

## 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 – 202**  
**April 11, 2013**

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### OntarioWineReview: *Why the LCBO Should Strike*

all me an anarchist but I want the LCBO to go on a nice, big, long strike. And by the time you read this newsletter I am 100% sure that the sheeple of the LCBO will have given their bargaining team the go ahead for strike action. Now the LCBO's contract was up on March 31, 2013 – which means currently the guys and gals roaming, stocking and generally keeping track of the aisles are without a legal contract with the provincial liquor board. I'm not about to get into the nitty-gritty of the contract negotiations, but when I read in the Liquor Board Employees Division (LBED) Bargaining Bulletin: "The offer we received from management can only be described in one word: Outrageous!" – well I just felt that I had to look a little deeper to see how the LCBO was screwing their own people (which is a nice change from the people of Ontario they screw daily).

What outrage would I find on the pages of the LCBO's proposal? Are they locking the doors and throwing employees out on their ears? Are they proposing actual punishment for selling to minors ([like the sting David Menzies did in July of 2012](#))? Will there be repercussions for doing a bad job, breaking the law, real penalties?

Now I have met, had dealings with, and actually, once upon a time, worked alongside some very good LCBO employees, most of them casual part-timers – but I can tell you that for every one good one there's two that are lazy, surly and just generally people you don't want to deal with in a retail situation – and sadly, those are the one's you are likely to remember. So from the LBED Bargain Bulletin dated March 1, 2013 here are 2 of the 9 crazy demands the LCBO is making of their employees and the Union's response to those "outrageous" proposals (I highlight my favs, but [you can read the full bulletin here](#)):

"LCBO wants to freeze our wages until 2017: ... The employer has indicated its intent is to replicate and follow settlement patterns similar to the Ontario Public Service ... *What we say:* This proposal is totally unacceptable."

My favourite is this one: "LCBO wants to promote employees based on 'merit' not seniority: The LCBO wants to eliminate seniority provisions currently in our contract and replace it with "promotion on merit to promote the most qualified employees" [Ed. Note: Heaven forbid.] "*What we Say:* This proposal is nothing more than a divide-and-conquer measure by the LCBO. Equality means that seniority matters when it comes to promotions at the LCBO. The employer wants to override seniority and promote employees on 'merit' which is a five-letter word for 'favouritism.'" [Ed Note: Yeah, because that's one thing we don't want, the right person in the right job – you might actually get results.]

Finally, the last line of the comparative What They Want – What We Say debate says: “We must never lose sight that the LCBO returned a dividend of more than \$1.6 billion to the people of Ontario. We did not create the deficit and neither we nor our families are prepared to take any form of concessions so that the government can balance its books.” Is it me or is the union completely out of touch with the economic realities of today?

These are the people we have in charge of our liquor system, I'm shaking my head at what I am reading, and I believe the LCBO employees should strike because the union makes a compelling argument. So walk off the job. Let the people of Ontario know what it's like to shop local – and by that I mean visiting wineries on weekend for their vino fix, or shop in the mainly Peller/Vincor run stores in the local grocers ... let people see that every few years their booze will be held hostage and then they'll be demanding the mom and pop stores - who have already been given the green light to sell cigarettes, sugary drinks, fatty snacks and countless other things deemed bad-for-you, shouldn't they also be allowed to stock and sell an assortment of beers and wines.

But who really suffers from an LCBO strike? California, Spain, Italy, France, Australia, Chile, in other words import wines and liquor producers, who can ONLY sell through the Province run monopoly, and they'll be demanding the LCBO settle so their products get into the hands of Ontarians instead of sitting idly in warehouses collecting dust. Meanwhile local producers could see a boon as Ontarians thirst for wine is not met by the LCBO but instead by in-province wineries. Tourism to wine producing areas should also see an uptick; instead of visiting Grandma on a Saturday afternoon the family would pile into the car (with Grandma) to tour the highways and bi-ways of Ontario wine country. A long LCBO walk could mean that Ontarians finally get the taste for their homegrown wines en masse and will then demand greater access – one weekend away is quaint, but having to make the trek each and every weekend may prove too much. And with that kind of demand we could see movement in this province towards a freer market system with independent and corner wine stores. Maybe the government will get tired of having to pay all those wages, negotiating with an inflexible union and decide to sell off the LCBO – preferring instead to reap the rewards from taxes instead of paying the price of labour unrest ... sigh, wouldn't that be nice?!? As for the employees, the good ones will have no trouble finding a job in the public sector, many in the same kind of newly created positions. The others? Well they'll just go back to ditch digging where they belonged in the first place.

