

## 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 – 147  
November 25, 2010

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### OntarioWineReview: *My Favourite Polls*

My favourite Poll would probably be my father, but that's not the poll I'm talking about here. I'm talking about those mini-questionnaires with the multiple choice answers that appear on the right hand side of [my website home page](#). Here you get to vote and give your opinion on a variety of wine related topics issues. Some have been wildly popular, like the ones about the sexiest winemaker, though it ended in a bit of a mess (you have to be careful when people's egos are at stake). Some have garnered little response, like the 21 votes logged for "Have you tried a Baco Noir wine?" But others have proven to be very interesting food for thought and because of that I thought today might be a good day to bring to light some of my favourite polls from the past few years.

Polls that proved to be quite popular were ones that had to do with Cellared in Canada (CiC) wines and the companies that make them. Back in August 2008 I asked, "[Do you think Ontario should finally get rid of the practice of blending foreign and domestic grapes?](#)": 68.5% of you agreed, while 25% answered "It's more complicated than that" – obviously the employees of Vincor and Peller were trying to muddy the waters. But let's look back at the original poll question and its outcome: it seems that Ontario will be getting rid of domestic and foreign blending, in favour of all foreign in 2014. Yes I know, many of the blenders say it won't happen, that they'll keep a percentage of Ontario in the mix because it is part of the "flavour profile"; but really, if you had the opportunity to use foreign grapes at less than 50 cents per liter vs Ontario's over-inflated priced grapes in your wine, would you? I didn't think so, and neither do these companies because, from what I've heard, they've already begun canceling contracts as of 2014. It will also make for a more bulging bottom line. So we all know which way "Cellared in Canada" is going: no Canadian content whatsoever.

October 2009 saw another stab at the CiC issue, as the wineries who make the product promised "transparency", which prompted this question: "[Do you trust the companies making CiC wines to be transparent?](#)" A simple yes or no answer would suffice here, and an overwhelming number of you wore your pessimist's hat, with almost 89% voting an emphatic "no". Seems the majority of us had been bitten by the Cellared bug and weren't quite ready and willing to forgive or forget.

Staying with the CiC issue one more time, back in June of this year I asked the rather simple question: "[Is Cellared In Canada a dead issue?](#)" This was prompted by an article in the global media by a prominent British writer and one of Canada's own writers wishing that said Brit would drop the issue and focus on the positives of Ontario wines. Yet 78% of you believe Cellared in Canada is still a relevant issue and requires further discussion, debate and a more appropriate resolution. This is down from 90% of you who believe the CiC debate was not over, back in October 2009. My feeling is that CiC wine will once again rear its ugly head as we get closer to 2014 and the threat of 100% foreign content in those cellared wines becomes a reality ... then the proverbial poo-

poo caa-caa will hit the high speed fan. What do those farmers do with those grapes? Ontario has a lot of wine related issues to contend with, yet I'm sure we'll sit on them till they become more imminent, as has been the way in the past, and certainly the future.

A more pressing issue should be how to get more local wines into the hands of Ontario consumers. Currently, on the site is a poll question based on my last newsletter. "[Would you like to see stand-alone ALL VQA-Ontario wine stores?](#)" – This is not the first time I have brought up this issue, though this time I provided more options. In May of 2009 I posted "[Do you support Ontario Craft Wine \(VQA\) and beer being sold at corner/convenience stores?](#)" Another overwhelming yes to this at close to 89% - yet still nothing has been done about slackening the grasp the LCBO has on our wine (and beer) sales. But it would seem the Chinese have an inroad to Ontario wines that we Ontarians don't have, yet so desperately want: a VQA wine store. Not sure how a communist regime gets something we here in a "free market economy" can't ... makes you wonder who's really living under oppressive rules.

And speaking of things that don't make sense, on the current poll 11% of you believe the LCBO is doing a "great job" promoting Ontario wines ... really?

Not all my polls have been serious, or are about serious issues, there are the What Grape Should we Challenge next questions, which always seem to garner interest ... and we should be looking at doing a grape Challenge sometime in 2011; maybe Chardonnay is the answer or red blends ... do I hear a poll in the works?

When I learned that Ontario was looking to celebrate 200 years of winemaking I asked you: "[Will you find a way to celebrate Ontario's 200 years of winemaking?](#)" 45% said "yes", while 41% of you found it surprising that Ontario had been in the wine game that long (200 years ... really?).

