

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 – 116
September 3, 2009

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OntarioWineReview: What's With the 'Sexy Winemaker' Thing?

A funny thing happened to me on the way to [my last newsletter](#), I received an email from a restaurateur who, one, invited me to a winemakers' dinner which her establishment was hosting, and two, confessed to having a 'crush' on a certain male winemaker. It wasn't the first time I had heard words like "cute" and "sexy" to describe the artists behind the bottles we drink, but it was the first time I had put any thought into doing or saying anything about it. Now allow me to change gears for a moment, bear with me, the train will come back to the station in a moment. I have been reading so much doom and gloom about the Ontario wine industry these days: the grape glut we are about to experience, Cellared in Canada (CIC) boycotts and debates, the government's unwillingness to help and the whining and moaning about the inability of the Wine Council of Ontario and the Grape Growers of Ontario's to do anything constructive together to help the industry. I thought instead of pouring more fuel onto a fire ([which I admittedly helped start](#)), why not step back for a moment and look at something that some might think a little frivolous, but others might find fun. And so with this in mind I started the "Sexy" Winemaker nominations, inviting people to [email me](#) with their selection(s) for Ontario's "Sexiest" winemaker (male and female) ... And the emails came, many with nominations, but others questioning why I was wasting my time when there are obviously much bigger fish to fry. The reasoning actually goes deeper than the one email and the few comments I have heard over the years ... much deeper.

Winemakers don't often get the kudos they deserve for making your life easier and lubricating the social scene. Their endeavours help us in our day-to-day lives, whether its making meals, making money (business meetings and lunches) or making time (you know what I'm talking about). Winemaking is not a 'sexy' job ... Have you ever seen a winemaker come out from his cellar during harvest time, wearing his hip waders and/or rubber boots, ripped and stained t-shirt, what hair they have left a gnarled mess, dirt under his/her fingernails that'll be there for months after the harvest, and juice and grape shrapnel splashed all over them from head to toe ... it's not a pretty picture. The job may not be sexy, but the results sure are. Their heart and soul goes into that bottle. You buy it, bring it home and dine with it. You get it for good occasions ("mazel tov"), bad occasions ("I need a drink"), special occasions ("will you marry me") and more often than not, for no occasion what-so-ever. Wine has become our social lubricant at parties, meetings and get-togethers: we drink it alone or with friends and family ... we're glad to see it on the table or counter ... we drink it for its taste and the way it makes us feel ... we sip it on its own and with our favourite meals – it makes the good ones taste great and the bad ones taste better. A bottle of wine can bring you back in time, take you to far off lands and make good times better. And here's something else to consider ... the next time you get laid, and a bottle of wine was served beforehand, be it with dinner, a night cap, a "come over for a drink" or a "let's go out for drinks", thank a winemaker ... they made it

possible.

OntarioWineReview is looking for Ontario's "Sexiest" winemaker – and by 'sexy', I mean however you interpret it (that's why the word 'sexy' is in quotes), nominate your favourite today by email to michael@ontariowinereview.com. The top 6 nominees will be in the poll section of the website starting October 1, 2009, then the real voting begins.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *A couple worth \$40 ... and two under \$15*
See winery's individual website for details

Rosewood Estates Winery 2007 Merlot Reserve - \$40.00 (W) (W)

www.rosewoodwine.com

"I love going the wild ferment route," says Natalie Spytkowski, "especially with reds." And with that, she poured a tasting of the 2007 Reserve Merlot: a two barrel, 50-case production that spent 13½ months in two barrels (1 new and one "seasoned") – fermentation only took 3 weeks to ferment out dry. Natural fermentation means that no cultured yeast is used, the winemaker just waits for the natural yeasts that exist in the vineyard and cellar to begin fermenting the grapes naturally. Natalie said the longest she ever waited is 5 days for any of her experiments in the natural world, "they'll go sooner or later, it's just a matter of time and patience," she said. Now that you know how, it's time to know what you're getting yourself into. The nose has a lovely chocolate-cherry-liqueur note (a natural oxidative quality for natural fermentation I am told) with black cherry and framboise also taking up residence in the olfactories. The flavours are big on cherry, some cocoa, toasty oak, a bit of smoke and great spices. There's also a little grittiness on the tongue from the tannins. Given a few years of respite in bottle that should smooth right out. Only 28-30 cases remain, and I'm told that despite the price, it is quickly selling out. Price: \$40.00 – Rating: *****

