

## 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 – 171**  
**November 17, 2011**

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### OntarioWineReview: *Visiting Colaneri*

Earlier this fall I had opportunity to visit Colaneri winery, one of Niagara-on-the-Lake's newest destinations, and taste some wines with mad scientist / winemaker Andrzej Lipinski.

Andrzej pretty much pioneered the appassimento style of winemaking here in Ontario, starting out first with Foreign Affair before taking his show on the road with Colaneri, Burning Kiln and Organized Crime.

Appassimento is the method of drying grapes to concentrate the juice. The Italians have been doing it for years in the making of Amarone where they dry the grapes naturally on mats over the course of months till they reach the proper point of raisination and then they make the wine. The advantage is more concentrated flavours and higher alcohol wines. Andrzej has forgone the drying mats and drying rooms for old tobacco kilns and what takes the Italians months takes Andrzej a week. Some would call that cheating, but Andrzej sees it as an efficient use of time and resources.

On this day we hightailed it through nine different wines, and now as some of those wines beginning hitting the winery shelves it's time to let you in on what's coming and what's already there.

#### **The Whites ...**

Four white wines of which 2 have now been released with the others on the way. The 2010 Fume Bianco made with Sauvignon Blanc grapes, of which 30% are dried then aged in 4 year old French oak barrels. This wine had an intense citrus nose and was well balanced on the palate with citrus and tropical flavours ... remember I told you earlier that drying the grapes increased the alcohol - well this Bianco is a perfect example of what I'm talking about, as it tips the scale at 15.6% - definitely not a wine for the feint of heart or those with a low alcohol tolerance. Out now.

Another beauty was the [2009 Chardonnay](#) (now in bottle - \$34.00); this one is all fresh fruit on the nose, even after 13 months in 60% new oak - but the palate is the complete opposite, this one's for those who like their Chardonnay weighty.

Then came tank samples of the 2010 Gewurztraminer and 2010 Pinot Grigio (30% and 20% dried fruit respectively). The Gewurztraminer had strange yet appealing aromas of candied citrus peel, Thrills gum and floral. Floral I expected but the other two seemed out of place, but not unwelcome. There was also a sweet spice on the finish. The Pinot Grigio was barrel aged 8 months in French oak and had a lovely inviting nose; but the palate seemed to be dominated by alcohol - I don't know if these grapes need drying or barrelling - I guess we'll wait and see on the finished product.

### **The Reds ...**

The 2009 Pinot Noir seem to be one of the few grape varieties that Andrzej left well enough alone. The grapes were a blend of fruit sourced from the Colaneri and John Howard estates (where Andrzej used to work), were left 6 days on their skins and 13 months in non-new barrels. It turns out that Andrzej made a very muscular Pinot with all the proper characteristics of sour cherry, cranberry and earthy notes with a black cherry, sour strawberry finish ... and only at 12.8% alcohol.

I was really taken by the 2009 Cabernet Franc. Everybody knows I don't hide my love for this grape in our climate, but Andrzej seems to have taken it to a new level. 50% dried and a whopping 14% (not an easy alcohol level to hit in 2009). The nose was beautiful with the right amount of raspberry, strawberry and tobacco smoke ... the fruit sang in the mouth while there was also smoky and spicy notes that kept everything in balance, then it ended with a tobacco-strawberry finish. This one should retail around the \$25 mark and from what I've tasted here should be worth it. Last word on this one: smooth mid-palate and robust finish.

### **Pre-taste vs. Finished product ...**

Three of my pre-taste wines came out over the last month or two, all from the 2009 vintage: [Merlot](#), [Syrah](#) and [Insieme](#) (Merlot, Syrah Cabernet Sauvignon blend). Now that I have tasted the finished product I thought it interesting to go back over my notes from a few months ago to see what has changed from tank to bottle. The Merlot was 50% dried and at over 14% alcohol (currently labeled at 13.9%) - my notes said: jammy, vanilla-laced and Zin-like with lots of cherry; needing a few years to come around. (See final review [here](#))

The blended Insieme, meaning together, is equal parts of the three grapes with only the Cabernet Sauvignon being 100% dried, the other two varietals were only 50% raisined. Early notes proclaimed pepper, ripe fruit and big tannins with a really tart finish. (See final review [here](#))

