

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 – 145
■ October 28, 2010

In this Edition

- **OntarioWineReview:** *The Lost Notes*
Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *The Lost Note Wines*
 - **Weekly Wine Notes and More:** *Fielding and Flat Rock Wines and more*
 - **Quick Sips:** *Hurray for Tawse, Cave Spring and the passing of an Icon*
 - **Wine Event Spotlight:** *Tis the Season - for lots of things to do*
-



OntarioWineReview: *The Lost Notes*

I recently moved. Anybody who has pulled off that feat knows it takes a super human will and constitution to do it right. There's the packing and unpacking, the actual move, the lugging and slugging of boxes. Everyone told me "get a mover", but I insisted on doing it all myself - with the help of a few friend, of course, whose help was invaluable, trust me (thankfully there are still those willing to work for pizza and beer). In truth, it was not all that bad (although my office still looks like a bomb hit it some now 10 weeks later); my only problem, I can't find one of my notebooks that I write my tasting notes in.

I remember reviewing some wines while I packed - opening bottles and pouring glasses between packing up books and wrapping glasses. I remember loving a bottle of Stoney Ridge Charlotte's Chardonnay, the fruit practically leaped out of the glass and grabbed me by the nose and held me there. I remember a Tawse Sketches Chardonnay that was quite delicious and a Fielding Viognier that really whet my whistle. I also found myself staring down 3 bottles of Closson Chase Chardonnay, two I loved, one I loathed (way too much oak). But for the life of me I can't remember vintages of these wines or the specifics - they stick out in my mind and I am still searching for that lost notebook.

My dilemma got me thinking about people's perception of wines and why certain wineries have the following they do. Many wine drinkers never notice the vintage date on the wine they are drinking - they just blindly go off buying wine. I talk to many people and very few know what year they're drinking, just the producer. In a wine region like Ontario that's a odd way to be drinking your wine. We're a cool climate region after all and if you don't understand the difference between a good vintage wine a mediocre vintage wine you could be stuck with a lot of 2003s in your cellar for 10 years or more. The key is to know their drink-ability (2003) or conversely, know how long you should be holding onto wines like the , a few extra years of aging will give these wines time to mature and integrate, drink them too early and you'll miss out on all the fun.

In a cool climate region (Ontario, Bordeaux, New Zealand) Vintage date means more than in a hot climate region (Australia, Argentina, Chile) - there temps are always beautiful (read: warm and sunny) and vintage variation plays little part in the finished wine; while in a cool climate region harvest is a waiting game and in many years prayer is a grape farmers best friend.

Take 2010 for instance, this year has the likelihood and pedigree to be even better than the much lauded 2007. What makes 2010 better? Glad you asked. While 2007 had lots of heat and little rain (which grapes love), 2010 has been a longer growing season, with lots of heat and rain has come at the "appropriate" times. If you'll recall our winter was very mild and bud break occurred in April, at

that time the prayer for farmers was the 'Pasm of No Frost'. A longer growing season with lots of heat means good grapes - but that does not always apply to all grapes, but that's really a discussion for another time.

Most determine a good season by how well the red grapes are going to be - in a cool region white grapes grow well year-after-year - but many of the Bordeaux red grapes struggle (Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc). 2007 was a great year for the usual Bordeaux varietals as well as others reds that don't often ripen fully under the Ontario skies.

So be aware of the vintage dates my fine Ontario wine loving friends, know the ones to drink now and the ones to hold a little long. it'll make your Ontario wine experience all the more enjoyable. Now maybe you can answer this question for me: If you were a notebook, where would you hide?



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *The Lost Note Wines*

Between the time I wrote my article and published it here, my combing through boxes paid off, I found the notes and I reveal the reviews below, in one case I am too late:

Tawse 2009 Sketches Unoaked Chardonnay - \$17.95 (W)

www.tawsewinery.ca

Tawse introduced the sketches line a few years ago with a Riesling, and since then Sketches has grown to include a Rosé, a Cabernet-Merlot and this unoaked Chardonnay. now I could get into the genesis of Sketches, which came out of the ashes of Echos (which is now a restaurant only label), but let's not waste each other's time on the past and focus only on the present. This is a lovely Chardonnay for those fans of the unwooded variety. The nose has lots of apple with a little lemon and mineral backing it up. There's a big hit of acidity on the palate (trademark of whites from this vintage year), pear starts off the fruit flavour then it kicks into Granny Smith apple and sidles its way into some mineral notes. Crisp, clean and lovely. Price: \$17.95 - Rating: ****

