



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

March 2010

Upcoming Events

Ontario Chardonnay - Seriously Cool

March 24 - 6:30 p.m.

Toronto Lawn Tennis Club

Take Part in a Historical Ontario Wine Event!

Cool climate VQA Chardonnays from Ontario will be showcased in England when British wine writers gather at Canada House in Trafalgar Square on May 17 to taste 34 of Ontario's top VQA Chardonnays selected by a group of Ontario wine critics.

This Ontario Wine Society event will be a dress rehearsal for the Canada House tasting.

"Britain is the largest market in the world with a very small domestic wine industry," noted Bill Redelmeier, owner of Southbrook Vineyards. "The opportunity to showcase Ontario wines in London can provide a real boost for our product. A generation ago, the New Zealand wine industry launched Sauvignon Blanc in Britain, and it put New Zealand wines on the map."

"Most people think Icewine is Ontario's signature wine, but actually it's Chardonnay," said Tony Aspler, who will also be in England for the tasting with Bill Redelmeier and winery principals. "The London tasting will give the British press the opportunity to discover wines that are food-friendly and reminiscent of fine white Burgundies."

Redelmeier conceived the idea for the British media tasting after Niagara's Le Clos Jordanne won a prestigious competition last year in Montreal putting French wines against wines from the United States. Le Clos Jordanne's Chardonnay served as the "ringer" in the contest and emerged victorious in the category. Hearing Le Clos winemaker Thomas Bachelder say in a radio interview that any number of wineries in Ontario could have won the contest, Redelmeier came up with the idea of promoting Ontario Chardonnays as a group effort.

For a detailed list of the wines that each will be pouring, please go to

<http://www.ontariowinesociety.com/flyers/seriouslycool-winelist.htm>

\$39 each for a member and one guest. \$49 each for additional guests and non-members.

Cheers for Cheddar!

March 31 - Reception: 6:30 p.m., Tasting 7:00 p.m.

\$35 for members, \$45 for non-members

CUCCI Ristorante (event room)

119 Jones Street, Oakville

Join the OWS for an evening of sampling that irresistible combo - wine and cheese. And not just any cheese, but the world-renowned fine aged cheddars produced by Balderson Cheese. This event will be hosted by John Nadeau, co-founder of The Wine Establishment and consultant to Ontario's wineries.

The event will pair Balderson's Extra Old White Cheddar (aged up to 18 months) with a 2006 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Single Vineyard, Queenston Road Vineyard, a three-year-old white cheddar with a 2006 Reserve Merlot, Creekside Estate Winery, and a six-year-old cheddar with 2005 Reserve Meritage, also from Creekside Estates.

The price includes the wine, cheese and a sampling plate of Cucci's signature appetizers.

This event is open to OWS members and non-members, but attendees must be 19 years of age or older.

Register for this event on-line at [ontariowinesociety.com/Upcoming Events/Oakville Chapter](http://ontariowinesociety.com/Upcoming%20Events/Oakville%20Chapter), or by mail using the registration form below. Seating is limited, so be sure to register early.

Toronto Chapter Annual General Meeting

The Ontario Wine Society, Toronto Chapter

Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday,

April 27 at 5:00pm at the Faculty Club, U of T, 41

Willcocks St. This will be just before the "An Austrian/Ontario Wine Experience event.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

1. Report on the financial state of the Society as of March 31, 2010.
 2. Report on the accomplishments during the past fiscal year.
 3. Elect the Board of Directors for the next year.
- Members that have put their name forward for election or re-election to the Board are Ken Burford, Sadie Darby, Neil Yeung, Glonore DePencier, Craig Fleming Michael van Vlymen.



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Anyone wishing to stand for election, or nominate a candidate, should contact Ken Burford at 416 489 0979 before April 20, 2010. Only members-in-good-standing are eligible to vote at the Annual General Meeting.

Niagara Chapter Annual General Meeting

The Ontario Wine Society, Niagara Chapter will be holding its Annual General Meeting and Social at Alvento Winery in Vineland on Saturday, March 27.

Previous Events

2010 OWS Icewine Weekend

WENDY MUIR

On a sparkling sunny afternoon on Saturday, January 30, OWS members and friends gathered at Konzelmann Estate Winery for the start of the annual Icewine Weekend. The group of 29 was taken on a tour of the winery by the fun and very informative Jeremy. Recently, Konzelmann has been under going major expansion. Some of the newly constructed areas to be used for group tastings and special events were presented, including the exciting "Icewine Room" which is not quite ready for visitors. The whole winery now has an open, airy feel to it with traditional looks but modern features.



Jeremy, far left, pours his delicious Icewine martinis while, l-r, Wendy Muir, George Jesenko, Dianne Thomas, John Gavigan and Jansin Ozkur look on. Photo by Andy McCraw.

Jeremy then led everyone downstairs to the small barrel cellar where wine was aging in mainly French oak barrels. Then it was up and outside to see the vineyard. As the group soaked in the sunshine on the windless afternoon, Herbert Konzelmann's own home could be seen just down the driveway, right on Lake Ontario. The fourth generation winemaker traveled from Germany in 1984 and bought the land which he immediately planted with vines.

