



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

April 2004

Ontario Wine Society Events

❖ Toronto Chapter

• First Annual Wonderful Wine Fair, Monday, April 5, 2004

We have been hearing for years that our members are the friendliest bunch of wine-loving folks. So, we are offering an informal event where you can mingle with your fellow OWS'ers while enjoying a wide selection of wines. There will be over 300 Ontario VQA wines to choose from while The Tasting Rooms will serve a selection of our favourite appetizers ... think cocktail party!

• Annual Dinner, Wednesday, May 5, 2004

The Toronto Chapter's annual dinner this year will be held at the thoroughly Canadian Tundra Restaurant in the Toronto Hilton Hotel. Thomas & Vaughan Vintners will be the featured winery of the evening with Thomas Kocsis on hand to talk to us about his winery and award winning wines.

• 2004 Ontario Wine Awards Winners, June, 2004

❖ Niagara Chapter

• Pinot Noir Horizontal Tasting at Niagara College Teaching Winery (NCT), Tuesday, April 27, 2004

"Happy Anniversary" Niagara Chapter! To celebrate our first year anniversary, we'll be sampling Pinot Noirs. This new facility, NCT, educates the winemakers of tomorrow, as teams of students produce wines under the supervision of professor winemaker Jim Warren. We'll celebrate with a toast of sparkling wine to kick off the new year. Then we'll start the tasting off with a tour of the production facilities, and finally proceed to the greenhouse, where we'll sample Ontario Pinot Noirs, including NCT Winery's award winning 2002 Pinot Noir. Walter Sendzik will lead the tasting. Sendzik is publisher/editorial director of VINES magazine and the co-author of the Buyer's Guide to Canadian Wine.

• "Terroir Series" - Terroirs of the World Through Riesling at Strewn, Monday, May 17, 2004

Winemaker Joe Will will lead the tasting.

Note: Members may attend events in either chapter.

To Contact Us

Mail: Toronto Chapter P.O. Box 519, Station K,
Toronto, Ontario
M4P 2G9

Niagara Chapter 4850 Cherrywood Dr.,
Beamsville, Ontario
L0R 1B9

Voice-mail: Toronto Chapter 416 921 9798

Niagara Chapter 905 685 7623

E-mail: contact@ontariowinesociety.com

Web: www.ontariowinesociety.com

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Recent OWS Tastings

❖ Toronto Chapter

Taking the Mystery Out of Wine & Food Pairing, February 24, 2004

By Dean Tudor

The Ontario Wine Society continues to be one of the most exciting wine clubs in the city, by virtue of its educational and dining programs. The notes for this offering to the sold-out crowd at Tasting Rooms say that "while food and wine matching isn't rocket science, it is true that certain combinations can wreak havoc with taste buds".

There are ways to ensure a simple strategy to take the mystery out of pairing wine and food. Linda Bramble, a teacher at Brock University's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI), led the session with a PowerPoint presentation.

She emphasized that you can drink any wine with any food and can love the match (actually, within reason; I've found that only milk-based liqueurs can stand up to excessively hot dishes). Nevertheless, there was a range of foods and a range of wines.

The Vincor wines, from the Wine Rack and the Winery, included Jackson-Triggs Cuvée Close 2001 (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Riesling in a blend, a finely tuned but softer wine, ideal for receptions – which is when we had it), Inniskillin Riesling Reserve \$12.95, Jackson Triggs Grand Reserve Meritage 2001 \$24.95, Jackson Triggs Special Select Late Harvest Vidal 2002, \$18.95/375ml, Jackson Triggs Methode Classique \$24.95, Inniskillin Founders' Reserve Chardonnay 2000 \$29.95, Sawmill Autumn Blush \$6.75, Inniskillin Gamay Noir 2002, \$10.95, and Olera port style \$9.95.



The foods included a lemon slice, brie cheese, broccoli, salt, sugar, parmesan, pound cake, raspberries and salsa. Photo Pat Dinsmore

We were to try various foods against various wines, in

order to find perfect matches. It was a largely interactive session, with many questions and answers from the audience and from Linda. She led us through the dozens of wine and food pairings: the good, the bad and the ugly.

