



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

March 2005

OWS's Upcoming Events

❖ **Toronto Chapter**

• **OWS, Toronto Chapter AGM**

The Annual General Meeting of the members of the Ontario Wine Society's Toronto Chapter will be held on March 8, 2005 at 6:15pm at the Tasting Rooms Restaurant, 100 King St. West.

• **Cave Springs - Double Vertical Riesling, Tuesday, March 8, 2005**

Cave Spring's Angelo Pavan (OWS Winemaker of the Year Award winner) has consistently produced some of Ontario's finest Riesling. He and Tom Pennachetti, Marketing Director, will take us through a vertical of their top two tiers of Riesling, the Reserve and the Cave Spring Vineyard from 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2003. Produced from vines up to 27 years old, growing in limestone rich clay till overlying shale and sandstone, these are exceptionally age worthy.

Other Events

All Ontario Wine Fair April 4, 2005

Annual Dinner May 3, 2005

All Ontario Awards May, 2005

Erie North Shore Tour June, 2005

❖ **Niagara Chapter**

• **First Annual Social Night**

March 22 - 6:30pm

Lakeview Winery - Vineland

Join us for our first annual social night while tasting a special selection of "weird and wonderful" wines from Ontario. The annual election of the Niagara Chapter will be held on this evening. A portion of the evenings proceeds will be donated to Grapes for Humanity.

**KARL J. KAISER PRESENTED
ONTARIO WINE SOCIETY'S FIRST EVER
LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD
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Write-ups on Past OWS Events

❖ **Toronto Chapter**

• **ONTARIO WINE SOCIETY ICEWINE WEEKEND 2005**

by **Wendy Muir**

The Ontario Wine Society held their annual Icewine Weekend in Niagara-on-the-Lake February 5 and 6, 2005. 37 members from both the Toronto and Niagara chapters gathered at Inniskillin Winery at 3:00 p.m. for a tasting led by the master himself, Karl Kaiser. Karl, along with partner Donald Ziraldo, founded Inniskillin in 1975; the first winery to be granted a license in Ontario since 1929. Bringing his wine making background from Austria, Karl produced the first ever icewine in Canada, with his 1989 product winning the most prestigious prize at the 1991 Vinexpo in Bordeaux, France, *Le Grand Prix d'Honneur*.

At Inniskillin, members were led through a tasting of six icewines. The first three were made from the Vidal grape, the 2003 and a 2002 oak-aged icewine which was created for the American market. The third was the actual 1989 Vidal ice wine that put Ontario on the wine making map. A very deep golden colour, the wine was holding up exceptionally well for its age. Priced at \$500 a half-bottle it is virtually unavailable for purchase anywhere. The fourth ice wine was from the Inniskillin library, a 1998 Riesling that demonstrated amazing structure and finesse. The fifth was a special creation of Karl's from the Austrian Dornfelder grape. This ice wine was a deep red colour due to the red flesh of the grapes. It had a pleasant cranberry, rhubarb palate. The final sample tasted was the Sparkling Ice Wine. This refreshing sparkler cannot be made by the traditional method of secondary fermentation in the bottle. Instead, it is made by the Charmant method.

Throughout the tasting Karl passed on many of the trials and tribulations of wine making in Ontario and shared some fascinating stories with the group. With him was Debi Pratt an integral and long-time member of the Inniskillin team who handles Public Relations for the winery. She helped with the details of Karl's talk and added a few important points herself. Her favourite descriptors of the Vidal ice wine as "luscious" and the Riesling as "elegant" were very appropriate. Though everyone could have stayed for hours, the tasting wound up around 4:30 so that those who hadn't already, could check into the Queen's Landing Hotel in Niagara-on-the-Lake where the group was spending the night in the upscale accommodations.

