

## 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 – 144**  
**October 14, 2010**

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### OntarioWineReview: *Feedback ... You Said It*

It has been awhile since I have let you know what you have been saying about my articles ... but soon I will be doing it as a regular feature every few months. So today we are going to look back at a few thoughts you have passed along to me over the last few months or so.

[Newsletter #143](#) (September 2010) ... The Sound of Silence:

A winery up for sale prompt me to write a piece about the hardships of owning a winery and the passion it takes to keep one going:

Don wrote in:

"Nice piece about the difficulty of owning a winery in Canada ... Best solution is to convince consumers to buy more local. Seems I spend most of my days in Toronto restaurants doing blind tasting with my wine friends and slowly convince them to buy Canadian. It usually takes buying several bottles of expensive imports, a comparable (usually half the price or less) Canadian, asking the Sommelier to bring the wine glasses to the table and the guests then usually embarrass themselves by not being able to tell which is which. Long slow process."

Karen ...

"Amen Michael ... You really captured the truth and passion behind owning a winery. Thank you for the compassionate energy behind your words."

In [Newsletter #142](#) I gave some unsolicited advice to the Shores of Erie Wine Festival, I received a few responses, including this from the Shores of Erie Festival committee head:

Esther wrote:

"Although Sunday's schedule in the Wine Pavilion changed, Saturday's line up was the same as in all past years. Our focus on the winery's this year actually increased with several new additions.

1.) The first annual Shores of Erie Wine Awards were hosted, with special presentations taking place at the Wine Maker's dinner Friday evening along with a news conference specifically to cover the wineries and a VIP tasting prior to the event. This initiative increased public awareness for the SOE wineries and their wine making achievements. [ed note. although I requested the list of winners twice and was promised them, nothing ever materialized, so I can not tell you the winners.]

2.) The 'Wine Ladies' attended the SOE-- interviewed and filmed our wine makers.

3.) The "Local Cellar Tasting Bar" with two locations, was staffed by volunteer sommeliers and open throughout the festival; this feature exposed our wine maker's product to all 20,000 plus attendees and proved to be a very effective tool. The two locations offered wines from all participating wineries with a wide variety of product available for 1 ounce tastings. Thousands of tastings were served."

Marty, an attendee at this year's festival, had this to say:

"As to the focus on wine, your source failed to mention the "Winemaker's Dinner" as one of the wine functions. That was held on Friday night, with area winemakers and some of the SOE wine judges filling the role of host at

each table. The festival inaugurated a wine competition this year, and the gold medals from that competition were awarded at the dinner. There were about 150 attendees, along with press and tv. New this year was a "cellar table" just inside the entrance to the festival grounds where the public could sample a selection of wines from each winery. This also focused on the wine component of the event, and helped people choose wines they could later purchase by the glass or bottle. I agree that the potential expansion of SOE is loaded with possibilities, given the proximity of the wineries themselves, and that traffic to the region would be enhanced by including events outside the confines of Ft. Malden. The Niagara model you mention provides a lot of fruit for thought -- good idea!"

While Glen wanted to prove me wrong about my notion that honeymooning in Windsor after a wedding in Niagara was a bit backwards:

"I actually got married in Niagara nad honeymooned in Windsor. I was starting my MA at the University of Windsor a week after I got married so we went to Windsor the day after the wedding."

He then asked me to ``say hello to Eroica for me`` - my wife`s name is Erica, while Eroica is the name of a Riesling co-made by Loosen (Germany) and Chateau Ste Michele (Washington) in Washington state. Erica is a huge fan of Riesling so I am not sure if that was a typo or if the "error" was made on purpose.

In [Newsletter #141](#) I called for the return of the plastic bags from the LCBO - if we're paying for them we might as well be paying for good ones.

One reader, who wished to be anonymous wrote: "I for one am glad to see the back of them. For everyone you (or me or your friend) who would reuse them again and again, there are hundreds of ignoramuses who would buy their hooch and then pitch the bag in a park."

Of course I have railed against Cellared in Canada (CiC) on many occasions over the past few months and you have help feed the fire on this topic.

