

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 – 136
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OntarioWineReview: *Is Cellared in Canada Dead?*

A winemaker I was talking to at this year's [Ontario Wine Awards](#), when asked about the [Cool Chardonnay event in London, England](#) last month and the subsequent [Jancis Robinson article in the Financial Times](#), stated unequivocally, "Cellared in Canada is a dead issue, move on." Now to give you a synopsis of what the great JR shot out of her pen (or is that keyboard these days) three-quarters of her article was about our practice called Cellared in Canada (CiC) and the last quarter was about the Chardonnays – to Jancis this is certainly not a dead issue; and now she has us speaking about it again, so how dead can it be? Buried, yes. Dead, not so much.

An out of town colleague sent the following email: "I was in the Cedarbrae LCBO (Lawrence and Markham – Scarborough) last week and the 'separation' of VQA and CiC is rather mythical, who polices this, Constellation?" While on the other hand another colleague, Rick VanSickle, let's on that all is hunky-dory in the world of Ontario wine when he wrote his ["Dear Jancis Letter" \(on his blog\)](#) with lines like: 'hey Jancis, don't be mean, we love to be fooled by large American conglomerates into drinking cheap adulterated plonk from the southern hemisphere masquerading as Canadian wine' (I am paraphrasing of course). And then there's the prerequisite response letter written by Eric Moran, President of Vincor Canada. I won't bore you with the whole thing, [you can read it for yourself](#), but I would like to direct your attention to point number 5 of his letter:

"The designation Cellared in Canada is federally regulated by the Canadian Standards Board. The words 'Cellared in Canada from Imported and Domestic wines' is required to be on every product of that distinction. For 14 years we have been using this terminology with no confusion in the marketplace."

Did you catch that last line: "...For 14 years we have been using this terminology with no confusion in the marketplace." What a load of B.S. The whole reason this issue blew up in the fall (2009) was because of the confusion in the marketplace. Esprit wines (the official Olympic wine of Canada brewed by Vincor) was designed to confuse, Jackson-Triggs use of the same label (one is white and one is black) is aimed at confusing the public, or at the very least, to obfuscate the issue. And let's not forget the colour scheme of this supposed 'clear labeling': light gray on white, gold on yellow – anything to make it harder to read. As for that Canadian Standards Board (CSB) that Eric refers to, they warned the makers of Cellared products that the term may not be above board – the following are taken from the minutes of the CSB meeting held in November of 2000, with specific reference to quotes involving Jim Standish (Canadian Food Inspection Agency), Elizabeth Andreen (Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board) and Tyler Dawson (Liberty Wine Merchants) along with Leonard Frassen of the LCBO:

- Jim Standish commented that CFIA had received a legal opinion that "Imported from" and "Cellared in" may not satisfy the country of origin clause in the Food and Drugs Act. He explained that the country of origin must be indicated on the principal display panel. (34.14)

- Elizabeth Andreen quoted the definition for "cellared" from the Roberts Wine Dictionary and said that the Ontario Grape Growers' Marketing Board had received an indication that the this term was inappropriate. The Chair asked if there was an alternate proposal. Elizabeth Andreen proposed that the best translation from the

French word “élaboré” was “bottled and blended” not “cellared”. (34.19-21)

- Tyler Dawson stated that from the consumer’s point of view, it is important that the information on the label is a true representation of what is in the bottle. He felt that “Cellared in Canada” does not represent what is in the bottle or how it was produced. He suggested that “Assembled and Bottled” might be more informative. (34.23)

- Leonard Franssen mentioned that in developing the 1996 wine standard, the Committee on Wine felt that the closest translation of the term “élaboré” was “cellared”. He said the consumer needs to be educated about the meanings of terms and that a wine labelled “cellared in” is actually a wine without a country of origin. (34.22 & .24)

Obviously, none of this education was done – and except for the adoption of the term “Cellared in Canada” nothing else was done either. I also have an inside source that tells me “no legal opinion was ever sought on the terminology”.

