



# Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2006

## ***Upcoming Events***

### **Toronto Chapter**

#### **Ontario vs. B.C. with Tony Aspler**

Monday November 27, 2006

Reception: 6:00 PM, Tasting: 6:30 PM

Members: \$36.00 , Non-Members: \$46.00

Once again we welcome Tony Aspler as our tour guide for our November foray through British Columbia's and Ontario's vineyards. Tony has chosen 10 wines, 5 from BC and 5 from Ontario, which exemplify the best of the Canadian winemakers' craft. The fun will be trying to match the wines to their viticulture areas.

On October 28, Tony's much anticipated 288 page 'Wine Atlas of Canada' will be launched and we have requested that a supply be made available for purchase on the night of our tasting. OWS members have been offered a \$10 discount and Tony will be available to autograph your book. The special OWS price will be \$50 (cash or cheque only). The original photography for the book is by Stephen Elphick, Canada's top wine photographer, and we have prevailed upon Stephen to join us on the 27th. Hopefully he will bring a camera!

In addition, Willi Klinger, the new CEO of The Austrian Wine Marketing Board, will introduce himself and has offered to celebrate his new position by bringing Austrian wines to be served during our pre-tasting reception.

The varietals are: Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Gewurztraminer, Riesling, Merlot, Shiraz and a Meritage. Test your skills and try to match up the wines with their province or origin, or even which winery!

We will be offering an enhanced choice of food at this tasting!

#### **Other Upcoming Events**

Cabernet Franc Horizontal - Tuesday, Jan 23, 2007.

Ice Wine Weekend - February 3 & 4, 2007.

Reif Winery 25th Anniversary Celebration - Tuesday, February 20, 2007.

New Kids On the Block - Monday, March 12th, 2007.

Annual Wine Fair - April 2007

Annual Dinner - April or May 2007

Bus Trip to Niagara Peninsula - Saturday June 9th, 2007

Bin End Dinner - July or August 2007

## ***Upcoming Events***

### **Niagara Chapter**

#### **Christmas Decorating at the Harbour**

Saturday, December 2, 2006

Harbour Estates Winery

\$ 35 Members , \$ 45 Non-Members

Reception: 2:00 p.m. Activities: 2:30 to 5:00 p.m.

What a year! We tasted the terroir of vineyards from coast to coast in Canada, unscrewed the mysteries of cork vs. Stelvin, and sailed the waters of Lake Ontario while sipping bubbly. This is just a brief overview of the engaging events members enjoyed in 2006. Well hold on to your mistletoe because we're not finished yet!

Do you suffer from holiday decoration envy? Does that expensive Meritage you wrap end up looking like a cheap floozy in a wrinkled dress? Well, don't despair. The friendly, creative team at Harbour Estates is pleased to share a few tricks of the trade as one of Niagara's premier corporate gifting wineries. We will "wrap up" the holiday season with a hands on, interactive demonstration on dressing up wine for gift-giving. Learn the art of tastefully decorating wine so it is as appealing to look at as it is to sip.

Spend an afternoon in festive surroundings, sampling Niagara's finest wines paired with savoury and sweet treats including traditional mincemeat tarts and warm mulled wine. Even if you don't attain the decorating skills of Martha Stewart, you will leave with your appetite satisfied toting a bottle of Harbour Estate's 2004 Baco Noir tastefully dressed for that someone special (or to keep all to yourself).

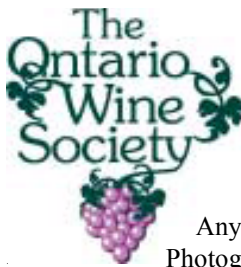
#### **Other Upcoming Events**

Canadian Meritage and Bordeaux - January

Interactive Pinot Noir Blending & Tasting - Flat Rock Cellars - February

Annual Social Event - March

Malivoire - Matching Wine and Food Tasting - April



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## **Winner's Circle Photo**

Anyone who was in the Winner's Circle Photograph taken at the August Bin End Dinner and has yet to receive their photo, please call

Wendy Muir at 416-675-3993 ext. 2596 and leave your name and address.