John seems to talk to himself a lot, so I am glad he finally wrote his thoughts down: "I was in a grocery chain store in Muskoka last week which has a Vincor outlet. At the front was a 3x8 foot display (approx.) all in yellow with wines displayed with a kangaroo. 'Odd,' I though, 'how does Vincor get to sell Australian wines in their stores.' Then I looked more closely and see it was a CiC blend. 'Funny,' I though, 'that they were branding it like it was Australian.'

This lead to my next thought. In 2014 Vincor would be able to push any country's wines in their stores. No Canadian content. Just a straight forward LCBO competitor. They could bring in bulk wine from France and bottle it as Burgundy. Regulation may prevent this (likely French regulations), but possible perhaps. The playing field seems to be stacked against the Canadian grape growers."

Then there is Chris who seemed to be on his own rant when talking about the Roundhouse LCBO Vintages location in Windsor, he finished his tirade thusly:

"Don't get me wrong, I love great wine from around the world, but Ontario VQA is world class too! Give it its due! Don't diminish its stature by cow towing to interests purporting to be providing industrial grade wines as if they were what they are not, Canadian Premium Grade Wine not made in Canada, except for 30% or less of its content. I mean no disrespect for the Ontario Growers whose quality wine grapes make up the minimal portion of these beverages. But it is fraudulent to ascribe a notion of origin in this unsavoury fashion! Market the price point, and label it square, it should sell on this merit alone, otherwise fire your marketing agencies!"

Dave had a rather cynical suggestion as to why CiC was changing over its name:

"I was at an event this week and they said CiC was no more. With a lot of other letters in the alphabet still available to use to screw over the public they have came up with a new one: DAI or IAD (domestic and import or Imported and Domestic)."

Finally, Ryan summed up the CiC debate with this subject line on his message:

"Thanks for your relentless attack on Cellared-in-Canada wines."

I don't always fire up controversy, in [Newsletter #133](#), I got a vintner named Randy to look at Gamay again:

"Loved your opening paragraphs on Gamay, funny. I have not had any in years. I see now I am overdue for some."

Well I feel if we go back any further we'll get lost in 2009. Thanks for reading and as always keep those comments coming, I read each and every one and who knows, you might see them here in the newsletter. Cheers.



## **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: Five New Reviews**

### **Mike Weir 2008 Chardonnay - \$15.95 (L)**

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

Last I looked Mike Weir's golf game was in the toilet – that might not be nice to say but it seems this perennial winner and former Master's Champion has fallen on hard times. Good thing his wine hasn't. This Chardonnay saw a mere 6 months in French oak, just enough time to add character to the fruit. The nose is very fruity, boasting delicious apple, honeydew melon and Bartlett pear. The palate has the melon and Bartlett pear fruitness along with good biting acidity which helps to keep the fruitiness in check. Price: \$15.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

### **Thirty Bench Winemakers 2007 Small Lot Benchmark Red - \$60.00 (W)**

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

This is another red beauty from the 2007 vintage from a house better known for its Rieslings than its red wines, and yet surprisingly Thirty Bench makes some of the nicest reds coming off the Bench. Their plainly named 'Reds' was/is stellar and this 'Benchmark' isn't far behind. Aged 24 months in exclusively French oak this wine will need time to develop and come into its own. The nose has candied raspberries and sweet red cherries, while the palate shows red licorice and black cherries – but that's just what's lying on the surface – beneath there's a whole new ballgame waiting to happen in 5 years or so, right now there's some juiciness and vanilla notes hanging about. Price: \$60.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*½

### **13th Street 2006 Cuvee 13 Rosé - \$24.95 (W)**

[www.13thstreetwinery.com](http://www.13thstreetwinery.com)

