail and I love kitschy-catchy wine names, I even thought of a few myself while cleaning up around the house, names like: Goes to the Head Red; Excited Elephant, or my personal favourite at the time, Our Getting Boned on Friday

blend ... and sure they would make for funny postcards to send out, but ... wouldn't you want to dry the wines - especially that Friday blend?

Ladies and gentlemen of the wine industry ... if you want us to write about your wine, send us a bottle, or invite us down to the winery, show up at a tasting event, or get your region to sponsor one (or hey, organize it yourself) ... just sending out catchy postcards with cute critters and catchy logos speaks volumes to me, in a negative way. It tells me that the winery has no confidence in what is actually in the bottle, they have no pride in the juice contained their-in and it will not scrutiny - but they are in love with the name and hope that will lead to some advance buzz. Sorry folks, until the wines passes over my palate the review (good or bad) can't be made. Now see below for the wines from some small wineries that did pass my lips and got some very good scores in my Picks of the Bunch ...



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: 3 Small Producer Reds

Peninsula Ridge 2010 AJ Lepp Reserve Merlot - \$19.95 (W)

www.peninsularidge.com

It's been a long time since I've been wowed by an Ontario Merlot ... but this single vineyard Merlot from the hot 2010 vintage has all the earmarks of a good Merlot now and one you can age into the future (5+ years). The nose is smoky with dark fruit, vanilla, cinnamon and a hint of strawberry ... the taste is complex with vanilla toastiness, herbal hints, cassis and cocoa notes with silky tannins and a lovely lingering finish. One of the best and most approachable 100% Merlots I've tasted from Ontario in quite some time. Price: \$19.95 - Rating: ****+

Foreign Affair 2009 Abbraccio - \$38.00 (W)

www.foreignaffairwine.com

Abbraccio is a dried fruit Cabernet Sauvignon. Foreign Affair was one of the first to use the Appasimento (dried fruit) method and continues to do it naturally on drying racks, instead of the quicker tobacco kiln method that is making the rounds at various Ontario wineries. The wine is dark, rich and opulent, with plum and blackberry leading the charge ... there's a touch of rustic-ness here along with some gripping tannins and big 14.8% alcohol, but that's what drying gives you. There's a hint, and I do mean a hint, of volatile acidity (nail polish) tainting the nose but it disappears on the palate, leaving a touch of mocha/vanilla on the powerful finish. Price: \$38.00 - Rating: ****+

Aure 2010 Umoja - Cabernet Franc - \$22.20 (W)

www.aurewines.com

This new winery on the Beamsville Bench might end up being one to watch. The name for the wine comes from the Swahili language and means "unity" - the wine took on that name because the winery was hosting an event for International Needs on the day it was released. This is a very good Cabernet Franc showing the stylistic character of Cabernet Franc with a little extra. Nose is tobacco with cherry and raspberry fruit ... palate shows a little more complexity, sure it has the tobacco, but there's also a little leather, touch of smoke, hint of spice, plus fruit ... and it's the fruit here that really shines over top of all those other flavours. Price: \$22.20 - Rating: ****

More from the Must Pile ...

Wines tasted last year that did not make it into last year's publications ...

[Greenlane 2010 Old Vines Riesling - \\$29.95 \(NIAG\)](#)

[Henry of Pelham 2009 Baco Noir Reserve - \\$24.95](#) (NIAG)
[Inniskillin 2008 Two Vineyards Cabernet Franc - \\$22.95](#) (NIAG)
[Strewn 2010 Sauvignon Blanc - \\$15.15](#) (NIAG)

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



Bi-Weekly OWR Updates: *On the Road articles - What I'm Drinking Reviews*

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

Trips, tours and tastings – join me as I review the highs, and sometimes, the lows
Reports Coming Soon in the Next Week (or so) ...

