

## 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 – 184**  
**July 5, 2012**

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### OntarioWineReview: *Death of a Canadian Icon*

Back in 2002 Randall Grahm, owner of Bonny Doon Winery in California, staged a mock funeral for the cork, complete with casket and pallbearers. Well that same funeral can now be held here in Canada as the inevitable has happened to a Canadian icon ... but this time there is nothing mock about it, this one truly has died.

Now, in truth the company's death knell was rung back in 2006 when the world's largest wine producer based out of New York purchased them, I am talking about Constellation. And it was only a matter of time before the name we have all come to signify Canadian wine dominance was swallowed up by the big corporate machine it is now owned by. On June 13, 2012 it finally came to pass as Constellation announced: "Vincor Canada, the country's leading domestic wine producer, today announced that the company will now operate as "Constellation Brands". The Change is part of a global initiative by Constellation Brands, Vincor's parent company, to align its operating companies in the US, Canada and New Zealand under a common name to better reflect its strategy to a more unified organization."

Yes ladies and gentlemen, Vincor is now officially dead, and you'll now see things like "Constellation Brands (formerly Vincor Canada)" ... and within a few years even that little bit of recognition of Canada's contribution to the wine world built by misters Triggs and Jackson will be gone. Does that mean it's time to pull out the hankies and snot-rags to wipe our collective eyes and blow our collective noses? I don't think so. Vincor lost its Canadian identity the moment it was bought out, sure they still have head honchos here in the Great White North that were suppose to be looking after the brands, but they never were all about the Canadian way of wining and dropped the ball from the very beginning. Take the "Esprit" fiasco of 2008, where Cellared in Canada wine was passed off as Canadian spirit in a bottle to help promote our athletes and the Vancouver Olympics. I won't dredge up the details, but if you need a refresher they can be found here ([Newsletter 101](#)) ... but suffice it to say the identity of Canadian wine, as seen through the eyes of an American company was spelled out quite clearly in that one act of Je Ne Care Pas.

With Vincor gone it's time we look to our two other large wine companies: Peller and Diamond for direction in the industry and for spearheading our global domination ... Not. Canadian wine is not about global domination and taking the world by storm - we just don't make enough to feed the global consumer. The battle is here at home, with our own consumers, our own regulatory bodies and for the hearts and minds of Canadians to fall in love with the wines we make here.

Adios Vincor - thanks for being there, thanks for being part of the Canadian firmament but just like Eaton's, Nortel and other great Canadian companies that finally succumbed, your day has finally

come. As for the folks at Constellation Brands this is good news for them, without the burden of having to "live up" to the Vincor name they can do all the flimming and flamming of Canadian wines it wants to; and since the word "Canada" is no longer in their name can we finally ask them to give back those stand alone stores they acquired? Wouldn't that be nice.



### **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: 10 Wines from the County**

My recent trip to Prince Edward County proved that there were some very good wines being made in Ontario's emerging frontier, here's a sampling of 10 wines:

#### **Hinterland 2009 Sparkling Rosé - \$37.00 (W)**

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

Hinterland is strictly a sparkling wine house located in Prince Edward County ... and if you've never been there you're missing out on some of the best bubbly being made in Ontario ... and that's high praise for a producer under 5 years old, especially with all the bubbly being made in the province. This particular traditional method Rosé Hinterland started releasing after 18 months on lees, but my review is for the batch they just released, which is after 26 months of lees contact in bottle - giving more depth of character to the wine. A blend of 75% Pinot Noir and 25% Chardonnay the bubbly is a perfect pretty mix of strawberry, cherry and raspberry on both the nose and palate ... in 3-6 months the yeasty-leesy notes will begin to evolve and show off even more of this wine's elegance ... at the moment the red berries shine amongst that very balanced acidity. I wish I could pour each and every one of you a glass because even my description doesn't do this beauty its full justice. Price: \$37.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\* 1/2+

#### **Norman Hardie 2009 County Pinot Noir - \$35.00 (W)**

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

Norman's County Pinot is always the more feminine of his creations ... this one was wild yeasted and spent 10 months in barrel, of which 10% was new. Juicy raspberry, strawberry and hints of spice lead the charge with a slight bitter, yet appropriately pleasant strawberry-raspberry finish ... really good acidity and great fruitiness from start to finish. Price: 35.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS:** [Norman Hardie 2011 Riesling - \\$21.00 \(W\)](#)

#### **Karlo Estates 2010 Cabernet Franc - \$24.00 (W)**

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

The fruit is a mix of Niagara and Prince Edward County from the intense 2010 vintage. Karlo has encompassed some real intense notes to this wine like leathery tobacco, cassis and other black fruit ... there's lots of acidity to cleanse the palate but when it comes to this wine you've gotta like 'em big if you're going to get past the leather and black cherry finish - give it a few years to mellow. Price: \$24.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS:** [Karlo Estates 2010 Van Alstine White Port - \\$29.00 / 500ml \(W\)](#)

#### **Devil's Wishbone 2010 Riesling - \$22.00 (W)**

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

Owner Paul Gallagher supplemented his own fruit this year with 20% old vines Niagara and has delivered a Riesling that's even better than his first effort. Pear, apple, limeade and floral greet the nose, while on the palate there's a hint of sweetness, a lovely pear seam and hints of chalky and exotic fruit on the finish. This version is focused and delicious with nice acidity. Price: \$22.00 -