We learned how small taste adjustments can make food and wine marriages perfect. But first we had to sniff some numbered sealed cups in a blind tasting test. Of course I got them all, except that the pineapple actually smelled to me of rotting pears, which is the answer I gave. The basic principles are: sweet wine with food less sweet, avoid tannic young wines with bitter food (unless you add salt), adding lemon to food makes any acidic wine taste sweeter or less acidic. Fresh fruit enhances sweet wine flavours, use sweet wines which are low in alcohol with hot foods. There are three main concerns with food and wine pairing: how many tannins are in red wines, how sweet is the white wine, how high is the alcohol.

Linda went on to instruct us in the Jelly Belly test of tasting for flavours - flavours occur in the nose - and then plotted a simple strategy. You'll need to identify the dominant component in the wine, and in the food. Then you can match.



Linda Bramble having us hold our nose and taste jelly beans! Photo Ken Burford

The easiest solution: the best wine that goes with anything is one that is low in alcohol, low in tannins, and off-dry. But then, why bother unless you just want a buzz? Hey – where's the beef? (or, in the case of Syrah, where's the bacon? where's the leather?). Inoffensive patio wines have their place. The best "modest" wines I have found to accompany most things are off-dry apple wines; at least they have some character.

The evening concluded with the usual range of tasty appetizers from Chef Terry Kennedy: grilled pesto marinated shrimp brochette, chicken satay with peanut sauce, vegetable spring roll with chili ginger, grilled beef in honey-ginger, stilton cheese and walnuts in puff pastry, spinach-feta phyllo.

And many, many kudos to Sadie Darby and her crew for



not only pouring the wines but also for cutting up all the lab foods and the smell cups...they were there from mid-day onwards!

Dean Tudor, Wine Writer and Professor Emeritus of Journalism, Ryerson, University, Toronto, www.ryerson.ca/~dtudor.

❖Niagara Chapter

For the Love of Wine and Chocolate, Lailey Vineyard Winery - February 19, 2004

By Yvonne Halliday

This wonderfully interactive tasting was held at Lailey Vineyard Winery on the beautiful Niagara Parkway in Niagara-on-the-Lake. This modern winery has a growing reputation for outstanding wines, and is fast becoming a leader in Canadian Oak aging. Owners Tonya Lailey and Derek Barnett (winemaker) were on hand at the event to answer our questions and explain their wines.

Lyle Bleich, owner of Bernard Callebaut Chocolates in Oakville led us through an enlightening tasting, pairing his chocolates with wines that included both reds and whites, as well as a rosé and an Icewine. His chocolates included white, milk, semi-sweet and bittersweet. So, with both the full array of chocolate and wines, I couldn't have imagined a more comprehensive comparison format. Then he broke out the truffles and chocolate candies and blew everyone away!

As the tasting finished, people shared their perceptions of the wine and chocolate pairings. As usual, we had everything from "I loved every pairing", to "I didn't like any of them". But in the end we all shared our favourite pairings, and most of them seemed to fall in the white chocolate and rosé area. It was surprising for even Lyle and me who planned the event, as we were debating on whether or not to include a rosé wine in the tasting at all! The rosé was a Gamay blush and a "3" on the sugar scale.

After the tasting was concluded, Derek surprised everyone with a barrel sample of his Cabernet Franc - Canadian Oak that hasn't yet been released. What a lovely surprise! Lailey will be holding a release party for it on May 1, 2004 if anyone would like to attend. Reservations are required. You can call Lailey at 905 468 0503, or reserve on line at www.laileyvineyard.com.

A special thank you goes to Lyle Bleich for leading the tasting, to Tonya Lailey, Derek Barnett, and the staff of Lailey Vineyard for hosting the event, and to Robert Trout for preparing the savoury spreads.

Cabernet Sauvignon - 2000 Horizontal

Tasting, Lakeview Cellars Winery - March 15, 2004
By Yvonne Halliday

Thank you to Lakeview Cellars for hosting what turned out to be our 2nd largest turn-out yet! And what a suiting venue as this reputable winery is known for its great

reds. Winemaker Tom Green led the tasting by giving us some history of Cabernet Sauvignon and explaining what we might be looking for in a good example of one. He was on hand at the end to answer our questions and guide the discussion and debates that arose.

The tasting was blind as usual, and in the end, the results were a bit shocking! The votes for "favourite" wine were fairly evenly scattered among most of the wines, with little variance for price (ranging from \$12 / 750ml to \$40 / 750ml) except for one wine: the non-vintage, Magnotta Cabernet Sauvignon "box-of-wine" brought in a total of 7 votes as "favourite" wine! (Occasionally we may include something that doesn't quite fit the parameters of the tasting if it might prove to be interesting, or discussion worthy; and this was it.)