Finally, in early September I put forth the idea of bringing back the good old durable plastic LCBO bag (since we're paying 5 cents for them anyway why not pay for a good one) - seems not all of you are as fond of that piece of plastic as others. To the question: "[Should the LCBO bring back their plastic bag?](#)" 63% of you thought that would not be a good idea.

As always I thank you for participating in the polls, there will be plenty more in the coming months, so please keep your eye out and keep voting. Like the newest holiday inspired question: What will you be bringing to holiday get togethers?



### **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Picks from Taste the Season, NOTL***

Next week I will be posting my views and reviews on this year's Taste the Season event in Niagara-on-the-Lake on the On the Road with the Grape Guy blog ... this week I'll let you in on the best wines I tasted during the event.

#### **Stratus 2008 Wildass Red - \$19.95 (W)**

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

There are those who are going to poo-poo the 2008 vintage, mostly because it wasn't 2007 (the best vintage, so far, Ontario has seen) –but if you're one of those you're selling this vintage short. This is Stratus' second label, and to some, inappropriately named for this "posh" winery, but that is a debate for another day. All the reds grapes that Stratus grows find their way into this bottle, 11 in total: Cabernets Franc and Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Gamay, Syrah, Tempranillo, Sangiovese, Tannat and Mourvedre ... After that laundry list I feel I have no time to tell you about the wine, but for a wine this interesting I'll make some time – as I hope you will. There is a simplicity to this wine that you wouldn't expect from a blend with so many grapes involved, yet there is also a certain elegance that brings everything together with each sip. The nose is cherry and spice, which

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follows on the palate with some nice peppered notes – it's a light and easy wine with a decent amount of complexity (if you are willing to indulge yourself) thanks to all the players involved. Sip and savour, or grab and gulp ... because the wine is from Stratus you expect the first, but with a name like Wildass you're allowed to do both. Price: \$19.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\* ½

**Sunnybrook NV Spiced Apple - \$21.95 (W)**  
[www.sunnybrookfarmwinery.com](http://www.sunnybrookfarmwinery.com)

This is Christmas time in a glass, a blend of apple wine and five spices that includes cinnamon, nutmeg, and all-spice, but just like the good Colonel's recipe, no more secrets of the blend can be revealed. These spices are then infused into the wine making a great beverage for consumption hot, cold or at room temperature. (My preference would be chilled) The smell will bring a smile to your face, while the taste, well like I said, it's Christmas time in a glass – what more could you ask for during this season. Price: \$21.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\* ½

**Three other wines that made the radar during Taste the Season:**

[Reif Estate Winery 2007 Merlot Reserve](#)  
[Stonechurch 2007 Quintet](#)  
[Niagara College 2007 Cabernet Franc](#)

**Just Announced ...**

**Alvento 2007 Elige - \$19.95 (W, L)**  
[www.alvento.ca](http://www.alvento.ca)

I have been holding off on this review until I got word on the price, and yesterday I got it ... and it is the one I had been hoping for. The 2005 Elige, a Cabernet Sauvignon dominated blend, was the best wine in the Alvento line-up that year; and with the '07 edition this might again be their best wine – or at least it is definitely in the running. This year it's again a Cab Sauv dominated blend (65%) with 33% Merlot and just a titch of Cabernet Franc (2%) - all aged for 18 months in 100% French oak, one third of which is new. At this time the nose is fairly closed, but there's real potential here, especially if it follows the way of the palate. Lots of black fruit and robust tannins lead the charge ... it's youthful but it's going places. Decant for early consumption or wait a minimum of three years to pop the cork. Price was dependant on the LCBO taking the wine for Vintages, and I am happy to report they have ... a savings of \$7 vs winery only sales ... a bargain at \$19.95 at both the winery and the LCBO in Vintages (June 2011). Can't wait? Release date at the winery is December 11, 2010 – just in time for the holidays. Price: \$19.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\* ½

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



**Weekly Wine Notes and More:** *Coyote's Run White, Cattail Red 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):

**November 12, 2010** – [Coyote's Run 2009 Five Mile White \(LISTEN\)](#)  
**November 19, 2010** – [Cattail Creek 2009 Catastrophe Red \(LISTEN\)](#)