## **News from the Vines**

### **FRED COUCH, OWS – NIAGARA CHAPTER**

The Pillitteri Estates Winery family and team recently announced Dr. Marc Philip Bradshaw as Wine Master. Marc, who comes from Australia, joined Pillitteri in 2005 as Assistant Wine Maker. Another new winery opened this past summer in Niagara. Vignoble Rancourt Winery is located at 1829 Concession 4, Niagara-on-the-Lake. A website is being designed and a link will be up on the OWS website when available. Lakeview Cellars Estate Winery is celebrating its 15th Anniversary this year. Lakeview Cellars was founded in 1991 by Eddy Gurinskas and his wife Lorraine, creating one of Niagara's first cottage wineries. The new winemakers at Hernder Estate Wines are Mike Keeler and Lydia Tomek.

Le Clos Jordanne has announced that their wines (nine from the 2004 vintage and three from the 2003) will be available to the retail market in early 2007. In the meantime wines will be available to select restaurants in Montreal and Toronto in mid December. The multi-million dollar winery designed by world-renowned architect, Frank Gehry, has been put on hold and there has been no announcement as to whether the project will proceed. Le Clos Jordanne is a joint venture between Vincor Canada (now owned by Constellation Brands Inc.) and Boisset, La Famille des Grands Vins et Spiriteux of France.

Watch for the opening of these Southwestern Ontario Wineries: Colchester Ridge Estate Winery and Sprucewood Shores Estate Winery. Websites will be posted when available. Opening soon: About Thyme Bistro, 3457 King St, just west of Victoria Avenue. Vineland, 905-562-3457. About Thyme Bistro will feature wines from local Lincoln wineries.

From the OWS Website

The Webmaster has added the following link to the website – Ontario Wine Review's 'Grape Gear': [www.cafepress.com/owrgrapegear](http://www.cafepress.com/owrgrapegear).

## **Corporate Members Events**

### **CAVE SPRINGS CELLARS**

#### **20/20 Wine Weekend**

November 24 - 25, 2006

Enjoy an overnight stay at our luxurious Inn On The Twenty, including a winemaker's dinner and tutored tasting with Cave Spring Winemaker Angelo Pavan. Take advantage of this unique opportunity to taste and purchase new releases and rare back vintages. Consider capping off your weekend with a visit to our Spa On The Twenty.

Package includes:

- One Night Accommodation in a Suite with Fireplace and Jacuzzi
- Enhanced Continental Breakfast
- New Release Tasting and Hors D'oeuvres
- Five Course Dinner with Matching Wines Presented by Winemaker Angelo Pavan
- Private Tutored Tasting with Winemaker Angelo Pavan

Package price based on double occupancy accommodation: \$298.55 per person plus taxes. Package available without dinner wines for \$252.55 per person plus taxes. New Release Tasting & Winemaker's Dinner Only \$146.05 per person plus taxes. Available without dinner wines for \$100.05 per person plus taxes.

#### **Friday, November 24th**

6:30 p.m. - New Release Tasting and Hors D'oeuvres: A casual 'meet-and-greet' tasting with Winemaker Angelo Pavan featuring our '04 Brut.

7:30 p.m. - Winemaker's Dinner: Angelo Pavan will present selected limited edition wines, specially matched with the regional specialties of chef Kevin Maniaci. Enjoy this special dinner in the ambience of our century-old barrel cellar. Featured wines will include the '03 Riesling CSV, '04 Chardonnay Reserve, '04 Chardonnay CSV, '02 Cabernet/Merlot Reserve and the '05 Cabernet Select Late Harvest

#### **Saturday, November 25th**

11:30 a.m. - Private Tasting with the Winemaker: Join Angelo Pavan in our barrel cellar for a vertical tasting of our CSV Rieslings, the benchmark of Canadian Riesling. Enjoy a pre-release tasting of the 2005 vintage as well as 2004, 2003, 2002, 2000 and 1999 vintages. All new and back-vintage releases available exclusively for Release Weekend participants.

