

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 – 208
July 10, 2013

In this Edition

- ↓ **OntarioWineReview:** *Still Great Wines After All These Years*
 - ↓ **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch:** *Gamay, Pinot and Chardonnay*
 - ↓ **Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *Wine Videos, Blogs and More*
 - ↓ **OntarioWineReview:** *Dave Sheppard – Coyote's Run*
 - ↓ **Wine Event Spotlight:** *4 More Events*
-



OntarioWineReview: *JL Groux – Stratus Winery*

It's interesting and educational to spend the afternoon with winemaker JL Groux, a man who has been making wine in Ontario for the last 23 years (since 1990) – before that he spent 9 years in France. There's lots to learn from that kind of experience, especially the part about being in Ontario for such a long time. On a mid-March day I spent a few hours with JL having lunch, tasting wine and getting his thoughts on many of the grape varieties grown here in Ontario.

Much of what we discussed were the new releases of Stratus starting with what many would consider the lightest of wines outside Pinot Noir, Gamay Noir. But in the hands of the mad-wine-scientist that is JL Groux Gamay takes on a whole new way of being. At over 14.9% alcohol and almost 2 years in barrel this is not some easy drinking Beaujolais and a far cry from the bubblegum Nouveaus that are prevalent on the market in November. "Gamay is a pleasure but painful variety to make," says JL. The [2010 Gamay](#) is big and JL considers it underpriced because of the viticultural hoops they have to jump through to make this wine ... those are potentially damaging words as far as sales of the wine goes, considering it carries a \$29.00 price tag, making it the lowest priced Stratus labeled wine on the shelves. But according to JL Gamay grapes have to hang a long time to get the kind of concentration he likes in Gamay, "to the point of shriveling" he insists. The Gamay comes from some of the oldest vines on the property, planted in 1985; they were on the property when it was purchased.

Many people have poo-pooed the idea of Syrah in Ontario, yours truly included, and JL was in the same boat, "20 years ago I said forget Syrah in Ontario, but now I have great hope for Syrah," says JL. In fact, 2009 was the first year the Syrah was not declassified and blended away into the flagship Stratus Red. The addition of Paul Hobbs consulting has also made a difference for Syrah, he suggested removing the "high-wings" on the bunches, "we drop 25% of the crop, but it makes for a better, more concentrated wine" ... The [2010 Syrah](#) is one of the best wines I have tried from Stratus and one of the best wines in the entire tasting.

"The winery's job is to accept the grapes and process the fruit – wine is truly made in the vineyard," JL says, repeating a philosophy you undoubtedly have heard a million time before. The next wine tried during the tasting is an Ontario standard, Merlot, and the [2010 Merlot](#) is truly a delicious quaff made from old block (1985) vines and some younger plantings from 2001.

Which brings us to two very interesting single varietal wines: the [2010 Malbec](#) and the [2010 Petit Verdot](#), neither variety are ones you expect out of Ontario vineyards, nor do you expect them as stand-alone wines. But JL seems enthusiastic about both. "Malbec is a very vigorous vine, even one bunch per shoot will give us 6 tons per acre," he says; and about the Petit Verdot: "Always a

good crop because it grows very quickly – it's ready around the time of Merlot." Funny thing about the Petit Verdot, it was never supposed to be part of the vineyard: "we discovered it by mistake, we found out we had planted half a row." But the Petit Verdot has a special place in JL's heart, "This is the wine you want for food because the tannins and acidity fight; Petit Verdot has really big acidity."

I can think of only one other winery bottling single varietal Semillon (Rosewood) consistently – Stratus has now released theirs with the [2010 Semillon](#). JL recounts how this was not his favourite grape by a long shot, in fact because it was always being declassified he figured they'd dig up their 5 acres and replant to something more appropriate. "We used to pick it first with no results, but now we let it hang and pick it as one of our last whites – it manages to keep its acidity but gains flavours and aromatics" ... JL is looking forward to the 2012 version which he says has some botrytis on it. Rounding out the 2010 wines is a [Chardonnay](#) and representing the 2011's is the [Gewurztraminer](#).

But I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the [2009 Cabernet Franc](#); as many know 2009 was the big acid year in Ontario, perfect for Riesling and Pinot Noir, but not exactly ideal for bigger reds like Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. The grapes for the '09 were harvested December 7 and 8 and JL recalls that he has "never picked [dry table wine] grapes in December in my life." With close to 2 years in barrel and 47% new wood this Franc was absolutely stellar.

