

## 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 – 209**  
**July 25, 2013**

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### OntarioWineReview: *6 Barrels for 6 Chefs Does it Again*

Once again I find myself at Huff Estates winery in Prince Edward County for the never over-hyped, most anticipated must attend: 6 Barrels for 6 Chefs. If you have never gone (or have never heard of the event) allow me to take a few lines to explain its concept: 3 wineries pull wine out of two of their barrels, one white (Chardonnay) and one red (Pinot Noir) – these wines are then given to a chef to match with a dish of their choosing. In total there are 6 chefs, who create a dish around these barrel-extracted wines. The goal of the experiment, according to Huff winemaker Frederic Picard was “to illustrate the nuances among different barrels used on the same grape and how each could be elevated when paired with food prepared by a great chef.” It’s important to remember that these are “wines in progress” and can change from when the chef first tries it to when he is finally in front of you at 6 for 6 creating his dish. Last year’s Top Chef Canada winner, Carl Heinrich, who was also at last year’s 6 for 6, made such a remark saying that he would have to tweak his dish as the evening progressed to match the changed wine; he also said that he was surprised at how much the wine had changed over the course of the month since he had tried it.

The matches don’t always work, but the wines are always worth trying and the food is always delicious, but as my tablemate Jacques, a first time 6 for 6 attendee, remarked: “it’s an exploration - we’re all wine explorers, some are just further along on their journey than others”. The exploration tonight was to find the best wine, best food and best match.

### Best Food ...

For a while this category was a toss-up between two 6 for 6 veterans. One was the man, along with Frederic Picard, who helped put this event together: Bryan Steele (of the Stratford Chef School, Stratford) with his Risotto with crab, Gaspé shrimp, chervil and fresh peas. The other chef was Carl Heinrich (Richmond Station, Toronto), in his second year at the event (and hopefully he’ll return again), serving up Ramp and potato pierogi with oxtail ragu and carred onions. Both dishes were at the pinnacle of our must-try-again dishes list and we went back for seconds (and in the case of Carl’s, thirds) but in the end it was the wily veteran Bryan Steele who prevailed this year by a Risotto width ... the freshness of his dish was just a perfect complement to a summer’s evening dining al fresco, the peas and the dash of lemon just took Risotto to a whole new level of deliciousness – and it was for this reason he beat out his competitors – but I must tell you, it was a fun (and flavourful) battle to be judging.

The other chefs who also prepared dishes this evening included (all wonderful in their own right): Chris McDonald (Cava, Toronto) with his charred octopus tamal with tomatillo and chicharrones – more on this on in a bit.

Sean Collins (Mercer Hall, Stratford) and his smoked scallop, pablano pesto, snow pea slaw, red

chili, pancetta – which amounted to the spiciest dish of the night.

Ryan Crawford (Gastro Homestead, Toronto): oeuf en meurette - poached Homestead Farm fresh egg with chicken and Pinot ragu, homegrown 24-month aged prociutto, onion shells/young garlic puree; was not only the longest named dish but also the riskiest ... and it worked.

Marc Lepine (L'Atelier, Ottawa): chilled pea soup with lobster, smoked avocado and yogurt ... the coolest dish of the night – literally.

My note to any chef approached to participate would be: do not hesitate to be part of this event. The chefs here show real culinary skill and ability, and if you're worth your salt & pepper shaker and knife set you'll want to be a part of this. Everyone from chefs to winemakers to guests all enjoyed themselves and between the chefs there seems to develop a real sense of camaraderie.

### **Best Red / Best White ...**

With only three wineries participating and two wines from each this is still a stiff competition, especially when you look at the high caliber of the wineries: Huff Estates, Norman Hardie Wines and Closson Chase. This was the first year that Huff has featured a Pinot Noir – usually they show two Chardonnays, because they had no Pinot in their portfolio, but that has now changed and each winery can now put in one each of the featured grapes. As close as this battle was, Huff was shut out this year, shown up, if you will, by their guests. Interesting to note, because these wines are works in progress there could be a different outcome if these wines were tasted next week, next month or in 6 months – these were the tasting results from this snapshot in time during their development.

Closson Chase took the Chardonnay category with a 2012 in Dargaud 3rd fill 225L barrel – the nose was buttery and vanilla with sweet apple notes. The great creamy texture in the mouth made this wine “deliciously drinkable” – so say my notes. It was paired alongside the Bryan Steel Risotto – but this was not the top-rated pairing; and neither was the best Pinot Noir, which was paired with Carl's dish. Norman Hardie's 2012 in a Mercurey 2nd fill 228L barrel with CLL toast: it was very fruit driven and pretty with violet notes on the nose, but the fruit was the dominant star here from first sip to last swallow.

