



Just Off the Vine...

OWS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS AND OTHER NEWS...

Ontario Wine Society at 20

As much as things change, they stay the same. Although the Ontario Wine Society reaches a milestone this year and the Ontario Wine Industry has grown a great deal, with much international renown, many things are similar to the early 90's – tough economic times and a struggle to promote Ontario wines. This issue our feature article touches on this point and other articles explore the last 20 years.

OWS Prize Awarded



Sharon Marks, President of the Niagara Chapter, presenting the Toronto Chapter's Ontario Wine Society prize in Oenology and Viticulture to the 2010 winning student, Ian Bock, at Brock's Annual Awards Assembly, November 18, 2010.

Special Winemaker's Feature

This issue's interview is with Dave Sheppard from Coyote's Run.

Vineland Wine Club Offer

Vineland's wine club has a special offer for OWS members. Anyone signing up at the Vineland Wine shop anytime before January 28, will be able to take the already-released January package with them. Since the cost is \$50 but the value of the package is over \$60 - '07 Brut Reserve (\$22.75), 500 ml Vice (\$34.95) and Vice freezer bag (\$3.00) - the January package is well worth getting. Their wine club is unique because they frequently "partner" with another Ontario winery for each month's shipment.

For more information on the Connections wine club go to - www.vinelandconnections.com . Please be sure to tell them you are an OWS member and if you sign up at the wine shop, you'll receive an extra bonus!

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Niagara Chapter

Wed., January 26 - *Brand New Year, Brand New Wineries* at Pondview Estate Winery (Sold Out)

February 2011 - TBA

March 2011 – *Annual Social & AGM Elections*

June 2011 – *Debate: Should we grow Gamay in Ontario?* 13th Street Winery

July 2011 – *Pig Roast* at Greenlane Winery

Oakville Chapter

Wed., February 16 - *Bubbles & Ice* at Cucci

Wed., March 2 - *Cellaring your Wines* at Cucci

Toronto Chapter

Sat. & Sun., February 5 & 6 - *Icewine Weekend* at Reif Estate Winery

Tues., February 22 - *Seriously Cool Chardonnay* at the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club

Tues., March 22 & - *Quebec Cheese & Ontario Wine* at Taste of Quebec Shop in the Distillery District

April 2011 – *Virtual Wineries*

Thurs., May 19 - *OWS 20th Anniversary Special Event - Classic Pinot Noir: Burgundy and Ontario* at Casa Loma

Sat., June 11 - *Annual Bus Trip - Niagara Escarpment*

More details on Page 9 or at www.ontariowinesociety.com/events

WineAlign Offers OWS Members 2 Free Months of Their Premium Service

WineAlign is a service for making informed buying decisions at your local Ontario government wine store. You can use it before you shop from your home or office computer, or standing right in the store aisle, with your mobil device. WineAlign answers the question: "What wine do I buy?" WineAlign provides ranked lists of all of the wines in stock at your local LCBO. For

example, they can tell you what the top ranked Carmenere from Chile under \$25 is. They score all of the wines with a particular focus on the Vintages Releases. They use reviews from multiple critics including: David Lawrason, John Szabo, Rod Phillips, Steve Thurlow, Margaret Swain, Gord Stimmell and Sarah d'Amato. They believe that multiple reviews are better, if you get a few critics saying that a particular wine is good, it probably is. Their service works on

the web and mobile devices. You can build a shopping list of your wines in the Vintages release and print off the list or access it from your smart phone right in the store!

They are offering OWS members 2 FREE months of their premium service. Go to www.winealign.com and on the Sign Up page key OWS in the Promo Code box. You can also access their offer on the Discount Boutique page of the Ontario Wine Society's site.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Toronto Chapter needs a membership secretary.
Also, the Ontario Wine Society still needs a volunteer Website editor.
Interested? Please call 416 921 9798 or email – contact@ontariowinesociety.com

ONTARIO WINE SOCIETY 20TH ANNIVERSARY **THE BEGINNING** By Heino Claessens

It was during a late summer lunch at Prego's in downtown Toronto in 1990 with then Inniskillin rep Steve McAdam, that conversation turned to musings about why Ontario wines don't have a wine appreciation club. Meanwhile, the Ontario Wine Council was in the process of launching VQA and engaging in a major marketing campaign to put Ontario wines on the map. As a result of this innocent lunch conversation I was later contacted by Peter Gamble the director of VQA and Christina Cappadocia, marketing consultant for the Ontario Wine