Back inside, the wine making area was demonstrated. For a smaller winery, Konzelmann uses its own staff for all aspects of the winery such as picking and vineyard maintenance and does all bottling on site. The group was then taken upstairs to the loft for an Icewine tasting. Jeremy first offered a 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon Icewine. The strawberry-rhubarb taste was nicely complimented by the 60% chocolate pieces provided to go with it. Next, a 2006 Riesling Icewine was poured, its nicely balanced flavours going well with the raw almonds or blue cheese on each table.



OWS members and friends gather at Konzelmann for dinner. Photo by Andy McCraw.

The piece-de-resistance of the tasting was the 2007 Vidal Icewine that had taken the grand gold medal at VinItaly in April 2009.

It was the 2006 vintage of this wine that put Konzelmann on the Wine Spectator's Top 100 Wineries list for 2008, the first Canadian winery to ever be included. Though no longer available for sale at the winery, it was a special treat for the OWS group.

Everyone then had some time to go to the Konzelmann tasting room to taste and to purchase other wines then drive to the fabulous White Oaks Resort and Spa, where the group was staying overnight.

It was back to Konzelmann at 6 p.m. for a special dinner with Herbert and Gudrun Konzelmann as well as the vice-president of Marketing, Jansin Ozkur. The main entrance hall, with its cathedral ceilings, was set up with one long table and another across the top to seat the 32 guests. As everyone was arriving the Old Cellar Door sparkling wine was poured. This sparkler, made in the traditional method, was the perfect conversation starter for the group. Jeremy, who was the MC for the evening, was pouring, for those interested, a special "martini" that he had created for the Niagara Icewine Festival. This martini was comprised of a layer of the Cabernet Sauvignon Icewine, a layer of cranberry juice and a swirl of sparkling wine on top. With a fresh cranberry floating in the glass, it was quite the refreshing drink. Anymore, Jeremy?

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Once everyone was seated, dinner began, catered by the Blue Turtle Bistro of St. Catharines. It started with a potato soup with pork belly and truffle accompanied by either the 2008 Pinot Grigio or the 2007 decanted Zweigelt. The Zweigelt played more toward the pork belly but the Pinot Grigio went nicely with the potato and truffle flavours. Next course was a scallop and shrimp sausage with corn fritter and sweet potato and the 2007 Riesling Grand Classic, another delicious match.

The main course was a very tender braised short rib with goat cheese and ricotta ravioli on the side. The wine poured was the 2006 Four Generations Barrel Aged Merlot. Its soft and round berry-fruit flavours with a touch of pepper paired nicely with the beef. Though most complained of being full, no one turned down the crème brulee and 2006 Riesling-Traminer Special Select wine.

Herbert Konzelmann accepts the Ontario Wine Society Lifetime Achievement Award. Photo by Andy McCraw.



The finale of the evening was the presentation to Herbert of the Ontario Wine Society Lifetime Achievement Award. This award had previously only been bestowed on four other Ontario wine pioneers. Herbert was his usual modest self accepting the specially commissioned piece of art created by artist Tom Grella of Burnt Toast Gallery. As some lingered over a final glass of wine, others headed into the tasting room to purchase more of the fabulous Konzelmann wines. The big question is, where to next year?

Just Off the Vine is the official Newsletter of the Ontario Wine Society. It is published 10 times a year.

Editor: Glen Siegel
Associate Editor: Kait Nienhuis

Ontario Wine Society (Toronto) meets Schott Zwiesel MICHAEL PINKUS

In December of 2008, I introduced the OWS (Niagara Chapter) to Schott Zwiesel, at Chateau des Charmes; now, just over a year later Schott Zwiesel comes calling again, this time it's the Toronto chapter that got to experience the glassware difference of Schott Zwiesel, and it all took place at The Cannery restaurant in the Distillery District.

First, let's start with the hosts for the evening. I, Michael Pinkus, head writer for OntarioWineReview.com and all around Grape Guy, led the tasting part of the evening with the help of Schott Zwiesel's main man in Canada, Lloyd Thistle. I began by introducing myself as the writer of "a newsletter that's a must read if you are at all interested in Ontario wine" – it was nice to hear a few second that notion. Now, obviously SZ is not a Canadian company. It's a German glassware manufacturer who has been making glassware/stemware since 1872. They have the distinct honour of having made stemware for Riedel at one point in their long history. But, once they invented their patented Triton technology it was arrivederci Riedel. Triton technology is a no-lead crystal. Instead the glass is made with titanium-oxide which keeps the crystal clarity and the fine edge. But, now it has a durability higher than any other crystal on the market ... and bonus, you can even put it in the dishwasher. It's tested to an average of 1500 times before any etching occurs. All this mumbo jumbo is impressive to listen to, but once Lloyd tinged the glass off the table in front of the onlookers the ooh's and aah's from the crowd were plainly audible. The only thing missing from the demonstration was the Riedel glass I substituted in Niagara that caused Lloyd to break the glass. I couldn't do it to him twice in a row. But, it sure does show the durability between the two stems. Let me come right out and say it, I am a fan of Schott Zwiesel stemware because of their durability, I have watched plenty of my own Riedel or Spiegelau glasses snap and shatter with the merest cling or clang against the side of the counter, table top or even against one another. The versatility of putting them in the dishwasher reminds me of the Ronco Rotisserie commercial, "set it and forget it."