At 6:30 everyone met in the Jade Room of Queen's Landing for a private dinner. Karl and his wife Sylvia, along with Debi, joined the group. The leisurely dinner began with an "amuse bouche" followed by an amazing Quebec foie gras with toasted brioche and pineapple quince and the 2003 Inniskillin Riesling. The next course was a roasted sea scallop on a crisp pork belly with golden plum and walnuts served with the 2002 Chardonnay Reserve. This was followed with a smoked black cod with leek gratin, poached quail egg and caviar mousseline sauce and the 2002 Founders' Chardonnay. After a refreshing lemon sorbet, the main course of rack of Ontario venison with unpasteurized honeycomb and bittersweet chocolate jus was served. The Inniskillin 2002 Cabernet France Reserve was the matching wine. Everyone then had a plate of three Artisan cheeses; a chevre, a blue and an old cheddar, to help finish the Cabernet France. A delicious 2002

Select Late Harvest Riesling was served with the trio of passion fruit dessert.

As each new wine was brought out, Debi gave a brief talk on it for the group. The wine selections made by Debi were ideal, with each wine complementing the course perfectly.

No one realized that the dinner took over four and one half-hours to complete. The company, the atmosphere, the fabulous food and wines and the impeccable service made the evening fly by. Wine society members who were still up to it were invited to the Emerald Room for a reception afterwards, to have a taste of a few more wines, play a game of pool or chat with fellow members before retiring to their rooms. Everyone was in complete agreement that this was the best Ice Wine Weekend that the Ontario Wine Society has presented and it could not have been accomplished without the tremendous support and help provided by Inniskillin Winery.



Above: Karl Kaiser and Bruce Barber

KARL J. KAISER PRESENTED ONTARIO WINE SOCIETY'S FIRST EVER LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Niagara on the Lake, Ontario—The Ontario Wine Society proudly presented their first ever Lifetime Achievement Award to Karl Kaiser, Inniskillin Cofounder and Icewinemaker, this past weekend at their Inniskillin dinner at Queen's Landing Inn. The dinner was attended by Karl and his wife Silvia. Prior to the dinner, Kaiser had presented a very thorough Icewine Tasting to the group at the winery. Kaiser shared current, rare and older vintages of his Icewine including the pivotal 1989 Vidal Icewine that received the Grand Prix d'Honneur at Vinexpo, Bordeaux, France in 1991.



The award was presented to Karl by Bruce Barber, President of the Ontario Wine Society. Barber gave an overview of Karl's career and his many accomplishments. Barber commented— "The Ontario Wine Society is proud to recognize Karl Kaiser for a lifetime of achievement in the Canadian wine industry. He is truly a pioneer; an icon. His legacy IS the Ontario wine industry. Congratulations on receiving the Ontario Wine Society's first ever Lifetime Achievement Award."

In accepting this prestigious award, Kaiser thanked the Ontario Wine Society for this honour and paid tribute to the Society's role in assisting the wine industry through their efforts since 1991 in profiling and promoting Ontario Wines.

The following two comments on the award were made by Tony Aspler, Wine Writer and Author, and Leonard Pennachetti, President and Chairman of the VQA, and President of Cave Springs Winery.

Tony Aspler— "Canadian Icewine has become a global icon and it's because of your efforts, Karl. By winning the Prix d'Honneur at Vinexpo 1991 for your Inniskillin Vidal Icewine 1989 you single-handedly brought the world's attention to Canadian wine and introduced wine lovers everywhere to Canada's gift of winter."

Leonard Pennachetti — "On the subject of winemaking, I think of Karl first and foremost as the master of Pinot Noir here in Niagara. Over the years, the Inniskillin Pinot has been the benchmark for Pinot Noir grown here in Niagara. In my view, Pinot Noir will likely be the most important red wine grape for our industry in the future, so Karl deserves a lot of credit for his role as a pioneer. Speaking of that pioneering role, I can say that it was Karl, along with Donald and Paul Bosc, who took the leap of faith with vinifera here in Niagara, and by their example gave me the confidence to 'bet the farm' on growing vinifera in spite of the jeers that were directed at all of us by the so-called experts of the day. Looking around the peninsula today, it's hard to imagine a time when the received wisdom was that vitis vinifera could not be grown here, but I well remember those days. It was people like Karl who gave me the confidence to pursue the dream in the face of all that scorn and skepticism.