### **Best Pairing ...**

As good as those above wines were, the best pairing of the night went to Chris McDonald and Norm Hardie ... the wine elevated the food from good to great (or was it the other way around). Poured was a Norman Hardie 2012 Chardonnay aged in Mercurey 2nd fill 500L barrel with Norm's special CLL toasting. The creaminess of the wine with its balancing acidity seemed to bring out the best in the octopus tamal and tomatillo salsa. My note says, “something really works here – they elevate each other to a different plane.” But after that specifics get a little hazy ... a good food pairing is best enjoyed, not over analyzed.

6 Barrels for 6 Chefs continues to be the premier wine event in the County, the most innovative, and truly the most fun. The focus is the food, the wine and gives everybody's taste buds a workout worth remembering.

[Check out the pictures from this year's event here.](#)

And to see others comments look for the hashtag on Twitter, #six4six.

Finally, they may not have won, placed or showed, and what we tried from barrel might not be ready for another year or more, but we did try some new Huff wines of note – and you can find the full reviews by clicking on the wine name below:

[2012 Pinot Gris](#)

[2012 Rosé](#)

[2010 Cuvee Janine Rose Brut](#)



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**Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Three Merlots & a Gamay***

**Hinterbrook 2010 Merlot, Reserve - \$40.00 (W)**

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

My notes for this wine date back to my birthday in December when I attended a wine and food pairing, why I've waited so long to publish this I'm not quite sure, maybe because I'm not worried about the age-ability of this wine, because they'll easily go 5+ years. A nose of black pepper, blackberry and black raspberry followed on the palate by some real peppery, spicy blackberry, cassis and blueberry skin. Drinks more like a Syrah than a Merlot with all that spice and pepper ... follows on the finish with a tannin punch and a little dusting of cocoa powder. Give this a few years to mellow. Price: \$ 40.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**Kacaba 2010 Merlot, Reserve - \$44.95 (W)**

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

2010 was a really good vintage for Merlot, I have tried many that have really impressed ... and at such a young age. Ontario Merlot usually takes some times before its drinkable, but the 2010 are ready now with age-able pedigree. This Kacaba version is smooth right off the hop with vanilla, blueberry, blackberry and chocolate – the palate is supple and the tannins, while there, are unobtrusive. Price: \$44.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**Malivoire 2011 Gamay, Courtney – 29.95 (W)**

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

Gamay is the Rodney Dangerfield of grapes – it gets absolutely no respect ... I blame this partially on the Beaujolais over exposure and the hype of Nouveau, which kicked the crap out of the seriousness of the grape. But here in Ontario there are some wineries determined to bring respect back to this much maligned grape – Malivoire is one of them. Nice peppered-cherry notes which follow on the palate adding raspberry and definitive white pepper to the mix. There's a nice juiciness here yet with nice balancing acidity. With great Gamays like this being made it's only a matter of another dozen years before the respect comes back – it's a long row to hoe but I'm glad there are those willing to take on the job. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**Strewn 2010 Merlot, Terroir - \$26.00 (W)**

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

Here's another blockbuster of a 2010 Merlot. I have found that Merlot of 2010 are ripe and ready, but with an age-worthiness that'll make them even better in 5-7 years; this Strewn number follows right in line with those. Nose of blueberry skin, blackberry, black raspberry and cocoa, followed on the palate with black cherry and raspberry, those blueberry skins and cocoa ... the tannins here act in a complimentary aspect instead of something to weigh down and over-power the wine. Price: \$26.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

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

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Bi-Weekly OWR Updates: Wine Videos, Blog Additions and more

**The 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 #14 – [Southbrook 2010 Chardonnay – Whimsy! Lot 20](#) (Chardonnay Week)

Video #15 – [Coyote's Run 2012 Red Paw Chardonnay](#) (Chardonnay Week)

Video #16 – [Pondview 2011 Bella Terra Chardonnay](#) (Chardonnay Week)

Video #17 – [Chateau des Charmes 2010 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay](#) (Chard-Week)

Video #18 – [Featherstone 2012 Black Sheep Riesling](#)

**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:**

[A Matched Pair from New Zealand](#)

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

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

[A Pictorial Look at Huff's 6 Barrels for 6 Chefs](#)

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

**July 20, 2013 – Vintages Release Report  
In-Store Discoveries – July 20, 2013**

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Something to make you smile ... or cringe



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### **Wine Event Spotlight:** *One Simple and One Black Tie Event*

**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](mailto:sbarker@stoneyridge.com) / [rclarke@stoneyridge.com](mailto:rclarke@stoneyridge.com) or call 905-562-1324 ext:22

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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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