

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 – 137
July 8, 2010

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OntarioWineReview: *Clarify not Vilify*

It seems that whenever I write about Cellared in Canada I spark some kind of controversy and last Newsletter ([#136 - Is Cellared is Canada Dead?](#)) was no different.

About an hour after launch, the emails came in, with thoughts, reflections, experiences and general comments on the Cellared in Canada issue. I had asked for people to weigh in on the issue and I definitely got what I wanted.

Winery owner Jeff Aubry (Coyote's Run) publicly declared, on the [Ontario Wine Lovers facebook page](#): "It is a dead issue. The industry and government are moving quickly towards establishing new rules to enhance clarity. The LCBO is improving their signage and shelving. But these things take time."

While a wine agent lamented the state of Canadian wine: "I am so f'in sick and tired of hearing the public talk about VQA and CiC wines as if they were the same. CiC wines are the main reason people don't think Canadian wines are very good. The LCBO and other stakeholders do a fantastic job in confusing customers on this issue."

As if to illustrate that point, this reader wrote in about the LCBO store at Highway 7 and Woodbine, "a woman was there promoting the new Peller wine called Copper Moon. I had never seen or heard of it before so I asked where were the grapes from. She replied Niagara-on-the-Lake. I noted that the wine was not VQA, she agreed that it was not, it was then that she acknowledged that there was probably about 70% foreign component to the wine." The reader went on to blame the LCBO. In fairness, these types of in-store displays are usually handled by a third party promotions company – but you still have to admit that appalling training. These are those "other stakeholders" to which the agent was referring.

Another reader shared his own CiC / LCBO concerns: "Two stores near me are TERRIBLE with their lay outs. One store in Pickering had VQA, CiC and 100% foreign on the same shelf! Just as bad, the column in their vintages section devoted to 'Ontario' is only about ¼ Ontario wines, the rest is California product."

And finally, I did get a kick out of this "fabulous" [Twitter picture](#) showing a Kittling Ridge White Zinfandel Vidal blend under the banner of "VQA Ontario Staff Pick". The photographer's caption read: "...I didn't know we grew Zinfandel here."

But there was one email thread that concerned me. A winery principal asked me why I "slagged on Rick [Vansickle]" who, as it turns out, was in the midst of Twittering that evening about his dislike for Vincor's new CiC critter brand. I also received an email from Rick directly, accusing me of "personally attacking" him. I would like to, hopefully and publicly, clear the air on this matter.

I in no way intended to attack Rick personally and I'm sorry he took the column, that way, or for that matter, anyone else who took it that way. My point was this: Rick took the position that "all those cheap blended wines have been moved away from the VQA aisle at the LCBO and they are clearly marked for what they are: A

domestic-foreign blended wine.” What Rick failed to mention in his [Letter to Jancis](#) but ended up writing to me during our email back-and-forth was, “Our efforts here [in St. Catharines] have forced the LCBO to move the CiC wines far away from the VQA wines in the new stores that have opened and the old stores that are being redesigned.” He also acknowledged, “I have no idea what’s happening at someone else’s little LCBO store.” And that is exactly my point.

While Rick has had success in his part of Ontario, the rest of Ontario deals with mis-shelved and mis-labeled wines. The fight for clarity is not over until every LCBO store moves those wines into proper, well-signed and properly designated areas – where, as Rick says, “the CiC wines [are] far away from the VQA wines.” Jeff Aubry says “this takes time”, but I live near one of Toronto’s largest LCBO stores, and frequently pop my head in the door. I find it amazing that they can switch the Australia section with the South Africa section (general list) and completely rearrange the layout of the Vintages section in a day, and yet can’t seem to find the time, or space, to move the CiC wines “far away” from the VQA wines.

I’m sorry if Rick was offended, and for any of those readers who believed I was picking on him in any way – I was trying to point out that Rick’s fight might be over and done with but the rest of the province is still battling for their own LCBO stores to have some respect for pure, unadulterated 100% Ontario wines. Instead of telling Jancis the problem is solved and all is well here in Ontario, it would have been better to tell her that the fight continues but we’re winning it in certain corners of the province with the hopes of gaining more ground.

