

## 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 – 198**  
**February 14, 2013**

### In this Edition

---

- **OntarioWineReview:** *Ontario Government to the Publishing Industry: “Screw You”*
    - **Grape Guy’s Picks of the Bunch:** *Might not be Riesling Weather Yet, But ...*
  - **Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *On the Road, International Wine Notes and more*
  - **The Lighter Side:** *The Year in Food Words*
  - **Wine Event Spotlight:** *Upcoming and On-Going Events*
- 



### **OntarioWineReview:** *Ontario Government to the Publishing Industry: “Screw You”*

Friday February 8, 2013 was a sad date for Canadian wine lovers, and it is with a very heavy heart, heavy pen and leaden fingertips that I write these words: Wine Access Magazine has shuttered their doors ([read the official press release here](#)). I remember reading Wine Access before it was part of soon-to-be former publisher RedPoint Media of Alberta. I remember thinking what a great job it would be to write about wine, travel and tell the story about how each bottle came to be bottle. Although I have never written a single word for the magazine I have had the pleasure of meeting a number of their writers and tasted alongside them. In the past I had also pitched a few story ideas to them, but alas never was able to see my name printed in their much lauded pages. I count founder David Lawrason amongst my friends and consider Anthony Gismondi a colleague, and sadly their dream has died.

In a statement from RedPoint Media: “President Pete Graves said this decision allows a refocusing of the company’s strategy on areas of greater potential growth ... Wine Access has established itself as one of the top Canadian wine magazines, attracting some of the most talented writers and wine professionals from across the nation. Wine Access also supported the International Value Wine Awards and the Canadian Wine Awards – two awards programs that grew to be two of the most prestigious competitions in North America.

The closure of the magazine and these high-profile but resource-intensive award programs will allow RedPoint to focus its energies on its other consumer magazines, as well as areas of growth in the marketing solutions and custom publishing fields ...” This statement can only mean one thing: Wine Access magazine was not profitable. They sponsored and conducted some of the most prestigious wine competitions in Canada; they produced a Canadian Wine Annual that was the envy, and certainly the bible, for many Canadian wine followers – and yet there was no profit to be made? How could that be?

Dumbfounded by the news I contemplated the landscape of Canadian wine journalism, with only 3 dedicated wine magazines in Canada (Tidings and Vines being the other 2) there was definitely plenty of room for all to succeed ... except wait, magazines survive on advertising revenue, it’s where they make the majority of their coin: it pays the bills, funds the quality articles (ie: pays the writers) – advertisers foot the bill from newspapers to magazines (also in TV and radio) and there are no doubt plenty of winemakers (read: producers) in the world, heck wine is a growing market and plenty is sold within the borders of Canada; what prevents Wine Access from tapping into so many of these producers (and by extension the accessory companies: decanters, glasses, openers, etc. plus anyone else who wants to tap into the influence wine buying public)? Well here in Ontario I can think of one cause – but before I spill the beans, allow me to tell you a personal story.

Three years ago I wrote a wine column for a publication called [Silver and Gold](#), a magazine based in Burlington that caters to “Mature Adults” (the magazine still publishes today). After a year and a half of writing for them the publisher emailed to tell me they could no longer continue with my column. Had I offended the readership? An advertiser? Was I too young to be writing for an over 55 magazine? Was it my politics? Answer: None of the above. The reason given: “... because we have tried to pair up with some of the wineries but unfortunately none of them “have the budget to advertise” and reserve their dollars for the wine festivals and the LCBO magazines.” Take note: it was hard to find wine-related advertisers because money is marked for another (pseudo) wine publication: Food & Drink Magazine – the LCBO’s glossy, at times biblical (in length) publication that is handed out free in stores. A magazine published by the LCBO to advertise and sell more product to an already captive Ontario audience. Why captive? I turn to MPP Peter Shurman to explain, as he did [on The Agenda with Steve Paikin](#) (TVO) when confronted with the question of the LCBO’s supposed “social responsibility”: “...Social responsibility? The social responsibility shown by this current government [in allowing] its LCBO to publish 500,000 copies of a glossy magazine every year to show us how to pour Blue Curacao in a glass and have a summer cocktail when they’re the only guys who sell Blue Curacao.”

Now there are some of you out there who will be asking how can the Ontario Liquor Monopoly put an Alberta-based magazine out of business – well it’s actually quite simple, if you’re willing to connect the dots: if you only have a certain amount of advertising dollars to spend in Canada how much are you going to allocate to the largest population in the country (Ontario); even more to the point, how much do you put into the Liquor Board willing to buy more product if you’ll spend more of your ad budget with them versus a magazine that might (or might not) increase your sales.