Another little known fact about Karl was and is his role in the creation and ongoing enhancement of our VQA appellation system. As you know, in the beginning, the job of actually writing the rules fell to me, but I relied heavily on people like Karl to help me through the process. Karl was then and still remains a veritable encyclopedia of knowledge regarding appellation systems, especially those of the Old World. Since those early days he has

continued to play a very active role on our Standards Development Committee as we have added more and more detail to our regulations. In this way Karl has made an enormous contribution to our industry that very few people know about."

Ontario Winery Events

Niagara Peninsula - East

❖ Cave Spring Cellars

• Good Earth

March 5, 12, 19 & 26 - 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.

The limestone-rich Chinguacousy clay till soils of the Beamsville Bench are the foundation of our finest Estate wines. Taste the terroir of Cave Spring Vineyard in a selection of these wines.

Reservations Required - 905-562-3581, ext. 302
\$12.00/person

❖ Coyote's Run Estate Winery

• 2004 Vintage Preview

March 11/12

Off-Dry Vidal, Riesling & Pinot Noir Rosé

March 18/19

Unoaked Chardonnay and Oaked Chardonnay

Mar 25/26

Pinot Noir

Be the first to sample some of our newest wines *before* they are bottled. Join us at the winery for very special tastings in March and judge for yourself how great the 2004 Vintage will be.

For more info call 905.682.8310
\$2/person.

❖ Inniskillin Wines

King of Red Wines

March 5,12,19,26 - 1-1:45 & 3:30 - 4:15

One of the most highly collected wines. Inniskillin's unique single vineyard production of the Cabernet Sauvignon grape variety has these wines flying off the shelves. Come and be one of the selected few to enjoy some of our outstanding and meticulously crafted vintages. An interactive and comparative tasting. Truly enlightening!

\$25 per person



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❖ Jackson - Triggs

• Savour the Sights

Saturday, March 12 - 6:30pm

Enjoy a unique epicurean experience of five courses of food and wine served in picturesque locations throughout the winery.

Special price for the month of March! \$125.00 plus taxes + gratuity.

• Twilight In The Vineyard

Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate Winery has just announced the 2005 performing arts programme at its stunning open-air amphitheatre - just minutes from the centre of picturesque Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Proudly launching its fourth season, this year's "Twilight In The Vineyard" line-up showcases some of Canada's renowned stars in the world of rock, folk, classical music, song and dance. With six performances confirmed to date and one sensational season closer still pending, the series opens on July 2nd with gold and platinum selling, singer-songwriter Sarah Harmer, whose debut album, *You Were Here*, enjoyed rave reviews in both *Time* and *Rolling Stone*.

Two weeks later, on July 16th, is Juno award-winner Melanie Doane, who has thrilled audiences across North America with her infectious pop music, savvy lyrics and impressive talent on fiddle, mandolin, piano and bass guitar. The season continues to heat up on July 30th when *Spirit of the West* brings its irresistible blend of folk, rock and pop poetry to Niagara. Regularly on tour in Canada, the US and Europe, the band has four gold and two platinum albums to its credit and is instantly recognizable for its smash hit, *Home For a Rest*.

Easing into August, velvet-voiced Matt Dusk takes the stage on the 6th with the voice, style and sophistication of the rat pack era crooners. A star in Las Vegas and on CTV's *Casino*, this twenty-something "Sinatra" meets the future with his own stunning collection of songs, entitled *Two Shots*. On August 20th, the pace changes with *Quartetto Gelato*. A favourite on CBC Radio, the group mixes classical masterworks and operatic arias with the sizzling energy of tangos, gypsy and folk songs. Their relaxed stage presence and delightful, dry humour establishes an immediate rapport among audiences of every taste in music.