Enough about the glassware, for the moment, it's off to taste the wines. Tonight we were tasting wines in varietal specific glasses. Five glasses were in front of us. Each had a specific job. Enhance the wine inside. Each wine started out in the Sensus glass, Schott Zwiesel's version of the ISO glass that we all know and love, yet more elegant. We then poured the wine into each glass sipping, sniffing and sampling as we went. Then I polled the crowd to find out which glass was their preferred vessel.

While personal preference always comes into play here, the majority always picked the glass deemed best for that specific wine. Even those who started the evening as skeptics were convinced that the proper glassware does make a difference on how we taste and experience wine.

The wines of the evening were:

Rosehall Run 2008 Riesling, \$14.95

Black Prince Winery 2008 Chardonnay \$14.75

Rosehall Run 2007 Rosehall Vineyard Pinot Noir \$37.95

Alvento 2005 Elige (Cabernet Sauvignon – Cabernet Franc) \$29.95

A very special thank you to Lloyd Thistle of Fortessa of Canada for helping to fund this event; and to myself for leading everyone so wonderfully through the tasting. Lloyd would like to remind you that Schott Zwiesel stemware is available through Sadie Darby, vice-president of the Toronto Chapter, sdarby@rogers.com, at a special OWS discount. Oh, and did I mention that we all got to take our five stems home with us so that we could experiment with our own favourites. That could have been the best part of the evening if it wasn't for the food that Chef Eric, executive chef at the Cannery, prepared for us. He paired two hors d'oeuvres with each wine and totally outdid himself, as did Lloyd, moi, and the rest of the OWS team who made this event possible.

Matching Wine & Aphrodisiacs

YVONNE TROUT

Upon entering this Valentine's themed event, each lady was adorned with a big feathery boa, and each gentleman was armed with a novelty hotel key to the "No Tell Motel" that had two wine related pick-up lines printed on the back (i.e.: Say, aren't you Marilyn Merlot?). We then proceeded to Strewn's tasting room where we enjoyed pâté and crudités as we sampled some of Strewn's reds.



Ted Han demonstrates his pick-up success with Rose-Ann St. Jean (left) and wife Gillian.

It's amazing how a few brightly coloured feathers can put people in a playful mood!

We then proceeded to the dining room of La Cachette, the restaurant inside Strewn Winery, where we sat down to six samples of wine and a palate plate full of taste samples. Linda Bramble, our speaker and recent author of Niagara's Wine Visionaries, proceeded to lead us through an options game where each table worked together as a team. Each team answered aphrodisiac and wine related questions to score points in hopes of winning autographed copies of Linda's new book for the whole table. Linda's line of questioning had us eating oysters on the half shell, feeding spears of asparagus to our man-folk, assessing which food aroma was most arousing, and blushing and giggling as we debated which body part avocados most closely resembled! As always with Linda's tastings, we giggled a bit and learned a lot.



Linda Bramble distributes copies of her book to the members of the winning table.

After Linda granted the winning table their prizes, a plate of aphrodisiac hors d'oeuvres prepared by Chef Alain Levesque was presented to each person. Each morsel was crafted from aphrodisiacs like chilies, chocolate, grapes, avocados, pine nuts, black beans, honey and strawberries. We then got to pair them with each of our wines and assess which were the best matches as we discussed it with our table.

It was a playfully romantic evening of interaction, games and education. After the loose feathers from 35 boas finally settled to the carpet, it looked like a small group of brightly coloured chickens had just finished an aerobics class!

The Niagara Chapter would like to thank Terroir La Cachette and Strewn Winery for hosting the tasting, Tricia Keyes and Joe Will for their assistance in planning, and their staff members Desiree and Christine for helping at the event. Thank you to Linda Bramble for leading us

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through the tasting and Chef Alain Levesque for the delicious food. We'd also like to thank Yvonne Trout for planning the tasting. Pictures of the event were taken by Bruce Jackson, and can be viewed on the web site: www.ontariowinesociety.com. Thank you Bruce.

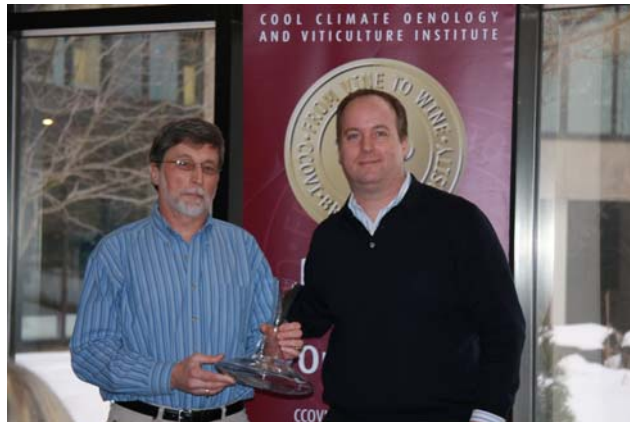
Promoter-at-Large Award

The Ontario Wine Society President, Ken Burford, has been awarded the first Promoter-at-Large Award at CCOVI Expert's Tasting Event.

