

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 – 77
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OntarioWineReview: *WINERY REVIEW – Cave Spring Cellars*

Our winery reviews are done blindly – the wineries have no prior knowledge of our visit and are not made aware until just before we leave their premises that they have been “spot-checked” – this ensures that we get the same level of service that anybody walking off the street would get.

Tucked away in an alcove of Niagara lies the village of Jordan, Ontario; there you'll find the unassuming façade of Cave Spring Winery. No long driveways, no huge castle-like structure, no vineyards to point the way - Cave Spring's storefront does not hint at the marvels of wine that lie behind its doors. It blends into the village like any of the cafes or antique shops that make up this unique little town - but through those doors lies the stylish winery shop and marvelous On the Twenty restaurant.

If you blink, you just might miss Jordan's main street, as you drive the wine route. It's rather tucked away ... but if you follow your wine route map carefully, and make the right turns, you'll find yourself on the main street of downtown Jordan; really no more than half a city block. Here's a hint: look for the Jordan House restaurant and that's the gateway to “downtown” Jordan – and a fine place to dine.

The sidewalk is raised up from street level; parking is three hours by the curb or in a little parking lot smack dab in the center of town. Restaurants, cafes, art shoppes and antique shops are derigeur up and down the street. Who would think that this quaint little hamlet holds one of the best Riesling producers in all of Ontario.

Walk through the front doors of Cave Spring Cellars and you'll forget about the small town setting behind you ... elegance and sophistication greet the eye. A long black tasting bar to your left and wooden shelving to your right, both along the wall and in the centre of the store (nothing haphazard, everything looks like it's in the right spot). Plenty of gift shop space and some great little trinkets and wine paraphernalia ... There's even fresh artisan bread waiting at the cash for you to purchase – all as good, if not better, than they smell. At the back, you'll find a raised, rail-surrounded section that houses the library wines. There you'll find the last remaining bottles of past vintages.

The tasting bar is black granite on which the glasses make a heavy clinking sound when put down in front of you. Here they are masters of the Riesling grape (one of the first wineries to realize the potential of that varietal here in Ontario), and by extension they own some of the oldest Riesling vines in Canada. If you're any kind of a Riesling fan, Cave Spring is the place you must put on your touring schedule.

Being a pre-1993 winery (Cave was established in 1986), means that Cave Spring could chose to produce non-VQA, cellared in Ontario wines, if they so chose, but as one of the founding wineries behind the VQA standards that would seem rather hypocritical ... Therefore, all the wines they make are 100% Ontario fruit, VQA-grade wines.

At any winery, professional staff is a must, and one of the best I've encountered in my time touring is Brian – always professional and always ready with the facts about the wine. He'll even give you a little story/history (if the wine has got one). Never intrusive with his comments, his knowledge and explanations about Cave Spring and the wines is exemplary and a big help to both wine lovers and novices alike.

You'll look out the door and around the winery and probably notice one thing missing – the grapes. Where are

the grapes? Funny you should ask. Cave Spring is unique amongst Niagara wineries for having their retail shop away from their actual vineyards. They own 75 hectares of vineyard in two spots throughout the area. One is a 50-hectare plot on the Beamsville Bench and another 25-hectare plot along the Twenty Mile Bench. Between these two plots, they grow most of the biggies: Riesling, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Gamay amongst others, but their main focus is Riesling, which comprises about 50 percent of their production ... out of the fifteen wines on their list, seven are Rieslings (that includes icewine).



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: Dolomite and La Penna
For directions and more information visit www.cavespring.ca

Cave Spring Cellars 2005 Riesling "Dolomite" - \$15.95 (W, WTH)

Believe it or not there are very few, if any, wines in Niagara named for the soil the grapes are grown in. Sure you can find plenty of wines named for the vineyard – but soil seems to take a backseat; funny considering the hot word these days is 'terroir'. With that in mind, Cave Spring brings us their "Dolomite" Riesling, named for the layer of dolomite (mineral found naturally in the soil, aka: dolomite limestone or magnesian limestone) the grapes grow in on the Niagara Escarpment. This is a beautiful terroir-driven wine right from the get-go. The nose shows off its complexity with scents like talc, apples and peaches (heavy on the peaches) coming to the fore – there's even a faint hint of petrol. The taste digs even deeper, with a wet-stone like minerality and plenty of white peach. Great acidity, a long lingering finish and just a touch of sweetness could see this wine ageing gracefully over the next decade (maybe more); but will you have the will-power or the patience to keep it that long ... I seriously doubt it – it's just so tasty. With only 960 cases made, and restaurants buying it up like crazy, this rarity won't be around for long.