The tasting scene at Lakeview Cellars. Photo Yvonne Halliday

This unexpected result sparked much discussion and debate full of un-answered questions so I'll include a few brief answers. At an averaged cost of \$6.00 / 750ml, the Magnotta 8 litre box format is a non-VQA, "Product of Canada" wine, containing 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, of which about 60% are Chilean and 40% are Ontarian.

But in conclusion, aside from the Magnotta, the other samples seemed to prove that the reputation and skill of the winery may be more of an indication to the quality of the Cabernet Sauvignon than the price. In the end, most agreed that going out to the winery to taste the wine before buying it was their safest method of selection. Thankfully, many of us live close enough to the wineries for this to be a viable option. After the tasting was concluded, Tom provided everyone with a sample of Lakeview Cellar's '98 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, currently retailing at \$49.95 / 750ml. What a tasty surprise! Thank you, Tom.

A special thank you goes to Tom Green for leading the tasting, to Joanne Keogh and the staff of Lakeview Cellars for hosting the event and to Robert Trout for



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preparing the savoury spreads. Thank you also to Paul Carfagnini, producer of "Cheers Niagara" radio show with Linda Bramble on 1220 CHSC (Friday nights from 6 - 7pm). Prior to our tasting, he graciously explained a bit about the show and mentioned that they will be doing a segment next month on the Ontario Wine Society. I hope you listen for it.

Ontario Winery Events

❖ Cave Spring

"Release Weekend"

April 23, 24.

Enjoy an overnight stay at our luxurious Inn On The Twenty, including a winemaker's dinner and tutored tasting with Cave Spring's winemaker, Angelo Pavan. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to taste and purchase new releases and rare back vintages. Cap off your weekend with a visit to our Spa On The Twenty. \$313.48 per person plus applicable taxes. Call 905 562 3581, Ext. 348 or e-mail events@cavespring.ca for information.

Cab by a Nose

April 3, 10, 17 and 24, 11:00am and 2:00pm.

Experience the aromatic essence of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot, and learn about the history of the so-called Bordeaux varietals and how they have taken the world by storm.

\$10 per person. Reservations required. 905 562 3581, Ext. 302.

❖ EastDell

International Night

Every Thursday to April 28.

Taste around the world with a multi-course feast.

\$19.95 per person, \$9.95 children under 12. Visit www.eastdell.com for menus or call for more information.

The Ultimate Date Night

Every Friday & Saturday to May 1.

Unwind with a three-course supper romantically served on platters just for two.

\$55 per couple. Visit www.eastdell.com for menus or call for more information.

Easter Brunch

Sunday, April 11, 11:00am to 2:00pm. Three seatings, 10:00am, 12:00pm and 2:00pm.

Enjoy a fabulous holiday buffet of seasonal cuisine and a decadent dessert table. Kids, join the Easter Bunny for a Vineyard Easter Egg Hunt.

\$21.95 per person, \$10.95 for children under 12.

Walk on the Wild Side

April 24, 25, tours leave at 10:00am and 1:00 p.m.

Celebrate Earth Week with a guided hiking adventure along our portion of the Bruce Trail. Excellent educational experience for kids! Parents are invited for a wine tasting afterwards. All proceeds go to Bruce Trail Association.

Hiking Adventure: \$5 per person. Kids are free.

❖ Peninsula Ridge

Wine and Culinary Experience Dinners

The pleasures of the table and of the cellar are integral to the experience we offer here at Peninsula Ridge. Our winemaker Jean-Pierre Colas and executive chef Robert Berry invite you to join them for our very special Wine and Culinary Experience Dinner Series this spring featuring four-course menus complemented by our wines. Space for these intimate dinners is limited.

'Uncork Spring' is the theme of our next dinner to be held on Tuesday, April 13, beginning with a wine reception at 6:30 pm followed by dinner at 7:00pm.

The dinners are held in our restaurant and provide a personalized dining adventure where you interact with both our chef and winemaker to discover their creative philosophies along with their suggestions for pairing foods and wines. A truly fun and memorable evening is in store for you!

Upcoming Wine and Culinary Experience Dinner Dates: Tuesday, May 11, Tuesday, June 15

\$99 for each evening, plus taxes and gratuity.