Fevre / Bouchard Tasting
Argentina Tasting
Fortified Wine Dinner
Austrian Tasting
Banfi Lunch

[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
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
[New Posts Added](#)

including: a Juan Gil comparative, my Malbec day choice and older Cali wines

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

[Vintages Shop On-Line April 19, 2012](#)
[Vintages release: April 28, 2012](#)

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CAUDLE'S CATCH
SEAFOOD
PRESENTS
WATERLOO REGION
food & drink
SHOW
The Aud
KITCHENER MEMORIAL
AUDITORIUM COMPLEX
VIP Night:
Thursday, April 26, 2012
5-10pm - \$15 Admission
April 27-28, 2012
Friday & Saturday, 3-10pm
\$12 Admission

The [Waterloo Region Food and Drink Show](#) happening April 26-28 at the Aud in Kitchener.

Lots to see and taste ... including 3 seminars hosted by our very own Grape Guy Michael Pinkus ...

8:00pm - Thursday April 26 - The Many Faces of Port

7:00pm - Friday April 27 - Ontario's 2010 Vintages, Doesn't Get Much Better Than This
7:30pm - Saturday April 28 - The Wines of Niagara vs. Lake Erie North Shore

Advertisement



Quick Sips: *News from around the World of Wine and Here at Home*

April 2012

Signs that China is Soon to be a Powerhouse in Wine ... "Champagne maker Moët-Hennessy has invested in a vineyard in the mountains of China that will produce red wine for the domestic Chinese market." - <http://sg.news.yahoo.com/mo-t-hennessy-produce-red-wine-china-165041279.html>

Muscat is Having a Moment ... "It wasn't that long ago that Pinot Grigio (Pinot Gris) displaced Sauvignon Blanc as the second most popular white wine variety in the United States. Now Sauvignon Blanc has ceded its third place status to fast-growing Muscat wines." - <http://www.winesandvines.com/template.cfm?section=news&content=97410&htitle=Muscat+Wines+Steal+Sauvignon+Blanc+%27s+Market#.TzrsjXDIVY.twitter>

Paris Will Rise Again ... "... in its glory days in the 18th century, the prized wines of the Ile de France, the Paris region, stocked the cellars of French kings and clergymen and covered over 100,000 acres of land – more than Champagne or Alsace." - <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/9077628/Paris-wine-makers-seek-recognition-for-grape-growing-renaissance.html>

What's in a Name? Confusion = \$\$\$... "A study of consumer wine habits out of Canada suggests that oenophiles place more value on wines with tongue-twister names, in the subconscious belief that bottles with unfamiliar and "disfluent" names are rarer, reported industry publication Decanter magazine last week." - http://articles.nydailynews.com/2012-02-28/news/31108872_1_wine-buyers-blind-tastings-names

No Longer a Single Producer Wine as Pink Port Goes Mainstream ... "They have given the sweet red or amber colored Portuguese fortified wine, which is traditionally sipped as an accompaniment to the cheese course or dessert, a makeover with a lighter rosé version that is 20 percent alcohol." - <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/03/20/us-wine-port-pink-idUSBRE82I14A20120320>

Find Out What the 50 Most Admired Wine Brands in the World are ... Does it surprise you that Canada's own Inniskillin cracks the top 50? - <http://www.drinksint.com/files/Supplements/2011/DI-Most-Admired-Wines-2011.pdf>



Wine Event Spotlight: *3 upcoming events*

April: The first annual Waterloo Region Food and Drink Show - Thursday - Saturday April 26-28, 2012 ... find the detail of this event here: <http://www.fooddrinkexpo.com/about-us/>

April / May: Get Fresh in the Twenty Valley ... 23 wine and food pairings for your spring time pleasure over two weekends: April 28-29 and May 5-6, 2012 - details about the event and how to buy tickets: <http://www.twentyvalley.ca/files/Get%20Fresh%202012%20Information%20Package-1.pdf>

May: Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake's annual Wine and Herb Festival every weekend in May - this is one of the best festivals of the season - details can be found: <http://wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com/wine-and-herb>

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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