The 2009 Syrah was my "wine to watch". 18 months in 70% new oak and 50% dried fruit the wine needed work and it seems Andrzej really worked it over. A wet vintage like 2009 should not produce Syrah with great character, but here the white pepper, black cherry, smoked meat, vanilla and cassis all came ringing thought on both the nose and palate. I had written "a real winner if all this character translate from tank to bottle" ... also liked the "lovely long peppery finish with the right amount of smoke." I'll tell you, of the three wines that have now come out this one lived up to expectations - it really is the bomb. (See final review [here](#))

Is appassimento through tobacco kilns the wave of the future? Between Andrzej's use of it at three wineries and Reif doing the same at there place, it would seem raisining your grapes has a future here in Ontario - taking what mother nature gives you and improving on it ... it's like plastic surgery for grapes. And whether you're a purist or experimentalist you have to admit the process has merit ... but not for all grapes.



### **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Favourites from Taste the Season (NOTL)***

These were my favourite wines being poured during [Taste the Season in Niagara-on-the-Lake](#) (on now) ...

#### **Reif 2009 Reserve Chardonnay - \$19.95 (W)**

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

After spending a whopping 18 months in oak (14 in French, 3 in Hungarian and 1 in American) the wine still retains lots of its fruit on both the nose and palate: apple, pear, peach vanilla and butterscotch aromas fill the nose, but it's the lovely fruit that really jumps out here. The palate keeps all that lovely fruit and wraps it is a blanket of vanilla and butterscotch with a subtle spice finish, nice acidity too. Let this one sit another year or two or open an hour before serving. Decanting helps pull out all that fruit, especially when so young. Price: \$19.95 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**Pillitteri 2007 Cabernet Franc - \$20.00 (W)**

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

A well made Cabernet Franc is worth its weight in gold and I know that Charlie Pillitteri would agree with me (we've had that conversation with him) ... this Franc hits all the right notes. The nose delivers the stereo-typical Franc aromas of raspberry, tobacco and smoke (from the barrel). The palate ramps up what you've had on the nose and like a special edition DVD adds bonus features: raspberry-strawberry, tobacco and smoke, cedar and spice with just the right amount of kick. The finish is lengthy and laced with red fruits. Price: \$20.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\*

**Ice House 2009 Signature Series Dornfelder/Cab Sauv Icewine - \$65.00 / 200ml (W)**

[www.theicehouse.ca](http://www.theicehouse.ca)

I do not believe I have ever seen the word Dornfelder on a bottle of icewine. That's because Dornfelder isn't your typical icewine grape variety - heck it's not even your typical red grape variety. Dornfelder is a grape of German origin, a cross created in 1955, and is the second most planted red in Germany, behind Pinot Noir. Whatever it is it really adds something to this sweetie. Deep rich and red in colour with inviting cherry and raspberry aromas. The flavour profile is just as inviting conjuring up cherry, red plum and some lovely balancing acidity, all leading to a long sumptuous finish. Price: \$65.00 / 200ml - Rating: \*\*\*\* 1/2

**4 More wines of note on the tour ...**

[Coyote's Run 2010 Cabernet Merlot](#)  
[Jackson-Triggs 2010 Black Series Merlot](#)  
[Colaneri 2009 "Insieme"](#)  
[Pondview 2010 Cabernet Merlot](#)

**Special Mention Wines - wines tasted outside the event ...**

[Colaneri 2009 "Pensieri" Merlot](#)  
[Colaneri 2009 "Visione" Syrah](#)  
[Peller Estates 2010 Private Reserve Gamay Noir](#)  
[Pondview 2010 Bella Terra Chardonnay](#)

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



**Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *On the Road posts and Taste it Again wines*

**Weekly Ottawa Life Blog Entries:**

[How to Import Wine Into Ontario](#)

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

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

[Montes Dinner at Splendido](#)  
[6th Annual Stem Wine Group Tasting](#)  
[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**

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

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

[Hillebrand 2007 Trius Red](#)

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

[Sprucewood Shores 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve](#)

[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 Posts Added](#)

including wines from the USA and Australia

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

[November 12, 2011](#)

[Vintage On-line: November 3, 2011](#)

[Mini Release for December 17, 2011](#)

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**OntarioWineReview:** *Drinking from the Ravine*

My next stop (not on the same day), was by Coyote's Run, where owner Jeff Aubry and the gang are cornering the market in all things Pinot - not just the Noir variety, but Blanc and Gris too. This time I was there to taste the new line up of Pinot Noir, but before doing that was offered up their newest General List (LCBO) offering, the 2010 Pinot Gris/Pinot Blanc. Now regular reader should know that I'm a fan of what winemaker David Sheppard is doing with the Blanc he gets - the grapes are not yet grown on the property - here he has cobbled together a nice sipping wine for lazy Sunday afternoons.

The real story of the day were the Pinot Noirs, four in total. Coyote's Run has made a name for themselves amongst Pinot-philies because of their separation of vineyard lots, known as Red Paw and Black Paw ... which coincides with the red clay and black clay soils in which the grapes are grown. I had previously tasted and reviewed the [2009 Red Paw Pinot](#), so it was time to get a taste of the new [2009 Black Paw](#) version. This is the more limited of the two wines with only 100 cases being made - that's because there is less Pinot being grown on the black clay soil. Folks swear, me included, that the Black version is earthier than the Red Paw. I like to think of them as two sides of the Coyote world ... one more feminine (Red) the other more masculine (Black).

Before getting to the star of the show let's back track a little to the newest member of the Coyote family, the cub if you will, the [2009 Pinot Noir](#) (\$19.95). The first thing any Coyote's Run fan or follower will note is the price I just bracketed beside the name; Coyote's Run has never released a Pinot Noir for under \$20. That's the point. Jeff Aubry is now going for that under twenty market. He believes in this grape so much, and its viability in Niagara to such an extent, that he wants to introduce Ontarians to a well-made Ontario Pinot for under twenty bucks. (He was also instrumental in putting together the Pinot Affair back in October). The key to this Noir is that it is non-estate fruit and it's exclusive to Vintages as of January 12, 2012. I found the wine, in comparison to the Red and Black Paw versions, to be simple yet still flavourful, hitting all the right notes that makes Pinot Noir Pinot Noir without going overboard on the things that make people dislike Pinot, like earthiness, the mushroom notes or especially (as the French would say) "the merde". A good introductory Pinot for the un-initiated and a delicious sipping one for those who are.

Moving from the simple to the complex and elegant means we're now going to touch on the pinnacle of Pinot at Coyote's Run, the [2009 Rare Vintage](#). By most accounts 2009 was not a great red vintage, but Pinot Noir seemed to bask in the cooler wetter weather and thus many proclaimed 2009 a Pinot Noir vintage ("the best in Ontario's history"). Thus perfect for a Rare Vintage wine from Coyote's Run. Jeff's eyes lit up as he described the wine being made from his new darling clone, 828, using terms like "the best", "excited" and "revolutionary" ... it's the first time this clone has been used almost exclusively to make a Pinot at Coyote's Run and Jeff thinks maybe Ontario ... it's the future of Pinot says Jeff, and he wants to be on the cutting edge of it.



#### **Wine Event Spotlight: *Taste the Season and Where I'll Be***

##### ***All weekends in November ...***

Taste the Season Touring Pass Event ... **All weekends in November (5/6, 12/13, 19/20 & 26/27)**

**The Taste the Season touring pass event is the "must-do" event of the season for many Niagara-on-the-Lake wine country visitors. Each touring pass entitles the holder to a VQA wine and food pairing at each of the 26 member wineries and is valid for one of the featured weekends. Touring passes are available for only \$44.25 (+HST) and can be purchased online or by phone. For details and to purchase visit:**

**[www.wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com](http://www.wineriesofniagaraonthelake.com) or call 905-468-1950 (Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce)**

##### ***Where I'll be ... Last weekend of November:***

Waterloo Region Food and Wine Expo ... **November 24-26, 2011 - Downtown Kitchener Market.**  
**<http://www.fooddrinkexpo.com>**

The Grape Guy will be part of three presentations, two on Thursday and one on Saturday. Check the website for times and topics.

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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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