

## 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 – 112**  
**July 9, 2009**

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#### OntarioWineReview: *Quick Sips – Ontario News*

Occasionally interesting things cross my desk that I would like to pass on

**Hooray for Hudak ...** Niagara West-Glanbrook member of Provincial Parliament, Tim Hudak, took over the reigns of the Progressive Conservative party in late June. What does this mean for Ontario wine lovers? Well as with all things political time will tell, but Tim is a member of the Facebook group [Boycott Cellared in Canada Wine](#) – could we see real change if he takes office ... something to think about in 2011 when you cast your ballot.

**And They Call it Democracy ...** The Cellared in Canada debate is heating up. It started as just a rumble but now it seems that everyone is getting into the act and putting their two cents worth in. Now it's time for every Tom, Dick and Harry; Molly, Johnny and Billy to lend their voice to the fray ... and trust me you want in on this topic. Environmental Defense Canada has started a website where you can sign the petition to "[Put the 'O' Back in LCBO](#)" – read it and put your name down, if we stir the pot enough we might just make some good broth. This is one case where too many cooks in the kitchen spoiling the concocted soup would be a good thing.

**The Call to Go Local, Now it's Wines Turn ...** You can't turn around and sneeze these days without someone throwing the word "local" at you. "Go local". "Buy Local". "100-mile diet". "Eat what's in your own backyard". It's out there and they're the buzz words of the 2009 (and for the future). Now it's time for the restaurants to look at their wine lists and do the same thing says Adam Pesce of Taste T.O. in his article "[Where's the Local Wine?](#)" A very good question indeed Adam. It's time to step it up Toronto, wine country is an hour to an hour-and-a-half away (depending on traffic on the QEW), how much more local does it get?

**No More Freebies for the LCBO ...** I don't get my booze for free, and now the folks that sell us the booze won't be seeing freebies either. LCBO employees have been ordered to stop accepting freebies from distillers, brewers and other companies that do business with the Board. The ban was actually tabled last August (2008) but was finally implanted in March (2009). The LCBO audited the reports of 95 workers, mostly in sales and marketing, who work closely with suppliers. Over an 18 month period each worker enjoyed at least one freebie a month (mostly in the form of tickets to events). The report also identifies 268 suppliers as providing free meals and tickets, though only 10 account for the lion's share, they include Diageo, Vincor, Mark Anthony and Corby. The LCBO has also sent out letters to suppliers asking them to "stop tempting employees with no-charge tickets." Back in the good old days of radio they called this "payola": a pay-for-play scandal that artificially made hits of records based solely on the money paid to the DJs to play it – the more money paid, the more they played. Catch the inference, cause I ain't saying anything else.

**Scholarship Questioned ...** In the wake of the freebie enforcement, the LCBO is now going to look

into the merits of keeping a scholarship that benefits their own; hmm, wonder how that's going to turn out? The LCBO is going to "review" as to whether or not they should be involved in a scholarship program sponsored by the Association of Canadian Distillers, a 12 year old scholarship, that gives the winner \$3000 to "encourage young people to consider careers in the hospitality industry." But having the LCBO look into this matter would be like the fox investigating the henhouse. Here's something to chew on: in 2004 LCBO president Bob Peter's daughter won this very scholarship – now isn't that ironic, as Alanis Morissette might say.

**Fruit Goes to Queen's Park, Again ...** This is not my way of bashing some a politico with a questionable liaison (thou now that I re-read it that sure does sound like a headline in a San Francisco newspaper); this is actually about fruit wines once again taking their place at the table of the legislature. While many of us believe our politicians are already drunk, on June 2 an after hours panel was formed to judge 18 Ontario fruit wines to determine the winner in three categories (Sparkling, Table and Sweet), the winner would then be served at official events. Congratulations go to the winners: Archibald Orchards and Estate Winery Hard Cider, Scotch Block Country Winery Black Raspberry and Applewood Farm Winery Iced Cider. Many in attendance praised the wines they had just tried, so I ask: If you are so proud and so happy with the fruit wine, [what happened to Bill 132?](#)

**Popular Pratt ...** Public relations manager for Inniskillin Wines (Niagara), Debi Pratt, was recently honoured with two, count 'em, two inaugural awards "recognizing her outstanding contribution to Canada's wine and tourism industry". The Ontario Wine Society, Niagara Chapter, Exceptional Hospitality Award and the Binational Tourism Alliance Summit's 2008 Women in Tourism Award; this is the first time the award was not presented to a "dancer" named Trixie employed by near-the-airport Gentleman's club ... of course I am just kidding – and knowing Debi, she just might find that funny. Congratulations Deborah on a job well done ... may you continue to make us proud (tassels or not – wink).

**Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss ...** And who is the new Boss? Well as of March 2009 it is none other than Eric Morham – the new president of Vincor Canada who takes over the position from Jay Wright. Eric is a Montreal native with more than 30 years experience in the beer and wine industry. Eric's former position was president of Constellation's Icon Estates. Seems the announcement of the all-VQA Esprit Olympic wine followed shortly after this announcement ... maybe he's not "same as the old boss"- time will tell.

**Airport Flies High With New Investment ...** Back in June the federal and provincial governments committed 7.6 million to revamp the Niagara District Airport in Niagara-on-the-Lake. You might have passed this airstrip on your way into the heart of Niagara-on-the-Lake, St. Catharines MP Rick Dykstra promises, "the facility that you see today is not going to be the same facility that you see in a couple of years." Thank God for that, the current "airport" looks more like a landing strip drug traffickers use in South America (did anyone see Scarface?).



**Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch:** *Two reds for the Q – and two summer bonuses*  
See winery's individual website for details

**Cave Spring Cellars 2007 Gamay - \$12.95 (W)**  
[www.cavespringcellars.com](http://www.cavespringcellars.com)

Long have I been a fan of the Gamay grape – next to my passion for Cabernet Franc as Ontario's red grape of choice, I think we do a heck of a job with Gamay – and it is so amenable: you can oak it or unoak it, chill it or room-temperature it, serve it on its own or with food, you can bathe with it or in it ... it's just such a fun grape ... and usually very well priced. Check out this tasty treat from Cave Spring for instance, it hits all the marks for a good Gamay. The nose is ripe with strawberry and cherry, while the palate delivers much of the same along with good acidity and a nice tannin

balance. Chill it to really bring out the cherry notes or leave it at room temperature for strawberry to dominate, either way it's delicious and a real bargain. Price: \$12.95 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

**Cattail Creek 2007 Cabernet Franc - \$18.00 (W)**

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

The red wines coming out of the 2007 vintage are built to impress: deeper, riper fruit, richer colour, bigger flavours. Something else that happened was longer barrel ageing than usual, to smooth out those robust tannins, and bottle ageing, for better integration. While it doesn't seem very long, this one resided in French and American oak barrels for 7 months, was bottled in August and released in December (2008). The results are a wine with aromas that are pretty simplistic at this time, giving off cherry and floral notes. But this wine really shines on the palate, where it really brings most of its umph! A mix of raspberry, tobacco and smokiness – I also loved the very accessible price of \$18 a bottle for a wine that delivers good flavour and value. As for the finish, it lingers with smoke, tobacco and repetitive hits of red fruit (you pick the berry – and it's in there). Price: \$18.00 – Rating: \*\*\*\*

**Summer Selections** – two wines to help you get the most out of summer

[Peller Estates 2008 Private Reserve Pinot Gris \(W\)](#)

[Legends Estates 2008 Malbec Rosé \(W\)](#)

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



**Weekly Wine Notes and More:** 2 from the County, A Canada Day surprise 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:**

**Great News – Now you can listen to the [Podcasts](#) of your choice - individually**

**June 30, 2009** – Huff Estates 2007 First Frost Vidal ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

**July 7, 2009** – By Chadsey's Cairn 2008 Muscat ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

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

[Twilight in the Vineyard at Jackson-Triggs starring Chantal Kreviazuk](#)

[42 Wines, 21 Wineries, 1 Unforgettable Place](#)

[2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Pine Island Wine Tasting](#)

**[What's NEW in the ... Lost and Found \(blog\)](#)**

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

**[A Happy Canada Day bottle of 1999 Southbrook Cabernet Sauvignon – Lailey Vineyard](#)**

**[What's NEW ... Taste it Again Grape Guy \(blog\)](#)**

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

[Hillebrand 2006 Trius White](#)

**[NEW BLOG – What I'm drinking Tonight](#)**

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

[9 New Reviews Added](#)