For reservations please call 905 563 0900, Ext. 35.

2003 Sauvignon Blanc Release

April 3, 4

The 2003 version of our always-popular Sauvignon Blanc will be on the shelves. Demand for this fresh and flavourful white has risen with every year, but unfortunately, supply has yet to keep pace.

Reserve Weekend

April 17, 18

Complimentary tasting of our complete selection of Reserve Wines with a special draw for a guided tour and tasting for 8 people with any reserve case purchase.

Riedel at Peninsula Ridge Seminar

Friday, April 30, 7:00pm

Taste for yourself how your favourite wine can show even more character when enjoyed from a glass made specifically to show off that wine. Riedel Crystal of Austria has done extensive research to develop specific glasses to complement a multitude of fine wines.

At Peninsula Ridge we are committed to being your Niagara Riedel Headquarters. We have an extensive inventory of Riedel products, and are the only Niagara winery to feature staff specially trained by Riedel



Canada. Join us on the final Friday of every month as we offer an in depth Riedel tasting seminar featuring Peninsula Ridge Estates Wines along with discussions of these special glasses, while further delving into the various facets of viticulture, winemaking, and wine appreciation.

\$15 per person or \$25 per couple. All ticket prices will be deducted from any Riedel purchase that evening. 905 563 0900, Ext. 25.

❖ **Southbrook**

Barrel Cellar Dinner

Saturday, April 3, 7:00pm.

Southbrook Winery is happy to once again open its doors to our 150 year old barrel cellar. These dinners have become a Southbrook tradition. For those who have never experienced a dinner in this beautiful setting, it is a great opportunity to get together with friends and enjoy the atmosphere that this unique venue offers.

Join our winemakers for a truly wonderful evening filled with fine wines, great food and a stunning setting.

Menu:

- Radicchio Bruschetta and Proscuitto-Wrapped Bacon paired with Kir Royale.
- Tomato, Goat Cheese and Roasted Yellow & Red Pepper Towers with Chive Oil and Candied Almonds paired with 2001 Sauvignon Blanc.
- Baked Polenta with Sicilian Capponata and Fennel Sausage, topped with Grated Parmigiano Cheese paired with 1999 Triomphe Chardonnay.
- Braised Veal Osso Bucco on a Pillow of Yukon and Sweet Potato Mash and Seasonal Vegetable, served with a Red Wine Reduction and Topped with a Crispy Vidallia Onion paired with 2001 Cabernet Franc - Watson Vineyard.
- Savoardi Biscotti Soaked in Vidal Icewine and Smothered with Sweetened Moscarpone Cream and Southbrook Framboise Chocolate Sauce paired with 2001 Vidal Icewine.
- Coffee/Tea

\$79.95 per person plus taxes. Call 905 832 2548 for reservations.

Ontario Restaurant Events

❖ **Bb 33, Bistro and Brasserie**

April Feature Winery - Thomas & Vaughan

The wines featured at Bb33, and throughout the Delta Chelsea hotel, will be 2000 Riesling, 2002 Pinot Grigio, 2000 Cabernet Franc and 2002 Marechal Foch.

Bb33, Bistro and Brasserie, 33 Gerrard St., W., Toronto

❖ **St. Catharine's City Steak House**

Reif Winemaker's Dinner

Saturday, April 24.

Contact Joe Boyle for tickets at 905 688 7017.

St. Catherine's City Steak House, 80 King Street, St. Catharine's.

❖ **Tundra**

April and May Feature Winery - Hillebrand

The wines featured will be 2002 Sauvignon Blanc Vineyard Select, 2002 Gamay Noir Rose Vineyard Select, 2002 Gamay Noir, Harvest, 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon, Harvest, 2002 Vidal Icewine, Trius.

Tundra at the Hilton Toronto Hotel, 145 Richmond Street West, Toronto.

❖ **Wildfire Grill**

Vincor Winemaker's Dinner

Monday, April 26, reception 6:30pm, dinner 7:30pm.

Menu:

- Hors d'oeuvres served with Hogue Chenin Blanc
 - Fresh salad with goat cheese and citrus with Kim Crawford Sauvignon Blanc
 - Pasta with Jackson-Triggs Grand Reserve Chardonnay
 - Grilled Salmon Kabobs with Inniskillin Founders' Reserve Pinot Noir
 - Mixed Grille with both Inniskillin Klose Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon and Inniskillin Syrah.
 - Blue Cheese-Cheesecake with Inniskillin Riesling Icewine
- \$100.00 per person, taxes and gratuities extra. Reservations are required. A \$25 deposit will maintain reservations as this event is sure to sell out.
- Wildfire Grill, 3438 Yonge St., Toronto.