The culmination of the August programme on the 27th, is the much anticipated World Première of *Carmen La Gitana!*, a new entertainment inspired by Bizet's *Carmen*. Performers include world-renowned ballet

dancers Veronica Tennant, Rex Harrington and Ronda Nychka, Canada's leading opera singer Jean Stilwell, flamenco guitarist Jorge Miguel and pianist Robert Kortgaard, who is also the Music Director. The new work will celebrate the glorious music from the opera, along with the guitar fervour of flamenco puro in a dazzling reinterpretation of *Carmen's* timeless tale.

Tickets for these performances will go on sale on Tuesday, March 1, and interested purchasers are encouraged to contact the box office early. Last year, a number of performances sold out within weeks of the tickets being released.

For tickets, log on to www.jacksontriggswinery.com, or call the Jackson-Triggs Amphitheatre Box Office at 905.468.4637 (locally), toll free in Canada at 1.866.589.4637 or by e-mail at info@jacksontriggswinery.com.

❖ Konzelmann

• Cuvée - En Route Passport Program

March 4, 5 & 6 - 11am - 4:30pm

Gewürztraminer Styles - Horizontal Tasting
Gala ticket and passport holders are invited to taste three different styled Gewürztraminer wines produced by Konzelmann Estate Winery.

Niagara Peninsula - West

❖ EastDell Estates

• Exploring Terroir

March 4-6

Taste the characteristic nuances of Bench-grown grapes in three wines from our award-winning 2003 Escarpment series vintage: Estate Riesling, Pinot Noir and Barrel Fermented Chardonnay. Complimentary to Cuvée Gala ticket and Passport holders.

• Sparkling Wine Luncheon

March 5 - 11 a.m.-2p.m.

Enjoy a glass of EastDell's Cuvée Brut paired with a special two-course lunch. Visit www.eastdell.com for menu details.

\$24.95 p.p. for Cuvée Gala ticket and Passport holders.
905-563-9463 for reservations.

• Sugar Bush Blues Gala

March 11- 7 p.m.-10 p.m.

A fundraising food and wine tasting gala in support of The Bruce Trail Association. Groove to live blues featuring Miss Holler and the Blue Callers. Enjoy Niagara-style Quebecois cuisine and silent and live



auctions. Attire: Denim & Diamonds (dress for indoor and heated outdoor areas).

\$125 per person (includes \$50 tax donation receipt).

• **Sugar Bush Blues II**

March 12-13

The fundraising fun continues...Bring the family to EastDell Estates for Saturday pancake breakfast, horse-drawn wagon rides, traditional French-Canadian fare in the Bench Bistro and Sugar Bush Sunday Brunch. On Saturday, join The Bruce Trail Association's Niagara Club for a guided walking tour along the Trail and through EastDell's sugar bush grove. Proceeds to benefit The Bruce Trail Association.

• **March Break**

March 14-18 - 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Come play in our neighbourhood this week with loads of kid-friendly activities and a pancake menu to tickle the pickiest palate. Hike the trails, create some art, visit our sugarbush.

• **Easter Brunch**

March 27 - Three seatings, 10 a.m., 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.

Enjoy a fabulous holiday buffet of seasonal cuisine and a decadent dessert table. Kids, join the Easter Bunny for a Vineyard Easter Egg Hunt, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

\$22.95 p.p., \$10.95 p.p. for children under 12.

• **The Artful Blend**

March 30

The head-on flavour of a well-made single varietal is wonderful, but the taste of blended grapes can take the palate to new plateaus. Tonight's Adventures in Winemaking is hands-on as Jason James, EastDell's Winemaker, guides you in the art of blending complementary grapes to create your own personal vintage. Three-course winemaker's supper included. 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. \$55 p.p.

❖ **Lakeview**

• **Winemaker's Dinner Series**

Saturday March 12

Reception: 6:30pm, Dinner: 7:00pm

Celebrate your love for wine and culinary delight with us! Experience two styles of winemaking from the unique mind of winemaker Tom Green. The four course dinner will be paired with wine from both Lakeview Cellars and Birchwood Estates, as guided by assistant winemaker Jason Roller. The menu is the creation of Chef Darren Stoute of Gourmet Chef Catering.

