

## 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 – 160  
June 16, 2011

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### OntarioWineReview: *Whose Winning What*

There are two major cross Canada wine awards competitions: the Wine Access Canadian Wine Awards, which I looked at back in February ([Newsletter #151](#)); and the second is the more recently announced All Canadian Wine Championships, which gives out such awards as Best of Red/White/Sparkling, etc., Double Gold medals for best of category, and the standard gold/silver/bronze per varietal category. Ontario made some good showings at this year's awards, some in our usual dominant varietal categories like Chardonnay, Riesling, Cabernet Franc and the perennial Icewine (all varieties). We also had some surprising showings elsewhere. As usual I look at the numbers for Ontario and break them down to see how we did.

We'll start with the Trophy Wines, these are the wines deemed to be best of their particular type and there are only six given out. Ontario took 3 of those 6 trophies: Best White ([Mike Weir 2008 Riesling](#)), Best Sparkling ([Flat Rock 2007 Riddled](#)) and Best Fruit Wine ([Applewood 2008 Iced Cider](#)).

In the Double Gold selection (best of category) we took both Dry and Off-Dry Riesling, Chardonnay (under \$20), Rosé, Cabernet Sauvignon (over \$25), Merlot (over \$25), Pinot Noir (under \$25) and both Cabernet Franc best ofs. We also clean swept the icewine categories (Riesling, Vidal, Red, Other).

In the individual categories of note we took 50% of the Sparkling awards, the bright spot being all three golds plus the Sparkling of the Year honours. The news is mixed when it comes to Chardonnay, the grape that has been getting so much play of late. Sure we took 51% of the Chardonnay awards, but when you remove the unoaked versions we get downgraded to a mere 42%. Riesling didn't fare much better. 46% of the Riesling awards went Ontario's way, though the bright spot here is that we took 100% of the medals given out in the Off-Dry Riesling category (which includes the Weir wine). Sauvignon Blanc proved to be a real bright spot, with 6 of 8 medals (75%) going our way, including all the silver and bronze awards (we split the 4 golds with B.C.). Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer were low points at 40 and 20 percent respectively. And we really hit the skids in white blends with a mere 3 of the 13 medals going to the big-O. We also seem to be losing our hold on white hybrids, which is a good thing, unless you're a winery making wines from white hybrids - I know feeling are mixed on hybrids in the province.

As for the reds, we definitely had our bright spots, and only some thanks goes to the remaining 2007 wines that are making their way into competitions. We took 50% of the Cabernet Sauvignon awards with an equal split of 2007 and 2008 wines taking home medals. Ontario Merlot took a beating, garnered only 2 out of 17 of the medals awarded, a paltry 11% and our Pinot Noirs have seen better

days in competitions as a measly 29% showed up for in this award category. Cabernet Franc was its usual stellar self taking 66% of the awards handed out with an equal showing in both the under \$25 and over \$25 and with only one 2007 wine in the mix, the rest were '08 with a 2010 thrown in for good measure. As for the Bordeaux-style blends, B.C. took home 72% of those medals leaving us to mop up the rest. Anyone who thought Syrah/Shiraz would be an Ontario powerhouse might want to re-think that philosophy, as no Ontario Syrah showed up for a medal. And finally take heart Baco fans, we rule the roost here with 100% of the medals in that category ... granted there were but three handed out, but Ontario took them all.

We also had no problem snagging icewine awards, taking 63% of those including a clean sweet for red (7 of 7) and about all in Vidal (5 of 7) category.

I guess in the end I just like playing with these numbers, the results parallel previous years though we seem to be losing ground to the British Columbians with Riesling. But no matter how you slice it, it's an apples to oranges comparison and as we start to see more wines from the East Coast the diversity in wines being presented seems to be getting wider. But there's something odd about these award competitions, an unsettling fact that just can't be denied and should irk all wine fans from coast-to-coast: until the government gets off its arse and levels the playing field for shipping wine across country (as we can with any other product this country produces) these results (and the ones from Wine Access) mean nothing for your average everyday wine consumer in British Columbia and Ontario; neither of us can order a case of the Red Wine of the Year (Blasted Church 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon-Merlot - \$25.99) or the Sparkling Wine of the Year (Flat Rock Cellars 2007 Riddled - \$29.95) ... though the real winner could be Mike Weir's 2008 Riesling which has national distribution.