Council with an invitation to form a wine tasting club headlining Ontario wines...and so the seed for the Ontario Wine Society was planted. The first meeting of kindred spirits (or rather winos) was held later that year at Tapster's Micro Pub in Mississauga with Tom Pennachetti, Paul Bosc Jr., Robert Moore, Steve Wolfe, Frank Aiello, Peter Gamble, Andrew LaLiberte, Richard Glushkoff, and myself in attendance. A mission statement was drafted and a logo that was created by Linda Bramble. The official launch of the OWS was at the spring 1991 Wine and Cheese

Show. Sponsored by the OWC/VQA, the drive for membership began. I'm sure there are still active members who signed up in those early days. As a result of aggressive marketing by the OWC in conjunction with the introduction of VQA, membership quickly increased to over 200 members. Initial membership fees were \$45, with renewal fees set at \$35. The inaugural event, held at the King Edward on June 4th, was "The Great Canadian Barrel Tasting" where members were able to rub shoulders with noted wine experts in sampling "still in the barrel"

Chardonnays from over 15 Ontario wineries. The event was complemented with foods specially prepared by executive chef John Higgins.

Through the talents of event director Bonnie McKee, the OWS held a number of first class events such as the "Vineyard Festival" at Vineland Estates Winery where Chef Chris McDonald prepared memorable summer fare. Another event, captioned by Tony Aspler as "Ontario and German Rieslings share podium at wine Olympics," invited members to the Four Seasons Hotel for a taste-off between

German and Ontario Rieslings. A memorable event with Herbert Konzelmann and Allan Schmidt engaged in conversation with the doyen of the German wine trade, Peter Sichel. Members received a new appreciation for what has been called that "most honest of grape". As the OWS didn't have a permanent home at the time, events were held at different locations throughout the city in order to showcase various venues. Shortly thereafter, the first issue of the "Society Pages", published and edited by Doug Hulley, was released. This later came to include the "Wine Purchase Program,"

spearheaded by Sadie Darby. The rest, as they say, is history. Without the strong support of the Ontario wine industry, the backing of Peter Gamble and the Ontario Wine Council together with the hours of volunteer work by all those who embraced the vision for the OWS in those early days, the OWS would not have been able to bear the fruit that it did. With the continuing dedication and commitment of those who followed, the OWS has grown into a respected association showcasing the best wines Ontario has to offer. It is to them that I give my thanks.

HAPPY 20th ANNIVERSARY ONTARIO WINE SOCIETY! By Ken Burford

20 years may not seem like a long time in the wine industry. But, for the largely volunteer run Ontario Wine Society (OWS), it is a huge mile (kilometre) stone.

Congratulations - to everyone who has helped run, or helped, the OWS in the past 20 years; to all the people who are currently running the 3 chapters; and to all of the past and current members who have supported the OWS.

For 20 years, in spite of the entrenched thinking that a wine from somewhere else is better, many people have felt so passionate about their local wine

industry and what it can produce, that they have volunteered their time and energy to promote it. I like to think of the OWS as the little engine that can.

Anniversaries usually involve parties or special events. Coincidentally, the 200th anniversary of the Ontario wine industry will also be celebrated in 2011.

All 3 chapters intend to hold special events. In Toronto, there will be the Seriously Cool Chardonnay event

in February, which is a dress rehearsal event for the wineries before they showcase their Chardonnays in New York City in March. There will also be a large Pinot Noir only event at Casa Loma comparing Ontario and Burgundy. There will be a special dinner at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club to celebrate our 20th anniversary and the industry's 200th anniversary. And, Toronto will be repeating the very popular "Taste and Order" event in November.

There will be more information on Niagara's 3 commemorative events and Oakville's in future newsletters and on the OWS site.

WHERE IS THE LOCAL ONTARIO VQA WINE?

By Patricia Dinsmore

Have you heard about the “controversy” surrounding the VQA tent cards, provided by the Ontario Wine Society, for those of us who would like to see more Ontario wines available on restaurant wine lists? While there are a large number of people who applaud the Ontario Wine Society’s initiative to get the word out there about local wines, there are some people who are calling it passive aggressive. Shortly after the cards were introduced there was some tweeting and blogging about the negative effects of leaving the card, rather than having an open dialogue, but here are a couple of points to keep in mind,

While some people have no problem discussing their options on a restaurant’s wine list with their server or a sommelier or the owner, not everyone is comfortable with doing that. The VQA tent cards give people who do not wish to engage in a lengthy conversation the option of letting the restaurant know that they would like to see more local wine. Fred Couch, who is the co-founder of the Niagara chapter and now

their Treasurer and an Event Planner, wanted to let everyone know:

“One of the goals of the Ontario Wine Society is to help support the wine industry in this province. This tent card is just a small way to promote awareness that we live in one of the great wine producing areas of the world. If we can convince just a few restaurants to carry a selection (or a better selection) of Ontario wines then we have at least done something. I can’t think of any other wine producing region in the world where the locals don’t support their local wine industry. I can’t imagine going into a restaurant in Napa or Sonoma and seeing a whole wine list of foreign wines! Yet in the GTA this is quite common and they are only 100 kms, or so, away from two great wine areas.”