So, is Jancis right to bring up the issue again? Certainly it’s her right. Is Rick sticking his head in the sand saying that all is well in Cellaredville? Let’s just say Rick will also be writing columns for the new St. Catharines Osterich Society newsletter fairly soon. As for my out of town colleague whose recent visit to an LCBO store incited comments on the “mythical” separation between the States of VQA and CiC, that’s another issue all together.

The Evil Empire we all know and love called the LCBO, seems happy to leave things status quo, with new signage that is suppose to make everything clear – as mud I say. The consumer still remains confused, still buys CiC thinking it’s 100% Canadian and now seems not to care as they did back in the fall; which is exactly what they hoped for when the brouhaha began. The LCBO continues to rake in millions along with their partners in this perpetrated crime Vincor, Peller and their ilk, while smaller wineries watch their piece of the monetary pie be eaten by these huge wineries – the rich get richer and the poor glean for the crumbs left behind, while the LCBO keeps the pressure on between the haves and the have nots.

Let me really quote Rick VanS for a second: “Thankfully, all those cheap blended wines have been moved away from the VQA aisle at the LCBO and they are clearly marked for what they are: A domestic-foreign blended wine. I think that most of us here are happy with that the change and can live with it.” Clearly Rick and my other colleague are not walking into the same LCBO locations. The LCBO still puts CiC wine and VQA wine in the same location of the store, facing each other in the same aisle.

Before people get the wrong impression, I’m not saying we ban Cellared in Canada wines, I’m saying Stop the Insanity of misleading labels: 1) clearly identify what it is on the front label, and 2) get these wines away from the VQA section. Thus giving the consumer proper and rightful choice – without obfuscation. Clearly, “clearly” is clearly NOT the right word to be using for how this issue has been handled, at any level.

But let’s back up. The question I posed at the beginning was: Is the Cellared in Canada issue dead? There are certainly some who want to bury it and make it go away – it is in their financial best interests – but what to you think? Have your say on the [OntarioWineReview website poll](#), or go to the [Ontario Wine Lovers facebook page](#) and share your thoughts. As for me, I think we let them off the hook, especially the LCBO, we should have demanded more from our liquor board, like they did out in British Columbia (moving CiC wines to a different location within the store) – yet again they have proven they love their local wines more than we do. They were willing to fight for them – are we?



Grape Guy’s Picks of the Bunch: Sneak Peek Week

Reif Estates 2009 Pinot Grigio - \$16.95 (W)

www.reifwinery.com

This wine starts off with an interesting colour and keeps getting better from there. First thing you’ll notice is the peach juice colour, it glints and glistens in the glass and will have guests wondering if you’ve poured some off-colour rosé, instead of a white. The colour comes naturally from a little extended skin contact of these green-gray-slightly pinky grapes. The peach theme from the colour continues on the nose with smells of a delightful peach and pear combo – heavy on the peach. The palate doles out refreshment by way of lemon and peach and those flavours linger and replay for a while after swallowing with a nice steady seam of acidity. This is one of those limited release wines available only at the winery and should see the light of day for purchase in time for summer sipping. Price: \$16.95 – Rating: ****

Cave Spring 2007 Estate Gamay - \$24.95 (W)

www.cavespring.ca

The '07s are still coming out and the ones that will emerge over the next 6-8 months will be the monster wines that should be well worth the wait. This Gamay will be released sometime in July, and it will have been worth the wait. Now, when it comes to Gamay you expect a certain degree of fruitiness and this one certainly has that, but it's the extra kick that makes this one so good. The nose is spiced black cherry and vanilla, while the palate proves that this wine ain't messin' around: black fruit, spicy oak, toasty notes and big tannins (from ageing in barrel 15-18 months). The finish is where (for lack of a better term), the balls kick in, with long flavours of black cherry and a welcome smokiness. This ain't your light and fluffy Gamay, what's more it has an ageing potential of 5-7 years. Price: \$24.95 – Rating: ****½

