



# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2008

## Upcoming Events

### **Passionate Pinot**

Tuesday November 25

Reception at 6:00 p.m., Tasting at 6:30 p.m. sharp

The Heartbreak Grape – highly susceptible to disease – Pinot Noir has earned the reputation for being a difficult grape to grow. Jancis Robinson calls Pinot “a minx of a vine” whereas Andre Tchelistcheff (the “dean of American winemakers”) stated that “God made Cabernet Sauvignon whereas the devil made Pinot Noir.” It’s not all bad though...Pinot Noir has been called “sex in a glass”, “a seductive yet fickle mistress” and “the most romantic of wines”. Pinot Noir is highly influenced by the terroir that surrounds it which means that depending on where your Pinot comes from, it could taste completely different than your neighbour’s Pinot. They say variety is the spice of life so come and join the Ontario Wine Society explore the wide variety of Pinot Noir that is available through a series of New World wine regions.

Leading us through this exciting tasting, we are pleased to announce that Norm Hardie of Norman Hardie Wines will be our guide. We’ll be spending most of our tour in Ontario but we will have little side trips to the Sonoma Coast of California, the Walker Bay region of South Africa and the Marlborough region of New Zealand. Just a little bit about our speaker for the evening:

*Early on, I traveled to the heart of the old wine world, I studied wine at the University of Dijon. Apprenticed with the legendary wine masters in Burgundy. Worked nights at a world-class restaurant. As sommelier and restaurant manager at the Four Seasons Hotels, I gained the perspective of food and wine connoisseurs - invaluable to a winemaker. But no wine education is complete without an appreciation of new world wines. So my journey led me to the most innovative Pinot Noir vineyards of California, Oregon, South Africa and New Zealand...working with winemakers who push the edge to produce sensational wines.*

In a May 2006 article in Post City Magazine, Tony Aspler is quoted as saying “It’s simply the best Canadian Pinot Noir of the vintage I have tasted. Norman has made wine in Burgundy, New Zealand, South Africa and Oregon. The experience has paid off. You heard it here first folks, Norman Hardie is truly a rising wine star.”

This was said before the 2007 vintage was even dreamt of being Ontario’s stellar vintage so imagine how the wines we will be drinking this night will taste.

2002 Birchwood Estates Pinot Noir (Reception)  
2006 Rosehall Run Vineyard Pinot Noir (Reception)  
2005 Bouchard Finlayson Galpin Peak Pinot Noir  
2006 Angel’s Gate Winery Pinot Noir  
2006 La Crema Winery Sonoma Coast Pinot Noir  
2006 Tawse Winery Pinot Noir  
2007 Flat Rock Cellars Estate Pinot Noir  
2007 Norman Hardie Wines County Pinot Noir  
2007 Allan Scott Family Winemakers Pinot Noir

## Previous Events

### **Que Syrah Shiraz...**

**Which was your favourite?**

#### **PAT DINSMORE**

Eight wines – six from Ontario, one from Australia and one from the Rhone Valley of France. Some of the Ontario wines bore the name Syrah while others were called Shiraz...so, what is the difference. Well, as our leader for the night – John Szabo – explained to us, a lot of it comes down to the style the winemaker chooses to take with the wine. If you see Syrah on the label, chances are pretty good that the winemaker decided to go with the more subtle, elegant, silky smooth flavour profile associated with some of France’s great Syrah’s. On the other hand, if the label says Shiraz, chances are pretty good that what you will be drinking is a powerhouse red full of jammy, fruity flavours and a lot of spice. We definitely had a real mix for the evening and there were people who liked both styles of the wines represented there that evening. For those of you who were not able to attend, here is the line up of wines from our wonderful evening:

1999 Inniskillin Wines Shiraz  
2004 Creekside Wines Reserve Shiraz  
2004 Southbrook Vineyards Syrah  
2005 Voyager Estate Shiraz  
2005 Domaine Pradelle Crozes-Hermitage  
2006 Fielding Estate Winery Syrah  
2006 Lailey Vineyard Canadian Oaked Shiraz  
2006 Peninsula Ridge Estate Winery Syrah Reserve

In this list, there is one wine that has yet to be released by the winery so those attending had a special treat half



# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2008

way through the tasting in the glass that contained the Fielding Estate Wines 2006 Syrah. We were also treated with the rare opportunity to have winery representatives – and in some cases the winemakers – from every Ontario winery represented. Considering this tasting was scheduled just as harvest was beginning in our wine regions, it is a rare treat to have representatives from the six Ontario wineries gathered in one room to share their passion, expertise and give us some insight into the wines we were drinking.