These tent cards could end up being an excellent way to make restaurants aware of how many great Ontario wines are available. Although there are plenty of Ontario wines that pair up nicely with foods from regions around the world, it may just not be well known or as common in some types of restaurants. I regularly hear

stories from friends of mine – who do love Ontario wine - of conversations they have been in or overheard that “Ontario does not make good wine”. Personally, when I hear someone say that, more often than not I immediately think, what was the last Ontario wine you tried? Chances are it was quite a while ago and it was simply a wine that did not appeal to your palate. Ken Burford, President of the Toronto Chapter and overall President of the Ontario Wine Society has this to say:

“It’s time to cut the crap. Ontario Chardonnays, Rieslings, Pinot Grigios, Pinot Noirs, Gewurztraminers, Sauvignon Blancs, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignons...etc, etc, etc and blends of all of these have been proven in tasting after tasting to be as good as if not better than the same wine from other countries...It’s time to get over our insecurity and support our local industries.”

So, where did all of this get its start? Fred and his wife Sue were travelling in the New York State wine regions and saw their cards available at a few of their wineries. After doing some research he found out

that it was a program sponsored by the New York Wine and Grape Foundation and he thought that it would be something that could be easily translated into Ontario for our wineries. He proposed the idea to the Ontario Wine Society Niagara Chapter's Operating Committee and a pilot project was created to test out the response. Fred said "we received nothing but compliments from the wineries about these cards. In fact, a number of wineries want a whole box of the cards. A former Chairman of the Wine Council of Ontario thinks they're a tremendous idea and wants a large supply for his winery to hand out. At Calamus Estate Winery, one of the first wineries to get the cards, they keep on running out of them. When Fred and Sue first encountered these cards in NY state, Fred approached the New York Wine and Grape Foundation for permission to "borrow" their idea and, if there was any backlash or problems they experienced as a result of their program, Fred is confident that the Vice President of the Foundation would have communicated them to him at that point – there was none.

Ken has used his cards at "a local pub where the owner knows that I am the President

of the Ontario Wine Society. The pub does have 2 or 3 Ontario wines on their list but they are chronically out of one of them...the one that I want! There is just no excuse for this. The LCBO is right across the road and the winery is an hour away. They always have all of their other imported wines on their list that come half way around the world! It is extremely frustrating. So, I want to do all that I can do to get the message to the owner." Only time will tell as to their true effectiveness but as Fred pointed out to me,

"Any impact would be a positive thing. If we can help the Ontario wine industry in any way then we are achieving one of our goals. Everyone is pushing GoLocal these days and we can only hope that restaurant owners would apply this to their wine lists as well. The Ontario Wine Society is at least doing something proactive!"

Although figures are not exact, here is a general idea about consumption of local wine in other wine producing areas; France is around 94%, Italy in the 80% range and Ontario is a meagre 6%. Think of the economic impact if we were to double Ontario's figure?

Comments have been made on various social

networking sites about how these cards seem like an unfair attack on the restaurants. What I would like to suggest that everyone think of this as an extension, by an outside organization, of the GoLocal promotion that the Government of Ontario has been pushing for a few years now. The government's advertising program consists of TV, Radio and online advertisements – all of which cost a lot of money. The VQA tent cards are simply, the volunteer run, Ontario Wine Society's way of promoting GoLocal, in respect to Ontario wines. Even with a limited budget the Society is still trying to make an effort to get the word out about how great our local wines are. The Niagara Chapter of the OWS held a tasting in January 2009 where they paired Ontario wines with foods from Japan, Thailand, Mexico and India. When the attendees were given an opportunity to provide feedback on the pairings, several expressed surprise and admiration that Ontario wines paired so well with the exotic foods they enjoyed that evening. It just goes to show that no matter what kind of food you serve in your restaurant, chances are better than most that there is an Ontario wine that can pair nicely with your food.