Rosewood 2008 Barrel 59 Cabernet Franc - \$30.00 (W)

www.rosewoodwine.com

Ontario wine consumers in the know love Cabernet Franc, while it's an unsung grape in much of the rest of the world, used primarily for blending; but here in Ontario we make plenty of Franc in the single varietal form. Winemaker Natalie Spytkowski has taken Franc to a whole new level with this single barrel offering from the Renaceau Vineyard (Rosewood's own). This was a barrel Natalie pegged from day 90 in its evolution, that's when, it is reported, "she drew a smiley face on the head of the barrel" – obviously she saw something special developing and wanted to keep track of it. Now, some 18 months later (12 in barrel – all brand new French - and 6 in bottle) we have the results, and let me say that her patience and foresight has been rewarded. I'm not one to give you a list of smells and flavours, but as I lingered over this wine, for about 10 minutes, here are just a few that I picked up: smoky, spicy, vanilla, tobacco, dark fruit nuances, more spice, more vanilla, black cherry, cherry-tobacco, lovely mouthfeel along with white pepper and dark cocoa on the finish. Whew, I know that had I lingered a little longer more would have been forthcoming because this was a new bottle and this wine is just a baby, it needs time to open and breathe to get it's full effect ... Finally, I shouldn't forget to mention the smoked black cherry that lingers on the palate after swallowing. A grand total of only 50-60 cases were produced (the number depends on how much Natalie and the staff take home. Hopefully they'll be some around come the release I was quoted (January 2011) – If I were you I'd see if I could get my hands on a few bottles early because this is a wine worth snapping up. Price: \$30.00 – Rating: ****½

Sip into Summer ... Something to take the edge off that summer heat

[Featherstone 2009 Black Sheep Riesling - \\$16.95](#)

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More: *Lots On the Road and Wines from the Ridge and Chateau*

A new Ontario wine is reviewed every Tuesday ... take two minutes to listen to the [Podcast](#) or read the tasting notes on the [Blog](#).

[Weekly Wine Notes](#) (added to the Blog and Pod in the past few weeks):

June 15, 2010 – Peninsula Ridge 2007 Reserve Viognier ([LISTEN](#))

June 22, 2010 – Chateau des Charmes 2008 Estate Bottled Riesling ([LISTEN](#))

[On the Road with the Grape Guy:](#)

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

[Ontario Wine Awards Lunch and Winners](#)

[French Wine Connection](#)

[Cono Sur Lunch and Tasting](#)

[The Bolla Relaunch Dinner](#)

[Merry Edwards Comes to Town](#)

[Stratus Preview with JL Groux](#)

[South Africa – Let's Celebrate](#)

[Portuguese A9 Lunch and Tasting](#)

[Strewn 5 Wines – 4 Vintages, White Release](#)

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[Lost and Found \(blog\)](#)

Wines that got "lost" in my cellar - some are Treasures others Trash ... Find out what happened
Nothing new this week – but keep checking back

[Taste it Again Grape Guy \(blog\)](#)

Find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the years
Nothing new this week – but keep checking back

[What I'm drinking Tonight \(blog\)](#)

When it's not an Ontario wine, here's what I'm pulling out of the cellar
[9 New Reviews Added](#)
Including: Three different ciders from the same Ontario cidery

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

[Nothing New Till July](#)

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http://www.scqhfoundation.com/events/partnership/savour_sounds.htm

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Quick Sips: *Occasionally interesting things cross my desk that I would like to pass on*

June 2010

Artevino Winners ... Rosehall Run Winery took two of the top three big awards at this year's Artevino Awards including the Jonathan Welsh Memorial Award for Winery of the Year. That award is based on the highest ration of medals won against wines entered. Rosehall Run also had the top scoring red wine (2008 Rosehall Vineyard Pinot Noir). The Best White Wine honour went to Huff Estates (2007 South Bay Chardonnay), echoing the results of the Ontario Wine Awards held the same week. [See all the results here.](#)

