

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 – 203
April 25, 2013

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OntarioWineReview: *Failing the People of Ontario – time and time again*

My last couple of newsletters have taken a hammer to the business of selling booze here in Ontario and in particular have been knocking on the door of the LCBO, its (potentially unconstitutional) monopoly and the hopes of it striking to establish an equilibrium in this province between private and the public sector ... the LCBO is going to fight tooth and nail to hold onto its power – even if in doing so they bring themselves down. Over the past month I have receive a number of emails and thoughts on the LCBO and its system of doing business and I have an email that I received from an agent to share with you.

I was also asked about the initiative started in late 2012, mywineshop.ca – and if I see them as a viable option ... in truth I am all for the concept, and yes I think you should go to the website and show your support, but just like freemygrapes.ca these two ideals are going to need a much greater push and a much more devoted following then just the act of putting your name on a piece of paper. Something more drastic is going to have to done or even a government with a pair of cajones to actually follow through with something that has been studied time and time again with the same results being tabled ... privatization is needed and beneficial. Yet, time and time again those reports are scraped, shelved or ignored in favour of our current system. As the email below illustrates government bodies that control liquor sales might bend a little to keep us “relatively” happy but they are not about to relinquish control.

The names in what follows have been removed to protect those who may feel repercussions from Big Brother (sad that you can't criticize the LCBO openly in this province without feeling their wrath).

“In 1988 an ad hoc group [was formed] to address the Steven Offer Commission - which had been formed to review Liquor License laws in Ontario.

Our presentation to the Commission was focused on two areas -

1) The fact that importing agents were not officially recognized as entities under the Act (a risky situation for companies who had significant investments in their own futures). Our licenses were issued at the whim of the LCBO and we asked the Commission to recommend official recognition of Manufacturers Agents in the Act, itself.

2) The creation of what we called the "New Agency Concept" - in fact, private retail stores. It was our assertion that the system had proven to be unable to address the growing need in Ontario for a broad selection of quality products - something which could only be addressed properly by a privatized system. The presentation was considerably more detailed than this short note - but that

was, in a nutshell, our goal.

We succeeded with number 1) and we are now officially defined by the Act and our licenses are issued by the AGCO (today's answer to the LLBO) and our existence is no longer subject to the "pleasure" of the LCBO.

The Commission fell short of recommending the privatization for which we lobbied - falling back on the fact that they had not been given a mandate to specifically deal with retail (as that was LCBO jurisdiction and not LLBO). They did, however, indelibly recognize our concerns in the body of their recommendations by commenting both on our arguments and by strongly suggesting that the LCBO meet with us and investigate how best the concerns we'd enumerated could best be addressed.

In the end, the Consignment Warehouse Program - at the LCBO - was the compromise.

In retrospect, although the Consignment program has provided significantly greater access to the market for a large number of products (most of which would likely, otherwise, never have seen the light of day here), it would be fair to say that it certainly did not provide the systematic resolution, which we had solicited, in the first place.

As I am sure most of our associates, friends and competitors will do, I will be watching these judicial proceedings with great interest."



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Four Wines from 3 Regions*

Cave Spring 2008 Chardonnay CSV - \$29.95 (W)

www.cavespringcellars.com

Some expect me to write "Chardonnay, go away, come again another day ..." I'm sure we can finish that little piece of poetry some other day, but the Chardonnay many Ontario producers are coming up with are impressing me – including this Cave Spring version. The nose is full-on buttery-vanilla with spice and poached pear ... the palate shows nice acidity amongst its creamy mouthfeel of vanilla-toffee, candied almonds and spiced apple ... this is a delicious full-flavoured Chardonnay that will easily lie down for four-plus years – which is funny cause that's exactly what I'm giving it as a score. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: ****+

Cooper's Hawk 2010 Cabernet Franc - \$21.50 (W)

www.coopershawkvineyards.com

The first red to come off the property is a winner. Blackberry and tobacco greet the nose, while blackberries and blueberry skin are the stars on the palate – it has a juiciness on the mid-palate before the nice tannin backbone takes hold on the finish. Price: \$21.50 – Rating: *** ½+