Alas, the LCBO knows the moment they go on strike the above may come to fruition and therefore must keep from showing themselves to be irrelevant and proving to Ontario that maybe privatization would be better. We've been down the 'almost-strike' road before with the LCBO, and each time they snatch defeat away from the jaws of victory for the people of Ontario – and once again we become a beholden province, held hostage by our liquor board. Change is all around us (see second article below), yet we stay stagnant in 1927. Afraid of change. So repeat after me, cowardly lions: I do believe in irrelevant but beneficial strikes, I do believe in irrelevant but beneficial strikes, I do believe in irrelevant but beneficial strikes.



### **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *One from Each Region***

#### **Closson Chase 2010 Pinot Noir, Close Chase Vineyard - \$39.95 (W)**

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

Another fabulous Pinot Noir from the folks at Closson Chase who seem to be raising the bar year after year, especially for wine made from their own fruit. The nose is light cherry anise, white pepper and cranberry cocktail. On the palate there's almost a sweet cherry/ cranberry cocktail sensation that grabs the tongue before licorice and a strawberry/raspberry blend take charge lending to a long finish. Leave it in your glass for a spell and you'll get a nip of earth and some tea leaf notes in the background. Should age beautifully till the end of the decade. Price: \$39.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

**Lailey 2012 Sauvignon Blanc - \$20.00 (W)**  
[www.laileyvineyard.com](http://www.laileyvineyard.com)

Probably one of the best Sauvignon Blancs I have tried from Lailey in years ... the strange part is the grapes come from a year that will be noted more for the reds than it will for the whites. This Sauvignon Blanc has loads of freshness, so much so that you can barely tell it was barreled for 4-and-a-half months, and that 60% of it was fermented in oak too ... probably because it was all done in older oak (3rd & 4th fill) that imparts little on the fruit. Floral, grassy and grapefruit aromas abound, especially with a good swirl in the glass; tastes lean heavily on grapefruit pith, lime and other citrus notes with good acidity and a nice crisp freshness all the way through to the finish. Price: \$20.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**Smith & Wilson 2009 Pinot Noir - \$18.00 (W)**  
[www.smithandwilsonstatewines.ca](http://www.smithandwilsonstatewines.ca)

For some reason this wine was not given its VQA designation but for the life of me I can't tell you why, it's a delicious version of Pinot with great character, like earthy notes, black cherry, hints of cranberry and strawberry with cocoa, coffee and cherry on the finish. My only complaint would be the plastic cork, which means drink up without the next 2 years. Drink and enjoy now thru 2015 latest. Price: \$18.00 – Rating: \*\*\* ½+

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



**Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *On the Road, International Wine Notes and more*

**Coming Later this Month ... the return of Weekly Wine Videos**

**Just as the name suggest ... every week I'll introduce you to another fabulous Ontario wine that you've just gotta try – [Check out the YouTube Channel Now](#)**

**NEW – [Ottawa Life – International Wine Selection\(s\) of the Week:](#)**

Check out the [Ottawa Life – Thirst Impressions](#) blog for my weekly selections

**This week's posts:**

**[California: The Other Side of Pinot Noir](#)  
[Zinfandel's Zinful Allure and Appeal](#)  
[California's Last Hurrah](#)**

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

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

**[2011 Bouchard / Fevre / Ponciago Tasting](#)  
[California Legends at the ROM](#)**

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

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

**[Inniskillin 2006 Pinot Noir – Reserve Series](#)**

**[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

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

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

[Read the New Posts Added](#)

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

April 13, 2013 – now available  
April 4, 2013 – [Vintages Shop On-Line](#)

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Where I'll Be



**Flavour Festival – April 28, 2013**

Sip your way around the world, enjoying wines from Ontario, Italy, Spain, Germany, Chile, South Africa and Australia, to name but a few. You might also like to quench your thirst by sampling Ontario artisan beers or discover our local spirits for the first time! Did you know we produce spirits of the region?

