

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 – 141
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OntarioWineReview: *Bring Back the Bag*

The other day I was over at a friend's house and on a chair in the corner of his vestibule was a small pile of elasticated plastic (about the size of a deck of playing cards); it looked very familiar. He saw me eyeing his pile and snapped it up, "these are like gold" he said, removing the elastic bands from around the plastic. He unfolded his prize possession and voila, he had three plastic LCBO bags.

"These are collector's items," he continued talking about what he had just unwrapped. "They're great, I've probably re-used these a dozen-dozen times. They're perfect for shopping. They're just the sturdiest, most reusable bag ever." I know you know the one's he's talking about – remember those bags the LCBO used to have before they went all 'environmental' on us by ditching the Canadian made plastic bags for paper, box or Orient-made cloth. "I'd gladly pay the 5 cents for these bags," my friend concluded.

As some of you might know, I recently moved to the Niagara area (St. Catharines), which of course meant packing up my abode in Toronto. In the course of my packing I came across a box of LCBO bags – stacks of them – I use them for the cat litter, but also for wrapping, carrying and shopping – they're tough, durable, strong and yes, made out of plastic; but have a multitude of purposes beyond bringing your liquor home – and people, like my friend and I, continue to re-use them over and over and over again. They are the very definition of the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle motto we have all be taught to tout. And now they are treated like prize possessions. You have to be careful not to damage or waste the stock you have for fear of being without your favourite carry-all. Ironically, these LCBO bags are, in some cases, right now more valuable than the wine you brought home in them.

Times have changed since the LCBO instituted their "no more plastic bags" policy – grocery stores, department stores, big box stores and even bag-your-own-stores like IKEA are charging for plastic – bags so thick you can read a newspaper through them; bags that tear and get hole-y the moment you put something into them, they definitely aren't worth the five cents you are legislated to pay for them. There is no better time than now for the LCBO to bring back, what some I have heard some refer to as the "best bag in the history of plastic" – durable, reusable, and, as my friend pointed out, well worth the 5 cents you would be paying for them. Since we live in an age where we pay for the privilege to use plastic, should we not bring back the bag worth it's weight in gold, the one we all hoard and now guard our supply with our very lives. The one we will most likely will to our children with the words, "take care of these they may look like simple bags but they will serve you well."

My friend said, as he snapped his plastic pile off the hallway chair, "they're mine and you can't have them." We LCBO bag lovers knew they're value – we just never knew they'd become obsolete collector's items like a Gretzky rookie card – funny thing is, I treat my LCBO bags with more respect than I did my Gretzky hockey cards.

I say to the LCBO: "Bring Back the Bag" ... we'll gladly pay for it, and surprisingly won't begrudge you the profit, because we know we'll use it again and again and again. "Bring Back The Bag", I say – it's the best 5 cents you'll ever spend on something plastic. Just ask anyone who still stashes them away from prying eyes, and for God sake, don't look longingly at someone carrying one; we know what you're thinking, and you can't

have it. LCBO, stop the wanton coveting of thy neighbour's plastic possessions and Bring Back the Bag.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: Merlot, Bubbly and Chardonnay + two more

Huff Estates 2008 South Bay Chardonnay - \$29.95 (W)

www.huffestates.ca

How do you follow up the honour of being named White Wine of the year at two competitions (Ontario Wine Awards and Artevino)? By producing an equally impressive Chardonnay from a better Chardonnay year. Frederic Picard's 2007 South Bay Chardonnay picked up a few Ontario honours and is now sold out, but it's follow up, 2008, is just as, if not even more impressive. Aged 12-14 months in French oak the nose has vanilla, hazelnut, butter and baked apple; while the palate brings the hazelnut to the fore with a touch of burnt vanilla. But its not all barrel notes across the tongue, mac apple courses thru the mouth while there's nice green apple-like acidity on the finish. This 2008 version is delicate and pretty as opposed to the full and assertive nature of its 2007 predecessor - both are delicious wines in their own right, but this one just might be a hair better. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: ****½ (plus a hair)

Hillebrand NV Trius Brut Rosé - \$29.95 (W)

www.hillebrand.com

Bubble, bubble, toil and trouble ... not sure how much toil and trouble winemaker Darryl Brooker got from making this wine, but he sure did end up with a lively bubbly to add to his already stellar line of award-winning bubbly. Alright, so there's just the Trius Brut in that line, but it did win best sparkling in Canada in the Wine Access Canadian Wine Awards, and took a share of the Best Sparkling wine award at Cuvee 2010. This Rosé is a welcome addition to the field and definitely something else to crow about. 53% Chardonnay, 40% Pinot Noir and 7% Pinot Meunier is the blend here, aged in the traditional method: in bottle and on lees, for 21 months. The result is a lovely raspberry nose. Palate is friendly, fresh and clean with very good acidity and raspberry lemony flavours – good fruit to acid ratio. A good first effort with the pink fizz and this wines will only improve the more it gets made; be prepared to see this on the podium for many years to come. Price: \$29.95 – Rating: ****½