PREVIOUS EVENTS

SPARKLING WINES, ICEWINES & CHOCOLATES By Bruce Jackson

The Niagara Chapter finished 2010 with another successful sold-out event. There were wonderful wines, both sparkling and Icewines, great food and delicious chocolates plus many surprise gifts all served up, on December 7th, in the cathedral to wines in Niagara, Vineland Estates Winery.

The gift shop and wine bar were decorated for the holidays with a huge Christmas tree. The reception was held on the mezzanine deck with nearly 50 of us enjoying breads and cheeses served with Vineland Estates Sparkling Brut.



Niagara Chapter President Sharon Marks and Vineland's David Hulley

We were welcomed by David Hulley, the Director of Customer Experience, who announced the first of our surprise gifts; each guest would be using two Spiegelau glasses, one for the sparkling and one for the Icewines, and would get to keep them both after the event was over. David has a warm place in his heart for OWS and this was one of many ways he

demonstrated his feelings. Later we were given a generous discount on the purchase of more Spiegelau stemware and promised special treatment at the winery on future visits.



Our Host/Guide Ted Han is also a member of Niagara Chapter

Our host and guide for the evening was Ted Han. Ted is an OWS Niagara Chapter member and an employee of Vineland Estates. He poured the wines and provided us with guidance and humour as we grazed through the wine and food pairings in various settings throughout the winery.

We were led into the tank room where we were served the other three sparkling wines. First came the Konzelmann Old Cellar Door Cuvee Brut made in the traditional method. It was dry, toasty and crisp and paired well with the Cascupec Bay oysters served on the half shell with wasabi/honey vinaigrette. The food was prepared by Chef de Cuisine at Vineland Estates, Justin Downes.

The delightful Cave Spring Dolomite Sparkling Riesling was our third wine. Chef Downes paired the wine with Estate Smoked Salmon with Lemon Aioli.

Peller Estate Winery Retail Manager Peggy Thorne donated the next wine which was our transition from sparkling wines to Icewine. This was Peller Ice Cuvee Rose. This delicious wine is made in the traditional method with a drop of Cabernet Franc Icewine added at dosage. The food pairing was Pork and Dried Cherry Terrine, Blue Benedictin Biscuits with Zucchini jam. There were smiles everywhere.

From the tank room we moved through the long barrel cellar to an elegant library/tasting room where Ted Han described the Icewines and the food pairings to the group that was becoming more celebratory with each wine.

What better way to begin than a Sparkling Vidal Icewine from Inniskillin? It was paired with a slow smoked Duck breast with Cherry Triple Crunch Mustard on Sour dough Crostini and was served in the second of our free Spiegelau glasses.

The second Icewine was a Riesling from Megalomaniac Winery. Like many Megalomaniac wines it has a humorous title: Cold Hearted. It

paired beautifully with an Icewine and Chicken Liver Pate.

A special guest introduced the last Icewine pairing. Bonnie Gordon of Chocolate FX had prepared Chocolate Icewine Truffles to match with Vineland Estates Cabernet Sauvignon Icewine. It was a match made in heaven. Bonnie had made enough truffles for each member to have two of them. Getting help finishing off the extras took very little coaxing.

OWS likes to promote companies related to the wine industry, such as Chocolate FX, from Niagara-on-the-Lake, which make truffles with Icewines from the region. The company makes delicious chocolates and has been so successful in both domestic and tourist sales that it will soon be opening a large chocolate factory/retail outlet in Virgil. As Bonnie proudly told us, "If you can't cover it in chocolate, it's not worth eating."

With Ted Han and his assistant Jessica Cown leading the way, we returned to the wine bar for our last tastings. Vineland Estates has a product called Vice, a blend of Icewine and vodka, which was served to everyone. Ted had even frozen some white grapes to add a festive colour to the Vice.

After dessert and coffee there were still a few surprises as OWS Niagara began a series of monthly draws to give members a chance to take home some of the single bottles of wine from our Society's cellar. The lucky winners were Debbie and Frank Demizio and Carol Butlin. Aside from their two Spiegelau glasses, each attendee went home with a special gift from the Niagara Chapter - two Chocolate Icewine Truffles.



Everyone attending was given a box of chocolate Icewine truffles

Many members took advantage of the Spiegelau stemware discount and also purchased bottles of the great Vineland Estates wines before leaving. We received many very positive comments from the participants as they left that evening and have received several more via email. It seemed that the event was enjoyed by all.