Concerned that I might have crossed over the line a little too far this time I sent [my newsletter article](#) to two people, who have also helped in publicizing the fight about clarity of CiC wines. Both did not see the article as a blatant personal attack, but could also “see Rick’s point” – one jokingly told me that “writers don’t like to be compared to animals.”

Finally, I’ll give the last quote to a mutual friend of Rick and mine, “I know that Rick has, at time, been highly critical of the LCBO ... He’s put it on the line many times ... hate to see you guys scrapping.”

I’m sorry if people think I was hard on Rick, but I thought Rick was too easy on the LCBO. And yes, I acknowledge fully (every two weeks in fact) that we have a wine industry with many good features – but I know that you already know that ... we don’t have to sugar coat an issue for Jancis, who already knows that the problem exists. She has people telling her that everything’s not all peaches ‘n cream in Cellarville, so why are we trying to hide it.

I just wish that Rick had clarified his point about which stores the LCBO had revamped to these new standards (namely St. Catharines) – and I hope now I have clarified mine.



Grape Guy’s Picks of the Bunch:

Some Found 2007 Reviews – Check with the winery for Availability

The Grange of Prince Edward County 2007 Trumpour’s Mill Cabernet Franc - (W)

www.thegrangewines.com

After learning the winners of last fall’s Artevino competition – 2009 edition - I went back to check my judges notes – and lo and behold this was my number one Franc in the competition. I guess the other judges agreed because it was not only the Gold medal winner in its category, but the highest scoring wine of the competition. After perusing my notes I’m not at all surprised. The level of complexity displayed by this wine was much more than I expected from a County Franc. Considering, of course, the County is known for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, I was surprised to find such a great expression of Cabernet Franc. Winemaker Jeff Innes quietly told a small group of us that Franc really is the surprise grape of the County, so I’m not surprised. I’ve used the word 4 times in this review already. The smells are smoky with cherry, tobacco leaf and raspberry liqueur. On the palate, you’ll find great sweet fruit character lovely spice, some herbs, good acidity and a real savoury finish. This wine shows a lot of finesse and the potential for longevity – really nice job here. Rating: *****

Featherstone 2007 Onyx - (W)

www.featherstonewinery.ca

As most everyone knows, onyx is a semi-precious stone that’s black in colour ... one of my favourite gems. While this wine lacks the deep blackness of an onyx, you might find the liquid to be semi-precious to your cellar. The blend is 60% Cabernet Franc and 40% Merlot, smells are fairly simplistic loaded with raspberry, cherry and cocoa liqueur; it’s on the palate where this wine shines. You’ll notice a real juiciness from the fruit flavours of

raspberry and strawberry, silky smooth tannins and a delicious sippability factor. But don't be fooled by its easy drinkingness, this one could offer great rewards with some mid-term cellaring, say 5+ years. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: ****½

Lailey Vineyard 2007 Impromptu - (W)

www.laileyvineyard.com

This is the Lailey wine that doesn't fit conventional wisdom of the usual Cabernet-Merlot blend. That's because it contains a boatload of Syrah – 68% to be exact – followed by 12% of both Malbec and Petit Verdot along with 8% Cabernet Sauvignon which spent 18 months in oak. The nose is slightly shy at this early age with smoked meat and black raspberry being the most noticeable at the moment. The palate is currently a little more forthcoming with smoky-bacon, raspberry, black cherry and spicy notes; there was also some interesting vanilla-pepper nuances. The tannins are well-integrated and should continue to integrate themselves nicely over the next few years while the wine itself should drink well over the next decade, possibly longer. Price: \$45.00 – Rating: ****

Sip into Summer ... Something to take the edge off that summer heat

[13th Street 2008 Funk Vineyard Riesling](#)

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More: Gewurzt, Rose, Burning Barrels and more

A new Ontario wine is reviewed every Tuesday ... take two minutes to listen to the [Podcast](#) or read the tasting notes on the [Blog](#).