The mission of "the promote the promoters awards" is to acknowledge those individuals that celebrate the Ontario VQA wine industry with unselfish enthusiasm, constructive input, and unsolicited promotion.

The Experts' Tasting is an annual, by-invitation-only event designed for the trade – primarily media, product consultants, sommeliers and wine educators, who promote VQA wines through education and/or promotion. It is sponsored by, and held at, Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute.

A new category of award was created this year, Promoter-at-Large. Ken is the first recipient of the award in the new category."



OWS Corporate and Toronto Chapter President Receiving Promote the Promoters Award at CCOVI Experts' Tasting Event, Feb. 20, 2010 – Photo by Barb Tatarnic

News from the Vines

Fred Couch, OWS – Niagara Chapter

The Ice House Winery's 2005 Northern Ice™ Vidal Icewine outperformed thousands of wines in Monde Sélection in Brussels, garnering a rare and coveted Grand Gold. Northern Ice Vidal Icewine was one of the many premium Canadian products given out to Golden Globe Award nominees and party-goers.

Congratulations to John Szabo who is now president of the Wine Writers' Circle of Canada and Michael Pinkus who is now vice-president.

Ravine Vineyards Estate Winery is the latest to become an Ontario Wine Society Industry member and supporter of the OWS. Check out their website at www.ravinevineyard.com.

Congratulations to the management and staff of Hillebrand Estates Winery, who received the 2009 Niagara Chapter's award for Excellence in Hospitality. The winery and staff have been huge supporters of the Ontario Wine Society and the special treatment the Niagara Chapter received at the 2009 Annual Dinner was exceptional.



Receiving the award on behalf of Hillebrand and staff were from left to right: Alison Zalepa, Estate Manager; Frank Dodd, Executive Chef; Shawn Spiewak, Restaurant Manager; Sherri Lockwood, Marketing. Photo by Bruce Jackson.

Jean Pierre Colas, head winemaker for 13th Street Winery is also consulting at Vignoble Rancourt Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Congratulations to all the winners at this year's Cuvée Gala. Cuvée has become known as the "Oscars" of the Ontario wine industry. Twenty-two of the twenty-four winners (1st place Gold) are Ontario Wine Society Industry members! For a complete list of the 2010 winning wineries go to www.cuvee.ca.



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Also announced at this year's Cuvée were the "Promote the Promoter" awards. These awards recognize individuals for their outstanding achievements and contributions in the promotion of Ontario wine. The 2010 winners are Michael Pinkus (www.ontariowinereview.com) for "Media", Ontario Wine Society – Niagara Chapter member, Jennifer Wilhem for "Education" and the OWS – Corporate President, Ken Burford for "Promoter at Large". Congratulations to these three great supporters of the Ontario wine industry.

Industry Member Events

CAVE SPRING CELLARS

Think Tank

March 20 and April 3 - 1:00 p.m.

The invention of stainless steel tanks ushered in a fresh, modern style of winemaking. Awaken your senses with tank samples of yet-to-be bottled aromatic whites from the 2009 vintage as well as tasting whites from vintages past.

\$15. Reservations required.

Release Weekend and Winemaker's Dinner

April 17 - 18

One night accommodation at Inn on the Twenty including a luxurious suite with a Jacuzzi and fireplace, enhanced continental breakfast, a new release tasting and hors d'oeuvres and a five course dinner with Cave Spring wines presented by winemaker Angelo Pavan. The experience will conclude with a private tutored tasting of "our very best" wines to date. Not to be missed.

Package cost is \$289 per person. Tasting and dinner only is \$146 per person. Taxes and gratuities not included.

Please call 1-800-701-8074 for reservations.

April Showers...

April 24 - 1:00 p.m.

Wedding and baby showers are a great time to break out the bubbles. So is the beginning of a new season! Join us at Cave Spring for a sparkling celebration that will include our three bruts (Dolomite, Riesling and our yet-to-be released Pinot Noir) along with a special 'guest' sparkler. We will pair the wines with some small delights prepared by Inn on the Twenty.

\$25 per person

May Flowers...

May 8 - 1:00 p.m.

Rose petal, violet, orange blossom...the aromatic floral notes of Cave Spring wines will be our focus as we explore the varieties associated with fragrant aromas and luscious palates. Chardonnay Musque and Gewürztraminer will be two of the wines we delve into in both new and back vintages.

\$15 per person

FEATHERSTONE ESTATE WINERY

Tasting Room Opens

April 1

Tasting room opens for the season. Hours are: April through October: Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays from 11 a.m.- 5:30 p.m.

Hours will shorten in the fall.