Director of Events, Bruce Jackson is most grateful to all of the people who made the event

such a success and apologizes in advance if anyone is left out. First, thank you to the wineries that were so generous: Inniskillin, Peller Estate, Konzelmann, Megalomaniac, Cave Spring and especially our host winery Vineland Estates. Vineland Estates Director of Customer Experience, David Hulley, surpassed all expectations in his generosity and efforts to facilitate our wishes and needs. Our guide Ted Han, who made the event so memorable, was ably assisted by Jessica Cowan. The food pairings prepared by Chef de Cuisine Justin Downes were delightful and we can't forget VE store manager Treesja Bjorgan, who helped out, even though it was her birthday. Thanks also go to Bonnie Gordon and Chocolate FX for their amazing sweets. In addition, Bruce would like to thank Fred Couch who helped pour wine for the large number of attendees and assisted in setting up for the evening and the others who pitched in: Sue Couch, Trevor Gough, Sharon Marks, Marg Jackson and Marnie Thomson.

Pictures of the event, taken by Director of Events, Bruce Jackson, have been posted on the OWS website.

WINEMAKER'S CORNER

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVE SHEPPARD OF COYOTE'S RUN By Jennifer Hart

I have long believed that none of us travel a straight path to get where we are, and arrive there through some interesting twists and turns. My theory was that these experiences in a winemaker's career might hold a special interest for those of us who just drink the result of much thought and work, so I reached out to award-winning winemaker Dave Sheppard with some questions and here is what he had to say:

What prompted you to get started in Winemaking?

Back in 1980 I had finished my degree from U of Waterloo, loaded up my backpack, bought an open-ended flight ticket and headed to Europe with my good buddy Jeff Morrow. Throughout our travels we found ourselves in the small town of Bacharach am Rhein in the heart of the Rhineland wine region, during the height of their annual wine festival. It was there that I made some great new friends (locals) and was captivated by the whole wine thing. A great time was had, and a new love and appreciation of wine was developed, and the thought of pursuing anything to do with wine was shelved until further

notice. Further notice came about 6 months later, when I was sleeping on a friend's floor in a flat in London (Jeff was heading home), woke up in the morning with 11 pounds Sterling to my name and decided to somehow make my way back to the continent, back to Germany, and hopefully back to Bacharach where I had hoped to find some kind of work in the wine business. I managed to hitch a ride to Dover (picked up by an off duty London Bobby) where I bought a walk-on fare for the ferry to Ostende, Belgium.

So when I arrived in Ostende with 1 pound to my name I hopped on the train to Germany (without a ticket) and figured that I'd get as far as I could until the conductor caught up to me. After frequent trips to the WC every time I saw the conductor coming, I made it all the way to Koblenz, Germany before being caught and unceremoniously tossed off the train with lots of stern threats (I think). From there I made it by foot and thumb the rest of the way to Bacharach and the salvation of my new friends.

The next morning I was working in the vineyard and winery for my first mentor

Fritz Bastian. Thanks to Fritz's kindness, guidance and infectious enthusiasm for winemaking and viticulture I found my new vocation. I ended up moving into a spare room in Fritz's house with his family and staying for a year with them. It wasn't until almost 2 years after my initial departure from Canada (I grew up in the Niagara region) that I met my next mentor and good friend of 29 years now, Karl Kaiser and started working for Inniskillin wines.

What trade-related accomplishment are you most proud of?

As for trade related accomplishments I guess that I'd say that the most satisfying one would be helping the owners of Coyote's Run (partners Steve Murdza the grower and vineyard owner, and the Aubry family who were the business side) start something from nothing (always scary) and make wines that would make the venture commercially successful. I was also lucky enough to receive the honour of producing the "Top Pinot Noir in Canada" a couple of times now, as deemed by the Canadian Wine Awards, which is also personally satisfying in so

much as I am a huge Pinot Noir fan, and as such love the collective enthusiasm and attention for the Pinots that can be made in Canada.

Do you have a mentor or a person who has influenced your winemaking and if so, why?

As for mentors, I can honestly say that Karl picked up right where Fritz left off and has been a great teacher, friend and mentor ever since.

What unique experience or experiences do you think you have had because of your winemaking?

My first experience (living with the Bastians and working in Germany) probably remains the most unique and memorable one for me, although doing a vintage in Burgundy (Inniskillin sanctioned exchange....thanks Donald, thanks Karl) was also a tremendous one.

If you were talking to someone who didn't know anything about Ontario wine, what would be the key thing you would want to tell them?

In talking Ontario wine with people from outside the area I always refer to the Niagara Region as Canada's

"Banana Belt" which is a term I've heard since I was a kid but never gave much thought to back then. I like to let them know what a gem we have in such a small fraction of such a large country, that affords us the opportunity to make such incredibly elegant wines. What we give up to warmer regions in terms of volume of wine produced, relative ease of viticulture, and (dare I say it)....taxation structure, I think we make up for in wines of delicacy and elegance with wonderful nuances and expressions of fruit.

