

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 – 166
September 8, 2011

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OntarioWineReview: *More Promises for Change*

The hot political topic these days is the New Democratic Party. We saw them sweep through Quebec in the federal election, like Irene along the east coast of the U.S.A. Then their illustrious and charismatic leader passed away and the whole of Ontario (I can only speak for the province in which I live) had a wave of Layton-love which the NDP seems to be riding ... but it's now time to get serious about what this government will do for our province, most notably for me, the wine industry. All I can really say here is that if you think you're sick of broken political promises, imagine how the wineries of Ontario feel.

Wine in Ontario is a political issue, one that is the cause of much scratching of heads and gnashing of teeth, and seems to get some play around election time, when the agriculture vote is being wooed. I'd love to be able to say this is a hot topic, but who am I kidding, Ontario is one of the only regions in the world where enthusiastic support for the domestic wine industry is really lacking (and that's putting it mildly) ... we are a long way off from our own country-mates in British Columbia who have a huge love affair with their own provincially made wines and a huge market share of same.

Which brings me back to the NDP and their promises about what they'll do for Ontario wineries and how to get Ontarians on the bandwagon of drinking more Ontario wine. While the Conservatives promised to look at VQA-only wine stores, one can only presume, outside the LCBO's current system, the NDP are promising to work with the LCBO to guarantee more shelf space for independently produced Ontario wines: "There are still too many barriers stopping small wineries from getting to the shelves of LCBO outlets," said NDP leader Andrea Horwath in a statement.

She's got that right, but are the NDP suggesting expanding the Ontario section in liquor stores, ridding Ontario shelves of the highly prized and much more profitable imports? I can't see the LCBO liking that ... which means squeezing more labels into the already limited Ontario section.

"We will examine a range of measures to give small wineries more access to more Ontarians, including allowing wine to be sold at designated farmers' markets." Something fruit wineries have been clamouring for for years with little to no results, getting the door slammed in their face, while watching other North American regions open up restrictions on farmers' markets and other places to sell wine ... but then that's the pitch of the much maligned and misunderstood fruit wine makers, grape wine makers will be seen differently and more favourably, right? Because it suddenly makes sense to have grape wine at farmers' markets? Really? Fruit wine I get, grape wine belongs elsewhere. And to make it even more fair Ontario wine stores should be adopted (not just VQA wines) made from 100% Ontario fruit, be it grape or otherwise. Why do we continue to pussy foot around this issue when we know the problem and have a solution?

But alas, this is all just wishful thinking and this will be a back burner issue just as soon as the last ballot is counted and the new guy (or gal) gets into office. Because as we all know Ontarians are still treated like small children who have to be protected from the evils of alcohol, and have been since the late 1920's. That we are actually having these discussions during an election campaign in the year 2011 is comical ... I for one find it appalling and I hope that you do too. This mess should have been cleaned up years ago and we should be advancing with the times, but the Liberal have done nothing about it for their past 8 years of governance and I see that continuing no matter who's in power. That's because the party in control suddenly gets a dose of reality once they achieve power, they see the situation they are in. Even "working with the LCBO", as Andrea Horwath and the NDP propose, they'll find themselves with a long hard fight on their hands, because if there is one thing I took away from reading my children's books as I was growing up it's that the giant hates giving up control of his castle; and I don't see the giant (LCBO) giving this one up any time soon.



Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch: *Wines of Interest and some Cab Franc*

Colio Estate 2008 CEV Gamay Noir - \$15.75 (W)

<http://www.coliowinery.com>

I'm not sure why Gamay doesn't get more respect in Ontario ... yeah I get the whole "Beaujolais is bad" connotation from those Nouveaus you drank back in the 70's and 80's, but Ontario is not France and there are very few Nouveaus made here in the Great White North. This Colio version has a pretty cherry nose, while the palate is loaded with spiced black cherry and vanilla nuances. The finish also impresses with black cherry and cinnamon ... all this adds up to is a serious wine with no Nouveau candiedness; and isn't that that way Gamay should be? Price: \$15.75 - Rating: ****+

Wagner Black Cat - \$13.00 (W)

<http://www.wagnerorchards.com>

Harold Wagner is the Dennis Hopper of the Lake Erie North Shore region - he's a bit of a wild man. He seems to always be mixing grapes and fruits to make something that is tasty as well as interesting. This time he has taken Vidal (70%) and mixed in black currant; the result is a blend of sweet and tart that plays games with your mind and tongue. The sweetness comes from the Vidal, while the black currant adds in its signature acidity. The flavour comes off as cherry with a black currant backing ... wild man, truly wild. Price: \$13.00 - Rating: ****

Legends 2007 Shiraz Reserve - \$19.95 (W)