Reservations Required. 905-562-3581, ext. 221

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## By The Glass

November 18 & 25 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

It's a well known fact that the shape of the glass dramatically affects our appreciation of wine. Discover exactly how by tasting a range of grape varieties in their proper stemware.

Reservations Required 905-562-3581, ext. 302  
\$15.00/person

## Season's Best!

December 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 - 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

'Tis the season for fine wine. Taste our top estate bottlings from great recent vintages, while planning your line-up of wines for merry making.

Reservations Required  
905-562-3581, ext. 302. \$15.00/person

## EASTDELL ESTATES WINERY

### Date Night at The VIEW Restaurant

PART II - Friday, November 17 - Seatings from 5:00 pm.

PART III - Friday, December 15- Seatings from 5:00 pm.

Part II of The VIEW monthly dining series. Each month brings a different themed meal for two. \$80/couple for meal or \$110/couple for meal with suggested wine pairings.

Reservations recommended. Call (905) 563-9463 or email [TheVIEW@eastdell.com](mailto:TheVIEW@eastdell.com) to reserve.

### Festive Family Brunch

December 24 - Seating at 10:30 a.m. & 12:30 p.m.

Let The VIEW take care of the cooking while you enjoy time around the holidays with family and friends. A special brunch spread bursting with holiday favourites. \$24.95 p.p., children's rate available.

Reservations required. Call (905) 563-9463 or email [TheVIEW@eastdell.com](mailto:TheVIEW@eastdell.com) to reserve.

Please note: We will be giving our staff some well earned time off on Mon.Dec.25th & Tues.Dec.26th

### Last Minute Gifts!

December 24 - 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Our wine boutiques (Birchwood Estate, EastDell Estates, Lakeview Cellars and Thomas & Vaughan) will be open until 4 pm with ready-made gift baskets for that special someone on your list. Custom baskets can also be made on the spot while you wait! Call (905) 563-9463 to place your holiday order or visit [www.eastdell.com](http://www.eastdell.com) for some holiday gift ideas!

## JACKSON TRIGGS

### Taste the Season

November 18/19 & 25/26 from 12:00pm

At Jackson-Triggs, enjoy a prosciutto and roasted plum panini paired with our Proprietors' Reserve Meritage.

Passports are valid for one of three weekends, November 11/12, 18/19 and 25/26, 2006 at a cost of \$40.00 and are available online at [www.niagaraonthelake.com](http://www.niagaraonthelake.com) or by calling Second Harvest at 416-408-2594.

Price: \$40.00

Jackson-Triggs Niagara Estate winery is pleased to join with 17 other wineries and present wonderful food and wine pairings. While you're with us, discover some great holiday gift selections, wines for your seasonal entertaining and wines to cellar for enjoyment later.

Present your passport at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce at 26 Queen Street in the Historical Shopping District and receive your "Vintage 2006 Collectible Ornament" as a keepsake of your trip.

All **Savour the Sights** require reservations, contact 905-468-4637 or 1-866-589-4637, ext 226. No reservations required for Taste the Season passport holders.

### Savour the Sights, Les Dames d'Escoffier:

November 18 - 6:30pm

Amidst striking architecture, "Savour the Sights" of picturesque locations throughout the winery while enjoying our finest wines paired with a delectable five course menu specially created by some of the talented Les Dames d'Escoffier member chefs.

Price: \$145.00

Les Dames d'Escoffier is a leadership culinary organization composed of women who have achieved significant success in their profession, and who contribute enormously to their communities. Their mission is to elevate the profession through mentoring members and helping worthy students succeed in their culinary careers. A portion of the proceeds from this event will help benefit Real Food for Real Kids.

### Savour the Sights

December 9, 2006 6:30p.m.