To see all the award winners from this year's ACWC visit:

<http://canadianwinetrail.com/cwt/all-canadian-wine-championships/>



### **Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Two Winners and Something for Summer***

#### **Creekside 2009 Sauvignon Blanc - \$13.95 (W, L)**

[www.creeksidewine.com](http://www.creeksidewine.com)

There seems to be a proliferation of folks making Savvy B these days in Ontario, but Creekside can not be accused of jumping on the bandwagon; they have been making the white Sauvignon, in one form or another for quite some time. This '09 version has all the acid you'd expect from the white friendly '09 vintage, but also has lovely fruit flavours and aromas. Smells include citrus, melon and pea pod followed by grapefruit, melon and limeade in the mouth - great price and a great wine to have on hand for your patio get-togethers this summer. Price: \$13.95 - Rating: \*\*\*\*

#### **Applewood 2008 Iced Cider - \$19.95 / 375ml (W)**

[www.applewoodfarmwinery.com](http://www.applewoodfarmwinery.com)

This little beauty won Best Fruit Wine at the 2011 All Canadian Wine Championships - and after your first sniff and taste it's easy to see why. You have to be impressed with this win, especially because it is an iced cider, something that the Quebecois seem to have really sowed up big time. Matt Passafiume told me his secret, I used 80% Spartan apples, but yes, he confirmed, it is made from 100% apples. Hard to believe really, especially with the huge wafting smell of peach coming from the glass, mixed of course with the apple aromas ... the flavours mirror the smells perfectly and finishes with excellent acidity to keep the palate clean and ready for your next sip. And the peach just roars on through. Fantastic job on this little delicacy. Price: \$19.95 / 375ml - Rating: \*\*\*\* 1/2+

#### **Coffin Ridge 2009 Bone Dry Riesling - \$18.80 (W)**

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

Whoa Nelly, you rarely see a "bone dry" Riesling that is not only named that way but truly is ... but from your first sniff of the wine you would not believe it as such. The smells leap out of the glass with lemon, tropical pineapple, peach and pear ... so lively, so inviting, so sweet with fruit. But the palate shows something different, a racy mineral quality with big acidity and mouth drying tartness. You gotta like your Riesling "Bone Dry", and I do mean dry and tart, if so then this is your baby ... my wife said it was like sucking on a lemon, then she took another sip and then another. Good enough for me - this wine has the wife's seal of approval. Price: \$18.80 - Rating: \*\*\* 1/2

Also see the review for the [Coffin Ridge 2009 Into the Light White](#)

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

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**Bi-Weekly OWR Updates:** *Ottawa Life Posts, On the Road Pieces and More*

**Weekly Ottawa Life Blog Entries:**

[NOTL comes to Ottawa](#)  
[The Start of a Tasteful Journey](#)

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

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

[Austrian Wine Summit](#)  
[Portugal G7](#)  
[Exclusive Concha Y Toro Tasting](#)  
[Ontario Wine Awards 2011 Gold Medal Winners](#)

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

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

**Nothing New To Report This Week**

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

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

**Nothing New To Report This Week**

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

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

**[1 New Reviews Added](#)**

**Low Carb diet has me off booze ... Yikes ... temporarily**

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

**Now available – [June 25, 2011](#)**

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### **OntarioWineReview: A Visit to Creekside**

On the Saturday morning after the Ontario Wine Awards, I dragged my spouse out of the house once again to partake in some wine. Creekside is one of Ontario's most awarded wineries in the past few years especially at the Ontario Wine Awards and Cuvee where they consistently pick up multiple golds and other precious hardware. This morning's visit was about sampling the new whites, a few interesting reds and some barrel cellar look-sees (Merazier anyone?)

We started on the patio run (on weekends only) by Hospitality on Hand; they have a great menu, with daily specials (that are based on fresh and local) and an excellent location overlooking the green algae-filled pond beside the winery (so much rain has fallen that it has stirred up all that natural green). We ended up with some charcuterie platters that were loaded with delectable cheeses, meats and assorted things to put them on. A favourite seemed to be the tri-olive spread and roasted garlic clove.