Gerry, our Events Director and the individual responsible for this tasting, is a huge lover of blind tastings as some of us know. This particular event was no exception and, in an Ontario Wine Society first I believe, our guest speaker was able to correctly identify each and every one of the eight wines. However, when you consider that our guest speaker was none other than John Szabo, the ONLY Master Sommelier in Canada, it really shows that his education has served him well and will continue to do so for a number of years to come. All that Gerry asked of the rest of us is to try to pick out the French wine, the Australian wine and choose a favourite. Well, picking the favourite was the easy one and some people were able to pick out either the French or the Australian and a small group of us managed to pick out both. For myself, I managed to pick out the Australian and my favourite was the final one of the evening – the Peninsula Ridge 2006 Syrah Reserve. How did everyone else fair?

The great thing is that each and every wine brought something different to the table. With each wine we tasted, we encountered different aromas and flavours when, for me at least, I was expecting some similarities. Just the way I've heard the weather described in some regions around this world, "if you don't like the weather wait five minutes" when it came to these wines, "if you don't like this one, try the next one." Chances are that if you didn't like one wine you liked the next and all around, it was a great selection of wines showing a wide range of styles and diversity. When I asked people after the fact how they felt about this particular tasting, the response was all favourable. The wines were great, the speaker was great, the food definitely seems to be improving and is now at an acceptable level in our eyes. Clear choices on favourites in the wine were the Creekside Estate Wines 2004 Shiraz Reserve and the Peninsula Ridge Estate Winery 2006 Syrah Reserve. John had started out the evening by saying that in the last ten years we have had a real boom in Shiraz or Syrah plantings worldwide. Originally, the largest plantings were in the Rhone Valley of France with the second largest area spreading across the wine regions of Australia

but, in Ontario, we now have major plantings ourselves and our wines are starting to show real potential. Craig McDonald, winemaker at Creekside Estate Wines, had these thoughts to express to us, "If you can get your hands on the 2005 and 2007 vintages they will definitely change your context of Ontario wines." Imagine, we only had the 2004 and it was one of the most popular wines of the evening.

## **Ontario Wine Society Shiraz/Syrah Tasting COLIN JOPLING @ VANCOUVER WINE INFO**

I think my years of referring to Ontario as Onterrible are over, I'm falling in love with this place. They seem to one up everything I see BC do. How many times have I attended a BC society tasting and had the opportunity to listen to 5 winemakers talk about their wines. Answer never! I'm lucky to hear one on the west coast. It was almost like a party, not a spittoon in sight. We chatted with one another during and after the tasting. WineAccess magazines were given to all the guests. Ok enough of that wishy washy crap, all I'm trying to say is the west coast has a lot they could learn from the Torontonians when putting together an event. I'm still a firm believer that the Left Coast is the Best Coast!

The event was held at the University of Toronto Faculty Club on campus. I arrived 45 minutes early so I had an opportunity to walk the campus enjoying the beautiful fall day. The Faculty club was an eloquent building that must have been at least 60 years old. The building was covered in Ivy, the inside was full of dark wood, with a grand ceiling in the dining room. The wine tasting featured 6 Shiraz/Syrahs from Ontario and 1 from Australia and 1 from the Rhone Valley in France. Our presenter was John Szabo M.S. John will also be featured in Sommelier Interviews next month, so I wouldn't talk about him to much now. John tasted all the wine's blind before hand so just like all of us he didn't have any prior knowledge of what wines were what. John started the tasting with a little history about the grape as well as talking about the characteristics of New World and Old World Shiraz/Syrah. Explaining the differences: New World more fruit driven with higher alcohol and riper fruit, Old World has higher acid and tannins. From their we tasted and chatted amongst ourselves trying to find the 2 ringers in the tasting. I was able to identify a couple of the wines. I didn't do as good as John who was able to go 8 for 8, picking the producers of all 8 wines blind.