Niagara Peninsula

Enjoy an epicurean experience including five courses of fine wine and food served in picturesque locations throughout the winery.

The first course, a selection of assorted hors d'oeuvres and sparkling wine, will be served in our Great Hall. This will be followed by a second course in the Atrium of our



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fermentation room. Next, enter our contemporary Tasting Gallery with its view of the vineyard and enjoy the third course.

The fourth course will be served at candlelit tables amidst oak barrels in our vaulted ceiling Barrel Cellar. Finally, a sweet ending to your dining experience as you enjoy the fifth course in our Estate Lounge, overlooking our picturesque vineyard and open air amphitheatre.

Price: \$135.00

## Savour the Sights, Holiday Edition

December 16, 2006 6:30pm

Enjoy an epicurean experience of five courses of fine wine and food served in picturesque locations of the winery with a festive fireside finish!

The first course, a selection of assorted hors d'oeuvres and sparkling wine, will be served in our Great Hall. This will be followed by a second course in the Atrium of our fermentation room. Next, enter our contemporary Tasting Gallery with its view of the vineyard and enjoy the third course. The fourth course will be served at candlelit tables amidst oak barrels in our vaulted ceiling Barrel Cellar. Finally, a sweet Yuletide ending to your dining experience as you enjoy the fifth course singing carols beside a crackling fire in our Great Hall - what better way to celebrate the season!

Price: \$145.00

## Savour the Sights, Celebrate the New Year

December 31, 2006 8:00pm

Join us this holiday season as we ring in the New Year with our first ever New Year's Eve Savour the Sights.

Your evening will begin with a selection of passed hors d'oeuvres and sparkling wine in our Great Hall. This will be followed by a second course in the Atrium of our fermentation room. Next, enter our contemporary Tasting Gallery with its view of the vineyard and enjoy the third course. The fourth course will be served at candlelit tables amidst oak barrels in our vaulted ceiling Barrel Cellar. Finally, a sweet ending to your dining experience as you enjoy the fifth course beside a crackling fire in our Great Hall with the DC-3 Band playing live into the New Year for your dancing pleasure. A midnight toast of sparkling wine and artisanal cheeses awaits as we kick off the start of 2007!

Price: \$175.00

## NIAGARA CELLARS

### Christmas in the Valley

November 24, 25 & 26 - 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Purchase your \$20 touring passport at Lakeview, EastDell or Birchwood during 20 Valley's Christmas in the Valley Open House. Passport includes 4 stone tile coasters for you to collect en route at one of the fourteen participating wineries. A great time to start shopping for the holidays! Call (905) 562-5685 x227 for information.

## LAKEVIEW CELLARS

Holiday Entertaining Wine Seminar

Saturday, December 2 - 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Become the admired entertainer among your friends! Our wine expert will prepare you with valuable food & wine knowledge just in time for the holidays. \$15.00 p.p. Reserve your space today by calling (905) 562-5685 x227 or emailing us at [Lvretail@lakeviewcellars.ca](mailto:Lvretail@lakeviewcellars.ca).

## NIAGARA COLLEGE TEACHING WINERY

### Winemaker's Dinner

Friday November 17 - Reception: 6:30 Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

An evening of seasonal specialties and new vintage wines hosted by the NCI Culinary Team, working with students in the Culinary Management and Hotel and Restaurant programs, and Winemaker-Professor Jim Warren, who will discuss the fine points of wine and food pairing as well as their approach to teaching their craft. Enjoy an evening of fine food, first class wines, and an opportunity to converse with some of the finest professionals in their field.

Price: \$70.00 plus taxes and gratuities

Reservations needed 905-641-2252 ext. 4619

## PENINSULA RIDGE

The retail store at Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery has: Monforte Dairy will be coming out on Sunday November 19th to do a tasting of their BEAUTIFUL sheep's milk cheeses. "Looking for Gorgeous Cheeses for Holiday Entertaining drop by the retail Store at Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery and choose from the wonderful selection available. Our staff will help you pick out the cheese or cheeses that will make your party an extra special occasion"

November 25th Mark and Abel from Sprucewood will be in the retail store showcasing their delicious shortbread.