Red Tail Release: A Return to the Wild

April 3 - 1:00 p.m. ~ 3:00 p.m.

Our 2008 Red Tail Merlot is named in honour of the local Red-tailed Hawks that we see soaring over the vineyards of Niagara. Falconer and winery owner Louise Engel was inspired by these magnificent birds to create a wine with the same soaring elegance and character.

Carol Ricciuto is a local, licensed wildlife rehabilitator who works extensively with Red-tailed Hawks at the Open Sky Raptor Foundation in Grimsby, Ontario. The day we release our Red Tail Merlot — she will have a live Red-tailed Hawk with her at the winery. This is a rare opportunity to observe one of these magnificent creatures up close, ask questions and learn about these regal birds of prey.

A portion of the day's sales of the Featherstone Estate 2008 Red Tail Merlot will go to support the Open Sky Raptor Foundation.

The 'F'ing' Winery Tour

April 10 & 11, 17 & 18 - 11:00 a.m. ~ 4:00 p.m.

Join us for a spring fling at all three of the 'F'ing' wineries- Flat Rock Cellars, Fielding Estate, and Featherstone Estate Winery. We three wineries band together once a year for a fanciful, flavourful, 'F'ing' Winery Tour.

Our farfetched theme and this year's forthcoming festivities include fanciful food and wine pairings at each winery. This year the food pairings will focus on flatbread with a fresh, fabulous topping. Each winery will match their featured food to their feature wines. We hope to see you at the forthcoming frenzy of first-class wines. Bring your friends!

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A passport fee of \$10 per person and entitles you to taste two featured wines and to enjoy a fitting food pairing at each winery. Passports can be

purchased at all three wineries, either by ordering ahead or on the day of your visit.

HENRY OF PELHAM FAMILY ESTATE WINERY

Back to Baco

July 1, 2, 3 & 4 - 11:00 a.m. ~ 5:00 p.m.

This is a taste sensation you won't want to miss. We'll be serving our Baco Noir and Reserve Baco Noir with complimentary plump, ripe strawberries dipped in freshly ground black pepper. It's a unique combination of fruit and spice that wows the taste buds.

Price: No charge

Shakespeare in the Vineyard

July 8, 9, 10, 15, 16 & 17

Wine Bar 6:00 p.m. & Play 7:00 p.m.

Twelfth Night is Shakespeare at his best, a comedy for common folk that is still filled with enough of that lovely language and wily wit to satisfy the intellect. Accessible and entertaining, Twelfth Night is a light-hearted, high-spirited romp full of intrigue and disguise, practical jokes and slapstick humour, pirates and castaways, lords and ladies. The moral of the story is never send a boy on a man's errand, especially if he's a girl.

Price: \$25 per ticket

To Purchase Tickets: Call Brock University at 905-688-5550 ext. 3257 or online at arts.brocku.ca

Oyster Boy

July 24 & 25 - 11:00 a.m. ~ 5:00 p.m.

In person from Toronto, John Petcoff from Oyster Boy will be on hand to shuck fresh oysters paired to our perfect 'oyster wines' including Sauvignon Blanc. Also that day, the renowned Ninavik Gallery from Jordan Village will present sculpture and modern masks from Ontario's Six Nations.

Price: Market price of oyster's that day

THE GRANGE OF PRINCE EDWARD

Celebrates Maple in the County

March 27 & 28

The Grange of Prince Edward Celebrates Maple in the County with free Wine and Maple Pairings: A special preview of our 2008 Victoria Block Chardonnay paired with a cornmeal pancake topped with an apple and roasted garlic chutney, crème fraiche and maple smoked bacon. Taking place Maple Weekend, March 27-28 at the winery. We will also have Steven Elphick's photographic work on display throughout the month of March. Free to view. Come check it out!

HILLEBRAND ESTATES

March Break

March 6 to 22

Hillebrand Winery is serving up sales with two mouthwatering wining and dining options at incredible prices.

Winter Tasting Menu Sale

Offered from 5:30 p.m.

Six-course tasting menu (an \$80* value) for \$50* per person!

'Break Away' Lunch & Tour Package

Offered at 1:00 p.m. & 1:00 p.m.

Three-course set menu and Winery Tour for \$45* per person!

*Exclusive of wine, taxes and gratuities

To book any events please call 1.800.582.8412 ext. 2 or visit www.hillebrand.com.

PELLER ESTATES

Winery Recruitment 2010

'If You Love Your Job You Never Work a Day in Your Life.'

March 27 & 28 - 1:00 p.m. ~ 4:00 p.m.

Do you have a passion for wine, a positive spirit and enthusiasm for customer service?

Peller Estates, Hillebrand Winery, Thirty Bench Wine Makers and Wine Country Vintners are looking for motivated, engaging wine enthusiasts who are looking to expand their wine knowledge in a variety of rewarding job opportunities in dynamic work environments.

We are hiring for:

- Winery Boutique
- Tours & Tastings
- Guest Relations



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Winery Restaurant Dining Service

Winery Restaurant Kitchen

Join us for Winery Recruitment Day at Peller Estates on March 27 and 28 from 1 p.m. to 4

p.m. Bring your resume and be prepared to spend some time with our team leaders.