Ontario Wine Awards Announced ... The big awards went to Huff for the 2007 South Bay Chardonnay (White Wine of the Year), Vineland Estates for their 2007 Reserve Cabernet Franc (Red Wine of the Year), the departing Darryl Brooker took Winemaker of the Year honours and Linda Bramble received the media award from her book on Niagara Visionaries. [See all the results here.](#)

Thomas Moves On ... Talk about breaking new, as I was writing this on Tuesday and email popped into my inbox telling me the Le Clos Jordanne's highly touted winemaker, Thomas Bachelder, is stepping down as the winemaker at Le Clos to open his own winemaking consultancy business in conjunction with his wife, Mary Delaney. Sébastien Jacquey, who has been working with Thomas for the past three years as assistant winemaker, will assume the role of winemaker. Thomas will remain as a consultant to Le Clos Jordanne.

"I Want a Thin Mommy" ... a friend of mine's three year old said those words, and now I have the answer for him – Red Wine. Researchers have found that regular moderate female drinkers were less likely to become

obese after a 13-year study of more than 19,000 women. Lu Wang, from Brigham and Women's hospital in Boston questioned 19,220 American women with healthy body weight about their drinking habits. About 38% of these women claimed they were non-alcohol drinkers. Over the 13-year period of this study this was the group that gained the most weight. Those who drank red wine gained the least weight with greater weight gain associated with beer and spirits.

Glass "Breathable" No More ... Back in October of 2007 Riedel, Nachtmann and Spiegelau filed suit in Munich, Germany alleging that Eisch's advertisement boasting 'breathable glass' constituted false advertising. On January 19, 2010 the two parties agreed to settle after Eisch's claim that its 'breathable' glasses were made using a secret process that 'opens bouquet and aromas within 2 to 4 minutes' was not supported in court. The court ordered Eisch to cease claiming its glass is 'Breathable' or 'Opens bouquet and aromas within 2 to 4 minutes', or face penalties of up to €250,000, or imprisonment of up to six months for senior directors ... It was also found that the wine in both types of glasses did not differ, 'neither in a food chemistry analysis nor in a gustation (tasting) test carried out by experienced wine tasters.'. (Taken from Decanter, March 17, 2010 - <http://www.decanter.com/news/296040.html>)

Constellation Takes a Tumble ... Standard & Poor's has lowered its credit rating for Constellation Brands (parent company of Vincer) after predicting that there is little prospect for improvement at the wine giant in 2010. The ratings agency cut Constellation from 'positive' to 'stable' on May 27, 2010.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Music, Charity Dinners and Tasting Events*

Grapes For Humanity Dinner ... On Thursday October 7th Grapes for Humanity will be holding a fine wine dinner and live auction of fine wines at The Four Seasons Hotel in Toronto. For details visit the website: <http://www.grapesforhumanity.com/?p=416>

Savour Stratford ... This year's big event is Sunday, September 26th this tasting pairs local chefs with Perth County producers to create delicious chef inspired samplings. VQA wines and local craft brews accompany over 30 samples that will delight any foodie. Details of all that's going on in Stratford around that time go: <http://www.welcometostatford.com/culinaryfestival/>

Jazz and Blues at Hillebrand ... July 10 is Jazz, August 14 is Blues, all taking place at Hillebrand winery overlooking the vineyard. All the info needed can be found here: <http://www.hillebrand.com/jazz-&-Blues-at-the-Winery.php>

Events at Chateau des Charmes ... Farm to Table feasts and Jazz music are all part of summers at the Chateau. To find out more visit the events page of the Chateau's website: http://www.chateaudescharmes.com/experience/special_events.html

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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