**Including:** 1981 Mission Hill, a Zin comparison, another Michigan and much more

**Vintages Release:** *July 18 vintages release report coming soon*

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**Hillebrand Jazz and Blues at the Winery – July 11 and August 8**  
[Get your tickets here.](#)

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**Quick Sips:** *World News - June 2009*

**Australian Over-Supply ...** The once wine juggernaut we know as Australia is having some tough times these days. A more competitive world market and an over planting of land has led to a grape glut. How bad is it? Some wine retailers are selling wine for less than a bottle of water, and wine giants like Foster's and Constellation are trying to rid themselves of vineyards at fire sale prices. According to the Winemakers Federation of Australia, about 1.5 million tonnes of grapes are required for the annual vintage, this year about 1.7 million were harvested and in the previous 12 months 1.8 million. That's a lot of grapes left over to find our shores (Canada), forget about putting it in Cellared In Canada wines, how about just sending us the buck-ninety-nine wine.

**South Africa Stink ...** For years now I have been smelling what I have termed "South African Stink" in many wines from that country, it's a burnt rubber, road tarry smell that seems to permeate most but not all South African wines, but I have also found that with a few years in bottle it seems to dissipate (say 5 + years). So I was glad to read that a study is being conducted on S.A. wines by the department of viticulture and oenology at Stellenbosch University, all prompted by a British wine critic's comments. Jan MacQuitty wrote "half were tainted by a 'peculiar, savage, burnt rubber' odor". Spokepeople, always looking to put spin on things said: "We prefer that people use the term acrid rather than burnt rubber," (Andre Morgenthal for Wines of South Africa). So far no conclusions have been found, though winemakers of that country cite "Bad winemaking practices." I sure do hope they get to the bottom of this one and stop rubber coating it like Andre tried to do.

**Apera Anyone ...** Due to a soon to come into effect agreement with the EU, many Australian winemakers are looking for new terms to replace the European names they were using on their bottles. Names like Burgundy, Chablis, Manzanilla, Marsala, Port, Sauterne and Sherry have to find replacements. After a \$450,000 inquiry, Australia's wine industry has decided to re-label sherry as "apera", short for "aperitif". Ah, now there's money well spent, sounds like a government study to me.

**Canada Makes the Group of Seven ...** AskMen.com has put together a list of the top 7 emerging wine regions citing "a new generation of winemakers educated globally who are returning to their home countries to build or revive the wine industry", those top 7 regions are: Switzerland, Ukraine, Romania, Greece, Canada, Brazil and England. Not sure about the company we are keeping, but in this case, it's just nice to be recognized.

**Good News for NZ SB Fans ...** A record Sauvignon Blanc harvest in New Zealand may cap prices of the wine for as much as three years. Even though New Zealand grape growers were pruning more

vigorously they still harvest 5% more grapes this year than last. Blame is being shouldered by new planting that came on line this year. "It'll take a while for the oversupply to come back into balance," said George Fistonich of Villa Maria wines, "There probably will be an element of discounting until it comes back into balance," his prediction, sometime in the year 2012.

**We Use Hockey Players, They Use Hello Kitty ...** An Italian producer, Tenimenti Castelrotto, has teamed up with the Hello Kitty folks to produce a line of Hello Kitty wines made from 100% Pinot Noir. The line includes a red (called 'Devil'), a white (called 'Angel'), and two Spumantes (brut rosé and demi-sec); all bottles carry the Hello Kitty logo on the label or neck pendant. The wine is currently distributed in Singapore, the U.S. and Russia. Too bad they didn't have a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc in the line, the cat's pee descriptor would have been very apropos.



**Wine Event Spotlight:** *This Weekend, it's gotta be jazz*

Two great wineries. Two great events.

**July 11, 2009 ...** [Hillebrand Jazz at the Winery](#)

**July 12, 2009 ...** [Chateau des Charmes host Matt Dusk in the Vineyard](#)

I get a lot of requests for this space, and I see lots of great events pass through my inbox, this time of year here's my advice if you are looking for something to do winery-wise: Pick any winery, check their website for their events listings and you'll find a light lunch, winemaker's dinner, comparative tasting, concert, or countless other things to keep you busy and fill your days sipping, savouring and enjoying wine country.

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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.

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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