Peller Estates Winery 2007 Signature Series Merlot - \$35.00 (W)

www.peller.com

Here's a 2007 wine that had extended barrel age (22 months) in a mixture of equal parts American and French oak – showing that 2007 wines could take their time in wood and still come out rich and fruity as well as showing barrel characteristics. The nose of this Merlot is full of raspberry, vanilla and violets – the palate is also loaded with sweet and juicy fruit namely blackberries, there's also a touch of vanilla and spice from the oak with good tannins structure on the finish. This one can easily age a decade. Price: \$35.00 – Rating: ****½

Bonus Reviews and a New Magazine: This week the inaugural edition of [Niagara Grapevine magazine](#) hit newstands and wineries near you ... inside you'll find, amongst other articles, my article about Virtual Wineries. In honour of that article and the new magazine I give you two "virtual" reviews that did not make it to print:

[Nyarai Cellars 2009 Sauvignon Blanc - \\$18.95](#)

[Daredevil 2009 "GSR" - \\$18.00](#)

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More: Bianco Merlot, Excellence Gris, Alberta event and more

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 24, 2010 – Pillitteri 2008 Bianco Merlot ([LISTEN](#))

www.ontariowinereview.com

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

August 31, 2010 – Stoney Ridge 2009 Excellence Pinot Gris ([LISTEN](#))

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

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

[German Wine Tasting](#)

[Jarvis Church & Erik Peacock at Chateau de Charmes](#)
[Albert Oilmen / Schott Zwiesel Tasting ... in Jasper, Alberta](#)

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

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

Nothing new this week – Keep checking back

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

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

[Tawse Winery 2006 Echos Red](#)

[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 Posts added over the last two weeks](#)

Including: Loosen Riesling, 2 by Pierre Laplace and a six wine evening

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

[Missed the September Tastings](#)

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OntarioWineReview: *Where's Your Ontario Wine?*

With reference to an article from the [St. Catharines Standard](#), I contacted Fred Couch, Treasurer of the Niagara Chapter, to explain his new idea for making more Ontario restaurants aware of their shortcomings with regards to carrying local wines on their wine list.

"The Niagara Chapter of the Ontario Wine Society has initiated a pilot project to help support the Ontario wine industry in an effort to convince restaurants with few or no Ontario wines on their list to carry local VQA wines. A tent-style business card has been developed that can be left with the server. On the front of the card it says, "The meal was great ... But where's the local VQA wine?" Inside there's a message that reminds the reader that there are over 150 wineries producing world-class wine and the impact on the Ontario economy that a local wine has over an imported bottle of wine.

My wife and I came up with the idea while on a tour of the Finger Lakes wine region of New York State. The New York Wine and Grape Foundation were behind a campaign to get area restaurants to carry more local wine. Fred noticed that a supply of tent cards were available at a number of wineries that customers could take away and leave at their favourite restaurant that did not carry any local New York wines. He thought this idea could work well in Ontario especially in the GTA area where quite a few eating establishments still do not recognize that Ontario produces some great wines. With the permission of the New York Wine and Grape Foundation and with input from other Niagara Chapter Executive a tent card was developed and printed. Initially, the cards will be available to Wine Society members and a number of wineries. For further information, contact the OWS - Niagara Chapter at sourgrapes4850@aol.com."

Here at OntarioWineReview we applaud this effort and hope you will join in the fight to bring a greater supply of Ontario wines to all restaurant tables.



Wine Event Spotlight: *Niagara Wine Festival And Taste are back for another year*

Niagara Wine Festival ... It's that time of year again, the Niagara Wine Festival kicks off September 17th and runs through to the 26th ... two weeks of wine soaked bliss for the wine lover in you. Details about all that's happening in the Niagara region can be found at: http://www.niagarawinefestival.com/page/winefest_home

Taste, a celebration of Regional Cuisine may seem like a long name but the event is way to short - a day long celebration of Prince Edward County's food and wine (Saturday September 25) - this year they are hoping to expand the event with some "week-long programming" Check out their website for all the details: <http://www.tastecelebration.ca/index.html>.

Programming Note for Taste: Michael Pinkus, the Grape Guy, will also be doing some wine presentations at 12:00pm and 2:00pm on Saturday the 25th, so be sure to check those out.

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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