\$75/ person (tax and gratuity not included)

Reservations required. RSVP by March

4th. Contact retail managers Bonnie

Sneath, Lakeview Cellars (905)562-5685 ext

223 / Chevonn Digby, Birchwood Estates

(905)562-8463

❖ **Thirty Bench**

• **Lincoln Wine Route Maple Fest**

March 5 & 19

• **One Day Spring Sale**

March 26

Everything in the Store is 10-20% off for one day only everything from the snacks that you want to pair with your wine to the glassware needed to serve the perfect bottle! It is all on Sale for one day only.

• **Lincoln Wine Route Sense of Spring**

April 2 & 16

• **Lincoln Wine Route Summer Kick-off BBQ**

May 7 & 21

• **Lincoln Wine Route Strawberry Festival**

June 4 & 18

• **3rd Annual Yoga in the Vineyard**

June 11

Experience the joys of nature, with a certified Yoga instructor guiding you through Yoga in the vineyard. Following the class, you will enjoy a three course luncheon, paired with a glass of one of our wines.

• **One Day Summer Sale**

June 18 - Everything in the Store is 10-20% off

Please contact the Fiona or Meaghan at Thirty Bench Wines for further information.

Tel: 905-563-1698

Fax: 905-563-3921

E-mail: wine@thirtybench.com

❖ **Thomas & Vaughan**

• **Cellar Treasures**

March 4-6

Discover why these three wines are must-haves for your cellar: 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon, 2001 Cabernet Franc and 2001 Meritage.

Complimentary to Cuvée Gala ticket and Passport holders. Thomas & Vaughan, 4245 King Street, Beamsville, 905-563-7737.

www.thomasandvaughan.com



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Restaurant Events

❖ Allen's and By Chadsey's Cairns Wine

Tuesday, March 24

Allen's Restaurant on the Danforth

143 Danforth Ave

6pm to 8pm

Drop in for free samples of a range of wines, from a 2004 Rose fresh from our tanks, through our 2003 vintages including our dry Riesling, our first Pinot Noir, Chambourcin with Baco Noir, a Gamay/Pinot Reserve just taken out of the barrel, and Brighton White, a blend of Chardonnay, Gewurz, and Chenin Blanc from our Brighton Gravelly Sand soils.

If you decide to reserve for dinner, you will not only experience John Maxwell's fine cuisine but John will be offering some of the wines that you have tasted, by the bottle, at reasonable mark-ups, and a free sampling of our 2002 Gewurztraminer to accompany your choice of desert.

An email rsvp will help me determine quantities, and if you wish to stay for dinner Allen's can be reached at 416 463 3086.

We will also have our full list of wines available including the 2004's with their anticipated release dates, in case you would like to order. We are making home and office deliveries on a regular basis to Toronto customers.

❖ Cutting Edge County II at The Waring House

Saturday, April 2 - 7:00 p.m.

Timed to coincide with *ArteVino*, the fine art and wine auction gala event to be held by Quinte Arts Council on Friday, April 1 (where The Waring House and Claramount Inn & Spa will be donating a weekend in the County), *Cutting Edge County II* will be the second in a series of stellar evenings that highlight a variety of Prince Edward County's most exceptional wines. Dishes created by Executive Chef Luis de Sousa will be perfectly paired to the wines from several County wineries. Limited seating. Reservations required.

\$65 per person, plus taxes and gratuities

The Waring House, Hwy 33 & County Road 1, Picton
800-621-4956 / 613-476-7492

Other Ontario Wine Events

❖ Cuvée Gala, 2005

March 5

On Saturday, March 5, eight of Ontario's finest, award winning chefs and 49 of its best known wine producers will showcase tempting creations and fine vintages for wine and food enthusiasts from across the province attending the much anticipated Cuvée Gala, 2005.

This year's line up of the Province's top chefs will each present three different creations at individual live cooking stations throughout the Gala.

