

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 – 140
August 19, 2010

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OntarioWineReview: *Lake Erie North Shore Vintage Tasting 2010*

I find it funny, and a little ironic, that the first newsletter I write from my new home in Niagara is about another Ontario region - then again I have been writing about Niagara (and other Ontario regions) from Toronto for over 6 years now.

The first thing I can say about this year's Lake Erie North Shore (LENS) Vintage Tasting - held August 8, 2010 at Muscedere Vineyards, is boy can those Italians throw a party. I haven't seen a spread like this since [Mastronardi hosted the event back in 2008](#). This is not to take anything away from Sprucewood, Erie Shore, or Viewpointe, who are the wineries that have held the event in recent memory; but the Muscedere Vintage Tasting just seemed to be bigger and grander - in the vein of Mastronardi's all out extravaganza.

For those who don't know, the LENS Vintage Tasting is a roving party held annually to showcase the new wines being launched, or having just been released, in the LENS region (located just outside Windsor). By "roving" I mean it changes venue from year-to-year, not that you have to get in the car and follow the party - it's all done at one location, in essence you go to a winery and all the wineries come to you.

Muscedere, one of the new kids on the block, did it up right, with plenty of space, plenty of food, and schmaltzy, yet infectious entertainment - when the lounge act broke into Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" around 3:20pm, the crowd "Bah-Bah Bah"-ed as if they were attending a Carolina Hurricanes game (you would have had to see the hockey playoffs to get that reference).

Most notably, and welcoming, was plenty of elbow room. Under the tent never felt crowded, tables were easily accessible and, when I finally got around to looking over the food table, there was still plenty to be had. And, just as I was leaving, the dessert trays began to arrive ... and me with my insatiable sweet tooth (thankfully I was leaving and had another engagement to attend or I could have made a meal of those sweet delicacies).

Next year it's Colchester Ridge's Turn - and I have a really good feeling Bernie will put on quite the show.

[Pictures from this year's event can be found on the On the Road with the Grape Guy blog.](#)



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Three Notables from the LENS*

There were plenty of memorable wines from this year's tasting - and I will unveil my reviews over the next few months in upcoming newsletters and Weekly Wine Notes. Here are three that I'll single out right now ...

Not At the Tasting:

Sanson 2007 Syrah - \$19.95 (W)

<http://dsanson.mnsi.net/>

www.ontariowinereview.com

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Dennis Sanson has not been at the LENS Vintage Tasting event for a number of years now, too bad, because he makes some of the most interesting wines in the region. I stopped in just before the event started to see what was new. The most impressive wine was his Syrah that may never see the light of day again. It seems the grapes have been ripped up because it wasn't a consistent crop, "3 out of 10 years is just not viable," Dennis told me. The production was also limited to about 300 cases. Those who do make their way down to the LENS should pick up a few bottles of this treat (well priced at \$19.95). The nose screams Syrah, not Shiraz, with plenty of smoked meat, white pepper and black raspberry. The palate deals out black licorice, chocolate, black pepper and peppered raspberries ... the finish is lovely with a smokiness wrapped in a thin layer of vanilla. The wine was aged 12 months in American oak, Dennis just loves that US wood. Price: \$19.95 - Rating: ****1/2

One from the Host:

Muscedere Vineyards 2008 Meritage - \$30.00 (W)
www.muscederevineyards.com

I bumped into an acquaintance on the way into the tasting and he mentioned that the Muscedere Syrah was the best wine of the day ... makes me wonder if he even bothered to taste their Meritage. This is truly an impressive wine and very limited (85 cases), comprising of 64% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Sauvignon and 14% Cabernet Franc. This wine is at least 2-3 years from being ready to drink, the tannins are rough and the fruit has yet to fully integrate, but the flavours are there and once those tannins mellow, the wood steps back a bit and the fruit comes more into focus, this will be a beauty wine. One of the Muscedere brothers (or maybe it was both of them) mentioned that the wine was bottled and released specifically for this event, "it hasn't been in bottle even a week yet". Those with some hindsight would be wise to buy a few bottles and Fonzie this wine (sit on it) for a few years. Price: \$30.00 - Rating: ****1/2

Something Unique and Interesting:

Erie Shore Vineyard 2008 Cabernet Fire & Ice - \$19.95 / 375ml (W)
www.erieshore.ca

This fortified wine takes its name from the burn and the pleasure it delivers in the mouth. It's a mix of Cabernet Franc icewine and late harvest wine fortified with alcohol to 21%. It has a sweet beginning with a real spicy finish, and a hint of burn going down. Harvey Hollingshead, owner and winemaker, says that this is a "winter wine" good for growing hair on your chest and warming the cockles of your being on a cold winter's night. And I would have to fully agree - this is a lot of fun - but as with Brylcreem, a little dab'll do ya. Price: \$19.95 - Rating: ****

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More: *Barrels and Jazz – Konzelmann and Sandbanks*

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):

August 10, 2010 – Pondview 2009 Cabernet Rosé ([LISTEN](#))
August 17, 2010 – Calamus 2007 Reserve Riesling ([LISTEN](#))

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

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

Nothing New This Week but look for the German Tasting and a Concert next week

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

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

With the move the only lost is my sanity - Check back again soon

[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

[7 New Reviews Added](#)

Including: Quite the array of wines I have been pulling out of the cellar

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

[August 21, 2010 - Vintages Report](#)

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

August 2010

Goodbye Graham ... South African winemaker Graham Beck died on July 26 in London at the age of 80. Please have a bottle of his wine and raise your glass as a toast to his memory.

Foster's Has a New Name for Wine ... Treasury Wine Estates is the new name for the wine division of Foster's Group, as the drinks multinational continues the process of splitting its beer and wine businesses. The re-branded company includes 12,000ha of vineyards, 20 wineries and 50 wine brands, including Penfolds, Lindemans, Rosemount, Wolf Blass and Beringer.

Argentina Gets Chile Reception for Findings ... For the very first time ever, Argentina is sending more wine to the United States than its neighbor, Chile, according to a new report released in mid July by Caucasia Wine Thinking, which is based in Mendoza. Argentinean wineries shipped just over 3 million cases of wine to the U.S. between January 1 and May 31 of this year compared to 2.8 million cases for Chile. The value of these exports was roughly \$97 million for Argentina compared to \$78 million for Chile. In response to the study's René Merino, president of Wines of Chile, dismissed the findings, noting that they are largely based on Malbec's recent gain in popularity. "Malbec is a fad," said Merino, who surmised that 90% of what was sent to the U.S. during this five-month period was likely Malbec.

The New Sultana Chardonnay, have you tried some (maybe you have) ... In one of the largest wine scams in Australia's history, the former boss of Rivers Wine, Andrew Hashim, was convicted of selling Sultana juice to major wine companies including Hardy's and Orlando, and claiming it was Chardonnay. Following an investigation by the Australian Wine and Brandy Corporation, Hashim was convicted with 34 counts. The company, which is now in liquidation, has now been fined more than \$300,000 and Hashim has been ordered to pay \$51,000 plus £58,00 in costs. However Hashim is now bankrupt and cannot pay the fine. (story taken from



Wine Event Spotlight: *Fill the longest table*

Hillebrand hopes to fill the longest Table ... Kick-off the start of harvest with a dinner in the vineyards, a tradition for our growers that we 'super-sizing' for one night only. Four courses will be served to you by Chef Frank Dodd at the longest table we have ever set at the Winery. Check out the details at: www.Hillebrand.com

Calamus plays with Wine ... August 27, 2010, two one act plays for twenty bucks and there's wine - [check out all the details here.](#)

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. We look forward to hearing from you!

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