

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 – 211
August 22, 2013

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OntarioWineReview: *Why Gamay Week*

I just know I'm about to say something that'll piss some folks off, but allow me to explain before I make my P.O. statement: I wrote this after leaving an LCBO Vintages tasting where I tried two marvellous Gamays from Beaujolais and a number of mediocre and over-priced Pinots from around the world ... I thought to myself (and here it comes): "Gimme a Gamay over a Pinot any day" ... I should qualify that statement a little more: "Gimme a well-made Gamay over a mediocre Pinot any day".

I'm glad some of you have decided to stick around after reading that ... so let's elaborate a little more. I have ridden the bandwagon (and at some points been the driver) for a number of grapes here in Ontario, Cabernet Franc being one of my favourites; I'm also a fan of Rieslings, and I see the merit in Chardonnay (witness my Chardonnay week videos leading up to the i4C) and of course there is a place for Pinot. But there's a grape we should be giving a little more credence to, and that grape is Gamay ... if we're gonna grow Pinot then Gamay is the next logical choice.

Gamay was actually the second red grape of Burgundy until July of 1395, when then Duke of Burgundy, Philippe the Bold, decided that Gamay was "disloyal" and "full of horrible harshness" – I guess the grapevines started speaking English, or worse yet, German – and they were banned from cultivation and relegated to the outskirts, namely Beaujolais, where it thrives to this day. In the early-70's Beaujolais hit the big time in the new world with the appearance of Beaujolais Nouveau and the celebrations that surround the release of the first wines of the new vintage. It was big through the 70's and into the 80's, and I am sure helped spark the big White-Zinfandel-Craze that swept through America (at least it sure helps to explain why that wine was so popular) ... but as palates became more sophisticated Beaujolais saw a down-turn, it was perceived as a lesser wine and became what people associated most with the Gamay grape. I would say it is then that Gamay could be deemed as 'disloyal', it was no longer true to its roots: tell people you're serving a lovely Beaujolais and the immediate association is with Beaujolais Nouveau, a candied confection wine, its mere mention and people turn their back and insist on something else, without even giving it a try.

Gamay in Ontario ...

Here in Ontario I'm not sure where Gamay is going – we have producers who take it extremely seriously, and we have producers making Rosé out of it. Gamay Rosé is the equivalent of White Zinfandel – a bastardization of the grape, it's already light and fruity and great with a bit of a chill, now you're making it even lighter? It would be equivalent to a product like Diet Coke Light, you've nullified what makes Gamay fun and exciting, turned it into something it shouldn't be; kinda reminds me of when my mom served us boiled chicken for dinner – it started out as chicken, but now it's a bland, tasteless representation of what it used to be. So out with Gamay Rosé, please.

But what about Gamay itself? It's time we get serious about Gamay in Ontario, where only a handful of producers are really doing it justice. One of those is Malivoire, who took both gold and bronze at the Ontario Wine Awards this year, there they are making stellar Gamays and plan to keep doing so: "We will continue to be absolutely committed to Gamay," says Stephen Gash, Managing Director at Malivoire.

13th Street falls into that camp as well, along with Chateau des Charmes, who are so committed to the grape they accidentally propagated their very own variety. There are also a few others that are firmly on the ground with Gamay, but not enough, I don't think Ontarians take this grape seriously (nor do a majority of our winemakers) – which is why I am proclaiming next week 'Gamay Week'. Starting Monday I will release one video a day promoting one of six of what I see as the top Gamays in Ontario right now – I would encourage you all to get out there, pick up a bottle, take it home, chill it for half an hour and enjoy it with what we have left of summer. Let's see if we can't raise the profile of this much maligned, but deserving of so much more, grape.

Bookmark or subscribe to the [OntarioWineReview YouTube Channel](#), or join the new [OntarioWineReview Facebook group](#) and starting Monday watch the beauty of Gamay come to life.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Six Amazing Ontario Wines*

Closson Chase 2011 Chardonnay – Closson Chase Vineyard - \$29.95 (W)

www.clossonchase.com

With each passing year the vines on this property get a little older, the roots dig down a little deeper and the winemaker gets a little smarter ... and as the old saying goes: "Every little bit counts". This wine gets better every vintage – the nose has butterscotch, baked apple and spice while the palate takes on a creaminess along with definitive oak flavour, but the oak acts as a vessel to deliver the spiced apple and vanilla ... it's a smooth, sexy wine with a very apropos spicy finish. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: ****+

Half Bay Moon 2012 Pinot Gris - \$15.00 (W)

www.hmbwinery.ca

On a recent trip to The County I tasted a few Pinot Grises that were very interesting. Now Pinot Gris (or Grigio) has got an interesting reputation: yes it is one of the fastest rising grapes on the selling front – but it also has very little character, as one winemaker once said to me, "it's the only variety that's varietal characteristics are that it has no varietal characteristics." That being said, this Gris does have character and a good one at that: a nose of pineapple and banana chip leading to a tropically tinged palate of pineapple, guava and banana skin – there's also a nice minerality here and crisp refreshingly clean finish. Price: \$15.00 – Rating: *** ½+