This is a blend of 55% Pinot Noir and 45% Chardonnay made in the traditional method, which means the wines goes through a secondary fermentation in the bottle and subsequent sitting around with the yeast cells. The length of that secondary fermentation and time in bottle depends on the style the winemaker is looking for. According to Peter Bodner Rod of 13th Street this wine spent 24 months on bottle lees, then another 6-8 months after tirage and dosage (removing of lees and adding the filler) resting in bottle. The result, 13th Street first Rosé sparkler, has lemon and green apple tartness with a kiss of strawberry ... this ain't no sweet sipper, it's fully dry – that kiss from the strawberry helps make it extra tasty. Good balancing acidity here too. Price: \$24.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*½

### **Five Rows 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon - \$50.00 (W)**

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

Hand crafted wine takes time and a lot of patience – they're also fairly expensive. The love and time put into the 45 cases of this wine (~ 2 barrels) really shows in the bottle. Made from 12 year old vines this wine really shows delicacy and a deft hand of shepherding this wine into your glass. Aged a total of 3 years: 1.5 in older French oak barrels, 6 months in 1 year old American and then a further year in bottle, the wine exhibits smells of raspberry, strawberry, vanilla and spice; the flavours are even more alluring than the nose, nice fruit, spice, a little pepperyness and red cherry brings it all together. This is a special occasion wine and the occasion is now, or anytime in the next 5-7 years. Price: \$50.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*½

### **Sue Ann Staff 2008 Pinot Grigio - \$18.00 (W)**

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

Not sure where Miss Staff gets off calling this wine Grigio because it lacks the particular characteristics I expect from the Italian wine style she took the name from but it does have some very interesting nuances that make this wine interesting and unique. The nose has a certain minerality, a nice mac apple quality and an interesting spice that really draws you in. The palate proves to be just as illusive to pinpoint and yet interesting in its own right. The minerality and apple are there, hints of citrus, apple and peach pit; good crisp acidity and there's also and interesting spice, could be of the baking variety. This is not your typical Grigio, but then it ain't you typical Gris either, I do believe Miss Staff has something special here. This might be the best wine Sue has made under her eponymous label. Price: \$18.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

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



**Weekly Wine Notes and More:** *Old Vines and Good Times, with Port*

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):

**October 1, 2010** – 13<sup>th</sup> Street 2009 Old Vines Riesling ( [LISTEN](#) )

**October 8, 2010** – Karlo Estates 2008 Van Alstine Port ( [LISTEN](#) )

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

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

[Savour Stratford](#)

[Wines of Brazil Lunch and Tasting](#)

[5<sup>th</sup> Annual Stem Portfolio Tasting](#)

[Amore di Amarone](#)

[Preview of NOTL Taste the Season](#)

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

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

**Nothing new this week – Keep checking back**

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

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

[Chateau des Charmes 2001 Estate Bottled Pinot Noir](#)

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

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

[5 New Posts added over the last two weeks](#)

Including: 2 Ripassos (Italy)

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

[Next Release Report will be for October 30](#)

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2010 Taste  
THE Season

Details can be found at ...

<http://www.wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com/tasteSeason.html>

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**Wine Event Spotlight:** *Taste NOTL Style, Gourmet is Back and Murder At Mastronardi*

**Taste the Season ...** Don't miss out as the 22 Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake get set for another wine and food extravaganza. Hailed as the 'go-to' event of the season (ed. note: I think I said that), this popular touring and tasting program showcases the unique VQA wines and Niagara-on-the-Lake Wine Country cuisine available in the region. It is also a great time to explore the different wine and gift selections available at each winery and stock up for your holiday entertaining. Visit [www.wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com](http://www.wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com) for a complete list of all of the 22 wine and food pairings.

**Gourmet Food and Wine ...** Does this event need any introduction? November 18-21 and all the details can be found at: <http://www.foodandwineexpo.ca/sitepages/>

**An Evening of Murder, Mystery & Mayhem at Mastronardi Estate Winery** - October 30, 2010 ... Join Michelle J. Mainwaring and company in this interactive mystery that will leave you howling with laughter. You'll enjoy a delicious four-course meal, complete with wines, while you try and solve the mystery of "Who Killed the Winemaker". The evening promises to be full of dastardly dealings and a devil of a good time. It all begins at 6pm with dinner at 7:00. Limited seating, \$50.00 per person, call for reservations: 519-733-9463

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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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