My favorite wine of the night went to Creekside with their

# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter



November 2008

2004 Reserve Shiraz. I was able to pick the Australian Shiraz out of the 8 wines, but the Creekside would have been my second choice. It really blew away the others, it was concentrated with blackberry's had a peppery component you would expect to find with a Shiraz from the Barossa Valley. On the nose I got earthy, mushroom notes. The tannins had integrated really well. An Honorable mention also goes to Southbrook and Inniskillin who also showed well. All in all it was a great tasting.

Fielding Estate Winery as assistant winemaker. Kristen, who was previously at Stratus, takes over the assistant winemaker's position from Adam Pearce who has moved out west to become head winemaker at Pentâge Winery in the Okanagan.

Congratulations to Lou Puglisi, this year's Grape King. Lou, who is the 57th Grape King, has 60 acres of vineyards on Line 2, Niagara-on-the-Lake.

## News from the Vines

### FRED COUCH, OWS – NIAGARA CHAPTER

Two new wineries have opened recently. The Foreign Affair Winery ([www.foreignaffairwine.com](http://www.foreignaffairwine.com)) is located at 4890 Victoria Avenue North, Vineland Station. Owners Len Crispino and his wife, Marisa fell in love with Italy and Amarone-styled wines. This "foreign affair" has been carried on back in Niagara where most of the wines are made in the same appassimento process.



*This is the painting that forms the basis of the wine labels for the Foreign Affair Wines. Each label is a section of the painting.*

Florence Estate Winery ([www.florencewinery.com](http://www.florencewinery.com)), located in Langton, near Port Rowan, opened its tasting room and restaurant in June. The Marshall Fields Restaurant is opened for breakfast, lunch and dinner (by reservation only).

Another acquisition for Diamond Estates Wines & Spirits! The company, which recently purchased 20 Bees Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake, has acquired DeSousa Wine Cellars in Beamsville. The purchase also includes a retail operation in the GTA. Diamond Estates will now be one of the top five wine producers in Ontario.

People on the move: JeanAnne Dubois is now estate sommelier and hospitality manager at Tawse Winery in Vineland. JeanAnne, who was named Sommelier of the Year at the 2008 Ontario wine awards, is a new contributor and tasting panel member for Vines Magazine. Kristen Banders has joined the winemaking team at

## Corporate Member Events

### CREEKSIDE ESTATE WINE

#### Treadwell Farm to Table Cuisine – Creekside Winemaker's Dinner 'Sneak Peek'

November 12. Reception at 7:00 p.m. Dinner at 8:00 p.m.

Treadwell and Creekside winery are presenting a 6 course winemakers dinner celebrating some of Ontario's most exclusive wines. Each of the wines, including the heralded Lost Barrel Red and Broken Press Shiraz, have less than 150 cases available and will not be released until 2009.

Voted by Toronto Life as one of Canada's Best New Restaurants, Treadwell has quickly garnered the reputation of one of Ontario's top culinary destinations. For tickets to this one time Creekside preview, contact the restaurant at 905.934.9797 or email at [info@treadwellcuisine.com](mailto:info@treadwellcuisine.com)

\$200 inclusive

#### Creekside Fall Release

November 14 – 16, 10:00 a.m ~ 5:00 p.m.

Traditionally, we like to do a large release of our smaller production wines and Reserves twice a year. This year's fall release will herald the return of old favourites, and some new stunning dessert wines. Please visit us in November to be the first to try our new wares. We think you'll be impressed. Our release date is November 14th:

2007 Laura White

2006 Laura Red

2007 Select Late Harvest Pinot Gris

2007 Riesling Icewine

Price: Complementary



# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2008

## Holiday Open House – Wrapped up in the Valley

November 22, 23, 29&30

11:00 a.m. ~ 5:00 p.m.