I have long advocated for the LCBO to cease publication of this magazine. Don’t get me wrong, it’s a beauty of a publication – my wife fawns over the pictures every issue – but it’s a publication that competes against private enterprise, and the LCBO is after all an extension of the government – so what I, and many others have said is unfortunately true: the government in essence, taking thousands of dollars out of the hands of the companies that pay taxes, their own populace, and competing against them. Sure I hear many of you saying “finally my tax dollars hard at work”: but ask yourself this question: how would you like the government competing against your business?

People don’t see the problem with Food & Drink magazine because they aren’t in the publishing business and are not affected by its publication, but consider these numbers: in the Holiday 2011 issue of said magazine, an almost Sears catalogue sized edition, there were 308 pages total, 140 of those were advertising (not including product placement and promotions within editorial / advertorial which is no doubt paid for as well – and don’t forget the 6 hefty inserts included inside the plastic wrapper) ... that’s money that was not spent with privately run magazines that could have, and most likely, would have. Here are some more numbers to boggle the mind. According to the [Luxury Media Sales website](#) a full page in F&D magazine is \$20,588 (2012 rate) – that’s a lot of money the government of Ontario is taking from their tax paying private enterprise magazines (in a democratic, free market system – who would believe the government is competing against their own populace). Think about that kind of money funneling out of your business sector, your chosen profession or what you do for a living (it’s close to 3 million dollars – 140 x \$20,588) ... do you think you’d be making the kind of money you are now? Would you welcome that kind of competition? And before you crassly answer “sure, the government can’t do anything right” also put in the fact that they’re the biggest game in town and control what you sell. The nightmare scenario is the closing of your business due to unfair competition and lack of revenue (but it’s the government, so what can you do) – in the publishing game you just shuttered a magazine because of lack of revenue and unfair competition. If you’re RedPoint Media you close down Wine Access magazine.

RedPoint won’t come right out and say it ... that’s what being diplomatic is all about, plus they have other interests and publishing properties ... but it would be nice if we could get away from all the hyperbole here and just call a spade a spade – outside influences caused us to shut down the magazine, influences that are government made in our supposed free- market economy. The words

Pete Graves used were “focus its energies on its other consumer magazines, as well as areas of growth in the marketing solutions and custom publishing fields” (read: areas we are actually able to make money in without government interference) ... And I haven’t even gotten into the part about the loss of jobs and livelihood. I think with the Ontario government’s wrong-headed approach of publishing a magazine they give up the “social responsibility” high ground; and make no mistake about it, the LCBO is the government – which should make you ask: who’s industry is next?

You wanna sell booze, sell booze, but taking on private enterprise that’s just not the role of government, and in this case it’s not socially responsible, it borders on downright criminal.

RIP Wine Access.

---



**Grape Guy’s Picks of the Bunch:** *Might not be Riesling Weather Yet, But ...*

**Cave Spring 2010 Dolomite Pinot Noir - \$21.95 (W)**

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

The dolomite series was started as a way to show off the mineral rich soil the Cave Spring grapes were growing in ... to me that led to a Pinot Noir that just seemed almost a tad too lean. Now comes the 2010, a hot vintage wine that has put some of the flavour back into the bottle. Nose has got typical Pinot character: earthy, cranberry, raspberry and strawberry – while the palate is still mineral driven, but the hot vintage has added the dimension of red berries on the mid-palate before turning more acid-driven with cranberry-strawberry notes. Price: \$21.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS REVIEW:** [Cave Spring 2011 Adam’s Step Riesling](#) - \$24.95

**Charles Baker 2011 Ivan Vineyard Riesling - \$35.00 (OL)**

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

For a man who prides himself on single vineyard Riesling from the Picone Vineyard – it would seem Charles is stepping out on his long love affair with Picone fruit ... this time with the 13 year old vines of the Ivan Vineyard. There’s a nice minerality throughout, very stony with just a touch of sweetness to keep it from being too rocky – nice dry finish with hints of lime pith and good balancing acidity. Seems after trying this new Riesling you’ll be ready to forgive Charles Baker his little indiscretion and give his new love interest a thumbs up. Price: \$35.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

**Fielding 2011 Estate Riesling - \$15.95 (W)**

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

Riesling has long been a calling card for Ontario and was one of the first wines I ever tried from Fielding; they had a knack for it then and they still have it now, delivering a minimum of one delicious version per year. This year’s version has nice mineral notes that help carry peach stone, apple skin with a green apple tinge on the finish – there’s also a beauty amount of sweetness that helps balance the acidity. Another fine Riesling job done by Fielding. Price: \$15.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*+