Cuvée Weekend tickets are \$200.00 per person and include admission to the Cuvée Gala at Niagara-on-the-Lake's White Oaks Conference Resort and Spa, and all Cuvée En Route (a weekend passport program) activities. Ticket and event information, details about each winery's Cuvée En Route tastings, overnight accommodation packages, and additional details about participating wineries and chefs can all be found on the Cuvée web site, www.cuvee.ca. Tickets can also be purchased by calling 905-684-8688. En Route passports will be available for \$20.00 at participating wineries on Cuvée Weekend. Proceeds from the weekend go to the Niagara Community Foundation and are used in its work with community groups across the region.

For further information, contact:

Liz Palmieri, Executive Director,

Niagara Community Foundation

Tel: 905-684-8688

Fax: 905-684-2337

E-mail: nfc@becon.org

❖ Sugar Bush Blues at EastDell Estates Come...Listen. Come...Taste. Come...Play.

**A unique fundraising gala in support of the
Bruce Trail - March 11, 2005 7 - 10 p.m.**

Good bye Winter, hello Blues - Rhythm & Blues that is, paired with fine Ontario wine and Niagara-style Québécois cuisine

EastDell Estates is proud to present the first annual Sugar Bush Blues, an exciting charity gala designed to celebrate the nature of the Niagara Escarpment and raise awareness and funds for the land preservation efforts of the Bruce Trail Association.

The Bruce Trail is a very important landmark in our area. Funds raised at this year's Sugar Bush Blues will establish a trust fund on behalf of the Bruce Trail Association to



claim and provide upkeep of "The Beamsville Byway," an unopened road allowance on the eastern edge of EastDell's property. This new pedestrian-only road will create direct access to the Bruce Trail providing our community with a much-needed connecting link for walkers to and from downtown Beamsville.

What is Sugar Bush Blues? It's an evening of distinctive, elegant-fun! With your help, this Friday, March 11th fundraiser will be unlike any party hosted in Niagara before!

Gala tickets are \$125 per person (with a \$50 tax donation receipt) and go on sale beginning January 15th 2005 during the Niagara Icewine Festival weekend.

After the gala evening kick-off, EastDell Estates will continue the community fundraising on Saturday, March 12 and Sunday, March 13 with family-focused seasonal events: Saturday pancake breakfast, Sugar Bush Sunday Brunch, Bruce Trail and sugar bush tours, horse-drawn wagon rides and traditional French-Canadian fare served in the Bench Bistro throughout the weekend. A portion of proceeds from tours, restaurant and tasting bar during these two days will go to the Bruce Trail.

The Bruce Trail Association is a charitable volunteer organization dedicated to preserving public access to the Niagara Escarpment while restoring its natural habitat. Recognized as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve, the Bruce Trail is Canada's oldest and longest footpath, running from Queenston to Tobermory (over 800 km). It attracts thousands of visitors each year.

Currently, over 51% of the Bruce Trail corridor is vulnerable to development. Please help us preserve the Trail for our community.

Come...Celebrate the Nature of the Escarpment

“Bring Your Own” Restaurants

www.bringmywine.ca is a new web site that is accumulating information on the restaurants in Ontario that are allowing customers to bring their own wine. It lists the corkage fees and other information you might need.

Bag-A-Cork Recycling

Iron Gate Cellarage Inc. and The Girl Guides of Canada are pleased to announce the official launch of the Bag-A-Cork recycling initiative. The first of its kind in North America, this is an educational, environmental and fund

raising program that we are proud to spearhead within our community.

The website is now launched thanks to The Ravenshoe Group who generously built the whole thing for us and Radiant Communications who are hosting it. The official address is www.Bag-A-Cork.org. Just so you know, if you type it without the hyphens or use .com it will forward to the correct site. On the site you can sign up to host a bin or locate one anywhere in the GTA through various search parameters.