Come celebrate the holiday season at Creekside as we roll out the red carpet for our annual holiday open house. We will be presenting some wonderful wine gift ideas and featuring back vintage wines, new releases and a great selection of Icewine perfect for the season. Enjoy Squash and apple soup with cider cream paired with Chardonnay Reserve on the Wine deck with recipes to take home.

Price: Complementary with a Wrapped up in the Valley Passport. Soup and Wine Tasting \$5.00 to the general public.

## COLIO ESTATE WINERY

### Annual Holiday Open House

Colio Estate Winery-1 Colio Drive, Harrow, On  
Sunday, November 30th, 2008 – 12:00 noon ~ 5:00 p.m.  
Trolley departure from Windsor Crossing at 12:00p.m.

Come out to Harrow on Sunday, November 30th and join us for our annual holiday open house. The Trolley will be picking up passengers at Windsor Crossing. Departing from Windsor at 12:00p.m..

Colio is featuring a number of our special holiday priced vintages paired with Far Flung Foods artisan cheese. Proprietor Greg Williams will join us to answer all your cheesy questions.

Ladies, are you looking for that perfect gift for your girlfriend, sister, or mother? We have Girl's Night Out here. Try some!

Shop in our retail boutique and check out our new, fun holiday items. Hor d'oeuvres & refreshments served. Door prizes and a grand prize draw. Enter to win.

## FLAT ROCK CELLARS

### LCBO In-Store Tasting with Ed Madronich

Friday, November 7, 4:00 p.m. ~ 8:00 p.m.

Vintages Release: Flat Rock Cellars 2007 Red Twisted

Come meet Flat Rock Cellars President Ed Madronich at the LCBO and be the first to sample our 2007 Red Twisted. This unique blend has not yet been released in our retail store and is only available through Vintages. We'd love to meet you and hear what you have to say about our wine!

Niagara Falls LCBO

5389 Ferry Street

Ferry Street Plaza, Niagara Falls, L2G 1R9

## Wrapped Up in the Valley

November 22, 23, 29 & 30 – 11:00 a.m. ~ 5:00 p.m.

Join Flat Rock Cellars as we participate with Twenty Valley wineries in this year's 'Wrapped up in the Valley' event kicking off the festive season! Passports are \$20 each and include a food and wine pairing at each winery as well as a Twenty Valley 'collectable edible' as you travel to each winery destination. Our offering this year will be Flat Rock Cellars Cheddar Delights matched with our Sweet Revenge Vidal Icewine.

For more details on Wrapped Up in the Valley and how the Passport program works, visit [www.twentyvalley.ca](http://www.twentyvalley.ca).

## In the Winemaker's Boots: Weekend Workshops

Much more than a tour!

Our Weekend Workshops are a great way to discover what Flat Rock Cellars is all about. These two hour sessions include enough to satisfy your initial curiosity but will definitely whet your appetite for more.

### November 1st: Does the Glass Really Matter?

Taste the difference! See how the right glass brings out the best in your wine.

### December 6th: Sneak Peek of the 2008 Harvest

Sample a selection of our 2008 wines partway through the aging process and understand what we can expect from our newest vintage.

## INNISKILLIN WINES

Enjoy our recently completed renovations:

The Piazza, Founders' Hall,

Underground Library, & The Brae Burn Barn

View our engraved stones imbedded in The Piazza commemorating Inniskillin's Milestones.

## Food & Wine Pairing

Weekends Only: 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Founders' Hall Demonstration Kitchen

Reserve Chardonnay with Potato and Cheddar Chowder - \$5.00 per sampling, includes 2oz pour of wine

Reserve Chardonnay 2006 Bottle \$15.30, Case \$183.60

Dry white wine, oak aged for 10 months in French Oak barrels. The wine is medium bodied, displays vanilla, butter and toasty oak on the nose, with flavours of baked apple and roasted almonds, leading to a clean finish.

# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2008



## Daily Tours & Tastings

Boutique Hours: 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Public Tours Daily @ 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 2:30 p.m.

\$5 dollars per person.

## Riedel Stemware Experience

Weekends only: 11:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

Weekdays by appointment

Enjoy a flight of four VQA wines - Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Icewine in a guided Riedel Stemware tasting seminar in The Riedel Room. See the difference the glass really makes - \$30.00 per person, redeemable against the purchase of the Riedel Vinum Extreme Four Glass Starter Set (retail value \$145.95) or the Riedel Icewine Gift Set (\$99.95). Length of seminar is 45 minutes.