Fielding Estate 2009 Viognier - \$30.00 (W)

www.fieldingwines.com

A wine has two levels: the level above the top lip and the level above the bottom lip; in other words, the smell and the taste. This Fielding wine gives good above the top lip and changes above the bottom. The smell is a lovely pear, floral and lemon that grabs you by the nose hairs and shakes you awake. The palate doesn't build on that sweetness, that's because it's a dry wine. Sure there's pear and peach but the taste doesn't fully deliver on the nose, in a good way, there's good acidity, nice fruit and good flavour. Refreshing and delightful. Price: \$30.00 - Rating: ****

Stoney Ridge 2008 Charlotte's Chardonnay - \$15.00 (W)

www.stoneyridge.com

This is an outrageously good unoaked Chardonnay for very little money (\$15.00), not only that it's got flavours and smells that will completely lure you in and have you taking sip after pleasurable sip. First, there's the nose of pineapple and melon which are the most noticeable in this aromatic punch bowl, they are so sniffable you'll be amazed at how long you'll keep your nose in the glass. Since I need you to go further with this wine it's time to get your nose out of the glass and get some of it onto your palate. Melon, sweet pear, peach, candied lemon and grapefruit - not just sniffable but highly sippable as well. Delicious sip after sniff after sip. Price: \$15.00 - Rating: ****1/2

Closson Chase 2009 CCV Sans Chene Chardonnay - \$25.00 - Sold Out

www.clossonchase.com

I am staunchly a non-Chardonnay fan (it's hard to believe that with the number of Chardonnays I reviewed in this newsletter), but I have planted my flag firmly in the ABC Camp years ago (Anything But Chardonnay). But over the years I have found myself wiggling the base of that flag as I try Chardonnay after Chardonnay and some just astound me. This one, from Prince Edward County, falls into that flag wiggling category. Such complexity on both the nose and palate is what won me over, with nary a stave in sight. The nose is peach compote with vanilla bean, and buttered nuts that simply invade the nose and stay there. The palate is light and refreshing - not what you expect with those aromas: butter and lemon, crisp acidity, hint of hazelnut, pineapple and a crisp, clean finish that proved to be long and lovely. This wine kept getting better with each sip and there were even more flavours found with each one. This wine has become the first casualty of my lost notebook reviews because I have just been informed it is completely sold out. If you were lucky enough to get some, enjoy. Price: \$25.00 - Rating: *****

Now let's add some wood to a Closson Wine:
[Closson Chase 2008 KJ Watson Vineyard Chardonnay](#)

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More: *Fielding and Flat Rock Wine + 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):

October 15, 2010 – [Flat Rock Cellars 2007 Riddled \(LISTEN \)](#)

October 22, 2010 - [Fielding Estate Winery 2009 White Conception \(LISTEN \)](#)

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

Trips, tours and tastings – join me as I review the highs, and sometimes, the lows
Stuff is on the way - so look for it

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

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

[Jackson Triggs 2001 Proprietors' Reserve Pinot Noir](#)

[Cave Spring Cellars 2005 Dry Riesling](#)

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

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

[Inniskillin 2004 Montague Vineyard Merlot](#)

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

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

[4 New Reviews Added](#)

Including: a BC Zinfandel, honest

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

[October 30th release](#)

gourmet food & wine expo

<http://www.foodandwineexpo.ca/sitepages/>



Quick Sips: *Occasionally interesting things cross my desk that I would like to pass on*

October 2010

Homegrown Winner ... A winery established less than 10 years ago has scooped up the top place finish at the Canadian Wine Awards, with 18 medals and the coveted designation as Canada's Winery of the Year. It is the first time an Ontario winery has been named Canada's Winery of the Year. Ontario's own Tawse Winery won five gold, three silver and 10 bronze medals. No other winery has ever won as many gold medals in a single year at the Canadian Wine Awards. In addition, Tawse won the White Wine of the Year Award for its 2008 Robyn's Block Chardonnay. The chardonnay received a score of 93 out of 100 - the highest score ever achieved by a table wine in this competition. A big congratulations to winemaker Paul Pender and the gang at Tawse.

