

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.



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OntarioWineReview: *There Must be Some Misunderstanding*

Forget about Educating Rita, it's the domestic consumer we should all be most worried about, especially because they don't seem to understand their local wine. Genesis sang it best, "there must be some misunderstanding...", and I learned about it first hand this past weekend.

Over this past weekend I was at the Waterloo Food and Drink Expo conducting a test on my fellow Ontarians (others called them seminars) comparing Ontario wines versus other wines from the same varieties (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Viognier, Cabernet, etc.) from world producers (France, Chile, New Zealand, etc.) to see how the Ontario wines would stack up. I billed the seminars as a tasting in honour of the Olympics that just past, knowing that everybody likes to have an opinion, especially when it helps pick a winner. Some might think me a little daft to pit our wines against some of the wines I chose, but I wanted to get a better understanding for what the public perceives. I of course had a hypothesis going in; my theory: you put an Ontario Cab up against a Chilean Cab, even from such a great year as 2010, and the Chilean will win 9 times out of ten and twice on Saturday; same for a Merlot ... but how would our mighty whites fare ... that was another story, of which I had another theory ... and was proven right on more than one occasion.

When it comes to big reds the wine buying public has come to expect rich, juicy fruit, silky mouth-feel, big alcohol buzz. Do we blame our winemakers here in Ontario for not giving us what we want, are they making inferior wines? No and no. They aren't making inferior wines; they are making cool climate wines - even during big years like 2005, 2007, 2010 and now 2012 (harvest is going on as we speak - in some cases almost 3 weeks ahead of schedule) ... we are still making cool climate wines. They are not going to have that big expressive fruit and ramped up alcohol ... and the general public has not been informed properly about it, no matter what we do we'll never do Chilean or Aussie-style wines. Who do we blame for this: the parents? The writers? The educators? The liquor board? Personally, I'd love to blame the board because they are big brother watching over us, so they should also be the one educating us; but how can you educate and turn a profit at the same time ... there is more money to be made in importing foreign wine than there is promoting domestic product. It's like asking Wal-Mart to tout the idea of buying American-made goods when they can make more money from a Chinese knock-off.

On the white side, when my audience in Kitchener was confronted with a mouth puckering [Vineland 2009 Dry Riesling](#) versus the sweeter New Zealand number, the New Zealand wine won over more than half the crowd - it was the sweetness that they liked, but put those same two wines on a dinner table with some fresh fish and they'd be singing a different tune. The same could be said for the two Viogniers I poured: the [Nyarai Cellars 2011](#) from Ontario and the Cono Sur 2011 from Chile - overwhelmingly the Chilean model won; it's all that fresh, fat, fleshy fruit that people are drawn to -

they don't look past their immediate gratification of all that fruit (and who can blame them) - though the idea of pairing it with a meal doesn't enter the mind. But that hasn't been our culture - wine isn't a staple on the table like it has been in Europe. We just don't have that history here in North America. So when confronted by two wines: one with an abundance of fruit and another with a nice food-matching balance of acidity - the fat wine wins out time and time again. The fat fruited Merlot beats out the one that needs a food pairing; the more supple and smooth Cabernet kicks the doors off the tannic, wait-five-years model. And so it goes. The exception to that rule is when it comes to Sauvignon Blanc - the Kiwis have so brain-washed the world with how Savvy B should taste that their aromatic, grassy-grapefruit versions beat out the more mouth-friendly tropically tinged version.

Before we can win the hearts and minds of our local wine buying public we have to first educate them on the styles of wines we are making and stop trying to imitate others. The importation of thousands of cheap, easy drinking wines does not help - there's a reason that French folks like French wines and that Italian's are fiercely loyal to their homeland's vinous creations - it's because that's what they were inoculated with around the table from a young age. I'm not advocating getting junior drunk at the age of five, but what I am trying to convey is that wine has been something for around the table for generations, the way we drink it as aperitif while mingling at a get together with the occasional bite of cheese - while fun - is far from what the winemaker intended (unless we're talking about the wines designed that way - which is exactly what our liquor board is now almost demanding from producers - but that's another gripe for another day ... and don't even get me started on the VQA and their term "typicity"). Next time you pick up a glass try to picture something you'd like to eat with it - whether it actually goes together or not is not the point, the exercise here is to see if a wine and food pairing is something you want to pursue as part of your wine education - or are you just happy to sip away and not worry about why you're not a fan of local wines ... and if that's the case, you're doing yourself a disservice.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: 2 Whites, 2 Reds and 5 Bonus reviews