Peller Estates, 290 John St. E. Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Call 1.888.673.5537 ext. 2 for more information.

March Break

March 6 to 22

Winery Chef and CityLine personality Jason Parsons is slicing his prices and offering two wining and dining options at incredible prices. These offers don't last forever, so don't miss your chance to enjoy our pruned prices before it's over.

Winter Tasting Menu Sale

Offered from 5:30 p.m.

Enjoy our six-course tasting menu, an \$80* value, for \$50*! That's a \$30 savings for a meal that Zagat rates as 'Extraordinary'!

Everyday is Sunday!

Offered from 12:00 noon

Savour our Lunch Tasting Menu, a \$58* value, for \$44.95*. We will also give you a complimentary glass of our sparkling wine upon arrival.

*Exclusive of wine, taxes and gratuities

Chef's Table Dinner Series

March 6 & 20 - April 3, 10, 17 & 24

Reception 6:30 p.m. Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

Come behind the scenes at Peller Estates Winery Restaurant and discover how Winery Chef and CityLine personality Jason Parsons approaches the art of pairing wine and food. Your dining experience begins with a reception in Jason's kitchen where he will discuss collaborating with winemaker Lawrence Buhler and his approach to developing innovative food and wine pairings. You will then enjoy a seasonally inspired tasting menu presented by Jason and perfectly paired with wines selected by Lawrence. \$140 per person, plus tax and gratuities. Space is limited.

To book events visit www.peller.com or call 1.888.673.5537 ext. 2.

REIF ESTATE WINERY

Taste the Terroir

March 27 - 12:00 noon ~ 2:30 p.m.

Hearty Winter Luncheon at Reif Estate Winery Taste the terroir of the Reif Estate vineyards in our First Growth wines from the 2007 vintage. Join winemaker Roberto DiDomenico for an afternoon of hearty winter local fare paired with our richest reds produced from our oldest blocks. Guest will enjoy the ambiance of our new barrel cellar as well as the benefit of pre-release pricing of 25% off wine from the First Growth Collection. Cost \$55 per person plus taxes and gratuity.

Email events@reifwinery.com or buy tickets on-line now or call 905-468-WINE (9463)

The 'White' Sale at Reif Estate Winery

April 22 through April 25

Visit Reif Estate Winery this spring or buy on-line to stock up for the season with wonderful whites for summer dining. You will get the year's best pricing on limited edition and estate bottled white wines, perfect for entertaining and outdoor grilling. This limited time pricing on our whites is only offered once a year, so come to wine country and taste what this vintage has to offer. Features complimentary wine tastings.

Wine Boutique open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

STREWN WINERY

Taste With The Winemaker

March 13 - 10:30 a.m. ~ 12 noon.

Come meet Strewn winemaker and owner Joe Will at the Terroir Bar. He will answer questions and talk wine as you sample some of Strewn's very best "Terroir" wines (regular tasting charges apply).

Terroir Bar Monthly Wine & Food Match

Daily 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., \$5 per person.

The March Wine & Food Match at the Terroir Bar is Cabernet Sauvignon 2007 Terroir paired with artisan cheeses. This big, bold Cabernet Sauvignon is drinking beautifully and hails from one of our best vintages.

Celebrate Spring Winemaker's Dinner

March 20

The location is Strewn and the lovely onsite restaurant Terroir La Cachette. The evening will begin with a wine sampling in the winery and a seasonal five-course dinner will follow in the restaurant. Cost is \$100 per person plus taxes and gratuity. Seating is limited so reserve early, and no later than March 12. Please let us know about any dietary restrictions when you book. To reserve, call 905-468-1229.

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The Vigneron Series: Vine Pruning & Vintage Sneak Peak

April 10

The Vigneron Discovery Series is a hands-on vineyard program. Our "terroir" has inspired us to create this special event. Guided by winemaker Joe Will, the day begins with a tasting of selected white wines from the 2009 Vintage and a classroom review of the principles and techniques of pruning. Following tasting, we provide you with pruning shears and you take the first steps to becoming a Vigneron. 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost: \$20. Reservations required. To book your spot, call 905-468-1229. *Dress warmly, it is still chilly in the vineyard; tough gloves and waterproof footwear are essential.

Nat Decants

FREE MOBILE APP

Natalie MacLean has just released a new smartphone app that takes the wine and food pairings from her web site and makes them available on your phone. You get all the pairings in the original bestselling Drinks Matcher app plus thousands of wine reviews, recipes, articles, glossary definitions and winery listings. It's like having a personal sommelier in your pocket. And it's free!

You can get the app at:

<http://www.nataliemaclean.com/mobileapp/>

Other Ontario Wine Events

LEGENDS ESTATES WINERY

Legendary Winemaker's Dinner

Friday, April 16

Enjoy an intimate night with Legends Estates Winery owner Paul Lizak in the heart of our wine cellar. Chef James Cuttriss presents a memorable three-course menu inspired by the offerings of the season, paired to perfection with the rare and signature varietal wines of Legends Estates.