[Weekly Wine Notes](#) (added to the Blog and Pod in the past few weeks):

June 29, 2010 – Cave Spring Cellars 2009 Estate Gewurztraminer ([LISTEN](#))

July 6, 2010 – Inniskillin 2009 Pinot Noir Rosé ([LISTEN](#))

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

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

[Lailey Barrel Burning BBQ](#)

[13th Street / Schott Zwiesel / Treadwell Dinner](#)

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

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

[Cilento 2002 Pinot Noir / Gamay](#)

[Crown Bench Estates 2002 Beamsville Bench Summertime Merlot](#)

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

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

[Lailey Vineyard 2005 Zweigelt](#)

[What I'm drinking Tonight \(blog\)](#)

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

[9 New Reviews Added](#)

Including: An Ontario Gamay, a Highway 12 blend and a Mexican Petite Sirah

[Vintages Release \(blog\)](#)

[July 10, 2010 Release Report](#)



Jarvis Church is coming – Learn more at:

http://www.scqhfoundation.com/events/partnership/savour_sounds.htm



Uncorked and Decanted: *Nifty gadgets, accessories and other things that enhance wine enjoyment.*

Book Review: Is This Bottle Corked?

What did Jane Austen recommend for a heartache? Was Pliny the first Robert Parker? And whatever happened to the Nicolas vans? All these questions and more will be answered within the pages of the fun-filled book Is this Bottle Corked? The Secret Life of Wine by Kathleen Burk and Michael Bywater.

This book was built on giving you quick answers to all those nagging questions that have plagued humanity (and potentially yourself) about the world of wine. Alright, maybe not so many of those nagging questions and potentially not even questions you were even thinking about asking, like What color was the “wine dark sea”? Or Why is white Burgundy so risky? But the book is filled with great anecdotes, explanations, stories and trivia, all doled out in bite sized chunks (the longest answer is maybe 3 pages long), but those are few and far between, the average is about a page, with plenty of HUH (Have you Heard) moments and interesting facts.

So if you're wondering What was George Washington's favourite wine? How did wine affect American civil rights across 2250 years? Or Does the Wine of Antipaxos exist? Is this Wine Corked? Has the answers to those head scratching questions you've been searching for ... and some you were never aware you wanted to know.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Stuff from East to West*

By Chadsey's Cairns Concert Series ... July 18, Sunday, 2pm - Jill and Matt Barber; July 24, Saturday, 2pm - Lily Frost; August 20, Friday, 8pm - Colin Linden. Seating is on straw bales or bring your own chairs (for back support). To reserve your spot email the.cairns@reach.net or call 613 399 2992.

Sounds, Sips and Bites at Sprucewood ... Every Sunday from July 4 to September 13 (12 – 4pm) Enjoy free live entertainment on our patios with wine sangrias and tapas overlooking beautiful Lake Erie. Cooking demonstrations will be performed at 12pm by Laura from Caldwell's Grant. [See the Sprucewood website for details.](#)

Sandbanks Goes Spanish ... Seems perfect timing (my token World Cup reference), Sandbanks celebrates their Spanish roots as they welcome back Roger Scannura who will amaze you with his Flamenco guitar skills. The signage says “Come visit the winery for one of our most exciting parties of the year. Olé!” – July 24, 2010 starting at noon, for more information go to: www.sandbankswinery.com

This Sounds Interesting ... Cave Spring Cellars brings you, “In Search of Red October” - a relaxing afternoon of fine wine, great food and gorgeous scenery. You will begin with a three-course lunch at Inn On The Twenty

restaurant. Next stop will be a journey through Cave Spring Vineyard, nestled on the Beamsville Bench in the company of Cave Spring wine consultant Brian Kelly. The beauty of the Niagara Escarpment while the foliage turns from green to vibrant red will be spectacular partnered with the excitement of our fall harvest. The afternoon will conclude at the winery for an in-depth tasting of the Estate reds from 2007 (possibly our best red vintage ever) paired with some old cheddar cheese and a tour of their century old cellars. Saturday, October 2nd & 23rd - \$65.00 per person ... details at <http://www.cavespringcellars.com/events/event-details?event=In+Search+of+Red+October&type=Winery+Event>

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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