You can pick up a bag and take it home with you. When it is full, bring it back to the drop-off point and get another bag. Drop off points in the Toronto and Niagara areas include:

Inniskillin Wines Inc.
Fairmont Royal York Hotel
Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate Winery
Tasting Room Restaurant
Niagara College Teaching Winery
George Brown University
Center for Vine Affairs
Crush Wine Bar
Ruth's Chris Steak House
The Hilton Hotel
Il Mulino Ristorante
Oro Restaurant
Cosmo Restaurant
The Wine Establishment
LCBO - Summerhill, Davisville, Queens Quay
LCBO - Dupont & Spadina
LCBO - Bloor & Royal York
LCBO - Laird & Eglinton
Access SelfStorage
The Cork House
Verity
George Restaurant
Barrel Select
Cru Restaurant

CHAMPAGNE

**I drink it when I am happy, and when I am sad.
I drink it when I am alone, and I find it
indispensable for any social gathering...
Otherwise I never touch it, except when I am
thirsty.**

Liliane Bollinger



The Wine Experience

A new method which will revolutionise the practice and art of wine tasting

by **Gerard Basset**

(Kyle Cathie Limited, 2000, 192 pages, ISBN 1-8526-365-7, 25. hard cover)

by **Glen Siegel**

As much as I enjoy wine tastings, I frequently feel that I don't get as much out of them as I could. This is usually because my notes, if any, are not very good. I don't have a systematic approach to the tastings.

I found "The Wine Experience" by Gerard Basset at a book sale in the CBC Atrium. The cover notes promised that I would become "proficient in tasting, judging and recommending wine". I would be happy if I improved.

"The Wine Experience" is an odd book to read. I have the feeling that this book was based on notes for a course on wine and wine tasting and that the shifts in topics corresponded to one class.

Without going into a chapter by chapter review, Basset covers the basic information you need to know about wine and wine tasting before he starts to explain his systems. He has a scoring system for comparing wines and two note taking approaches depending on the purpose of the tasting. His coded notes system is outlined below. I will review "five word minimum description" and the scoring system at a later date.

Basset uses the coded notes system at large walk-around tastings where there are lots of people milling around a lot of tables making lots of noise. At tastings like these, you are comparing known wines to see if they exceed, meet or fail to meet your standards for that wine.

The code system reviews 12 aspects of a wine, always in the same order and always using the same descriptors, some with + and - signs indicate if the wine is above or below average. The aspects and descriptors are as follows:

General Appearance

Normal, Deep, Pale, Odd (old looking or strange)

Nose - Expression

Positive, Strong, Reserved, Weak, Closed

Smell - (words are used here)

Leading Role - strongest smell

Supporting Role - second strongest smell

Nature and Quality

Varietal (+/-), Wine Making (+/-), Regional (+/-),
Development Reductive (+/-),
Development Oxidative (+/-)

Body

Thin, Light, Middle Weight, Full Bodied, Heavy

Structure, Texture and Balance

Coarse, Solid (+/-), Tight (+/-), Juicy (+/-),
Supple (+/-), Round (+/-), Flat

Length

Beautiful and Long, Nice, Indifferent, Unpleasant

Typicity

Archetype, Loose, Idiosyncratic, Not Applicable

Potential

Now, Now and Tomorrow, Tomorrow, Yesterday

Value for Money

Great, Fair, Poor, Irrelevant

Personal Preference

Love it, Enjoy it, OK, Dislike it

Objective Evaluation

Seriously good quality, Regular quality,
Easy drinking quality, Boring, Common

So the General appearance might be D for Deep and the Nose might be S for Strong.. While this looks complex, with some practice a Chardonnay might be assessed as:

N, S, tropical fruit and vanilla, WM, MW, J, N, A, N, F, E, R.

and a Pinot Noir could be described as N,P,bitter cherry and gamey,R+,MW,SU+,BL,A,NT,I,L,S. Decoding is left as an exercise.

Will this system work??? Any thoughts?? Suggestions??
Let me know and I will compile them in a future newsletter.

To Contact the Ontario Wine Society

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