Hinterland 2012 Lacus - \$22.00 (W)

www.hinterlandwine.com

Lacus is a charmat method bubbly made from 100% Cabernet Franc grapes; it is also not your typical sparkling, one Twitter comment I received called it: "a carnivore's bubbly", and I tend to agree. This sparkler isn't for everyone, the nose is not full of those typical sparkling wine aromas, instead it's herbal with earthy notes mixed in with strawberry and raspberry fruit. On the palate there's a presence, and it might scare some off, the herbal continues to be there and is accompanied by red berry lingering in the background and a long interesting black cherry finish. As I said, it's not everyone's glass of bubbly, but it sure is interesting and has loads of character – and

those usually make the best dinner guests – I'm just saying ... Price: \$22.00 – Rating: ****

Lailey 2011 Chardonnay, Brickyard Vineyard - \$25.00 (W)

www.laileyvineyard.com

There's something about the Brickyard Chard that I find completely compelling and fascinating – and obviously the folks at Lailey do too because they keep making this single vineyard offering. It all starts with the aromas: great buttery-spicy notes that lure you along and into the glass - then it all moves to the palate and that's where the wine truly shines; adding fruit along its way: peach and apple come together with the spice and buttery notes and there's also a hint of vanilla that seems to muscle its way in – all leading to a finish that has a creamy texture and superb length that brings about spiced-vanillin and pineapple. Simply put, this wine is incredible. Price: \$25.00 – Rating: ****
½+

Malivoire 2012 Gamay – Alive - \$16.95 (W, L)

www.malivoire.com

This is the Gold medal winning Gamay from the 2013 Ontario Wine Awards, and there is no wonder as to why it is pure Gamay from nose to tip of the toes ... well not really your toes I wanted to say 'tip of the tongue' but that is only the beginning. The wine is pure cherry in both aroma and flavour, it does add raspberry into the mix and touches of white pepper on the tongue, but nothing gets in the way of that purity of fruit that is a well-made Gamay. Price: \$16.95 – Rating: **** ½

The Old Third 2011 Cabernet Franc - \$38.00 (W)

www.theoldthird.com

The Old Third is a producer of Pinot Noir – that's their claim to fame and that is what they want to be known for; but then they also planted a small 1100 vines plot of Cabernet Franc, "just for fun". From that little plot, in 2011, they created 35 cases (a barrel and a half worth) of wine: that's only 420 bottles – now that's small lot production. The chance that they have any left is slim because not only was it very limited, it was also very good. A nose of raspberry and fresh ripe cherry ... the palate is delicate with raspberry, a touch of smoke and hints of red berries, very pretty indeed. It spent only 14 months in an old used French barrel, and it came out beautifully. I tell you all this so you'll keep your eyes peeled, or get your name put on the list, for the 2012. Price: \$38.00 – Rating: ****+

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



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

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 #21 – [Lailey 2012 Sauvignon Blanc](#)

Video #22 – [Creekside 2012 Backyard Block Sauvignon Blanc](#)

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:

[Going Local, or Is That Just Plain Loco?](#)

NEW – Quench By Tidings ... #Wine Wednesday ([see them all here](#))
[Rose Way of Thinking](#)

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

Trips, tours and tastings – join me as I review the highs, and sometimes, the lows
[Dave and I Share a Great Zinfandel](#)

[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 \(blog\)](#)

August 17, 2013 – Vintages Release Report
In-Store Discoveries – August 17, 2013
Vintages Shop On-Line – July 25, 2013

Advertising



[Check out all the other shows as part of Red White and Blues in the County here.](#)

Advertising



Wine Event Spotlight: *Movies, Music and Garlic*

At Marynissen – August 25, 2013 (3:00 – 7:00 pm) ... End of Summer Party, With a special Tribute to Mrs. Nanny Marynissen. Featuring the official release of a Commemorative bottling of 2009 Nanny's Blend (at a special price). Food from the Dirty South Food Truck and Live music from The Amazing Flyin' Hammer Bros.

Trius Presents: Movie Night (various dates in September) ... We invite you to Niagara-on-the-Lake's first ever movie night in the vineyard! Make it an ultimate night out with dinner and a movie at Trius Winery Restaurant! Every Thursday in September. Movies include: Ocean's Eleven, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, Skyfall and Sideways. ticket includes movie admission and seat, one glass of wine, a souvenir glass and one bag of popcorn. For information checkout [Movie Only ... Dinner and Movie](#)

At Closson Chase – September 14, 2013 ... Shakura S'Aida (2013 Juno Awards Nominee for "Best Blues Album") at Red White and Blues in the County - a weekend celebration of innovative local wine, food and music. Tickets \$20 advance, \$25 at door. Show at 2:00 – [details here](#).

At Rosehall Run – September 14, 2013 ... Born Ruffians at Red White and Blue in the County – a weekend celebration of innovative local wine, food and music. Tickets \$39, show at 7:00pm. [Details here](#)

At Diamond – Sept. 21, 2013 ... Everyone loves music and wine – they go together like a horse and carriage, so [check out this music festival being put on by Diamond Estates](#).

In Toronto – September 22, 2013 ... [3rd Annual Toronto Garlic Festival](#) at Evergreen Brick Works (550 Bayview Ave. ,in the Don Valley)- Hours are 9 AM to 5 PM - Admission \$5. Free for children 12 years and under. Express entry for holders of tickets bought online in advance.

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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