If there is one thing you take away from a visit with JL Groux it's this (well maybe two things): although he's been kicking Ontario vineyards for 23+ years he's still amazed each and every vintage; that leads us to the second point, which flies in the face of popular thinking and that is: you can teach an old dog new tricks.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Gamay, Pinot and Chardonnay*

13th Street 2011 Gamay Noir, Sandstone Reserve - \$22.95 (W)
www.13thstreetwinery.com

If you're not a Gamay fan I have to say you just haven't had the right Gamay. There are a few Ontario versions out there that really suck you into the world of Gamay Noir and make you want to stay – and one of those would be the 13th Street Sandstone Reserve. It's treated just right with a one-third / one-third / one-third treatment (new, 1 year and 2 year oak) for nine months; keeping the fruit while adding complexity. Black cherry, anise, white and black pepper all on the nose – while the palate responds in kind adding black fruit, cherry, and strawberry while also keeping the other stuff listed above. Nice structure for sipping or food pairing and shows power while still restraining itself. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: **** ½

Flat Rock Cellars 2010 Pinot Noir - Gravity - \$29.95 (W)
www.flatrockcellars.com

I'm a big fan of Gravity – one, it keeps me rooted to the ground ... but two, it makes for a really delicious Pinot Noir. It's a barrel selection that Flat Rock does and I've found in the past that the hot vintage Gravities have been less exciting than the regular Pinot Noir – until now. There's a nice cranberry, rhubarb, spiced-cranberry and complex tannins note all kept together with some really good acidity. It quite possible could be the best hot vintage Gravity yet made at Flat Rock. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: ****+

Hidden Bench 2010 Chardonnay, Estate - \$32.00 (W)
www.hiddenbench.com

Hidden Bench has a new winemaker, or at least she was new in 2010 (Marlize Byers) – this was her first full vintage with Hidden Bench and she's done a lovely job with this Chardonnay made from 12-35 year old vines and aged in 20% new French oak. The wine is just layered with flavour from nose to back of the throat and everywhere in between: lime meringue and peach are most prominent; the palate feels fat and mouth-filling but with nice balancing acidity ... plus there's just a super finish that hangs out to party. Price: \$32.00 – Rating: ****+

Malivoire 2010 Chardonnay – Small Lot M2 - \$19.95 (W)

www.malivoire.com

The Small Lot series expands to include Chardonnay – it started as a Gamay-thing but if Hollywood has taught us anything success breeds sequels – and as far as sequels go it's more Godfather 2 than Police Academy 4. A nice blend of white fruits here mixed in with hints of oak, vanilla and a touch of something buttery and at the same time nutty – it's all backed with a pleasant balance of acidity and lovely fruit nuances. But what really makes this wine is the hit of spice on the finish ... or is it the acidity that keeps it fresh? Nope, I'll vote for the spicy finish. Price: \$19.95 – Rating: ****+

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



Bi-Weekly OWR Updates: *Wine Videos, Blogs and More*

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 #11 – [Cave Spring Cellars NV Blanc de Blancs Brut](#)

Video #12 – [Peninsula Ridge 2010 Vintners Private Reserve Merlot](#)

Video #13 – [Chateau des Charmes 2012 Cuvee D'Andree 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:

[Celebrate Canada Day with a Rose](#)

[Canada Week Continues with Fantastic Foursome](#)

[Hot Weather Refreshers](#)

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

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

[Special Banfi Single Vineyard Component Tasting](#)

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

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

[Cave Spring Cellars 2005 La Penna](#)

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

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

[Three Vintages of Hillebrand Trius Red 2005, 2007 and 2010](#)

[Hernder Estate 2004 Merlot](#)

[Hillebrand 2005 Artist Series Meritage](#)

[Thirty Bench Wine Makers 2006 "Triangle Vineyard" Riesling](#)

[Coyote's Run 2009 Pinot Blanc](#)

[Back to Back Vintages of Trius Dry Riesling: 2006 & 2007](#)

www.ontariowinereview.com

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

Hillebrand 2006 Trius White

[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 \(blog\)](#)

Vintages Shop On-Line June 27, 2013
July 6, 2013 – Vintages Release Report
In-Store Discoveries – July 6, 2013

Advertising



THE REBIRTH OF COOL
BORN 2011
JULY 19 – 21, 2013
COOL CLIMATE CHARDONNAY

INTERNATIONAL
COOL CLIMATE
CHARDONNAY
CELEBRATION
2013

Niagara, Ontario
www.coolchardonnay.org

What else can be said ... if you are a Chardonnay fan this event is for you

Find all the details here:
www.coolchardonnay.org

Advertising



OntarioWineReview: *Dave Sheppard – Coyote's Run*

Soft spoken. Unassuming. Quiet. Always ready with a smile. Some words and phrases used to describe Coyote's Run winemaker David Sheppard – a winemaker who has been quietly plying his craft in Ontario for a whopping 30 years. 2012 marked David's 30th vintage in Ontario and in honour of this milestone Coyote's Run is releasing two special wines: 2012 Gewurztraminer (out now) and a 2012 Cabernet Sauvignon (to be released later).

