

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 – 113
July 23, 2009

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News ... One Month Left to Vote

You have just under a month left to vote for the next grape that OntarioWineReview will Challenge in the Fall. Currently, and surprisingly, Gewurztraminer is in the lead followed closely by Meritage and Riesling, all within 10 votes (or 4 percentage points) of each other. Have your say before it's too late. Visit the home page at www.ontariowinereview.com, look to your right and you will see the poll question ... closing date is August 15, 2009.



OntarioWineReview: Where's our pride?

Beyond my writing duties, I have the opportunity to work in some beautiful wine cellars and touch some of the rarest of wines: I help inventory, stock and organize wine cellars. Some cellars are recent acquisitions, having just been built, while others have been there so long that the organization has fallen on rough times and it is up to me to go in and fix it. I tell you this because it is here that I also get to work alongside a lot of trades people, many of whom are Italian (it's not a racist remark it's just true). One thing I can say about the Italians is that they love their wine, not just any wine, THEIR wine: Italian wine. I can't count the number of workers that have come up to me while I'm inventorying a cellar and say, "Lots of Italian wine eh? It's the best." Even if they don't drink wine, to them Italian wine is still "the best", and they are fiercely proud to see it in a wine collection.

I have also had the opportunity to do wine cellar work south of the border in the good old U.S. of A. Two things are true about American wine collectors: one, they have little respect for the French and two, they love their American wine – you might think that's too general a statement, but I have found it to be mainly true; Americans' like to collect American wine. Now granted, most Americans equate "American wine" to be Californian, with some exceptions (Washington and Oregon) - but California remains the King of American wine culture, even though all 50 states make wine. Yup, Americans love THEIR wine and are proud of what their country makes. Walk into any liquor store and front and centre for all to see, is wine made "right here at home in the good old U.S. of A." Proudly American.

[A recent study by Sopexa of Canada](#) showed that Quebecers like French wine more than any other province in Canada, that's French as in France. Really not very surprising, what did surprise me was that Sopexa would spend oodles of money to find that out; heck they could've just asked a few people on the street and they would've gleaned that info for free. Quebecers have always embraced their French culture and heritage; after all, they are a "distinct society" within Canada. Be that as it may, the Quebecois drink more French wine than that of any other country connection to it; it is THEIR historical heritage and they are proud of it.

On the west coast of Canada, it is sacrilegious if you are not a British Columbia wine fan. If you live in British Columbia now, or lived there through the wine renaissance of the past few years, and now live here in Ontario, you are a big fan of British Columbia wine. It's featured prominently in restaurants across the province, people buy it in droves at the stores, and some wineries sellout before the next vintage is ready to be sold.

Amazing. B.C.ers love THEIR wine, no doubt.

Imagine, if you will, pride in one's own industry, your local industry or your country's industry - supporting the "local", even if you're living in a different country, because you know that your home country's wine is "Da Best". So what the heck is wrong with Ontarians? Where the hell is our pride? I'm going to stop writing here before I say something that is going to get me into hot water. I do not want to lambaste this province quite yet. I don't want to get into the face of those who would lead us and those who buy Ontario wine; but I do want to hear from you. Ontario is going through a tough time within our wine industry and it's time our wineries, winemakers and others knew of our Ontario pride when it comes to our own wine industry. What I really want to know, is do we have any?

So, write to me and tell me how you feel (I'll publish comments in an upcoming newsletter). I want to know what you like, dislike, favourite wine(s) or winery and why you drink Ontario (real Ontario VQA, or 100% product of, not the CIC stuff). Send those emails to michael@ontariowinereview.com; or do like all the youngsters are doing: [Facebook it: go to Ontario Wine Lovers](#) and put your comments on the wall for all to see. I want to see "Ontario-Wine-Pride" before I go off on one of my rants to make sure I'm hitting the right people, and let's do it before harvest. That means we'll see how we've done by the end of August. Hope to hear from you ... soon.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Two houses Gamay built*