Rating: \*\*\*\*

**BONUS:** [Devil's Wishbone 2009 Merlot - \\$20.00](#) (W)

**Lighthall Vineyards 2010 Gewurztraminer - \$25.00** (W)

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

There are very few making Gewurztraminer in Prince Edward County and even fewer willing to be so brazenly brash about their love for it. Glenn Symons, owner and winemaker, admits to having a g-spot (a soft spot for Gewurztraminer) which is why he's always gonna make one - even if he's gotta bring everything in from Niagara. This wine is floral, lychee and has an unctuous texture with hints of white pepper on the spicy finish that's worth coming back to again and again. An Alsatian yeast is used in fermenting giving the wine a more Alsatian flavour and weight in the mouth. Look for more interesting G-wines from Lighthall in the future as they have plans to plant between 1-1.5 acres in the next few years. Price: \$25.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\*

**BONUS:** [Lighthall Vineyards 2010 Pinot Noir - \\$25.00](#) (W)

**Casa-Dea 2009 Cabernet Franc - \$18.95** (W)

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

Casa-Dea seems to have turned the fortunes of the former Carmela Estates around (it took me awhile to remember that name - that's how far they've come to erasing that bad memory), this Cabernet Franc is a delicious achievement showing all the right characteristics of the grape: tobacco, black cherry, smoky, and mineral notes with good acidity to cleanse the palate. Aged 12 months in 10% new oak and on lees giving it further character and a nice tannin backbone. Drinking-wise this is a nice aperitif type Franc as it is light and fruity - ready for sipping after a few hours open. Price: \$18.95 - Rating: \*\*\*\*

*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

*New Reports Coming Soon in the Next Week (or so) ...*

**[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

**[Huff Estates 2007 South Bay Chardonnay](#)**

**[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](#)**

**Just a few wines this week with Riesling and Cab taking center stage**

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

*Vintages Release for July 7 - missed*

*Vintages Release for July 21 - coming soon*

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SWOVA has become EPIC  
(South Western Ontario Vintners Association, now Essex Pelee Island Coast)

**July 22, 2012 at 1:00 PM to July 22, 2011 at 5:00 PM**  
**The 18th Annual Vintage Tasting – hosted by EPIC**  
Join the group at Holiday Beach Conservation Area to tip your glass and savour wonderful wines. Nibble on sumptuous food and listen to the band play while you stroll down to the beach and watch the water lap against the shore. Tickets cost \$65 and include all cuisine, entertainment & wine samples.

To reserve tickets: Please call Erica at (519) 776-5209 Dial "0" to reach reception to place your order. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. 519-776-5209

[info@swova.ca](mailto:info@swova.ca)

[www.swova.ca](http://www.swova.ca)

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

**July 2012**

**First Sparkling Screwcap Released ...** <http://www.decanter.com/news/wine-news/530000/first-sparkling-screwcap-released>

**"Playing a certain type of music can enhance the way wine tastes**, research by psychologists suggests." ... [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/7400109.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7400109.stm)

**Hand Harvesting Better???** ... Not according to some new research out of Auckland, New Zealand: <http://nz.finance.yahoo.com/news/hand-picked-grapes-may-not-230150557.html>

**Hold the Phone on Resveratrol ...**  
[http://www.slate.com/blogs/future\\_tense/2012/06/21/resveratrol\\_compound\\_in\\_red\\_wine\\_may\\_not\\_extend\\_life\\_says\\_meta\\_analysis\\_.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/future_tense/2012/06/21/resveratrol_compound_in_red_wine_may_not_extend_life_says_meta_analysis_.html)

**Scandal in Burgundy ...** "The Burgundy wine industry has been in an uproar since news emerged last week that four executives of one of the largest wine producers in the region, Labouré-Roi, had been detained on suspicion of falsely labelling hundreds of thousands of bottles of wine."

Full details: [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/19/business/global/fraud-charges-threaten-burgundys-vaunted-reputation.html?\\_r=1&src=me&ref=business](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/19/business/global/fraud-charges-threaten-burgundys-vaunted-reputation.html?_r=1&src=me&ref=business)

**Afraid you Got a Bogus Bottle? Who Ya Gonna Call ...**  
<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-07-02/wine-sleuth-sniffs-out-fakes-takes-hammer-to-lafite.html>

**New Fortified Terms in Australia ...** "The new terms for some of Australia's much loved wine types

have well and truly arrived as part of the vernacular with their acceptance by the Macquarie Dictionary."

Details: <http://www.hospitalitymagazine.com.au/beverage/new-aussie-wine-terms-become-official>

**Constellations Buys Another ...** "New York-based alcoholic beverage giant Constellation Brands today said it signed an agreement to buy the Mark West wine brand from Purple Wine Co., based in the west Sonoma County community of Graton, for about \$160 million."

Full Details: <http://www.northbaybusinessjournal.com/56898/constellation-to-buy-mark-west-wine-brand-for-160-million/>



#### **Wine Event Spotlight:** *Two Events based on Two Grapes*

***This July 20-22, experience the Rebirth of Cool ...*** Explore over 110 chardonnays from 14 of the world's coolest wine regions paired with culinary delights from some of the region's best chefs. Choose from 13 events at 12 stunning locations in the heart of Niagara's Wine Country, including the Official Kick-off Party featuring The Arkells, elegant four-course vineyard luncheons, and Saturday evening's signature "Cool Chardonnay World Tour" featuring the Beyond the Barrel al fresco dinner – a menu created by seven Ontario winemakers enjoyed under the stars. For all the details go to [www.coolchardonnay.org](http://www.coolchardonnay.org)

***The Pinot Affair ... 2nd Annual ... October 13 & 14, 2012*** - tickets on sale now ... find out all you need to know at [www.thepinotaffair.com](http://www.thepinotaffair.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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