Harwood Estate 2009 St. Laurent - \$20.00 (W)

www.harwoodestatevineyards.com

St. Laurent is a grape you see in Austria and maybe a little in Germany – it's a cool climate red that has Pinot Noir-like characteristics. The nose is loaded with sour cherry and raspberry, while on the palate there's a nice tartness with some earthy character which hangs out from mid-palate to the finish. As I said, this parallels Pinot Noir but with more acid, more earthy and a tad more sour ... great food wine with all that acid present. Price: \$20.00 – Rating: *** ½

Lakeview Cellars 2010 Cabernet-Merlot Reserve - \$18.95 (W)

www.lakeviewcellars.ca

This pleasant, easy drinking Merlot dominant blend (42%) with the Cabernet Franc (26%) and Cabernet Sauvignon ((29%) family members is well-fruited, evenly spiced and something I would consider a delicious wine – and in fact would consider ageing it for a number of years to watch it develop ... but, although it says 'reserve' on the label the winemaking team here has decided to put the wine under plastic cork; which means it has no long term ageing potential what-so-ever. Drink within 3 years after that all bets are off as to what will become of this wine. I'd like to be proven wrong but track record of plastic so far has not been good. Too bad. Price: \$18.95 – 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](#)

Video #1 – [Coyote's Run 2009 Sparkling Pinot Noir Rose](#)

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:

**[Climbing the Ladder of Torres](#)
[A Wickedly Good Rhone Wine](#)**

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

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

Nothing New This Week

[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

[Read the New Posts Added](#)

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

**[April 27, 2013 – Vintages Release](#)
[In-Store Discoveries, April 27, 2013](#)
[Vintages Shop On-Line April 18, 2013](#)**



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 Zweisel glass ware.

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



Raise Your Spirits: ... You May Live in Canada

With a few heavy topped newsletters under my belt I thought I would lighten the mood a little with this (purported) Jeff Foxworthy bit about living in Canada, that he recently delivered during an appearance at Caesars in Windsor:

If your local Dairy Queen is closed from September through May, You may live in Canada.

If you've worn shorts and a parka at the same time, You may live in Canada.

If 'Vacation' means going anywhere South of Detroit for the weekend, You may live in Canada.

If you measure distance in hours, You may live in Canada.

If you can drive 90 km/hr through 2 feet of snow during a raging blizzard without flinching, You may live in Canada.

If you carry jumper cables in your car and your wife knows how to use them, You may live in Canada.

If you design your kid's Halloween costume to fit over a snowsuit, You may live in Canada.

If the speed limit on the highway is 80 km -- you're going 95 and everybody is passing you, You may live in Canada.

If driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow, You may live in Canada.

If you know all 4 seasons: almost winter, winter, still winter, and road construction, You may live in Canada.

If you have more miles on your snow blower than your car, You may live in Canada.

If you find -2 degrees 'a little chilly', you may live in Canada.



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

Wrapped Up in the Valley – April 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.

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.

Food Truck Eats – 20 Trucks, 20 Wines at Peller ... According to the Peller news release - Look who's parking in our backyard - Kick off the summer at one of the biggest food truck events in Canada this May long weekend featuring 20 of Canada's biggest and upcoming food trucks. Food trucks are North America's newest trend in eating gourmet food. The line up includes these trucks driving down to Niagara to pleasure your palate: The Big Chief, Bonfire Catering, Buster's Sea Cove, Caplansky's Delicatessen, Dirty South, Dobro Jesti, El Gastronomo Vagabundo, The Feisty Jack, FoodMan & CultureBoy, Gorilla Cheese, Gourmet Gringos, Hank Daddy's Barbecue, Itty Bitty Pie Company, Manual Labour Coffee, Roaming Buffalo, Rome'n Chariot, R&R BBQ, Southern Smoke Truck, The Tide & Vine Oyster Company, Tony's Corner StrEATery ... May 18 – 1-6pm / 19 – 6-10pm – Tickets are only \$15 and still available. [Details by clicking right here.](#)

A Night of Music Under the Stars ... Once again Jackson-Triggs puts together an all-star line-up of musicians that'll sing their hearts out for a bottle or two of wine. This year look for these great Canadian artists to fill the beautiful Jackson-Triggs amphitheater with sounds you'll not soon forget:

Sam Roberts Band (June 14); Chantel Kreviazuk (June 15); Steven Page (July 6); Natalie MacMaster (July 13); Quartetto Gelato (August 4); Spirit of the West (August 10); Bruce Cockburn (August 30); Great Lake Swimmers & Elliott Brood (August 31); Alan Doyle (September 6) – [Find times and prices here.](#)

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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