November 25th & 26th the retail store is offering free gift wrapping on all Christmas purchases.

Our 2001 Equinox an exciting blend of Chardonnay and Sauvignon will be reduced in price to \$19.95 during November, a fabulous wine to pair with that turkey.

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## **The Restaurant at Peninsula Ridge**

Patio will re open Mother's Day weekend "weather permitting". Come in and experience our new Fall Menu Your Table is Ready... Wine and Dine in style at the Restaurant at Peninsula Ridge. Brush off the snow and cold by enjoying a heartwarming 3 course lunch..The weekends of November 25th & 26th and December 4th & 5th. 3 courses, paired with 2 wines \$50.00 per person taxes and gratuity included.

The restaurant will be offering a 10% discount to Local residents for lunch AND dinner during November and December (Grimsby and Beamsville residents only).

## **PILLITTERI ESTATES WINERY**

### **Gourmet Food & Wine Show**

Metro Toronto Conference Centre Toronto, Ontario

November 23 -25th, 2006

Visit us at the Best of Niagara Booth #337

### **A Starry Night Evening Gala"**

Pillitteri Estates Winery is a sponsor at "A Starry Night Evening Gala" Wine Reception at the Shaw Festival A Fundraiser for Wellspring Niagara Saturday, November 25th

## **STONEY RIDGE ESTATES WINERY**

### **Wine Makers Dinner**

November 13 - 6:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Sequel Restaurant Toronto

\$120.00 per person

### **Plaid Tidings**

November 17 -7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

November 18-19 - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Branksome Hall Private School Elm Street Toronto

### **Valley Open House**

November 24 - 26

Christmas wine and gift packaging specials includes food and wine pairing

### **Open house**

December 9 - 10 - 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Gift extravaganza and mulled wine

### **Christmas Gift Blow Out Sale**

December 23 - 10:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

December 24 - 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

## ***Other Winery Events***

### **LE CLOS JORDANNE**

#### **NATURE'S WAY OF MAKING WINE**

A unique alliance was announced in February 2000, between the wine regions of the Niagara Peninsula, Ontario, Canada, and the Burgundy region of France. It was inspired by an earlier winemaking collaboration between noted Canadian winemakers Inniskillin Wines and Burgundy's Jaffelin, now part of Boisset, La Famille des Grands Vins et Spiritueux, of Nuits-St.Georges, France. Boisset then went on to form a joint venture partnership with Ontario-based, Vincor Canada, which was the first of its kind for a European wine company.

The partners' goal was to create a world class "domaine" in the Niagara Peninsula devoted exclusively to the production of Burgundy's classic Pinot Noir and Chardonnay varietals. The joint venture and its resulting wines were named Le Clos Jordanne, in recognition of the similarity between the principal vineyard in Jordan and the walled or otherwise "enclosed" vineyards of Burgundy, which are referred to as 'Clos.' Le Clos Jordanne Vineyard is bordered on its east side by a beautiful pond, with the Niagara Escarpment to its south, and woodlots on its other two sides.

Now, six years later, the partners are poised to launch their first, eagerly awaited wines in Ontario and Quebec initially, and will release them in other markets across Canada, the United States and Europe in 2007. Nine Le Clos Jordanne wines from the 2004 vintage will be available in three distinct tiers, and three wines from 2003 will be available at selected licensees.