\$70 including taxes; Gratuity not included. Advance ticket purchase required. For more information, please call 905-563-6500 or email events@LegendsEstates.com

Tony Aspler's Cellar Book

GLEN SIEGEL

Tony Aspler and I got together in downtown Toronto on the auspicious day of Friday the 13th to talk about his newest book "Tony Aspler's Cellar Book".

GS: This seems to be a more personal book than "The Wine Atlas of Canada". Was it easier to write?

TA: Absolutely – it was more fun as it was the accumulation of my ears of experience in wine and it was also based on the experiences of people I have known and spoken to about wine. It still took me a year and a half to write it.

Now, everyone who drinks wine on a regular basis wants a cellar. One statistic that I quote in the book is that the average length of time between the purchase and opening of a bottle of wine is 54 minutes. However, anyone who drinks wine on a regular basis, sooner or later, wants a wine cellar. It might be a stash in a box in the cupboard for current consumption but it is still a wine cellar. If your household goes through a bottle of wine every day and more when you have company, you need about 500 bottles of wine per year. As wine needs some time resting before you drink it, you can see how you can easily need room in your cellar for 1000 bottles.

GS: In the book, you talk about the beginning of your lifelong love affair with wine. Have you ever had a wine that moved you to tears?

TA: I'm often asked about the best wine I've ever had and I remember it clearly. It was a 1964 Musigny Vielle Vignes. That was on February 13, 1975 when my son was born. At least 60% of the enjoyment of wine is the circumstances. The simplest wine can give you greater pleasure than a great wine depending on the circumstances and the company.

GS: You mention that your parents kept a single, ceremonial bottle of Manischewitz in the house when you were young. As you didn't come from a wine drinking family, how did they view your career choice.

TA: I think they were amused but it but I do wish that they had seen me receive the Order of Canada. I think they would have felt that my choice was alright. They wanted my to be a lawyer. I did my post graduate work in Dublin and fell into the "Dublin lifestyle". When I returned to Montreal in 1960 I wanted to be a writer and I had enough material for several novels including my first one "The Streets of Askelon". I've since written 9 novels and 16 wine books.



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

March 2010

GS: You talk about the difference between collecting wine and investing in wine. Do you collect or invest?

TA: I never sell wine. It's for drinking. It's like food to me. I don't sell groceries either. I do however trade wine with friends sometime.

GS: What was the most satisfying wine you ever collected?

TA: Port as a category is the most satisfying to me. It's infallible. Occasionally you get a corked bottle but otherwise, it is satisfying at every stage of development. I have come to prefer Tawny ports to Vintage. Vintage you have to finish rather quickly when you open them.

GS: In the book, you differentiate types of cellars including investment cellars. Do you think that people in Ontario can succeed at wine investment considering the rules of the LCBO?

TA: In 1972, the LCBO release Chateau d'Yquem 1967 at \$17.95. It's now worth over \$2500. If you buy first growth futures and hit the right one, you can do well but you need to be well heeled to purchase first growth Bordeaux or Petrus.

GS: You mention that although you have had the same thing for breakfast every day for years, but you wouldn't have the same thing for dinner every night so you need a diversified cellar. What is it you have for breakfast?

TA: Champagne!

(Note: I once asked Tony which wine would he pick if he could only have one wine and he answered "Champagne – it's the only wine that goes with everything and no one looks at you funny if you have it for breakfast!" He mentions in the Cellar Book that he doesn't actually drink wine at breakfast.)

GS: You talk about what happens to the wine before you purchase it and mention that many wine shops have the bottles standing up as it's faster and easier to stock the shelves that way. What do you think about the wine stores in the Toronto area?

TA: Other than bottles with screw caps, the stores really should have the bottles lying down. It doesn't take too long before the corks start to dry out.

GS: Does your cellar have many bottles with screw cap closures?

TA: Quite a few of them have screw caps. Many wineries use nothing else now. Take, for example, Flat Rock Cellars. All of their wines, even their icewine, have screw caps. Generally, wines I am laying down for longer aging have corks.

50% of my cellar is now new world wines and a good number of those are Canadian which I find very

gratifying. As for the questions about screw cap wines aging, I find that they stay fresh far longer. Occasionally, the sulphur compounds get bound in and you get a reductive rubbery taste but not often. I do know that some wineries are experimenting with screw caps that breathe so that the wines age more like wines closed with a cork.

GS: Throughout your book, you describe your dream cellar. How many of the wines in your dream cellar are in your cellar?

TA: (laughing) Not many! My dream cellar was developed by selecting the wines I feel are currently the best choices from each wine region. It would change over the years as some producers improve or as the weather changes. That's one of the more interesting aspects of wine. Things always change.

GS: Did you price your dream cellar which has about 620 wines in it?

TA: The average price of the wines in the cellar is about \$40 but actually pricing it would be too difficult.

GS: I'm sure all sorts of people will be second guessing you about the dream cellar. For example, you selected the Stag's Leap Cask 23 while I would have gone with the SLV. What will you say to people?