## Icewine Tasting Bar

Enjoy a flight of four of our world renowned Icewines for \$25.00 while experimenting with the Riedel Vinum Extreme Icewine Glass or enjoy a single sample, individually priced.

Icewines could include: Vidal, Oak Aged Vidal, Sparkling Vidal, Riesling, Canadian Oak Aged Riesling, Cabernet Franc or an older vintage from our Wine Library. The newly designed Icewine Tasting Bar features a great view of the vineyards and the Niagara Escarpment.

Holiday thoughts continue to bring great wine tips for entertaining and unique gifting ideas.

## Taste the Season at Inniskillin

Gamay Noir served with a mini holiday scone with dried cranberries, and white chocolate.

Purchase a passport \$40.00 through the NOTL Chamber or Second Harvest and enjoy a wine and food pairing at each winery.

[www.niagaraonthelake.com](http://www.niagaraonthelake.com) or [www.secondharvest.ca](http://www.secondharvest.ca)

## I.C<sup>2</sup>.E. Inniskillin Cool Culinary Experience

November 22, December 13

I.C<sup>2</sup>.E. will prove to be a one of a kind dinner experience that showcases culinary interaction with unique food and Inniskillin wine pairings, including our world famous Icewines. Relax, unwind and let us guide your experience.

[www.inniskillin.com](http://www.inniskillin.com) Cost: \$150 pp inclusive Reserve @ 905-468-2187 ext. 5403

## PILLITTERI ESTATES WINERY

### Taste The Season

November 1&2, 8&9, 15&16, 22&23, 29&30

Don't miss out this November as the 18 Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake get set for another wine and food extravaganza. Hailed as the 'go to event of the season', this popular touring and tasting program celebrates the season's bounty. It's also a great time to explore unique wine and gift selections or stock up for all your holiday entertaining. Check out our 18 delectable wine and food pairings.

Celebrate the season's best tastes on one of five weekends in November. Passes are valid for ONE WEEKEND ONLY and include a collectible holiday ornament. Proceeds from this pass will go to Second Harvest to provide enough fresh food for approximately 20 meals for those who would otherwise go hungry.

Visit Pillitteri Estates Winery during Taste the Season and sip on our refreshing 2004 Dry Riesling paired with a scrumptious chicken terrine & pear Riesling compote.

Tour Passes: \$40 per person + applicable taxes.

Order tickets online at <http://niagaraonthelake.com/>

Order by phone: Second Harvest at 416.408.2594 or Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce at 905-468-1950.

## Starry Night Gala

November 8th

Shaw Festival Theatre, Niagara on the Lake, ON  
The 5th Annual "A Starry Night Gala Evening" at the Shaw Festival Theatre. This affair is quickly becoming one of the most recognized events in Niagara. Guests will be treated to an exclusive pre-show reception catered by Niagara College Culinary Institute and featuring award winning Niagara wines, including those of Pillitteri Estates Winery. Live and silent auctions and a concert event showcasing some of Canada's finest entertainers and talent will also be a part of this stellar evening to benefit Wellspring Niagara.

Wellspring Niagara is a local charitable organization that provides a wide-range of free programs and services, to meet the emotional, social, psychological and informational needs of people living with cancer, and those who care for them.



# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2008

## STONE RIDGE ESTATE WINERY

### Winemaker's Luncheon

November 22 - 12:00 noon ~ 2:00 p.m.

Come out and sample some unusual and unique Stoney Ridge Wines from our Wine Library, including past gold medal award winners. Lunch in the Barrel Room. \$45 pp limited to 30 people.

### Mulled Wine Open House

December 3 - 7

Seasonal selection of gifts. Complimentary Mulled wine. Loyalty Club Specials All day event.

---

## Other Winery Events

---

### FEATHERSTONE ESTATE WINERY

#### Food Celebration: Holiday Open House

Nov 22 & 23, 29 & 30 - 11:00 a.m. ~ 5:00 p.m.