Malivoire Wine Company 2007 Gamay - \$17.95 (W)

www.malivoire.com

Martin Malivoire believes Gamay Noir is Ontario's red grape. For those who don't know, Gamay is the grape of Beaujolais and is much maligned as such, mostly for the bubble gum atrocity known as Beaujolais Nouveau - the wine equivalent of junk food. But real, honest to goodness Beaujolais, made from the Gamay Noir grape, can be a sublime wine experience. This Malivoire Gamay is handled in that way. First, there's the beautiful purple color, then the black raspberry, cherry and peppery-spiciness on both the nose and palate; beautiful grippy tannins should see this one age nicely over the next five to seven years ... (try that with Beaujolais Nouveau and you've got salad dressing). It is important to note that this wine won gold at the 2009 Ontario Wine Awards ... and to date is my favorite '07 Gamay from Ontario. Price: \$17.95 - Rating: ****½

Thirteenth Street Winery 2007 Gamay Noir - \$18.00 (W, L)

www.13thstreetwinery.com

Twenty-four hours later, we have a new champion. Those who read my Malivoire '07 Gamay review above should note I tried that wine at 3:00 PM on Friday, July 17. At approximately 5:00 PM. 24 hours later, almost to the minute, at Fiesta Buckhorn, I tried Thirteenth Street's version of the grape of Beaujolais. Thirteenth Street is another house dedicated to the advancement in stature of the Gamay grape here in Ontario. With this 2007 version, they are taking another step closer to regaining the respectability of Gamay. The nose is gorgeous, with cherry and raspberry notes mixed in with hints of vanilla. Taste follows with more of that great cherry, a touch of oak, along with floral on the front palate and vanilla cream in the back ... there's also a touch of tannin grit that'll smooth with time. Juicy and fruity, this wine shows real elegance and finesse. It shows what can be done with this grape when handled with respect: one year in a mix of French (20%) and American (80%) oak, of which 25% is new wood. In fairness to the purists, it's important to note that there's also 14% Pinot Noir added to soften the force of this big 2007 wine. They usually add about 7% Syrah to lift the wine, but this time, the big 2007 year caused them to go for a softening instead of a lift ... and they've done a fantastic job with this one. Price: \$18.00 – Rating: *****

Summer Selections – two wines to help you get the most out of summer:

[Thirteenth Street Winery 2008 Cabernet Rosé](#)

[Cave Spring Cellars 2008 Rosé](#)

Availability legend: W (Winery) – L (LCBO/Vintages) – WTH (Winery to Home).



Weekly Wine Notes and More: *Plum wine, Cuvee Franc and plenty of Road*

The Grape Guy presents the "Weekly Wine Note"! A savoury selection of Ontario wines to impress, enjoy, or just plain drink! A NEW Wine Selection is added every Tuesday or you can listen to the Podcast.

Here are the [Weekly Wine Notes](#) that were added to the Blog and Pod in the past two weeks:

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Great News – Now you can listen to the [Podcasts](#) of your choice - individually

July 14, 2009 – Kawartha Country Wines 2008 Shiro Plum ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

July 21, 2009 – Rosehall Run 2007 Cuvee County Cabernet Franc ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

NEW Reports in the [On the Road with the Grape Guy](#) section:

[10 Years of Treana with Austin Hope](#)

[Hillebrand Jazz Festival](#)

[Matt Dusk at Chateau des Charmes](#)

[Fiesta Buckhorn 2009](#)

[What's NEW in the ... Lost and Found \(blog\)](#)

Wines that got "lost" on my wine racks - some are Treasures others are Trash ... Find out what happened

[Colio Estate 2006 Riesling](#)

[What's NEW ... Taste it Again Grape Guy \(blog\)](#)

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

[Maleta Winery 2005 Cabernets](#)

[Chateau des Charmes 1999 Estate Cabernet-Merlot](#)

[NEW BLOG – What I'm drinking Tonight](#)