OWS EVENT DETAILS

Oakville Chapter - Bubbles and Ice – Wed., February 16

Come and celebrate the start of the New Year. And what would a new year's celebration be without a little bubbly? Try some sensational sparkling wines and a variety of luscious Icewines. Bring your friends, family and colleagues out to begin 2011 with some of the best wines Ontario has to offer. Sit back, relax and be entertained by renowned wine maker Arthur Harder. A native of Grimsby, Harder obtained his degree in chemistry at Ryerson University, and went on to complete his degree in Oenology and Viticulture at the famed Geisenheim

University in Germany. Working as a winemaker at some well known wineries such as, Inniskillin and Hillebrand, Harder has spent 20 years in the industry producing excellent grapes, leading to fantastic wines.

Toronto Chapter - Annual Icewine Weekend – Sat. & Sun., February 5 & 6

Reif Estate Winery is the featured winery for the 2011 "Icewine Weekend". The Ontario Wine Society's annual winter "pick me up" will feature a winery tour and special wine tasting, a delicious gourmet meal paired with fabulous wines and a night's stay at the sumptuous White Oaks Resort

& Spa. The Reif family tradition of winemaking began nearly half a millennium ago in the small winemaking town of Neustadt, located in the heart of the world renowned Rhine River Valley in Germany. In 1977, this tradition transcended to a new continent, when founder Ewald Reif purchased a plot of land on the fertile banks of the Niagara River. Reif Estate Winery officially opening in 1983. The tasting will include many of their premium wines and Icewines, including a sneak peek of their Ripasso style – think Amarone! – wine. Transportation to and from Reif for the dinner will be provided by the OWS as part of your package.

INDUSTRY MEMBER EVENTS

CALAMUS WINERY

An Evening of Wine and Art" - Winemaker's Dinner

Sat., January 22 - 6:30 p.m.

Join us for another of our very popular Winemaker's dinners at the winery. We will be featuring some of our new releases, the internationally renowned art of David T. Wright and food by "The Heat is On Catering". \$90.00 per person all taxes and gratuities included. The full menu is available on www.calamuswines.com. Contact the winery at 905-562-9303 to reserve your spot

COLIO ESTATE WINERY

11th Annual Festival of Ice

Sat. & Sun., February 12 & 13 – 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

Saturday: Main Event

The admission to this event is a canned or boxed good for donation to the local food bank. Come see professional ice carvers. See chocolate & wood carving demos. Sip on delicious Icewine and sample sweet treats and artisan cheese.

Complimentary winery tours and in-store specials. Fun for the whole family. Snow or shine. Bundle up and wear your winter booties. Enter to win grand prize.

Sunday: View Finished Ice Sculptures

Admission: canned or boxed good for local food bank. Complimentary cheese & crackers, tours and tasting. Enter to win grand prize.

www.coliowinery.com

COYOTE'S RUN ESTATE WINERY

Mulled Icewine

Weekends in January

Try this delicious winter warm up - warm, mulled Icewine. This cozy drink will take the chill out of the coldest day. It's like warm apple pie in a glass. Sample \$3.00

Winemaker's Dinner

Thurs., January 20
at Breadalbane Inn

Join our assistant Winemaker, Steven Trussler, for a special winemakers dinner at the beautiful Breadalbane Inn in Fergus, ON. Tickets are \$59.00+tax and available at the restaurant (519) 928-5700. www.breadalbaneinn.com/menus/wine_makers_menu.htm

Sweet Salty & Spicy

Niagara Icewine Festival
January 22 & 23, 29 & 30

Explore the versatility of Icewine. Enjoy a sample of our 2007 Riesling Icewine and see how it pairs with an Asian twist on mincemeat pie from Ginger Restaurant. All of your taste buds will be satisfied. Complimentary with your discovery pass, \$10.00 without. www.coyotesrunwinery.com

CREEKSIDE WINERY

10th Annual Fire and Ice: The Creekside Chestnut Roast.

Niagara Icewine Festival
January 14 through 30 - 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. each listed day

Creekside's annual winter celebration. Join us on the Deck @ Creekside as we prepare fresh roasted chestnuts on the grill, served with our latest vintages of Icewine as well as warming mulled wine. Tasting includes fire roasted chestnuts with herbed butters, a tasting of Creekside Icewine and mulled wine is included to keep off the chill. Complimentary with Niagara Wine Festival Icewine Discovery Pass, \$10.00 for non-passport holders. Reservations not required. www.creeksidewine.com

FLAT ROCK CELLARS

Skate & Bake

January 22 & 23, 29 & 30
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Embrace winter at Flat Rock Cellars! Skate on our pond and warm up by the open fire, where you can taste our freshly made Icewine marshmallows. Eat them from the box or roast them over the fire! Weather permitting, no reservation required. Skating is free. Small fee applies for the marshmallows.