TA: These are wines that I have tasted and loved. I haven't tasted everything so I couldn't select from all the wines made. New wines will come into this dream cellar and some wines will be replaced. Sometimes wines go through a bad period and then improve again so they may come back.

GS: In the section on Italy, you mention that the difference between Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC) and Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG) wines is that the DOCG wines are blind tasted by a panel to ensure their regional Typicity and quality. Tasting panels are used world wide for appellation control. Do you think this is good method of control?

TA: Well, I wonder what would happen to the wines if these controls weren't in place. Would the market purchase wines that were not good? I also wonder if the panel tastes the same product as gets shipped to the consumers.

GS: During your discussion of the wines of Germany, you quote Giles McDonogh who states that "Riesling in all its styles...is more cellar worthy than Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Soave or Muscadet." Do you agree with his assessment?

TA: I love Riesling so it's nice to live in Ontario. Some of my favourites include Najda's Riesling from Flat Rock Cellars, Cave Springs CSV and Hidden Bench's Riesling.

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GS: You mention that Ontario grows more varieties than it should, notably Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. Why do you think this?

TA: A wine region should play to its strengths. Our summers are not long enough or hot enough to ripen Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah every year. We should focus on Riesling, Chardonnay, Gamay Noir and Pinot Noir. We should also produce more sparkling wines and perhaps Rosés.

GS: In the chapter on Common Wine Mistakes, you mention holding a glass by the bowl as it heats up the wine. I take it that you are not a fan of stemless wine glasses?

TA: No – I think they are a cynical ploy by the glassware companies to sell more glasses. The only thing in their favour is that they float in a hot tub! Once a year I go fishing and I take the best plastic glasses I can find – with stems.

GS: Do you have another project in mind? Have you started on it?

TA: Actually – I've finished it! The American wine writer, Dan Berger, and I have produced a book about wine touring in North America. The tours are all laid out so you visit four wineries a day.

I'm also thinking about a project focusing on wineries in the Mediterranean crescent – Bulgaria, Israel, Lebanon and so on. Part of the problem is that wine books are outdated very quickly and most people are now getting their information on wine from the internet,

GS: Thanks Tony.

TONY ASPLER'S CELLAR BOOK

Tony Aspler

Random House Canada, 2009, 339 pages. \$32.95

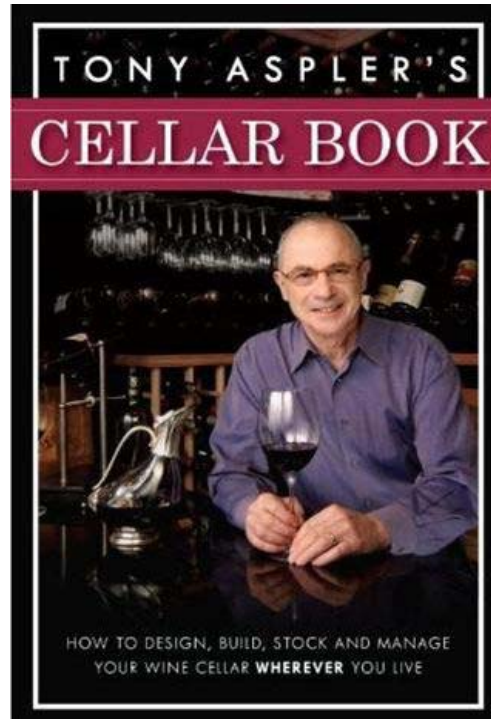
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Tony Aspler's Cellar Book is subtitled "How to Design, Build, Stock and Manage Your Wine Cellar Wherever You Live" which is quite an ambitious goal. Aspler accomplishes this with the clarity, breadth of knowledge, and good humour that his writing usually exhibits.

Aspler covers the history of the wine cellar, where you should build the cellar, your options if you can't build a cellar and then what you should put into the cellar. Although this sounds a little tedious, the book is full of anecdotes from Aspler and many of his friends about their cellars and their experiences with wine. People in Toronto will grin when they read a story involving a friend of Aspler's and David Miller, long before he was Mayor.

For anyone just starting a wine cellar, Aspler provides suggestions for a 48-bottle beginners cellar that he

estimates will cost about \$20 per bottle. However, he also points out that if you drink a bottle a night and you want to be prepared, you really need a 1000-bottle cellar.



The largest part of the book is a review of the major wine regions in the world and a listing of Aspler's "Dream Cellar", his current personal choices from every area. He follows this with extensive charts detailing styles of wine by colour and country and also an extensive alphabetic list of wines with their styles, origins and the grapes in the wines.

The final section of the book is about tasting and serving wine, cooking with wine, food and wine matching and then wine alternatives. This last section is not about alternatives to wine. It's about alternative wines by style.

The epilogue to the book is about the difficulties Aspler runs into while trying to build a wine cellar in his new condo. It's actually worth reading first!

This is a good book for people who are just getting involved in wine and don't yet have a cellar, or who are planning their first wine cellar, progressing beyond the cardboard box under the stairs.