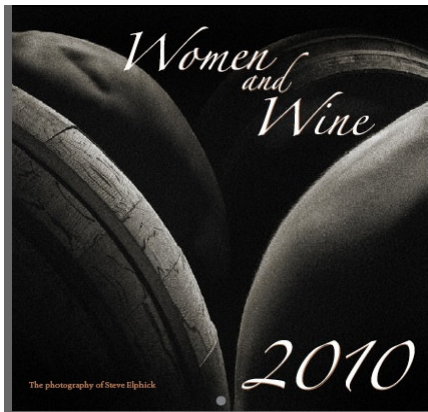
When it's not an Ontario wine, here's what I'm pulling out of the cellar

[3 New Reviews Added](#)

Including: An Italian, Something from Washington and a Rock & Vine

Vintages Release: August releases coming soon

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The **2010 Women in Wine Calendar** photographed by Steven Elphick
in support of Grapes for Humanity:

Contact Lindsay Groves for Details: lindsaygroves@hotmail.com

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Ontario Wine Review ... *Hey, What's with all the VQA?*

The question on everybody's lips (or the one that should be on everybody's lips) is where did all this VQA wine come from? A year ago Vincor was crying because they didn't have enough to make even the official Olympic wine "Esprit" 100% Canadian. Now, not only is there enough for the whole country to enjoy 100% Canadian Olympic wine, but there's enough for three more VQA products on the shelves: "Strut", "Open" and "Travigne".

I don't know the story behind "Travigne". The lady at my local Wine Rack (Vincor's private stores) told me "it's a

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recurring line that looks like it's finally here to stay.” The other two were recently launched within a month of each other. Both Open and Strut boast an \$11.95 price tag and contain a single varietal Merlot, as well as a red Cabernet-Merlot blend and a white Riesling-Gewurztraminer blend. Some skeptics have been pretty vocal about these two lines of wine having the same varietal makeup and the same price tag; and yes, it does look a little fishy. Word on the street is that LCBO turned down Strut - be it for taste or label - but approved Open for their shelves a few weeks later. Could Vincor have pulled the old switcheroo? Only they know for certain, but I do have to say that at least, outwardly, there seems to be a new focus towards VQA (100% Ontario wine) since the new boss took over in March 2009. That can only be a good thing, maybe we're finally getting through to these guys – let's hope it continues.

Hmm, are we really getting through? Or is this a smoke screen to keep our minds off the Cellared in Canada issue? Let me know your thoughts: michael@ontariowinereview.com.



Wine Event Spotlight: A Plethora of Big Events

15th Annual SWOVA Tasting ... Sprucewood Shores Estate Winery will be hosting the wineries from around the Lake Erie North Shore region to showcase and pour their best vintage wines, along with providing unlimited delicious food and entertainment. The date: Sunday August 9th 2009 from 1-5pm. Call (866) 938-9253 to get your tickets.

Jackson-Triggs adds a Really Big Show ... For one night only: On August 19, the Amphitheatre at Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate Winery, Niagara on the Lake, will host ROOTSTOCK, wine country's first ever Canadian Songwriters' Circle. This intimate evening will feature five of Canada's top musical artists - Steven Page, Jim Cuddy, Tom Cochrane, Kathleen Edwards and John Mann (Spirit of the West), and will truly be a celebration of fine Canadian music and wine. Call 1-866-589-4637 for tickets.

NOTL shows its Passion ... An event for those with a passion for exceptional food and wine. Enjoy a Saturday afternoon (August 22, 2009) of sampling VQA wines from the cellars of the 21 wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake and culinary offerings from 17 of the area's best restaurants. The event also features PassionArt – an exhibition of Niagara's finest artists with the live jazz sounds of award-winning Juliet Dunn Quintet setting the backdrop for this special afternoon. Tickets \$100 per person – visit www.niagarapassions.com for all the details.

Bobcaygeon Has Themselves a Festival ... the Bobcaygeon Wine and Food Festival is in its third year; and I have heard good things about it. It also takes place Saturday August 22, 2009 – costs only \$12 to get in and it's up in cottage country. For details visit the website: www.bobcaygeonwinefestival.ca.

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.

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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