Closson Chase 2007 CCV Pinot Noir - \$39.95 (W)

www.clossonchase.com

On the Wine Writers Circle of Canada's most recent excursion, we found ourselves in Prince Edward County – hopefully you have [read my account of the tour by now](#). We popped into Closson Chase to try their all-County line-up (they also make wine from Niagara vineyards). This Pinot was very inspiring with its lovely, and for lack of a better term: Pinotish-characteristics. A nose of sour cherry and cranberry with a touch of cinnamon and spice – going far beyond mere aromas of fruit and spice and into the realm of intense and inviting. On the palate, it was light (12.7% alcohol) with big ripe fruit, namely sour cherry, along with vanilla, spice and just enough tannin and acid to nicely hold everything together. Price: \$39.95 – Rating: ****½

Summer Selections – two wines to help you get the most out of what's left of summer

[Calamus Estate Winery 2008 Pinot Gris](#) (W)

[Vineland Estates Winery 2008 Chardonnay](#) (W, L)

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

August 25, 2009 – Riverview Cellars 2008 Gewurztraminer ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

www.ontariowinereview.com

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

September 1, 2009 – Mastronardi 2007 Cabernet Franc ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

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

Prince Edward County Wine Writers Tour:

[Day 1](#) – [Day 2](#) – [Day 3](#)

[Australian Christmas Tasting](#)

[Bodegas Norton Dinner](#)

Coming Soon: Adventures in Michigan Wine Country – [preview the wines here](#)

[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

[Legends Estates Winery 2002 Baco Noir](#)

[Pelee Island Winery 2003 Vinedressers Cabernet Sauvignon](#)

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

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

[D'Angelo Vineyards 2002 Cabernet Franc](#)

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

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

[8 New Reviews Added](#)

Including: 7 Deadly Zins, Alamos Malbec, Lustau Sherry and more

[Vintages Release:](#) *Next Vintages release report: October 10, 2009*

Advertisement



Thursday September 17, 2009 – Belleville, Ontario

For tickets and information:

<http://www.quintartscouncil.org/events/artevino.html>

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Feedback: *Talking About Our Pride*

From the seemingly frivolous to the serious ... in [Newsletter #113](#) I asked a seemingly simple question, "Where is our Ontario Wine Pride?" I asked folks to email in their comments or, if you were brave enough to wear your heart on your sleeve, post your thoughts and feelings on the [Ontario Wine Lovers Facebook](#) page or forum. Of course you always get one joker in the crowd, and since sometimes hold that title, I should give him his 15 seconds, or at least his 10 words of fame before moving to the serious side of Ontario wine pride. He asked: "does 'Ontario wine pride' have anything to do with Chardonngay?" (editor's note: Daniel Lenko's newest wine label). I have no answer to that kind of enquiry, but I did find it a bit funny, so I shared.

As for the rest of you, you did show some amazing pride for Ontario wines and shared some great stories. Let me start the feedback off with Steve C., who commented: "This is not a question that you should have to ask..." – he then went on to discuss the overpriced wines in Ontario and a comparison between the wines of British Columbia and Ontario. Unfortunately, for Steve and other wine drinkers like him, they don't seem to grasp the concept that although B.C. and Ontario share

the same country, their growing regions are different. The Okanagan is a desert, a hot region; while Ontario is temperate with a cool climate – the wines will naturally be different; and don't get me started on over-priced. Steve says, "Just check out who dominates the Canadian wine awards every year." True enough, but the North American palate leans toward hot climate these days, with lots of big fruit. Finally, I would like to point out, and this is not sour grapes, that comparing the two wine regions is like comparing apples to oranges, the wines they create are completely different specimens and really have no basis of comparison other than they are both wines. To compare how Ontario is doing wine-wise, you would have to compare our wines to other cool climate regions, Bordeaux, Burgundy, Germany, New Zealand all come to mind ... all regions known for their finesse, not over the top fruit.