**BONUS REVIEW:** [Fielding 2010 Vignoles](#) – \$34.95 / 200ml

**Wagner 2012-Tasted Forbidden Fruit - \$15.00 (W)**

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

This is the kinda wacky, mad scientist blend I have come to expect from Harold Wagner. Vidal mixed with raspberry (icewine-style) and cherry wine ... carbonated and made into a frothy fun beverage. The nose is all raspberry while the palate gives you the cherry, raspberry hit, but finishes dry due to the addition of the fizz. Harold explains that the sweetness starts out pretty high but with the addition of carbonation and the natural raspberry acidity this thing ends up drier than one would believe. And after tasting it I do believe. Price: \$15.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

**BONUS REVIEWS:**

[Wagner 2010 Dark Angel](#) - \$13.00

[Warner 2010 Log House Dry](#) - \$13.00

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



**Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *On the Road, International Wine Notes and more*

**NEW – Ottawa Life – International Wine Selection(s) of the Week:**

Check out the [Ottawa Life Blog – Thirst Impressions](#) for my weekly selections

**This week's posts:**

[A Taste of Oregon – Sort of ...](#)  
[Abbotts & Delaunay Wines Worth Seeking Out](#)  
[Valentine's Day Sparkles for Not a Lot of Bread](#)

**On the Road with the Grape Guy:**

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

[Abbotts and Delaunay Lunch](#)  
[Groupe Soleil Growers Champagne](#)  
[Jonata Tasting](#)

**Lost and Found (blog)**

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

[Pillitteri 2007 Exclamation Reserve Merlot](#)

**Taste it Again Grape Guy (blog)**

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

[Mountain Road 2004 Botrytis Affected Riesling](#)

**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)**

Next Report is for March 2, 2013 – coming soon

**Advertising**

The advertisement features a blue background with a green banner at the top that says "CELEBRATING 21 YEARS!". On the left, there is a logo for "the Good Food & drink festival" with "TORONTO STAR" and "TheStar.com" above it. In the center, it says "FEATURING THE WINE & CHEESE EXPERIENCE". On the right, it announces "NEW DATES! NEW LOCATION! APRIL 5-7, 2013 The Direct Energy Centre".



### **The Lighter Side:** *The Year in Food Words*

**wine apartments** (noun): A Tokyo property developer broke ground this year on the Shibuya Shinsen Wine Apartment Project, an upscale apartment complex aimed at wine lovers that will feature a wine bar and bistro on the ground floor, along with a 10,000-bottle underground wine cellar. The apartments are due to be completed in 2013.

**butt chugging** (verb): A University of Tennessee student was treated for severe alcohol poisoning following an incident at the university's Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity house involving this method of intoxication, the latest in the annals of gastrogrotesquerie (see also "vodka tamponing"). The technique pouring liquor through a tube into one's rectum in order to absorb the alcohol quicker than drinking.

**buzz bars** (noun): The Indianapolis Star noted the emergence of buzz bars, coffeehouses serving alcohol in addition to coffee. It's a trend that may take off nation-wide as Starbucks began piloting a "Starbucks Evenings" program featuring beer, wine, and small plates.

**a•pork•a•lypse** (noun): Fears of a worldwide shortage of bacon in 2013 exploded in social media following the dissemination of a report by the UK's National Pig Association claiming heavy drought conditions in Europe had so destroyed corn and soybean feed crops that a reduction of pork production was inevitable.

Full list can be found at [TheFoodSection .com](http://TheFoodSection.com).

---



### **Wine Event Spotlight:** *Upcoming and On-Going Events*

**Raclette at Hidden Bench** ... Valentine's weekend just got a little cheesier as the festivities at Hidden Bench have been extended: February 16th, 17th and 18th – 12 noon until 5pm. Chief racletteur Harald Thiel, otherwise known as HB's passionate proprietor will be cooking up his authentic raclette with all the traditional trimmings. For those that are curious and asking: what is Raclette? The name comes from the French verb 'racler', to scrape, because of the way the melted cheese is scraped off the block. [Check out the details here](#)

**Chocolate at Tawse** ... Join the folks at Tawse to experience the decadence of perfectly paired chocolate and wine. Explore the nuances of texture, temperature and taste as you enjoy four wines seductively matched with chocolate creations. Only \$20, or complimentary to their wine club members. Reservations are required. Saturdays and Sundays, February 16, 17, 23 and 24 - 12:00, 2:00 and 4:00 each day - Also available on Family Day, February 18th. [Find all the details here](#)

**Days of Wine & Chocolate** ... Explore the decadently sweet and savoury art of wine and chocolate pairing. Visit the wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake to taste up to 28 VQA wines matched with chocolate-infused dishes – from classically sweet flavour combinations to unexpected surprises. Notice the "chocolate infused dishes" - that finally sounds like something worth attending – kudos to the wineries of NOTL. Weekends in February. [Visit here for details and to get tickets.](#)

**The New Cuvee** ... March 1, 2013 - <http://cuvee.ca/>

---

**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!

© OntarioWineReview.com 2013. 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](http://www.ontariowinereview.com)