**Listen to the Interviews on CHOK-Sarnia:**

[October 21, 2010](#)  
[October 28, 2010](#)

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

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

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[Annual Italian Tasting](#)  
[Zonin North American Premier](#)  
[Yellow Tail Reserve Launch](#)  
[A Few Sips with Larry Horne of Calamus](#)  
[Cattail Creek Riesling Clonal Project Tasting](#)

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

Wines that got "lost" in my cellar - some are Treasures others Trash ... Find out what happened  
**Nothing this Week – but reviews upcoming**

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

Find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the years  
**Nothing this Week – but reviews upcoming**

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

When it's not an Ontario wine, here's what I'm pulling out of the cellar  
[6 New Reviews Added](#)  
**Including: a big Aussie, a delicious Rasteau and more**

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

[November 27, 2010](#)

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

**November 2010**

**Ontario Chardonnay Takes on the World, Part 2 ...** Bill Redelmeier (owner of Southbrook) is going to try again, this time south of the border. Here's a snippet from his most recent announcement. "As the harvest finishes, thoughts turn to how to promote Canadian Wine. Last year we took a group of Ontario Chardonnays to show off at Canada House in the UK. (See [Coolchardonnay.ca](#) for some of the details) We don't think that a return to the UK would bear as much fruit; we already have had reviews from most of the major British Writers, so we are thinking about what else we can do to continue the initiative. We are proposing to take the Big Apple by storm in early March. The format is similar to last year, with a few changes to keep it interesting. All VQA wines produced in Canada are eligible. Note the change, that we are inviting BC wineries to take part, as well as any wines from Nova Scotia that are certified 100% Nova Scotia Fruit. If you have any questions, please contact me either at [bill@southbrook.com](mailto:bill@southbrook.com) or 416 886 4448."

**JT Wins Again ...** Jackson Triggs is thrilled to announce that Okanagan Estate winemakers Brooke

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Blair and Derek Kontkanen, and Niagara Estate winemaker Marco Piccoli have won a total of 29 awards at the International Wine and Spirits Competition (IWSC) in London, England. Marco Piccoli, Jackson Triggs Niagara Estate winemaker, was honoured with 10 awards from the 11 wines submitted, including Gold (Best in Class) for the Proprietors' Grand Reserve Syrah 2007 and Delaine Vineyard Riesling Icewine 2007.

**Japanese Wine, Not Just Rice Anymore ...** The Japanese have made wine for years; it is just that no one outside Japan wanted to drink it, particularly if it was sweet swill made from a native table grape called koshu. It seems there are now wineries in Japan racing to put the first Koshu grape on your table ... [read more here](#)

**Do You Have Your Cards Yet? ...** To further promote 100% Ontario Wines, the Ontario Wine Society (OWS) has launched a "Tent Card" initiative that they hope will encourage more restaurants to serve more 100% Ontario Wines. The "Tent Card" initiative was piloted by the Niagara chapter of the Ontario Wine Society two months ago and has been very well received in the Niagara area. Because of that, they have decided to expand the program to their two other chapters, Oakville and Toronto, and the rest of province. To order 12 free cards and see more info, go to [http://www.facebook.com//66cd0hunf7BmpMLn\\_26LAJHcleg;www.ontariowinesociety.com](http://www.facebook.com//66cd0hunf7BmpMLn_26LAJHcleg;www.ontariowinesociety.com).

**Do You Suffer After a Glass of Red? This might be the answer ...** Scientists have identified the mysterious allergen in wine that causes headaches, stuffy noses, skin rash and other allergy symptoms. Wine allergies occur in an estimated 8 percent of people worldwide. Only 1 percent of those involve sulfites, sulfur-containing substances that winemakers add to wine to prevent spoilage and also occur naturally in wine. Giuseppe Palmisano and his colleagues suggest that glycoproteins - proteins coated with sugars produced naturally as grapes ferment - may be the culprit. Their analysis of Italian Chardonnay uncovered 28 glycoproteins, some identified for the first time. The team found that many of the grape glycoproteins had structures similar to known allergens, including proteins that trigger allergic reactions to ragweed and latex. [More ...](#)



**Wine Event Spotlight:** *Tis the Season for Open Houses*

I can't list them all but check you favourite wineries websites to find out what's going on.

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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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