<http://www.legendsestates.com>

Once again we have some reductivity on the nose, something that winemaker Serge Papineau readily admits is his fault in his 2007 wines ... but if you can get past that, and I recommend that you do, you'll find this Shiraz has juicy black fruit, blueberry, pepper, a hint of spice and very silky tannins - this wine should find its way into a decanter first, then into your glass half-an-hour to an hour later, where you'll find it really enjoyable. Price: \$19.95 - Rating: ****

A look at some Cabernet Franc

(some available, some are gone - but you should know about them):

[Lailey Vineyard 2008 Cabernet Franc](#)

[Magnotta 2009 Equus Series Cabernet Franc](#)

[Thirty Bench 2008 Small Lot Cabernet Franc](#)

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



Weekly Wine Notes and More: *Ottawa Life Posts, On the Road Pieces and More*

Weekly Ottawa Life Blog Entries:

[Counting on the Drinkers' Vote](#)

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

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

[New Wines of Greece in Toronto](#)

[Argentinean Tasting](#)

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

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

[The Ice House 2006 Northern Ice Cabernet Sauvignon Icewine](#)

[Mountain Road Wine Company 2006 Reserve Chardonnay](#)

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

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

[Hillebrand 2005 Trius Red](#)

[Chateau des Charmes 2005 Rose Brut](#)

[Reif Estate 2007 Kerner](#)

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

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

[6 New Posts Added](#)

including wines from Canada, California and Australia

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

[Special Ontario Release - September 10, 2011](#)

coming soon: September 17, 2011

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Have yourself a Pinot Affair - October 15 & 16, 2011

<http://www.thepinotaffair.com/>

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

September 2011

This is the Season for Change ... The LCBO has announced a "policy" that will permit consumers to personally transport alcohol into Ontario in limited quantities. The liquor board says that they will allow consumers to bring up to 3 L of spirits, 9 L of wine and 24.6 L of beer into the province so long as the alcohol is carried in "on their person" and is for personal consumption. The "in person" requirement will still prevent Canadian wineries from shipping direct to their customers in other provinces.
http://www.winelaw.ca/cms/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=160:lcbo-qpolicyq-permits-personal-interprovincial-wine-transport&catid=1&Itemid=19

Sad to Note ... here is the article that prompted my above rant about wine and politics, but I would also like you to take note of the picture that accompanied the article, it's of the Cellared in Canada section of the LCBO - now really how can I take what is being said about promoting local wines when the pictures is of wines that don't fit the bill. Shame on the Globe & Mail for this gaff ...
<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/ontario-ndps-latest-election-promise-wine/article2127887/>

Bag in Box is not VQA Ready ... "A winery in B.C.'s Okanagan Valley is switching some of its bottled wine to bag-in-box packaging, but will lose a prestigious B.C. Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) designation on those products. Summerhill Pyramid Winery says its decision was driven by environmental considerations; boxed wine stacks more efficiently into trucks, so transportation and fuel costs are lowered. But industry rules mean Summerhill's boxed wines will lose their VQA designation."
<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/vintner+loses+designation+putting+wine+boxes/5228692/story.html#ixzz1XBh85WF3>

Are You Ready For This ... as one fan posted on the Ontario Wine Lovers Facebook page: "Get ready for a tsunami of cheap, blended wines, boyos and girlos." ... and here's why:
<http://www.niagarathisweek.com/news/article/1059025--vincor-to-expand-production> and
<http://bulletnewsniagara.ca/2011/08/18/vincors-new-wine-press-only-one-of-its-kind-in-north-america/>

Cider House Rules ... "Niagara's overlooked pears have a new home in a cider that's being brewed and sold at a Winona winery. It's called Sir Isaac's pear cider and uses Niagara Bartlett and Bosc pears with visual flaws that make them unsuitable for fruit displays. Brock Puddicombe, of Puddicombe Estate Farms and Winery, said the inaugural batch is now on sale at the Highway 8 winery." <http://www.stcatharinesstandard.ca/ArticleDisplay.aspx?e=3268023>

Women and Wine ... they drink it but that aren't allowed to make it says this study: " Although it is nearly 50 years since the first woman graduated with a wine degree from a top university, less then 10 percent of women are chief winemakers at U.S. wineries."
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/18/us-wine-women-idUSTRE77H5KF20110818>



Wine Event Spotlight: *Fall Festivals Galore*

Plenty to see and do on the wine trail so check your favourite winery or region for what's going on.

Keep these dates in mind for an all-encompassing regional event:

[Shores of Erie International Wine Festival - September 8 - 11, 2011](#)

[Niagara Wine Festival - September 16 - 25, 2011](#)

[Taste the County - September 24, 2011](#)

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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