Sitting in the vineyard tasting wine with the anniversary boy, Dave reflects briefly about his 30 years of wine making: "I have friends who are accountants and other professionals making lots of money and I could have done that, but it's really hard to beat this," he says surveying the vineyard with a glass of wine in one hand and a cheese topped cracker in the other. Dave is indeed soft-spoken, especially next to Coyote's Run outspoken co-owner Jeff Aubry, who is never without something to say. He praises Dave for his winemaking skills and for making wines in a style he likes to drink. He once told me, "In a worst case scenario, where nobody wants to buy my wine, I would have to drink these wines myself, good thing Dave makes wines I like to drink." Dave has pretty much seen it all

(so far) from a brief stint at Barnes wines in 1982 before moving quickly to the nascent Inniskillin later in 1982, where he was Karl Kaiser's right hand man for 21 years. In 2003 he left to help the start-up Coyote's Run and became a partner in the project.

My tasting with Jeff and Dave begins with some sad news about the Black Paw vineyard and in particular some of the fruit: Chardonnay and Cabernet Franc – they will no longer be made due to Red Blotch Disease (mid-way through ripening the leaves get red blotches as if leaves were dying off), they were the first officially recognized case in Canada. "Not something we want to be known for," Jeff admits, "It's from infected replanting. We've done everything to stop it in its tracks and thankfully don't see any sign of it anywhere else in the vineyard." Good news for the vineyard but bad news for the fans of such Black Paw favourites as Chardonnay and Cabernet Franc – leaving Coyote's Run with only one bottling of each.

The best new wines of the newest release are the [2011 Black Paw Pinot Noir](#) and the commemorative bottling of the [2012 Gewurztraminer](#) – Dave says he loves working with Gewurzt and makes some every year, but it usually gets blended away in the Five Mile White ... this time the grapes and resulting wine was just too good to hide in a blend. Other wines of note were the [2011 Red Paw Pinot Noir](#), my usual go to Pinot because of its light fruity nature, the [2012 Five Mile Red](#), a great BBQ red and a great preview of what the 2012 wines will be like come reserve wine time. And finally the [2012 Red Paw Pinot Gris](#) ... a real hidden gem amongst this year's releases. How could I forget my love to hate grape: Chardonnay and the [2012 Red Paw Chardonnay](#), a grape variety that helped establish Coyote's Run (along with their Pinot Noir), and one Dave never fails to amaze me with – I call myself a devout Chardonnay loather, but Dave pulls me to the white side each and every year, this year was no exception.



Wine Event Spotlight: 4 More Events

Vintages BBQ ... On Thursday, July 11, VINTAGES (LCBO) is celebrating summer in style, with a sizzling hot evening of exploring their latest selection of newly-released wines, barbecue fare and music. VINTAGES will be showcasing 65 products, perfect to pair with classic barbecue favourites. When: Thursday, July 11, 2013 - 6:30-9pm ... Where: CORUS (Queens Quay & Lower Jarvis) 25 Dockside Drive, Toronto ... Cost: \$65 per person – includes sampling of more than 65 products and barbecued treats. For further information, please visit vintages.com/bbq ... To order your tickets, please call 416-365-5767 or 1-800-266-4764 Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 6 pm and Saturday 9 am to 6 pm, except holidays.

i4c's kick-off event: 8 Chefs. 8 Grills ... Raise your glass to Chardonnay at the Official Kick-Off event for the International Cool Climate Celebration on Friday, July 19 at Trius Winery at Hillebrand. At 8 Chefs. 8 Grills. meet and toast with 62 i4c Winemakers from around the world, and prepare to fill your glass with top International Chardonnays alongside Trius Winery's vines. As the sun goes down, stunning globe lights transform the vineyard into a magical scene while you indulge in barbeque delicacies from 8 renowned chefs. Use your taste buds to help Trius Winery Restaurant's Gold Medal Plates-winning Executive Chef, Frank Dodd determine the champion of the Chardonnay-inspired grill. [Click here to find out how you can join in the celebration.](#)

SANTE: PARTY IN THE VINEYARD & WINE BARREL AUCTION ... Enjoy a casually elegant evening of dining, dancing, wine barrel auction and special guest entertainment: Santé. To your health and to a new era of health in our community. \$500 per person, inclusive of taxes and gratuities. Tickets include a charitable tax receipt for the maximum allowable amount. Details can be found here: <http://reservations.andrewpeller.com/events/sante.html>

MOVIE IN THE GARDENS at Stoney Ridge ... August 16, 2013 - \$29.95 per ticket which Ticket includes: one glass of wine (4oz), access to gourmet popcorn bar and a pass to view The Harder They Fall starring Humphrey Bogart - Doors open at 7:30 pm, Children under 12 are free. Call or

Email Stoney Ridge to reserve your spot today! sbarker@stoneyridge.com / rclarke@stoneyridge.com or call 905-562-1324 ext:22

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!

© OntarioWineReview.com 2013. All rights reserved.

You may use the content of this newsletter by including full credit to Michael Pinkus, Grape Guy and a link to www.ontariowinereview.com