At the previous night award ceremony Creekside shared their usual Golden Viognier award with Nyarai Cellars (a virtual winery, and their first Viognier), but we did try the wine, just for the heck of it, and its a beauty: [2009 Viognier Reserve](#). But even before we wrapped our palates around that we tasted what could be one of the best values in Sauvignon Blanc today (at the you know where): [2009 Sauvignon Blanc](#) (\$13.95) with its melon and citrus notes that just livens up the palate and any patio you happen to be sitting on. Red wines included the [2008 Shiraz](#) (Creekside insists on calling Shiraz) - the nose is delightfully Shiraz-ish while the palate speaks more to a Syrah-style. Also poured was the [2007 Reserve Merlot](#), a wine that's way too young to be enjoyed now, but will be something awesome in the future (say around 2014 and beyond); and an Undercurrent wine (these are small lot oddities from Creekside) composed of [60% Shiraz and 40% Malbec](#) ... something drinkable now but could see another 3-4 years of ageing. As for the aforementioned "Merazier" its just one barrel right now and may never see the light of day - but my brief tasting says this might turn into one of those Undercurrent wines along with an American oaked red Icewine that has some interesting characteristic ... we'll watch for both of those together.



### **Wine Event Spotlight: Lots of Action: Concerts, Tailgates and More**

**TD Tailgate Party kicks off the New Vintages Festival June 18, 2011 5:30 to 9:30 PM ...** On the eve of the Summer Solstice, one of the longest days of the year, over 35 Niagara Wineries will celebrate the start of the new vintage. Kick off the celebrations with a casual evening featuring internationally acclaimed wines, fresh produce and skillful grilling in a casual vineyard backdrop. Join the Grape Grower of the Year in her own backyard for a truly Canadian tradition. Some of Niagara's most celebrated chefs will be preparing superb summer recipes featuring the finest local produce

and meat. [http://www.newvintagefestival.com/news/50/td\\_tailgate\\_party](http://www.newvintagefestival.com/news/50/td_tailgate_party)

**Tawse 10th anniversary solstice celebration concert, featuring Jim Cuddy and Al Stewart ...** Saturday, June 18, 2011, Canadian music icon Jim Cuddy returns to Tawse Winery along with "Year of the Cat" singer/songwriter Al Stewart, to help celebrate their 10th anniversary. The evening begins with outdoor marche dining at 5:30pm, with delicious food offerings from four Niagara area restaurants. The concert will follow at 7pm with performances by Al Stewart and Jim Cuddy. General Admission Tickets available at \$59.00 (plus applicable tax and service charges) and include a \$10.00 voucher for food and wine. (General Admission is lawn seating only - bring your own blanket or lawn chair). [http://www.tawsewinery.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&page\\_id=67](http://www.tawsewinery.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&page_id=67)

**Legends Estates Presents `Lakefront Blues and BBQ` July 7 ...** tickets are a mere \$15 (performance only) or \$30 for dinner and show. Find all the details you'll need here: [http://legendsstates.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=208:lakefront-blues-bbq&catid=3:newsflash&Itemid=72](http://legendsstates.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=208:lakefront-blues-bbq&catid=3:newsflash&Itemid=72)

**SWOVA 17th Annual Vintage Tasting - August 07, 2011 from 1:00 5:00 PM is being held this year at Colchester Ridge Estate Winery ...** Special seminars and guest speakers Konrad Ebjich and Michael Pinkus will be highlighting the Lake Erie North Shore vintages! Food provided by Mettawas Station, Thai Palace, Tecumseh Roadhouse and Ducks on the Roof! Come and enjoy music provided by Just Jazz and the University of Windsor Quartet. Tickets are \$55.00 a person, are limited and by advanced sale only ... so hurry and get yours today! Call 519-738-9800 or email [info@colchesterridge.com](mailto:info@colchesterridge.com). Or for more details about the winery go to [www.colchesterridge.com](http://www.colchesterridge.com)

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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.



**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](mailto:michael@ontariowinereview.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

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