Each year as the holiday season approaches, the folks at Featherstone pull out all the stops to make their Open House an event to remember. Newly released wines are poured by the winemaker and matched with house specialties.

### MALETA WINERY

#### November is "Grape Brain at \$9.95" Month

Every weekend (Fri to Sun) of November

Just in time for the holiday season, prices on the following GRAPE BRAIN wines have been slashed. This promotion is only available in-store Friday to Sunday in November.

2004 GRAPE BRAIN Cabernet-Merlot — \$9.95

2003 GRAPE BRAIN Riesling — \$9.95\*

2006 GRAPE BRAIN Chardonnay — \$9.95

\*2003 GRAPE BRAIN Riesling regular price is \$9.95.

#### The Big Disgorge Event - For Sparkling Wine Lovers

December 6 - 5:00 p.m.

Come learn how our traditional-method sparkling wine is made, and then join us in our cellar where you will disgorge, add dosage, cork and package your own case of our 2006 View Old Vines Brut. Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres will be served following the event.

Reservations required with a \$150 deposit which will be applied towards the purchase of your one-case minimum of Old Vines Brut.

Limited space. 1-866-620-1244 or 905-685-8486 to reserve or for more information.

### Taste the Season 2007

#### GLEN SIEGEL

Last November, I spent a weekend in Niagara on the Lake at the annual "Taste the Season" for the first time. Seventeen of the area wineries participated showcasing one of their wines and pairing it with an appetizer that ranged from soup to steak frites to cheesecake.

Dianne and I drove down Saturday morning with our friends, Helen and David. We arrived around 11:00 am to pick up our passports. We then charged off up the River Road and quickly visited Peller, Lailey and Reif, dashed out to the car and raced off to Inniskillin. As we arrived, we realized that we had two days and we had already visited almost 20% of the wineries in 90 minutes!

Collectively, we drew a deep breath, exhaled and realized we had lots of time so we could talk with the people in the wineries, savour the wine and food pairing and enjoy the day. (In the interest of journalistic honesty, I was the one who had turned this into a race. Everyone else said we had lots of time.)

At Inniskillin, we sat in the sunny tasting room and enjoyed our squash soup and the Pinot Noir. We then looked around the new Founders Hall tasting room and then drove over to Marynissen where we enjoyed their warm hospitality and outstanding red wines. After that, it was off to the wineries along Niagara Stone Road. After visiting four wineries here we called it a day and drove over to the hotel.

Our planned dinner at Stone Road Cafe was cut short as one of our group wasn't feeling well. After a good night's sleep and a leisurely breakfast, we started our day at the Niagara College Teaching Winery. We then drove across the area to the wineries on the Lakeshore. Mid afternoon, we took a break and had lunch in Niagara on the Lake, intending to stop at the last few wineries on the way out of the area. Unfortunately, Stonechurch closed at 5:00 p.m. and we arrived at 5:15 so we missed our dessert of Icewine and Berries.

This is a fun and interesting event. Two days gives you time at every winery to enjoy the food and wine pairing, talk to the staff and look around the winery. Many of the wineries, Jackson-Triggs and Palatine Hills, for example, have separate tasting areas set aside for this event which encourages discussions with other people who are also visiting for the event. While at one winery, we bumped

# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter



November 2008

into a couple that raved about a pairing we had tried the previous day that none of us had enjoyed. It was good to hear their perspective.

We also were surprised at some pairings that sounded great but just didn't work well. At one winery, we enjoyed both the appetizer and the wine, just not together. We spent some time trying to figure out why they didn't work together. We're still not sure but we had fun talking about it.

Are we going again? Definitely.

The Wineries and Appetizers in the order we visited:

**Peller Estates** – Andrew Peller Signature Series Ice Cuvée – Jerusalem Artichoke Soup with a Smoked Salmon Swizzle – creamy soup with some nice peppery notes but I really thought the saltiness of the Smoked Salmon wrapped around the breadstick worked the best with the off dry citrus flavours of the wine – I used the idea at Christmas wine tasting in December

**Lailey Vineyard** – 2006 Vidal Select Late Harvest with Apricot Cheesecake – the sweetness and apricot notes of the wine mirrored the flavours in the cheesecake – the acidity of the wine kept this from being too sweet

**Reif Estate Winery** – 2004 Vidal Icewine wit Smooth Chicken Liver Mousse on Brioche Toasts with Spiced Date Sauce – the apricot, orange and burnt sugar flavours of the wine matched will with the spiced date sauce – the richness of the wine was balanced by the richness of the mousse

**Inniskillin Wines** – 2004 Montague Pinot Noir and Cinnamon Scented Squash Soup – strawberry / raspberry flavours in the wine with some nice spicy notes on the finish – squash soup with cinnamon was very good but we didn't think the pairing worked as the wine seemed really sour after the soup

**Marynissen Estates** – 2002 Cabernet Merlot with Black Olive Tapenade on Foccaccia Bread – sour and dark cherry flavours – well balanced wine – the saltiness of the tapenade played against the fruitiness of the wine

**Jackson-Triggs Estate Winery** – 2005 Jackson-Triggs Proprietors' Reserve Meritage with Braised Beef Short Rib Stew – with 48% Merlot in the blend, this wine is juicy and fruity but the Cabernet Sauvignon provided enough structure to stand up to the stew

**Joseph's Estate Wines** – 2002 Cabernet Merlot with Peanut Butter Toblerone Cheesecake – a dark ruby red wine full of red fruit, cherries and cloves – we weren't wild about the match with the cheesecake – other people we talked to raved about it!

**Pillitteri Estates Winery** – 2002 Pillitteri Estates Unoaked Chardonnay with Tartlet of Brie de Meaux with

Quince Preserve – fresh floral and citrus nose – lime and green apple flavours with some residual sweetness – loved the tartlet but I would have gone with an oaked chardonnay

**Hillebrand Estate Winery** – 2005 Trius Red with White Bean and Niagara Harvest Vegetable Minestrone Soup with a Spiced Cheese Straw – lots of dark red fruit with some pepper, spice and chocolate on the finish – matched well with the bold flavours of the soup

**NCT Winery** – 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon with Turkey and Wild Board Pâté en Crôte with Niagara Fruit Compote – red fruit with cedar and vanilla on the nose – red stone fruit and some earthy flavours echoed in the pâté and fruit compote

**Château des Charmes** – 2005 Cabernet Franc, St. David's Bench Vineyard with Warm Tomato & Pancetta Soup Shot with Marjoram Cream Foam – raspberry and cherry nose with some tobacco notes in the back – the tannins seemed a little too firm by itself but the soup reduced the tannins and this worked nicely

**Coyote's Run Estate Winery** – 2006 Cabernet with Bison Steak Frites – equal parts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc make this a big wine which stood up to the Bison and – lots of red fruit with cedar and spice on the finish

**Strewn Winery** – 2006 Gewürztraminer "Terroir" with Caramelized Onion Tart – roses and white grapefruit nose and flavours matched the creaminess and sweetness of the onion tart – could have been served as a desert

**Sunnybrook Farm Estate Winery** – Spiced Apple Wine with Apple Cheese Tartlet – what better match? – apple pie with cheese and apple wine to wash it down – same spiciness in the wine and the tart

**Konzelmann Estate Winery** – 2006 Red Moose Zweigelt Reserve with Roasted Tortilla Goat Cheese Wraps and Cracked Black Pepper & Tarragon - the wine was full of red fruits like red currants and cherries with a spicy / peppery finish which matched the pepper finish on the tortilla

**Palatine Hills** – 2006 Riesling Traminer with Mango Sorbet in a Pastry Cup – even though the wine is 65% Riesling, the lychee fruit nose of the Traminer won out – citrus and exotic fruit flavours work well with the mango sorbet



# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2008

## Winery Review: Le Clos Jordanne

**MICHAEL PINKUS – GRAPE GUY**

*Reprinted with permission from*

<http://ontariowinereview.com>

*Our winery reviews are done blindly – the wineries have no prior knowledge of our visit and are not made aware until just before we leave their premises that they have been “spot-checked” – this ensures that we get the same level of service that anybody walking off the street would get.*

Well it's as official as it gets ladies and germs, in a conversation earlier this year with Bruce Walker, executive VP government and media relations, he pretty much confirmed that an actual Le Clos Jordanne winery would not be forthcoming as planned. One of the reasons given is that they sell out of wine too quickly - what would be the point of having a winery sit vacant of wine for 325 days of the year? So Le Clos does the next best thing, they have a tasting of their wines annually, just before they are released to the public.