Other Ontario Wine Events

❖ **Couchiching Institute Fund-Raiser**

Saturday, May 29.

"Wine that maketh glad the heart of man" - Psalm 104.

"Wine is the most civilized thing in the world" according to Ernest Hemingway.

Therefore, the Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs (CIPA), advisory council member Bluma Appel and the Wine Council of Ontario are organizing a day in wine country as a special fund-raising event for the CIPA.

Bluma Appel has graciously offered to host a luncheon reception at her beautiful residence in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Niagara VQA Ontario wines will be featured, thanks to the Wine Council of Ontario which is also arranging deluxe wine tastings at wine country wineries following the luncheon. One of these tastings will be at Peller Estates in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the other at

Henry of Pelham Winery in St. Catharines, which will be hosted by CIPA board member Bobbi Speck and her family who own the winery. You will meet the owners, taste award-winning wines and enjoy some wonderful company. A luxury coach will whisk you to Niagara-on-the-Lake, Bluma Appel's home, the wineries and will bring you back to Toronto. There will be other surprises as well.

The proceeds of this event will help to ensure that the organization continues its mission to increase awareness and understanding among Canadians on issues of important public policy and that it continues to bring together the best of Canadian and foreign thinkers and speakers to spark debate and challenge citizens to become more knowledgeable and engaged on topics of concern to us all.

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 29. Space is limited so please reserve early! Tickets are \$500 per person, a large portion of which will be tax receiptable. Cash, cheques, VISA, Master Card and AMEX are accepted.

Tickets can be purchased by calling CIPA at 416 494 1440, Ext. 229 (Shannon Bott) or Ext. 231 (Ruth Abrahamson). Fax requests with credit card numbers can be sent to 416 495 8723. Tickets can also be purchased online on our secure web site at <http://www.couch.ca>

And so "good friends, go in, and taste some wine with me, And we, like friends, will straightway go together." - William Shakespeare

❖ Lincoln Wine Route - A Sense of Spring

Saturday, April 17, 10:00am to 6:00pm and Sunday, April 18, 11:00am to 5:00pm.

Grab a free passport at any one of the wineries and tour Angels Gate, Crown Bench Estates, Magnotta Winery, Mountain Road Wine Company, Thirty Bench Winery and Thomas & Vaughan Vintners to taste delicious wines paired with spring-themed snacks or to experience spring-themed showcases featuring local artists or florists.

The recipes for each of the spring snacks, along with last month's recipes, will be published together and sold for a reasonable price with all proceeds going directly to a local charity. Get your passport stamped at all six and enter to win a mixed gift basket from the Lincoln Wine Route Group.

For information call 905 563 3959 or visit www.lincolnwineroute.com.

Feature Foods and Wines:

- Angels Gate: We will be serving a "bite-sized phylo cup with sprouts, spring greens and quail egg finished with a mustard oil"

- Crown Bench Estates: Spring Vegetable Primavera Pasta and 2001 Oaked Chardonnay
- Magnotta: A selection of refreshing fruit wines paired with a delectable spring fruit compote drizzled with Icewine.
- Mountain Road Wine Company: 'Art by George' The beautiful art of local artist George Howard exhibited and for sale in our store for this weekend only. Tasty Spring Rolls (wine to be announced).
- Thirty Bench Wines: To be announced
- Thomas & Vaughan Vintners: Will be pairing up with a local nursery for a spring plant show and sale. As a promotion, for every 6 bottles of wine purchased, the customer will receive a complimentary plant.

Ontario Wine Industry News

❖ A First for Canada Blooms

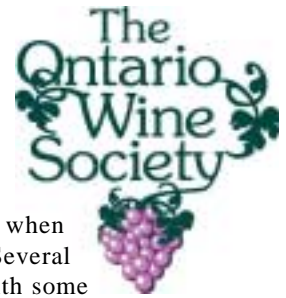
By Dianne Thomas

The initial idea for Stoney Ridge Estate Winery's participation and sponsorship of a garden display at Canada Blooms was envisioned by winery CEO Mark Bonham and President Barry Katzman.