**1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.. The Experience of Glass on the Palate: In this seminar wine authority Michael Pinkus will take you through a structured tasting of wine in various shaped and sized Schott Zwiesel glass ware.**

Here's where you can find all the details <http://www.flavourfestival.com/>

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Where I'll Be



**In The News: Privatization is a-foot ... but not here**

All eyes in Ontario should be focused on the state of Pennsylvania for the next few months as they prepare to do battle over their state run liquor board. On March 22 the House of Representatives listened to the populace of the state and voted narrowly (105-90) to end the state run system. Now the bill heads to the Senate and Governor Tom Corbett is urging the senate to pass the bill in time for the June budget: "Expect some phone calls," he said, "because I've asked the House to talk to their members of the senate to convince them that we need to move this bill forward. And I hope that they will do so in a quick and expeditious manner."

Thom Nickels in the [Huffington Post on April 8](#) proclaimed in his pro-liberalization rant that "Prohibition is over, and Pennsylvania needs to move on." He also stated something that all Ontarians should take note of: "For anyone who has traveled to New York, California and to the

south -- where wine can be purchased in local supermarkets -- Pennsylvania's LCB system seems like an H.G. Wells trip into medieval times. Walk the streets of Manhattan, and you'll find countless little shops that sell wine." Although he did get one thing wrong: "Travel to Canada and you'll see wine for sale beside the candy bars and pound cake in neighborhood convenience stores." He obviously must be talking about Quebec, cause he sure ain't talking about No-Fun-Ontario

Closer to home (or at least in the same country) Nunavut also eyes a more liberalized system in the territory. According to the CBC report of March 20, 2013 "The GN is responding to the 195-page report from the Liquor Act Review Task Force. The report had 50 recommendations including cracking down on bootlegging, and liberalizing access to beer and wine while restricting access to hard liquor."

With all this movement all around us you'd think Ontario would take the hint. What the hell is wrong with this province when it just can't see the writing on the wall? What are they afraid of? If you have any thoughts (pro or con) on this issue let's hear them on [Facebook](#) or by [email](#), and we'll follow up in a subsequent newsletter.



### **Wine Event Spotlight: *It's All About Tasting in Spring***

**Wrapped Up in the Valley - April 20-21, 27-28 and May 4-5, 2013:** 24 wineries of the Twenty Valley will be participating serving 24 gourmet appetizers over three spring inspired weekends. Collect recipe cards along the way so that you can create these sensational pairings for your friends and relatives and be the star in your very own backyard this summer! You can purchase your passports on line through the e-commerce site at [www.twentyvalley.ca](http://www.twentyvalley.ca).

**Discover the Flavours of the Kawarthas and Northumberland County – April 28, 2013 ...** Come celebrate the somewhereness of the Kawarthas and Northumberland County at the 2013 Flavour Festival. Nibble on gourmet cuisine prepared with local, fresh and seasonal ingredients, crafted by the hands of award winning and talented chefs, caterers and gourmards. Chefs will be using local ingredients to prepare and celebrate Canada's ethnic diversity, celebrating the flavours of Italy, France, China, Japan, India, Thailand and more! Also sip your way around the world, enjoying wines from Ontario, Italy, Spain, Germany, Chile, South Africa and Australia, to name but a few. And what would a Canadian celebration be without beer - quench your thirst by sampling Ontario artisan beers or discover some local spirits for the first time! It all happens Sunday, April 28, 2013 – visit <http://flavourfestival.net/> for details.

**The Wine & Herb Touring Pass Event (Wine & Herb) ...** returns this May 2013 and brings with it 27 unique VQA wine and food pairings created by the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Wine & Herb takes place Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays in May 2013 (May 3/4/5, 10/11/12, 17/18/19, 24/25/26) from 11 am to 5 pm. Touring passes are \$43 per person (plus HST), entitling the holder to a VQA wine and food pairing at each winery, passports are valid for every weekend. Visit <http://wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com/wine-and-herb> for details.

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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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