Colio 2011 CEV Sauvignon Blanc - \$15.35 (W)

www.coliowinery.com

Colio has a new winemaker, and his name might be familiar to those who have liked Peller wines over the past few years - Lawrence Buehler has taken over the reigns and has brought his Niagara experience with him; and from what I have heard Lawrence is fitting right in. Now comes his very first wine that he shepherded to bottle (with a little help from those that came before him). Lawrence thought the wine needed a little more mid-palate to round out the great aromatics and lovely acidity, so he put 10% of the wine into a new French oak barrel for four months. The result is an amazing Sauvignon Blanc that has everything you're looking for and more. The nose has grassy, lime zest and vanilla notes; while the palate is tropically fruited with grass and hay notes along with some well-integrated grapefruit including the zest, pith and pulp. And the weight Lawrence was looking for ... it's there too. This one's a real beauty, especially for the price. Price: \$15.35 - Rating: **** 1/2

Hinterbrook 2010 Pinot Noir - \$25.00 (W)

www.hinterbrook.com

There are winemakers that bring out the earthy-sour fruit character of Pinot Noir and there are others that seem to have a knack for coaxing out more fruit in their Pinot creation - Natalie Spytkowski seems to be one who brings out the fruit instead of the rustic earthy nature ... The nose on this Pinot is full of strawberry and raspberry notes with the backing of cranberry fruit. The palate carries through with the cranberry, some sour cherry, good minerality and graphite notes, leading to a spicy finish with cranberry compote notes and the right amount of acidity to keep it fresh. Price: \$25.00 - Rating: ****

BONUS: [Hinterbrook 2010 Chardonnay Reserve](#) - \$19.00 (** 1/2)

Lailey 2010 Cabernet-Merlot - \$15.00 (W)
www.laileyvineyard.com

For those of you who took advantage of Lailey's first ever bargain blend in 2009, you're goona love the 2010 edition. With a better red vintage comes an even better red wine, this one has aromas of raspberry with herbal and smoky notes, which lure you deeper into the wine and begs for you to gtake a taste. The palate delivers with brambly black cherry, smoke, spice and herbal notes along with some nice grit from the trannins. There's a nice cedary finish that's laced with cocoa powder - offering up a dryness on the tongue. I think this one is not only better than last year's model, but has better longevity as well. Price: \$15.00 - Rating: ****+

BONUS: [Lailey 2011 Sauvignon Blanc](#) - \$20.00 (** 1/2+)

Thirty Bench 2011 Triangle Riesling - \$30.00 (W)
www.thirtybench.com

There are everyday Rieslings - and then there are special Rieslings - this one falls into the latter category as the price keeps it out of the everyday category, but what's in the bottle makes it something very special. The nose is loaded with mineral, lime and green apple. This mostly follows into the mouth: the green apple and minerality do anyway ... then there's the zip and zing of the lively acidity and the squeeze of juicy fresh peach on the mid-palate, which lingers right to the end. Price: \$30.00 - Rating: ****+

BONUS: [Thirty Bench 2011 Winemakers Riesling](#) - \$18.00 (** 1/2+)
BONUS: [Thirty Bench 2010 Wood Post Riesling](#) - \$30.00 (****+)
BONUS: [Thirty Bench 2009 Red](#) - \$24.00 (** 1/2+)

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



Bi-Weekly OWR Updates: *Video Wines of the Week - 2 Taste it Again and more*

NEW - Video Wine of the Week:

WineFox.ca and the Grape Guy have teamed up to bring you the Ontario Wine of the Week

This week's videos:
[Nyarai Cellars 2010 Cadence](#)
[Rosewood 2010 Merlot](#)

On the Road with the Grape Guy:

Trips, tours and tastings – join me as I review the highs, and sometimes, the lows
[Tasting of Brengman Brothers Wine \(Michigan\)](#)

Lost and Found (blog)

Wines that got "lost" in my cellar - some are Treasures others Trash ... Find out what happened
[Chateau des Charmes 2005 St. David's Bench Cabernet Franc](#)

Taste it Again Grape Guy (blog)

Find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the years
[Peller Estates 2007 Private Reserve Cabernet Franc](#)

[Fielding 2006 Sparkling Riesling - Charmat Method](#)

[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](#)

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

[Vintages Release for Saturday September 15, 2012](#)

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October 3, 2012

Get all the details here: <http://www.sipandsavourontario.ca/>

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OntarioWineReview: *The Mostly (Un)Surprising Results from the Kitchener Tasting*

The Whites ...