Cave Spring Cellars 2005 "La Penna" - \$35.00 (W, WTH)
(Release date: March 1, 2008)

They're not the first, nor will they be the last, but Cave Spring has decided to experiment with some old-world winemaking practices on one of their wines. Winemaker Angelo Pavan was thrilled (so I am told) when they came up with the idea of bringing a little Italy to the winery ... namely melding the Amarone-style of winemaking to a Cabernet Franc/Cabernet Sauvignon blend. "La Penna" is 85% Franc, but what makes it special is the 15% Sauvignon that they bring to the blend in an "Appassimento"-style (think Amarone and dried grapes). The nose is rich and ripe with great plummy along with black cherries, in the mouth, there's even more going on – rich vibrant red fruit: raspberries, cherries and plums – slightly dusty tannins fill this one out nicely, and the heat from the 14% alcohol is barely noticeable on either the nose or in the mouth. Here's yet another Cave Spring wine that can see the darkness of your cellar for 10+ years. And talk about a rarity, only 200 cases were made and it is available only at the winery. You've got to get down there to try it ... and oh, bring some money too, because once you try it you'll definitely want to buy it.

Other Cave Spring wines of interest:

[2005 Estate Bottled Chardonnay - \\$19.95](#) (W, WTH) - [2006 Indian Summer S.L.H. Riesling – \\$24.85](#) (W, WTH)
[2006 Riesling - \\$13.85](#) (W, L, WTH) - [2005 Cabernet Franc Estate Bottled - \\$24.95](#) (W, WTH)

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More

The Grape Guy presents the "Weekly Wine Note"! A savoury selection of Ontario wines to impress, enjoy, or just plain drink! A NEW Wine Selection is added every Tuesday or you can listen to the Podcast.

Here are the [Weekly Wine Notes](#) that were added to the Blog and Pod in the past two weeks:

Lakeview Cellars 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon ([read](#)) ([listen](#))
Mountain Road 2005 Unoaked Chardonnay ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

NEW Reports in the [On the Road with the Grape Guy](#) section:

[Cuvee Media Tasting](#)
[Osoyoos-Larose Release Lunch and Seminar](#)

[NEW Blog ... Lost and Found:](#)

Wines that got "lost" on my wine racks - some are Treasures others are Trash ... Find out what happened

[NEW BLOG ... Taste it Again Grape Guy](#)

Taste it Again has it's own blog - find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the past few years
Just Added: [Fielding 2004 Semi-Dry Riesling](#)

Vintages Release: [The March 1, 2008 LCBO Vintages Release report is now available.](#)

Also see the reviews of notable Ontario Wines being featured in Vintages this release:

[Chateau des Charmes](#) – Le Clos Jordanne ([Pinot](#) and [Chardonnay](#)) – [Stratus](#)



The Wow Factor:

Every winery has a uniqueness to it ... be it the tasting bar, the barrel cellar, the gift shop ... something besides just the wine – it is here where we highlight another reason you should visit.

Of course, the first reason to visit Cave Spring is because you are a Riesling fan – and who isn't; once you get those luscious flavours of peach, apple and pear in your mouth, you are drawn to the grape like a bee to honey; they truly do make some of Ontario's best. Another reason to visit is their fine dining restaurant On the Twenty and the luxury inn, Inn on the Twenty. Both are highly rated; perfect for romantic weekends, getaways and that special time you may be planning. I have to admit that I have never eaten at, or stayed in, either but while strolling through the winery and into the restaurant area (to make a "pit stop"), I looked at the restaurant's décor and at the menu and my mouth began to water.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Hamilton Food and Drink Fest – and a Ticket Giveaway*

"The Festival with Taste" is back – that would be the Hamilton Food and Drink Fest for the uninitiated. This is the 3rd annual and something tells me it is going to be bigger and even better than last year – [see my previous review here](#). It's a real smorgasbord of wineries from home and abroad, breweries in and around the area and interesting eateries from Hamilton (and the surrounding region). For all the details of how you can get tickets, who's going, the cost and where it's being held, check out: www.foodanddrinkfest.com.

Ticket Giveaway: Lucky you ... if you've read this far then you will find out that the Hamilton Food and Drink Fest will be taking place at the Hamilton Convention Centre (1 Summers Lane). You'll also get the chance to win a pair of tickets to the show. OntarioWineReview has been given 5 pairs of tickets to giveaway to our readers ... and that would be you. It doesn't get any simpler than this: send me an email with your name, address (w/ postal code), and phone number – answer the incredibly challenging skill testing question and send to – michael@ontariowinereview.com.

Skill Testing Question – In what city is the Hamilton Food & Drink Fest taking place?

Cuvee Passport Winners: We have our 4 winners of the Cuvee 2008 passports – they are: Mike Gilechuk (Ajax), Sean Cole (Richmond Hill), Brian Preston (Portland), John Crawley (St. Catharines) – they will be touring the wineries of Niagara and tasting some of the best – past, present and future. You can too – just check out www.cuvee.ca for details of the event.

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.

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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