Porky's Revenge

Niagara Icewine Festival
January 22 & 23, 29 & 30
11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

A new twist on an old favourite. Winemaker Ross Wise is out of the cellar and into the kitchen to cook up another crowd pleasing pulled pork Icewine infused slider. Paired with our 2007 Sweet Revenge Vidal Icewine. No reservation required. \$10.00 (Free with Discovery Passport)

Winemaker's Dinner

Thurs., January 27 - 6:30pm
at Paradiso Oakville

Join Winemaker Ross Wise & Proprietor Ed Madronich for a delicious encounter with Flat Rock wines paired with five delicious courses from Executive Chef Matthew Tait. \$75.00 per person (taxes & gratuities extra).

To book your seats, please contact Paradiso Oakville at (905) 338-1594. Deadline for reservations is Mon., January 24.

In the Winemaker's Boots:

Weekend Workshop

Saturday, February 5
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Flavour profiling: Does a high score mean that you'll like a wine? What is it about some wines that makes you enjoy them so much and others turn you off? Wine can sometimes be a mystery. We'll help you taste with your mouth, not your eyes! \$25:00 per person (plus HST). Max. 20 people per session.

INDUSTRY MEMBER EVENTS CONTINUED

FLAT ROCK CELLARS **At the Winemaker's Table:** **Valentine's Lunch**

Sun., February 13
12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Rest your boots under the table, roll up your sleeves and prepare yourself for an outstanding meal and great wine. It's your chance to get to know the faces behind the wines while tucking into a delicious 3-course lunch prepared by el Gastronomo Vagabundo. \$75.00 per person (plus HST) Max. 12 people per session.

To book please call Allie at Flat Rock Cellars, 905 562 8994. Or email tours@flatrockcellars.com. www.flatrockcellars.com

WAYNE GRETZKY ESTATES **A Canadian Icon:** **The Beaver Tail**

Niagara Icewine Festival
January 14 through 30 - 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. each listed day

Join us as we serve up a quintessential Canadian classic with a Niagara twist: Wayne Gretzky Shiraz Icewines paired Fresh made Beaver Tails, hot from the fryer, with all the fixings and a drizzle house-made 99 Shiraz Icewine syrup. Complimentary with Niagara Wine Festival Icewine Discovery Pass, \$10.00 for non-passport holders. Reservations not required. www.gretzkyestateswines.com

HIDDEN BENCH VINEYARDS & WINERY

Raclette on the Bench
February 12 & 13 - Valentine's Day Weekend

Looking for something different? Why not spend a great weekend in Beamsville Bench's wine country, where you can relax in front of a beautiful, cozy fireplace, try some wines and

experience an authentic raclette? At Hidden Bench, we love food and wine which is why we would like to invite you to come and share with us in our annual Raclette on the Bench. Indigenous to Switzerland and parts of France, Raclette is usually paired with white wines, and the term "raclette" derives from the French racler, meaning "to scrape". Imagine a cold winter's day, inside by a roaring fireplace, some delicious Hidden Bench wines by the glass and melted artisanal cheese, served in the authentic style with dried meats, gherkins and new potatoes. Yum!! All you need to do is bring your honey and let us do the rest! \$10 per person, if you are bringing a bunch of honeys (6 or more), we suggest you let us know ahead. 905.563.8700 or email mmcgrath@hiddenbench.com www.hiddenbench.com

HUFF ESTATES **Winemaker's Dinner at the Arc Hotel, Ottawa**

Wed., January 26 – 6:30 p.m.
Join Huff Estates winemaker, Frederic Picard, at Arc the Hotel. \$75.00 plus tax (valet included) For reservations contact Kevin Jelley: kjelley@arcthehotel.com or 613-238-1259

Chocolates & Bubbles - Valentine's "Perfect Pairings" Sat., February 12 - 4:00 to 6:00pm

Let our sommelier Brian Hanna lead you and your partner through a wine experience which will tantalize your senses. You will also learn how to properly pair wine with food as he takes you through various tastings. The cost for the tasting is \$45.00/couple. For \$275.00/couple you can treat that special someone to the perfect pairing tasting, a night at our Inn, as well as a dinner at any of our partnering restaurants. Limited space available. To call and reserve a room or perhaps just a seat for you and your partner at our

perfect pairing tasting call 613-393-1414 or email theinn@huffestates.com www.huffestates.com