Stoney Ridge's winemaker Liubomir Popovici and Wine Writer and OWS board member Sadie Darby. Photo Dianne Thomas

The Canada Blooms Show ran from Wednesday March 3 to Sunday March 7, 2004. This marked many firsts for Canada Blooms. The first time a winery was a garden sponsor; the first time wine was poured and sampled by visitors to the show; and the first-ever wine-themed garden. During the event, approximately 150,000 people visited the vintage garden and over 6,000 took the time to sample some of Stoney Ridge's award winning wines.



John Consolati, Landscape Architect, came up with the design and vintage garden concept and Joe Murgel of Stonetech Landscaping was responsible for the actual construction.

Kimberly Riordon, Lisa Biancaniello and Matt Loney of Stoney Ridge headed up the implementation of the event which included a Gala held on the evening of Thursday, March 4. The invitation-only event was held after Canada Blooms closed to the public for the evening, and was in appreciation of the wine media, loyal customers, and business and industry affiliates. Along with decadent food, we were offered tastings of limited-edition wines, including the 2003 Founder's Signature Collection of Charlotte's Chardonnay, 2002 Founder's Collection Meritage, 2002 Reserve Cabernet Franc, and 2002 Reserve Chardonnay. Good wine, good food and beautiful flowers - what more could one ask for?

This Stoney Ridge innovative concept was so well received by the public and Canada Blooms event organizers that they are hoping Stoney Ridge will make it an annual event.

❖ Association des Viticulteurs de l'Est Ontarien (AVEO)

The AVEO is organizing its 5th annual general meeting on Saturday, April 24, at 10:00am at the Chateau Bourget. An expert from Brock University will talk about growing grapes and marketing wine in their region. Also, local commercial wineries will make presentations on the equipment needed to start in business.

\$30 for members. \$40 for non-members. Includes lunch and a wine tasting. Please reserve before April 14, by e-mail at clos.baillie@videotron.ca or by phone at 819 827 3220. More information at: <http://aveo3.site.voila.fr/>

❖ Cuvée Winners

By David Lawrason - for www.winerytohome.com. Reprinted here with permission.

The 16th annual Cuvée celebration and Awards presentation was held March 5 at the White Oaks in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Most of Ontario's wineries presented their top four wines for hundreds of trade, media and the public, as well as Governor-General Adrienne Clarkson.

The Cuvée Awards are considered "the Oscars" of the Ontario industry because, like the Academy Awards, the judging is done by peers, the winemakers for Cuvée, during a well structured blind competition.

A who's who of Ontario wine politics took to the podium during the awards presentation, including His Excellency John Ralston Saul who is husband of the Governor-General, Ontario Minister of Tourism and Recreation Jim Bradley, and LCBO Chairman Andy Brandt.

Cuvée has also become the moment when Ontario wineries debut new wines. Several came out of the cellars this night, with some impressive results. Thomas & Vaughan debuted their excellent \$45 reserve reds from the 2000 vintage, a Cabernet Franc and a Meritage. In the same vein, Reif debuted its \$50 "First Growth" series including a Pinot Noir, Merlot and a very good Cabernet Sauvignon, which won its varietal class.

The Tony Aspler Achievement Award was also presented to Paul Bosc for his lifetime of work in advancing viticulture and winemaking in Ontario.

The proceedings recognized the long involvement of Grey Gables School of St. Catharines, the organizer and beneficiary of Cuvée since its inception in 1989. This was its last year at the helm as this international school for environmental and multi-cultural studies focuses on a new campus to be built near Brock University. Cuvée passes into the hands of the Niagara Community Foundation next year.

❖ Free Reports on Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris

These reports are packed with information focusing on these varieties and their suitability for planting and growing in Prince Edward County.

Download these reports from www.thecounty.ca/wine/chardonnay.html. For more information on the industry in the County, log onto www.thecounty.ca/wine.

❖ OWS Niagara Chapter Election Results

The results of the Niagara Chapter election were announced at the March Lakeview Cellars, Horizontal Cabernet Sauvignon tasting. Last year's elected board members ran for the same positions and all positions were unchallenged. Continuing on their duties will be Yvonne Halliday as President, Fred Couch as Treasurer, and Bert Richards as Secretary.

❖ Screw Caps for VQA Wines

Toronto, Ontario, March 3, 2004

Vintners Quality Alliance Ontario (VQA Ontario) today announced that it will permit Ontario's premium wines to be packaged with screw cap closures. The VQA regulatory body has decided that the decision to use screw caps should be left in the hands of each winery.