Now this article would have normally appeared in the On the Road with Grape Guy section of my website, but with all the interest in Le Clos wines, and a lack of a winery (never-to-be?) - for the reason mentioned above - it only feels right to say a few things about this culture and the launch event that introduced us to the 2006 vintage.

Le Clos Jordanne makes (or will make) a maximum of 16,000 cases per year ... and the demand for this wine continues to be amaze both the owners and winemakers. The LCBO is screaming for a raise in their allowance and so are the other distribution channels. All the wine is made from their 52 acres of plantings, of which 75% is Pinot Noir; hand harvesting of all this fruit takes approximately fourteen days to complete. Winemaker Thomas Bachelder is also quick to point out growing and making practices, “we grow it in the vineyard and respect it inside, this is real winemaking, the real thing, nothing added.” The event itself went something like this.

First Jay Wright, President and CEO Vincor Canada, thanked us all for coming announced that Le Clos wines have achieved distribution for the first time in Tokyo, Japan and Southeast Asia, not bad for a Canadian wine that doesn't have the word “Ice” in front of it. Then Jean-Charles Boisset, the other half of the Vincor/Boisset partnership, gave us his view of the project – how Le Clos Jordanne “encourages mother nature to give us her best” by using certified organic farming practices (Le Clos was certified in 2005). JC said that this project could only be done in very small pockets of the grape growing world, citing Burgundy, some parts of New Zealand, the Russian River (California) and Niagara; finally he thanked Jay for

“keeping the vision alive” even as Vincor was being “swallowed up by a larger entity.”

Then it was time to hear from the winemaker himself, Thomas Bachelder, who in four short years has made quite a name for himself in Niagara and within the Canadian wine industry as a whole. Thomas B. has become kind of mythical figure in Niagara, every one talks about him as if they know him, using just his first name: “Thomas is picking his Pinot today”, “I visited Thomas in his cellar”, “Have you tried what Thomas is cooking up”. In some circles you say “Thomas” and everyone knows of whom you speak - it's only a matter of time before his moniker actually is just “Thomas” - like Sting, Madonna or Carrot Top.

Thomas was both humble in his comments to the crowd while still showing a wee bit of hubris, but that is to be expected from a winemaker of his caliber heading one of the most prestigious wineries in the area. First he said how surprised he was that there is still such excitement about this project, even after four years. He made mention of his fellow winemakers in Niagara, “my brothers and sisters out there are making good Pinot in the area,” and it was here that he let loose with a little chest pounding, “but while they're catching up, we're pulling ahead,” here he paused and smiled his best winning smile, “and that continues to be our motto.” He then went on to give us a rundown of all the vintages in Ontario that he has been a part of (2003 to 2008) and how he believes the wines will stack up over time. He concluded his formal comments with a few bon mots: about Le Clos wines - “judge us on our Village [declassify barrel blend] because it's the hardest wine to make”; difficult vintages, “a difficult year does not mean bad wines - it means you just have to be more careful”; and vineyard management during tough years, such as 2008, “ripeness and small yields will get you through - sorting is also very important.”

Le Clos Jordanne is putting Canadian wines on the worldwide map, for something other than Icewine, and any winery that does that is a bonus for our industry. I love Icewine and I love Late Harvest wines, but it's time for Canada, and especially Ontario, to be known for something other than the sweet stuff, if we get pigeon-holed into that category we may never recover (just ask the Germans how long it has taken them). We see that problem within our own province as we attempt to overcome our past ills and our need to be taken seriously by our own countrymen (and women) - we don't need to add to that pressure on the world stage too. Wineries like Le Clos Jordanne, along with their “brother and sister” wineries, that help put Ontario table wines on that stage and especially onto tables around the world, are a welcome addition to our industry and our growing reputation.