An expression of the partners' shared belief in the Niagara Peninsula's ability to produce spectacular world-class wines, Le Clos Jordanne Estate is now comprised of four vineyards within the Jordan community. Under the joint management of Boisset and Vincor, noted experts from Burgundy, such as Professor Bernard, soil geologist Yves Hérody, chief viticulturist Bernard Zito and Montreal-born winemaker Pascal Marchand, were brought over from France to join their counterparts in the Niagara Region to blend the expertise of both the Old and New World of grape growing and winemaking. Since then, the stewardship of the vineyards and winemaking, jointly referred to as "viniculture," has been led by Thomas Bachelder and his associate, Isabelle Meunier. Both grew up in Quebec and each followed their lifelong passion for Pinot Noir by independently studying at the winemaking school in Beaune, Burgundy, and working at various winemaking estates in Burgundy and the New World.



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## FEATHERSTONE WINERY

### Holiday Open House

November 25 & 26 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. The neighbouring wineries and merchants of the Twenty Valley Tourism Association all hold their Holiday Open House the same weekend, so plan on making a day of it.

### Wine Seminar: It's a Wrap!

December 9 at 11:00 a.m.

December 10 at 1:00 p.m.

Wrap up the season with a comparative tasting of finished, bottled wines and then wines from the fall vintage that are still in the tanks. Review the strengths and challenges of the season with winemaker David Johnson. \$10.00 per person, max 15 people per session. Please call ahead to reserve. 905-562-1949

## ROCKWAY GLEN ESTATE WINERY

### Holiday Carols Dinner

with The Robert Wood Singers & The Wood Kids

December 8 - Cocktails & Dinner begin at 6:00 p.m.

Show will begin at 8:00 pm. Price is \$55.00 per person.

### Led by a Star

Featuring the Treblaires Show Choir

December 15th - Cocktails & Dinner begin at 6:00p.m.

Show will begin at 8:00 pm. Price is \$55.00 per person.

For further details and reservations, call (905) 641-1300

## STONECHURCH VINEYARDS

### Taste of the Season

Be sure to get your pass to participate in this great event put on by all the Niagara On The Lake Wineries. All passport holders will enjoy a delicious food and wine pairing selected especially for this event. Purchase your pass for one of three weekends in November – including November 11/12, 18/19 and 25/26th. This event is a great fund raising event for a great cause – Second Harvest Food Bank. You can purchase your pass on line at [www.niagaronthelake.com](http://www.niagaronthelake.com) or by calling 905-468-1950 or at Second Harvest at 416-408-2594. Hope to see you at Stonechurch to enjoy our Cabernet Sauvignon paired with marinated beef Carpaccio on a Toasted Crostini. Of course we have many other award winning wines on hand for tasting too!

## Fine Arts Public Auction at Stonechurch

November 16 - 18

Viewing will take place on Thursday & Friday from 11:00am till 6:00pm. Auctions on Saturday, November 18th beginning at 1:00pm. Decorative Arts – Fine European Antique Furniture – Semi-Antique and Antique Persian and Oriental Carpets.

### Fresh Flowers

December 3 - 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 pm

Christmas arrangements made with your own two hands! Enjoy our award winning wines and some Canadian cheese while you create! Limited space available.

\$50.00 fee/person. Call to register – 905-935-3535 x228

## WILLOW HEIGHTS ESTATE

### 10th Annual Holiday Open House

November 25 - 26 - 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Let Willow Heights Estate Winery add some sparkle to your holiday season as we share a few of our favourite things... Icewine and cheese, mulled red wine and tastings of our new release wines... 2004 Cabernet Franc VQA, 2004 Merlot VQA, 2005 Chardonnay Sur Lie VQA

Join the wineries of Niagara's Twenty Valley for "Wrapped up in the Valley" a fun winery touring passport event. Visit [www.20valley.ca](http://www.20valley.ca)

## Other Wine Events

### CHRISTOPHER WATERS

#### Meet Your Maker: Niagara's Best

Christopher Waters is presenting a tasting with Derek Barnett (Lailey Vineyards), Darryl Brooker (Hillebrand Estates) and Rob Power and Craig McDonald (Creekside/ Mike Weir) during the Gourmet Food and Wine Expo in Toronto.