Screw cap closures are growing in popularity and are becoming more common among New World wine producers.

"We recognize that screw cap technology is now proven to be an effective closure for preserving quality wines," said Len Pennachetti, President and Chair of VQA Ontario. "Both consumers and the wine trade are more readily accepting screw caps as a quality closure and we



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don't want to restrict wineries from seeking alternatives to the traditional closures as long as wine quality isn't jeopardized."

Screw caps have been accepted in virtually all New World wine-producing countries as a way to ensure product quality and a way to battle cork taint.

"It will now be up to Ontario's winemakers and consumers to choose between the tradition of a cork and the convenience of a screw cap," says Jim Watson, Minister of Consumer and Business Services, the provincial ministry responsible for beverage alcohol regulation. "Around the world, top producers in Australia, New Zealand, California and France have adopted this technology for some of their best wines."

Consumer acceptance of screw caps in the quality wine sector remains largely untested but VQA Ontario believes that many consumers will be happy to have the choice of an alternate closure for some of Ontario's best wines.

VQA Ontario is an independent regulatory authority that has been delegated the responsibility for administering the Vintners Quality Alliance Act, 1999 by the Ontario government.

VQA Ontario establishes, monitors and enforces a system of quality standards and verification of product origin for Ontario wines. Only those wines approved by VQA Ontario may use appellation terms and descriptions. These include geographical terms such as "Niagara Peninsula", "Pelee Island", "Lake Erie North Shore", and "Estate Bottled" as well as terms that are linked to regulated production processes such as "Icewine" and, of course, the term "VQA."

❖ **Vincor Acquires Australia's Amberley Estate**

Toronto, Ontario, March 18, 2004

Vincor International Inc., today announced that it has completed the acquisition of privately held Amberley Estate Pty Ltd. of Margaret River, Australia.

Amberley was established in 1985 and is based in the Margaret River region of Western Australia. Sales volume for Amberley has grown to over 100,000 cases annually, 85% of which is Margaret River appellation with a focus on white wines and specializing in Chenin Blanc - all in the super-premium category and marketed under the "Amberley" brand. The winery also produces a small amount of specialty Margaret River appellation Cabernet Sauvignon red wines in the over A\$50 category, also marketed under the "Amberley" brand. As a result, Amberley is the fourth largest Western Australian brand in Australia. The combination of Goundrey with Amberley will create one of the largest Western Australian wine producers and increase Vincor's dedicated Australian sales and marketing team

from 20 to 33.

Amberley's winery, cellar door, restaurant and vineyard are located on a scenic property in the Margaret River region. Amberley's operations will be integrated with those of Goundrey and overseen by Rich Hanen, President of Vincor Australia.

❖ **Vineland Estates Winery**

March 11, 2004

This week, John Howard, President & CEO of Vineland Estates Winery Ltd., presented a written statement to the staff and management of the winery entitled "Freedom 55". Mr. Howard opened his remarks by saying, "April 22, 2004 will mark my 55th birthday and an important juncture in my personal and professional life". This statement announced his resignation as President and CEO of Vineland Estates Winery Ltd. effective March 11, 2004.

John Howard also stated, "I am proud to say that Vineland Estates Winery has evolved into a profitable and innovative industry leader in all segments of its regional, national, and international undertakings. Indeed the culture which you have established here will not only perpetuate this profile but has established a foundation which guarantees a horizon of even greater success in the new global marketplace".

The DeGasperi family, who have been corporately involved with Vineland Estates Winery and the Niagara Land Company since 1998, have acquired Mr. Howard's outstanding share holdings in the company.

The DeGasperi family along with co-shareholders Allan Schmidt and Paul Mazza and the entire staff and management of Vineland Estates winery, would like to extend their sincere appreciation to John Howard and his family for their 11 years of dedication and commitment to their shared dream of positioning Vineland Estates Winery as one of the premiere wine and culinary destinations in Niagara.

Allan Schmidt will take over as President & CEO of Vineland Estates Winery Ltd. Allan has been with the company since 1987, originally as the winemaker and most recently as General Manager of the company.

Brian Schmidt, who has been the winemaker for 13 years will once again resume his duties as head winemaker for the winery, in addition to assuming his new senior management role as vice-president of operations.