

## 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 – 185**  
**July 19, 2012**

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### OntarioWineReview: *Get Fresh 2012*

Back in May I had the pleasure of touring the 24 wineries taking part in the "Get Fresh in Twenty Valley" program ... an event that pairs food and wine on a passport program. This year the Valley wineries were also giving out the recipe cards that had the 'how to' of making their little amuse, a nice touch to add to your cookbook collection. The Valley was broken down into two parts: East and West and that's precisely how we broke it down, doing 12 wineries one day and 12 the next, then we rated the wineries on a scale of one to ten as to their performance. Because the event is about the food and the pairing we weigh that more heavily in amassing the scores, the wine was only considered if it enhanced (or total detracted) from the food - I already know these guys and gals can make wine, the question is: can they pair that wine with an interesting food?

We'll start in the East with the bottom four: Stoney Ridge served us an oxidized Pinot Gris with a greasy duck, which overpowered the wine completely - plus our server lied to us as to why the wine was like that - please don't tell me it was made that way on purpose (score: a very generous 4). Rockway Glen, with their smoked salmon and seafood croissant ... sorry folks too much bread, it was all we could taste, where's the fish? (score: 5.5). Cave Spring served mini tartlets, but the tart pastry overwhelmed the innards and the pairing was only so-so. Same could be said for the 13th Street spring tart, both food and wine pairing were uninspiring (score: 6).

Vineland has a good pairing, but the rhubarb chutney that accompanied the pork belly was sweet and overpowered the savoury pork (score: 6.5). Calamus kept it simple and safe with a spinach and artichoke dip ... but it was quite tasty (score: 7). Then there were the following Eastern wineries that tied with 7.5 points: Creekside with their East Coast Mussels served on the patio with Sauvignon Blanc; Henry of Pelham presented a green apple risotto ball that would have been even better with a little more salt - also served with a Sauv Blanc; and Sue-Ann Staff pulled off a packed-with-flavour cured beef tenderloin served at her dining room table.

Trying for second out in the East was Flat Rock Celars, who ordered in a Wood Fired Goat Cheese Pizza from AVella's Mobile Catering, simple delicious flavours over a crisp crust. Kacaba also did well with an assortment of wines to go along with their Cashew Pate, Fresh Fruit preserves on 'filo square'- this was probably the most unique experience of the day (both wineries scored 8 points).

The top prize on Day 1 went to Harbour Estates, whose BBQ'd Mexican Slider and Refried Beans not only paired unexpectedly well with their Riesling, but was substantial enough to take 3 or 4 bites of - the sweetness of the wine cut the heat and the food was flavourful and hearty (score: 9).

Day 2 found us in the Western part of the Valley for another 12 wine and food experiences. Low

man on the totem pole here was De Sousa, offering up a wine and cheese plate combination which showed little imagination (score: 4). Surprisingly Tawse also found their way into the bottom part of the list, their Niagara Slaw was just plain bland and boring (score: 5).

Mountain Road and Rosewood tied with a very respectable 7 points: one offered Falafel Roll with Chardonnay - tasty yet simple (a la Calamus); the other a Honey, Caramelized Onion and Bacon Tarte - or flat bread - it was a bit dry but also quite tasty.

Here's where things got interesting and we started to nit-pick to get scores. We had three wineries who put up a score of 7.5 points, 1 with 8 another with 8.5 and three with 9 ... Seven-and-a-half went to Greenlane for their Fresh Thai Vegetable Spring Rolls; Megalomaniac for the cool and refreshing Mediterranean Seafood Delight; and the last 7.5 was acquired by Thirty Bench with their flavourful and well-spiced Asian Inspired Poached Shrimp. Angels Gate also featured a trip to the Orient with Thai Fried Rice with Roast Pork paired with their 2010 Rosé, this proved to be the best pairing of the two day affair because the rosé helped bring out the sweetness of the pork and cool those spices at the same time (score: 8.5) - but their were three wineries that just had better food. Seems I skipped someone, Aure with their hearty oxtail stew (score: 8).

Tying for Top Spot (food-wise) out West were the following three wineries: The Good Earth (no surprise here - food is what they do) with their stomach warming Lamb Bracirole paired with Pinot Noir. Malivoire, who took the sweet dessert route with a Lavender and White Chocolate Cookie (called "More than just a cookie"), it was a delectable few bites of sweet goodness. And finally, Peninsula Ridge came within a hair of getting a perfect score, but their pairing was wrong - a Parsnip and Empire Apple Soup looked bizarre on paper but tasted delicious, but they paired it with a light rosé which was lost and underwhelming - this soup required a ballsier Chardonnay to do it justice (each of the three wineries scored: 9)

Lots of fun and some fantastic food memories to take home and use for company ... congrats to the winners this year, hope you can maintain your winning ways next year (it's harder to do than you think). As for those that ended up at the bottom - you've got a year to re-think up a great pairing - because as these wine and food events every year is different and that's what makes them so worthwhile and fun.

[To see some pictures from the 2 days of Fresh - click here](#)

Next newsletter I'll review Niagara-on-the-Lake's May food and wine extravaganza: The Wine and Herb Festival.



**Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: 3 Whites and a Red + 8 Bonus Reviews**

**Calamus Estate 2011 Pinot Gris - \$17.00 (W)**  
[www.calamuswines.com](http://www.calamuswines.com)

These days Pinot Gris' are a dime a dozen, and to my palate a very boring wine ... which is too bad because it used to bring mouth-watering excitement at the very mention of the grape. This is Calamus' most popular white and this year winemaker Arthur Harder seems to have brought sexy back to the glass. The nose is apple skin and poached pear, while on the palate much is going on: it's weightier than usual with a hint of something spicy along with baked apple notes and hints of white pepper on the finish ... and the more you sip the better it gets, especially when it comes to that white pepper that grabs at your tongue. There's also a floral note that's not too in your face, but it does sneak its way in. Best Pinot Gris Calamus has made to date - different and weightier but still retains its freshness. Because of the popularity the winery has with this wine they have just planted another 5000 vines - so in three years they'll be more to go around. Price: \$17.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS:** [Calamus Estate 2009 Cabernet Franc - \\$19.20](#) (W)  
**BONUS:** [Calamus Estate 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon - \\$19.95](#) (W)

**Chateau des Charmes 2010 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay - \$13.95** (W)  
[www.chateaudescharmes.com](http://www.chateaudescharmes.com)

Here we go again. Chateau des Charmes has created another whopper Chardonnay from a hot vintage. I was a fan of the 2007 and this follows right in its footsteps. The nose is what you'd expect from something Californian with lots of buttery, baked-apple and vanilla. The wine was only in barrel 6-7 months but it really took on the flavours of its oak home: rich, creamy vanilla and spiced apple ... Sure it's fat and creamy, but it also has a great backbone of acidity to keep it from being too heavy ... and that's no small feat. What's more it's priced well under what a Cali-Chard is gonna cost you. Price: \$13.95 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS:** [Chateau des Charmes 2010 Aligote - \\$13.55](#) (W)  
**BONUS:** [Chateau des Charmes 2009 Chardonnay Musque - \\$16.95](#) (W)  
**BONUS:** [Chateau des Charmes 2008 Estate Pinot Noir - \\$14.55](#) (W)

**Flat Rock Cellars 2009 Reserve Pinot Noir - \$45.00** (W)  
[www.flatrockcellars.com](http://www.flatrockcellars.com)

2009 was the vintage of the century, if you're a Pinot Noir drinker - according to Pinot producers anyway. Although not a particularly great vintage for the Bordeaux varieties the Burgundian grapes loved it. This reserve from Flat Rock has all the hallmarks of Pinot Noir. Aromas of beets, mushroom and earthy notes all with raspberry-strawberry backing. Flavours forego the earthy character and delivers on the juicy cherry-strawberry, white pepper and plenty of other spices ... the acidity helps keep everything clean and allows for a lovely lingering replay of flavours on the finish. Price: \$45.00 - Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS:** [Flat Rock Cellars 2010 Pinot Noir - \\$19.95](#) (W)  
**BONUS:** [Flat Rock Cellars 2007 Sparkling Brut - \\$35.00](#) (W)

**Malivoire 2010 Forgotten Row Chardonnay - \$29.95** (W)  
[www.malivoire.com](http://www.malivoire.com)

This wine gets its name from a back row in the vineyard that seemed to have been forgotten come harvest time ... which means this wine isn't just about terroir, it's about a certain strip of property, and what a strip it is. The nose is full of exotic fruits, apple core, lemon meringue and vanilla. The palate has juicy pear, peach and the exotic continues in the form of mango and pineapple - this is all wrapped up in a very fine sheen of vanilla - just for flavouring with a creamy mid, and great acidity on the finish that continues to replay in the mouth. Price: \$29.95 - Rating \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS:** [Malivoire 2010 Wismer Cabernet Franc - \\$24.95](#) (W)

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



**Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *On the Road articles - What I'm Drinking Reviews*

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

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

[Pictures from the Get Fresh in the Valley Weekend](#)  
[Huff Estates 6 Barrels for 6 Chefs](#)

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

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

[Caroline Cellars 2005 Cabernet Franc](#)  
[Riverview Cellars 2004 Cabernet-Merlot](#)  
[Kacaba Vineyards 2003 Cabernet Franc](#)  
[Colchester Ridge Estate Winery 2005 Cabernet Franc](#)  
[Hillebrand 2004 Select Vineyard Riesling](#)

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

Find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the years  
**A Pile Coming in the Next Week**

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

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

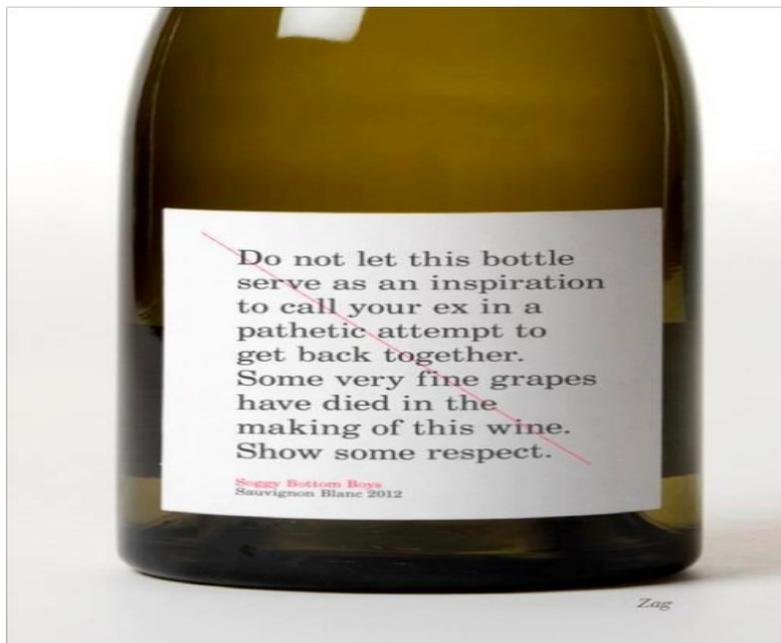
[New Posts Added](#)  
**A special wine from Michigan, a Four Bottle Extravaganza and more**

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

*Vintages Release for July 21, 2012 - coming soon*

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## Something Silly for Summer



**New Wine Label**

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**OntarioWineReview: No Doubting Thomas**

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

A bi-weekly newsletter dedicated to helping you discover Ontario's best Wines and Wineries.

Thomas Bachelder, of Le Clos Jordanne fame, is unabashedly pro-Chardonnay - so much so that at one point in our conversation he suggests (with a little tongue in cheek) that we rip out all other grape varieties in Niagara and replant everything to Chardonnay ..."but we're not going to convince anyone to do that," he finishes. But something tells me Thomas would not be opposed to the move.

On this bright and sunny July afternoon Thomas has brought a few writers together to taste some of this newest Chardonnay offerings. You might remember that earlier this year Thomas launched his first batch of Chardonnays, one from each of three regions he once worked in: Oregon, Burgundy and Niagara. For the 2010 editions of Bachelder Chardonnay Thomas has spread this wings to include some single vineyard wines into the mix: 2 from Burgundy, 2 from Niagara and plans to make one from the Lemelson 'Johnson' vineyard in Oregon - but those few barrels had to be rolled into the "Oregon" offering because of an unforeseen over-sold situation (a nice problem to have) ... he does hope to one day re-make this wine because he was loving where it was going and how it was shaping up.

For the record, all of Thomas' wines are treated the same way: 18 months in barrel, 15-20% new oak and all fermented using wild yeasts.

Starting with the Bourgogne wines: there's the currently tight, yet with good fruit and spice, of the entry-wine from the region: 2010 Bourgogne Blanc (\$29.95 - \*\*\* 1/2). Next up the two single vineyard Burgundy wines: The 2010 Macon St Veran 'Les Chatagniers' (\$24.95) has a buttery nose and spicy palate with vanilla notes, baked apple and peach nuances. It's not overwhelming, just a pleasant sipper (\*\*\*\*). The big gun from France has got to be the 2010 Beaune 'Les Longes' (\$44.95) with its pretty nose full of white fruits, silky palate of pineapple and vanilla and with a slightly spiced note that really brings it all together (\*\*\*\*+)

The Oregon offering, while nice, underwhelms compared to both the Burgundy and Niagara (see below) though still a good wine, and possibly still going through bottle shock, I found the 2010 Willamette Valley, Oregon (\$29.95) to be tight yet mineral driven, the fruit quite lean by comparison with crisp apple and a long white pepper finish (\*\* 1/2+)

Thomas beamed when he poured his Niagara wines - pride in what he has dubbed 'Brand Ontario', something the rest of the world has yet to embrace. "These are the wines people will want, they just don't know it They see Ontario on the label and dismiss it right away, while Burgundy and Oregon are snapped up because they are known entities." But Thomas can't wait to get his foot in the door using his Oregon and Burgundy wines so he can show off what Niagara has to offer. The three new Niagara wines are all from the hot 2010 vintage and includes the entry-level [Bachelder Niagara](#) (\$29.95), [Saunders Vineyard](#) (\$44.95) and the absolutely stunning [Wismer 'Wingfield Block'](#) (\$44.95) - please follow the links for a full review on each wine.

The one thing that Thomas B. showed us here today - and something many know and the rest should know - is when it comes to Chardonnay Ontario can really hold its own, against anyone, even if you are competing against yourself. All of these wines should be seeing LCBO shelves within the next year.



**Wine Event Spotlight:** *Two Upcoming Events to Look out for*

**Where I'll Be ...** *The Grape Guy will be at the EPIC Vintage Tasting (see below for details) giving a talk entitled: "The Whites of summer- real refreshment in the glass"*

**July 22, 2012 at 1:00 PM to July 22, 2011 at 5:00 PM ...** *The 18th Annual Vintage Tasting – hosted by EPIC. Join the former SWOVA group (now EPIC\*) at Holiday Beach Conservation Area to tip your glass and savour wonderful wines. Nibble on sumptuous food and listen to the band play while you stroll down to the beach and watch the water lap against the shore. Tickets cost \$65 and include*

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all cuisine, entertainment & wine samples. To reserve tickets: Please call Erica at (519) 776-5209 Dial "0" to reach reception to place your order. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday. 519-776-5209 - [info@swova.ca](mailto:info@swova.ca) - [www.swova.ca](http://www.swova.ca)

\*SWOVA has become EPIC - (South Western Ontario Vintners Association, now Essex Pelee Island Coast)

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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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