KONZELMANN ESTATE WINERY **Third Annual Winter Barbecue** Sat., January 22 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

After a fun time in the old town during the Village Festival, come out to Konzelmann and join our third annual "Winter Barbecue". Selection of Chicken on a bun, Wild Boar Sausage, Chili and more. Wine will be served by the glass. www.konzelmann.ca

PILLITTERI ESTATES WINERY **Warm Up With Pillitteri** Weekends in January 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

If you're feeling chilly during the Icewine Festival, stop by Pillitteri and warm up with our complimentary Cabernet Franc Icewine Hot Chocolate! You'll also have the chance to indulge in a Hidden Gem Icewine Flight. This opportunity to sample some of Pillitteri's rarest Icewines is only available during the Icewine Festival, so don't miss it!. Waffle and Icewine pairing and Hidden Gem Icewine. Flights are one ticket each for Icewine Festival Discovery Pass holders, or \$10.00 each without a Discovery Pass.

You Had Me at Merlot Weekends in February 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

This February, prepare to fall in love with Pillitteri. During the Days of Wine and Chocolate, we will entice our guests with our 2007 Exclamation Series Reserve Merlot, paired with scrumptious White Chocolate Blueberry Truffles. It will give your taste buds butterflies! Event is for Days for Wine and Chocolate Passport Holders only. One ticket per person. www.pillitteri.com

INDUSTRY MEMBER EVENTS
CONTINUED

STREWN WINERY

A Symphony of Icewines

Sat., January 22

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Join us for an in-depth tasting flight of three of our favourite award-winning Icewines: Vidal, Riesling and Cabernet Sauvignon. Discover the nuances and notes of these delectable dessert wines while sampling each along with a

delicious food pairing. One of Strewn's winemaking team will conduct this educational seminar on how best to serve Icewine matching similar as well as contrasting flavours to create an exciting taste experience. Vivaldi's Four Seasons: Winter will serve as a backdrop while you enjoy this tasting. (note: the seminar is scheduled for late morning when your palate is sharper).

Days of Wine and Chocolate
Weekends in February

Warm up your winter with this match made in heaven! Explore pairings of two of your favourite indulgences - wine and chocolate. Visit Strewn and try our 2008 Meritage with Dark Raspberry Chocolate. 11 am to 5 pm. Tour Passes are \$30.00 per person (plus applicable taxes) and can be used any of the four weekends. Passes can be purchased at any of the 25 wineries, online at www.niagaraonthelake.com or by calling 905-468-1950. www.strewnwinery.com

This month's SOCIAL MEDIA BUZZ is, fittingly, us !
Follow the Ontario Wine Society on Facebook and Twitter @IOWS

FEATURE EVENT

Seriously Cool Chardonnay Event – 2011 Version

If you missed last year's historical Seriously Cool Ontario Chardonnay event, you get a second, better but perhaps last chance to taste the best that Canada has to offer... all in one place. Last year the wines (and their producers) went to Canada House in London, England to be tasted by the British wine critics and public. This year the Seriously Cool - Great Canadian Grape takes on the Big Apple's critics and public.

Selected by a panel of experts, from the 100 submitted, this year's top Chardonnays from

Ontario, British Columbia and Nova Scotia, will be tasted by OWS members, guests and the public on February 22. This Toronto event will act as a dress rehearsal before they head to New York City to a room high up in the McGraw Hill building in midtown Manhattan.

As a special treat, each attendee will taste the Chardonnays in a commemorative Ontario Wine Society 20th Anniversary, Schott Zwiesel Cru Classic glass, that they get to keep.

This is not to be missed because word on the street is that this will be the last of this type of event for the foreseeable future. The event takes place Tuesday, February 22 at the Toronto Lawn and Tennis Club near Yonge and Eglinton. \$43.00 each for OWS members and their first guest. \$53.00 each for non-members and additional guests.

Registration hasn't begun yet but watch the OWS website for updates – www.ontariowinesociety.com/events

Just Off the Vine... is the official newsletter of the Ontario Wine Society. It is published 10 times a year. Visit us on-line at www.ontariowinesociety.com.

Editor: Jennifer Hart

Contributors: Ken Burford, OWS President

Heino Claessens, First President of the OWS

Patricia Dinsmore, OWS Media Rep

Bruce Jackson, Director of Events & Photographer – Niagara Chapter