Ontario Riesling not Just a Spectator ... Wine Spectator, has shone the spotlight on three Cave Spring Rieslings in their October 15th issue. Both the 2008 Riesling CSV and the Riesling Estate were rated an outstanding 90 points. This marks a milestone both for Cave Spring and Canadian wine, as we are the only Canadian winery to have repeatedly received 90-point Wine Spectator ratings. Their Riesling Estate was also highlighted by the magazine's senior editor and Riesling expert Bruce Sanderson as one of only seven extraordinary, "White Hot" wine values from some of the finest producers around the world. Also impressive was the 88-point rating for their entry level Riesling Niagara Peninsula 2008, which was showcased as a Top 125 Global Value Selection for its remarkable quality and modest price.

New Port of Call ... Cockburn's Port has been sold by Beam Global Spirits & Wine to Symington Family Estates for an undisclosed sum. The deal comes four years after Symington acquired the Cockburn's vineyards and wineries from Beam, who retained ownership and global distribution of the brand. Describing Cockburn's as 'one of the greatest names in Port', Symington joint managing director Paul Symington said: 'We look forward to applying the centuries of experience that our family has in Port to this magnificent brand.'

Gallo Makes an Admission ... The 'Pinotgate' scandal, allegedly involving 18 million bottles of fake Pinot Noir from the Languedoc, was 'a disaster' for Californian company Gallo, it has admitted. In a wide-ranging interview in the November issue of Decanter magazine Gina Gallo says the company was embarrassed by the incident. Whilst defending the company's standards for wine production, Gallo accepts the criticism for failing to notice that the fake wine contained Merlot and Syrah. "As a company we want to be squeaky clean, and we are scrupulous in declaring alcohol levels and other

matters, so of course it was an embarrassment to us," she said.

Theft of a Crop ... Thieves in France have broken into a vineyard and stolen an entire crop of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. Thieves struck in Villeneuve-les-Beziers a few weeks ago on a Sunday night, taking advantage of a full moon and using a harvesting machine to seize 30 tonnes of the crop. Farmer Roland Cavaille said similar crimes have taken place before in the Languedoc-Roussillon, one of France's best-known wine growing regions. He said the theft amounted to a year's work and about 15,000 euro (£12,900). "They used a harvesting machine to gather grapes. This means there was no need to have lots of people, two people would have been enough," Mr Cavaille told Le Parisien newspaper. "The area was quite isolated, it is a few kilometres from the village and near a river. So the thieves were able to work safely."

Web Wine Comes to Toronto ... Ciao Wine Bar is the first Toronto based restaurant to introduce an interactive wine list in a custom web based application for the iPad; known as the Virtual Sommelier. The Virtual Sommelier offers guests an interactive wine list in a web application designed specifically for Ciao Wine Bar, who have an extensive 300+ label wine list. The custom web application uses a wireless iPads to provide guests with information on wine, dessert wine, port and champagne available by the glass and bottle, complete with price, photo and description. Interested parties visit: <http://www.ciaowinebar.com/>

Saying our Fond Farewells ... Please join me in remembering a great icon of the entertainment community. The Pillsbury Doughboy died yesterday of a yeast infection and trauma complications from repeated pokes in the belly. He was 71. Doughboy was buried in a lightly greased coffin. Dozens of celebrities turned out to pay their respects, including Mrs. Butterworth, Hungry Jack, the California Raisins, Betty Crocker, the Hostess Twinkies, and Captain Crunch. The grave site was piled high with flours. Aunt Jemima delivered the eulogy and lovingly described Doughboy as a man who never knew how much he was kneaded. Doughboy rose quickly in show business, but his later life was filled with turnovers. He was not considered a very smart cookie, wasting much of his dough on half-baked schemes. Despite being a little flaky at times, he still was a crusty old man and was considered a positive roll model for millions. Doughboy is survived by his wife Play Dough, three children: John Dough, Jane Dough and Dosey Dough, plus they had one in the oven. He is also survived by his elderly father, Pop Tart. The funeral was held at 3:50 for about 20 minutes.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Tis the Season - for lots of thing to do*

A Plethora of Things to Do ... As the snow begins to fall and the decorations start to deck the halls, the Wineries of Ontario are gearing up for the holiday season by offering a range of festive wine offers, tasting experiences and open house events. With so many options, this is a special time of year to visit the wine region of your choice, so get out there and explore. Check the website of your favourite winery or region.

Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Fest ... Snow draped vineyards and warm hospitality collide during the Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Festival. Icewine comes to life as each of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake offer distinct events sure to leave a sweet taste in your mouth. It's coming this January, to get details of what's happening visit www.wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com.

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!

© OntarioWineReview.com 2010. All rights reserved.

You may use the content of this newsletter by including full credit to Michael Pinkus, Grape Guy and a link to www.ontariowinereview.com