Meet the winemakers responsible for some of Canada's best wines in this relaxed session that reveals the stories behind the wine. Join vintners from Creekside Estate Winery, Hillebrand Estates and Lailey Vineyard and learn their approach to the art of grape growing and winemaking. The eight samples will feature wines ranked with the best in the country in recent issues of VINES Magazine.

Cost \$59 (includes admission to expo)

November 25, 2:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.

Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building

Call 1-866-414-0454, ext. 311

Email [tickets@foodandwineshow.ca](mailto:tickets@foodandwineshow.ca)

Visit [www.foodandwineshow.ca](http://www.foodandwineshow.ca) for more information.



## ***Tony Aspler: An Interview***

**GLEN SIEGEL**

On October 30<sup>th</sup>, Tony Aspler was able to take some time out of his schedule to talk with me about “The Wine Atlas of Canada” and about the Canadian wine industry in general. We got together at Random House in between Tony’s interview with Star! Daily and ROB TV.

**OWS:** This is a huge amount of information to track. How do you approach a project this big?

**TA:** You start by sending out questionnaires to all the wineries to get the basic information and then you follow up by email and phone and email again. It’s a surprising amount of work. After all that, you go out and visit the wineries to actually taste the wines and see the place.

**OWS:** Did you actually get to all of the wineries?

**TA:** No. I got to most of them I missed one or two in each area. Also, they are springing up so quickly that there are a number of wineries that have opened since I visited the areas. The day I finished the manuscript, David Gamble told me about a new winery in Oliver, B.C. It’s called Oliver Twist Estates. I “googled” it and found out it was one of twenty-five new licences pending for wineries.

**OWS:** Is there a special winery, or more, that you want to visit again.

**TA:** There are several... In BC there is Blue Mountain, Poplar Grove and la Frenz for the spectacular view. In Ontario there is Closson Chase, Long Dog, Huff and Norman Hardie. Quebec has Vignobles Les Pervenches which is making the best wine in the province and also Vignobles Des Pins and anywhere in the Gaspereau Valley in Nova Scotia. However, the best wine in Canada is currently coming from Le Clos Jordanne. Their wines are the best expression of the terroir.

**OWS:** The Atlas is a great first edition and you mention a second edition in a couple of places. What changes would you like to make for the second edition?

**TA:** Well you can’t make radical changes in the structure of the book without redoing the whole thing. I will certainly bring the winery listing and the maps up the date. I would like better maps with more detail on them.

**OWS:** Have you thought of making the Wine Atlas available electronically?

**TA:** We’ve thought of that as it would certainly make it easier to update. We could also break it into pocket-sized editions by region.

**OWS:** You discuss fruit wines for some of the wineries that make them, especially in Quebec and the Maritimes. You also list the fruit wineries in the appendix but they

are not covered in the main text. Why not?? Does this represent a personal view.?

**TA:** Yes it does. I don’t believe that fruit wines can have the complexity and depth of grape wines. In addition, you can’t cover everything in one book. You would never get it finished.

**OWS:** How about grapes made from hybrid vines? In Quebec and the Maritimes, there is still a heavy reliance on these vines.

**TA:** Not in the whites. They don’t seem to have the finesse and elegance of the varietals. Perhaps in the reds. There are some very good Baco Noirs being produced. It will take time and experimentation.

**OWS:** Tony, you didn’t rate the wines or the wineries. Why?

**TA:** I see myself as a wine evangelist, not a wine critic. I might think a winery is good but not great and then they have a great year so I would be damning them with faint praise. I want to encourage people to go out and enjoy wines without my opinion getting in their way.

**OWS:** Do you think that the current VQA legislation should be extended towards the AOC style wherein the varieties, vine densities and so on are detailed.

**TA:** Maybe some day but not yet. This is still a very young industry and it’s too soon for detailed rules like that. There isn’t enough information on what vines grow best in which soils, and climates through out Canada.

**OWS:** So you think the recently announced sub-appellations in the Niagara Region are premature?

**TA:** Yes. