

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 – 17
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OntarioWineReview: *Can We Be B.C. East?*

Recently I spoke with a gentleman who moved to our province from out British Columbia way, let's call him Joe. Originally from South Africa Joe admitted that in his youth he was not a wine fan.

"South Africa imported all the good stuff and we were left drinking those highly tannic mouth-dryingly-bitter wines ... but to us that was wine, and I, for one, didn't like it." He told me. After he moved to B.C. with his family things changed. A friend of his worked for the B.C. wine council and kept insisting he try some B.C. wine. Still scarred from his experiences with wine back in South Africa he always found a reason to decline, "I thought I would be relegated to sodas the rest of my life; while the rest of the world around me drank wine. I thought I was just one of those people that didn't like wine," he said.

Finally, after months of being asked and re-asked, he gave in and sampled some B.C. wine at that same friend's BBQ, whole-heartedly convinced of his dislike for wine. A smile crossed his face as he confided, "My wife had to drive me home. I was that loaded. I had never experienced wine like that before." Since then he has been on a personal quest to sample as much B.C. and new world wines as possible ... making up for years of self-imposed abstinence ... "I have the rest of my lifetime to make this up and I don't want to waste it." Joe now lives right here in Ontario, where a whole new world of wine is being opened up to him - and suffice it to say he's loving every minute of it.

So why am I telling you this story about Joe? Because Joe has a unique perspective about Canadian wine ... a B.C. perspective, that you and I, who live in Ontario don't get to see or hear.

"In B.C. you drink B.C. wine, period. There is no other wine made East of the Rockies or below the 49th parallel," he says with pride. "You walk into any restaurant and order anything besides B.C. wine and they look at you like you have two heads. Over there B.C. wine is *wine* – everything else just doesn't exist." Now, we Ontarians know there's Australia, California, France, Italy, New Zealand, Chile and plenty of other wine making countries besides Canada; and other regions besides B.C. and Ontario. Is that because we here in Ontario are just more worldly than our counterparts on the West Coast? Has the LCBO done a better job at introducing other wines than B.C. Liquor Stores? Or does the B.C. Wine Institute have a better PR machine than Ontario's Wine Council?

The numbers seem to back Joe's statements of his former home province. In 2004-2005 the B.C. Wine Institute reports that sales of B.C. VQA wines (that's wine made from 100% B.C. grapes) are 13.44% of the total wine sales in B.C. – that's a rise of 22% from the last report, and good enough for second place behind Australia in the marketplace.

A commonly held notion here in Ontario is that B.C.'s wine industry is fairly young in comparison to Ontario's, and that Ontario has been trying to live down the plonk we produced and distributed back in the 70's and early 80's with some horribly inferior hybrid and *lubrusca* jug wines. Ontario has had a mountain to climb, mainly with an older generation that grew up on all of that. B.C., on the other hand, got their industry off on the right foot using: *vinis venifera* grapes like Merlots, Cabernets, Chardonnay, and other well recognized grape varietals. B.C. had no horrible past to overcome, having learned the painful lesson Ontario had taught.

"That notion is a myth," says one insider, "B.C. had the same troubles Ontario had during the rip up and re-planting; plus they have a third the land under vine that Ontario has, therefore a much smaller industry." Now I'm not making excuses to our B.C. brethren, just stating a fact. But here's something else that B.C. has over us: they have instilled patriotism about their wine using a combination of government controlled stores, specific B.C. VQA wine shops and private liquor stores ... their promotion of B.C. VQA has a greater chance of catching on. Something Ontario has not been unable to do. As one Ontario winemaker put it "B.C. backs their industry – they have VQA wine stores for godsake – we have nothing like that here.

"If you're not drinking B.C. wine you're a turn coat," said Joe. "And if you're drinking anything but B.C. wine in public you're a traitor – it's unpatriotic."

Joe continued to talk but my mind began to wander asking questions like 'why can't we be like that here in Ontario?' As if reading my thoughts Joe said, "You should be like that here in Ontario. Your wines are that good."

From your lips to God's ears Joe ... from your lips to God's ears.



Grape Guy's Pick of the Bunch : A Cabernet and a Gamay

Visit the winery or their website for more details or to purchase these great wines.

Featherstone 2004 unfiltered Gamay - \$17.00

www.featherstonewinery.ca

Gamay Noir has long been one of my favourite grape varieties since I started drinking reds; Ontario wineries seemed to be able to do them justice. But these days Gamay has taken a backseat to much more stylish varietals and the same care and consideration, that was once there, isn't being imparted on this once noble grape (even the French are poo-pooing the Beaujolais grape, literally). Thankfully Featherstone has renewed my love for Gamay with this lush wine. The nose is multilayered with black cherry, black raspberry, red fruit and a hint of light cedar. On the palate, the same flavours recur as suggested by the nose – and, as the wine warms in the glass some red licorice appeared, hiding in the background somewhere behind the sour black cherry foreground. This was a very pleasant easy drinking Gamay, that could be served with or without chill, and it's well worth the price.

Available at the winery or on-line at the winery's website.

Malivoire 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon - \$18

www.malivoirewineco.ca

The first thing we noticed about this wine was it's beautiful ruby-red and purple colour, how when you swirled it the wine seemed to cling to the sides of the glass creating a fantastic array a refracted colour with the florescent lighting in the room, and then there's the nose. Sweet cherry and plum with a dash of white pepper and hints of burnt caramel – not overpowering but pleasant. On the palate the wine is smooth and ready to drink, but might benefit from a few years on the cellar shelf. Medium tannins with pepper and black cherry on the tongue ... very nice. This wine also represents our very first screw cap wine reviewed – kudos go to Malivoire for helping to lead the Ontario pack into this closure technology revolution.

Available at the winery or on-line at the winery's website.

Every so often we'll add an extra wine review (or two) to the website, these Web Only Wines appear for a variety of reasons and we're sure you'll enjoy them. This week we have two that are very unique – one is only available on the web, while the other is non-VQA. Check out WildAss Red and 13th Street 'Reds' – you won't be disappointed by either.



The Grape Vine : *Submit your opinion and become a part of the OWR tasters circle.*

Should either of these wines be a candidate for our Ontario Wine Review Crystal Cork Awards? Chime In!

Contact us at michael@ontariowinereview.com



Raise your Spirits : *Advice about things we “wine” about: like stains and hangovers.*

Label Removal ...

Last week I received an email from one of our readers asking the following: “would you be on the lookout for label lifters, wine journals, and other accessories wine lovers and collectors may be interested in?” Now every so often in the “Raise Your Spirits” section we will bring your attention to one of these items. But this time I want to tell you about the easiest way I have found to remove a wine label, and the best part is you’re using stuff you already have around the house. You’ll need: your oven, an oven mitt, and a razor blade or Exact-o style knife.

First remove all corks, wax, and capsules from the bottle (this includes screw caps – but not necessarily the accompanying metal sleeve). Pre-heat the oven to 200 degrees – then when set temperature is achieved place bottle in oven for 20 minutes. Remove bottle from oven one at a time (as needed) **wear oven mitt, please.** Use the razor blade to gently remove the label. The heating of the bottle causes the glue holding the label to melt, thus making it easier to remove and re-stick into your keepsake book or onto wax paper. When done, cool the bottles in the sink by running hot water over them, gradually lowering the temp of the water (if you use cold water right away the glass will shatter – fun to see but a pain to clean up). Bottles are extremely hot – don’t forget to wear your oven mitt during the entire process. Happy peeling.



Wine Event Spotlight : *Malivoire Touring Weekend November 12-13*

Customers and fans of Malivoire rejoice because it’s that time of year again: the fall touring weekend. Now this event is by invitation only for customer of Malivoire, so why make it general knowledge? So that you become a Malivoire customer and get in on the action for the next winery tour they have. It’s a unique winery that provide a unique experience to their customers with special tours of the facilities and great food pairings. They only do this a few times a year so get on board for the next one.



Contact Michael Pinkus Grape Guy

OntarioWineReview’s Newsletter is designed to enhance the appreciation of wine, in particular Ontario’s wines and wineries and to develop a better understanding about how best to enjoy both.

Please feel free to pass this newsletter on to other wine lovers!

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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