Riesling: The Ontario Wine Awards Gold Medal winning, acid driven [Vineland 2009 Dry Riesling](#) was beat out by the sweeter Giesen 2011 Riesling from New Zealand ... it was very close.

Viognier: [Nyarai Cellars 2011 Viognier](#) was soundly trounced by the full-fruited 2011 version of the Cono Sur Viognier from Chile ... I like both of these wines but in a year the Nyarai will still be on the upswing for drinking while the Cono Sur will be on the decline. The Cono Sur is best drunk young and fresh, and in some case by the gallon.

Sauvignon Blanc: [Colio's 2011 CEV Sauvignon Blanc](#) had it's fans, but the New Zealand version (2011 Momo) was too much like everybody thought it should be ... that is the power and reach of New Zealand's Savvy B machine, they've told us what it should taste like and no others compare.

Chardonnay: Button-down the curtains and hold on to your hats, [Cave Spring Cellars 2010 Dolomite Chardonnay](#) bested the Bouchard Pere & Fils Macon-Lugny Saint-Pierre, too creamy on the French side, said the crowd ... an excellent showing for Ontario Chardonnay.

The Reds ...

Cabernet Sauvignon: Peller Estates 2010 Private Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon was in tough against a Montes 2011 Reserva (Chile), so smooth, so full of rich fruit it was hard to compete, I'd like to see this one play out again in a few years when the oak of the Peller has time to meld with the fruit.

Pinot Noir: Here we had a draw between the [Flat Rock 2010 Pinot Noir](#) and the Chanson Pere & Fils 2010/2009 wine - half the bottles were from the 2009 vintage and the other half from 2010 ... it would have been fun to see which won out over the two as 2009 was suppose to be a great year for Burgundy.

Merlot: Another win for the Chileans who have made a name for themselves with their supple Merlots full of fruit and mint. The Concha y Toro 2009 Marques de Casa Concha dominated the Chateau des Charmes 2010 St. David's Bench version - but just like Cab the battle it would be interesting to see this one waged again in 5 years, I think it would be a much closer call.

Shiraz: In a blow me away shocker, Creekside's 2010 Shiraz was a whopping winner over the Domaine les Grand Bois 2010 Cuvee les Trois Soeurs ... I honestly did not see that coming as Shiraz is a grape that does not do well across the board here in Ontario, but if ever there was a year for it 2010 was it, and Creekside always seems to be able to make a winning one ... that's been proven again.

Thanks to all the wines, wineries and producers (and their agents) who participated.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Stratford, Prince Edward, Niagara and Mastronardi*

TASTE community grown ... will be held on Saturday, September 29, 2012 from 11am - 4pm at the historic Crystal Palace, Picton, Ontario. A tight-knit community of chefs, winemakers, cider and beer masters, artisanal food producers and farmers united for one day to create the picnic of a lifetime. Tickets in advance are \$25 and include: wine glass, \$5 worth of sampling tickets, attendance at seminars and cooking demos, great music, parking and lots of fun. \$30 at the door. You can purchase tickets online at www.tastecelebration.ca or call 1.866.845.6644.

Savour Stratford Perth County Culinary Festival, September 21-23, 2012 ... Ontario's foremost celebration of authentic local cuisine with 12 award winning chefs, 30 illuminating tutored tastings, cooking shows and skills workshops led by renowned culinary authors, artisans and innovators and exclusive sampling events. Click here for all the details: <http://www.visitstratford.ca/culinaryfestival>

The Pinot Affair ... 2nd Annual ... October 13 & 14, 2012 - tickets on sale now ... find out all you need to know at www.thepinotaffair.com

Mastronardi's Grape Escape Festival ... October 13, 2012 at 8pm, for details do to: <http://www.mastronardiwines.com/>

Niagara Wine Festival ... September 21-30, 2012 - <http://www.niagarawinefestival.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!

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