As for real Ontario wine pride, it came in many forms. "Ontario wine makes up the largest single component of my cellar," says Iain C.; "I have been a mostly Ontario (90% of the time) drinker for years, and my preference is the small boutique wineries rather than the large conglomerates," Sandra chimed in; and Brian P. wrote, "I have long felt that we have some world class wines created by some world class 'wine heroes', as I like to refer to them.

But Ontario wine pride goes deeper than just passion for our wines, it seems to include a certain amount of head scratching over government policies and the LCBO. Gary K. reports, "Part of the problem is the LCBO's unwillingness to promote VQA wines. Last week my sister-in-law was preparing a birthday party for her granddad's 100th birthday. She went to her local LCBO (in Aurora), told the nice LCBO employee about her event and requested his help in picking out wines for the gathering. He helped her pick out some Chilean plonk telling her everyone will enjoy this."

While Wade F. says, "I am concerned however that the B.C. - Ontario governments seem to be discouraging inter-provincial trade in wine. If ever we needed more inter-provincial trade, now is the time. I would [also] love to see the LCBO allow more freedom for local wineries to market their product without the bureaucratic restrictions now in place ... we need to get some of the smaller producers into wider distribution - then maybe Ontarians would come to love their own wines."

Wade, as it turns out, is an ex-B.C. native, who has his heart in both wine regions, but, unlike Steve C., seems to have a better grasp of the differences and reality of the situation in both regions: "I prefer Ontario whites over B.C. whites and B.C. reds over Ontario reds. Of course these are just generalizations, and each province produces fine examples of both red and white. Last year, I had a dinner/tasting with two Merlots - one from B.C., one from Ontario, both 2004 vintages served with Bison. Much to my surprise, the Ontario one was judged better by my fellow diners - as one explained, the more acidic Ontario Merlot actually matched the Bison better than the B.C. one did."

But the wine pride issue can best be summoned up by Don K., who says "[It's] time to stand up and be counted and support the local producers. We can all do [our] bit with the locavore movement simply by supporting these hard-working, dedicated families who invest so much time and effort in producing a superior product." I couldn't agree more Don.

Thanks to all who wrote in, especially: Steve C. Iain, Don, Sandra, Wade, Brian P. Brian S. Steward, Gary, and Nicholas for their wisdom and food-for-thought.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Shores of Erie, Fallstock, Ontario Tours and Artisan Show*

Last Call for the [Shores of Erie International Wine Festival](#), all aboard – we had five winners who will be going to this year's annual event (September 10-13 at Fort Malden in Amherstburg – near Windsor); the Grape Guy will be there doing two seminars: Saturday at 12:30pm (Why Visit a Winery) and Sunday at 3:00pm (VQA is A-OK); and there will be plenty of food and wine. Looking

forward to seeing you there.

It's time for Larry Horne to strap on his accordion and dust off his kazoo at this year's annual **"Fallstock" Celebration at Calamus** (Saturday September 12, 2009 from 1:00 to 6:00 p.m). It's a "party at the vineyard" featuring the Horne Family Band playing classic rock from 2:00 to 5:00p.m. Bob Cook will be back cooking up his famous "Cookolini Weenies"... and wonderful Calamus wines. A glass of wine and Sausage will only set you back \$5 – now that's a good deal. More info can be garnered at www.calamuswines.com.

The LCBO, the WCO and the AGO present **A Tour of Ontario Wineries** ... it's your chance to sample the truly sensational 2007 vintage and over 90 terrific wines, nibble on hors d'oeuvres made with the freshest local ingredients, and meet 30 of our most talented and passionate winemakers. It takes place Thursday September 17 at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Baillie Court, 3rd Floor, 317 Dundas Street West, Toronto - 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm ... To order your \$45 ticket contact VINTAGES 416.365.5767 or toll-free 1.800.266.4764.

Looking for unique, one-of-a-kind items for yourself and those on your holiday gift list then Henry has the answer. Henry of Pelham is holding their **2nd Annual Artisan Show**, Saturday October 3 and Sunday October 4, 2009. Mingle indoors with Niagara-based artisans who will present their handmade works and wares in the warm and intimate setting of their 1840's country farmhouse. For further information about who will be on hand selling their wares visit the [Henry of Pelham website](#).

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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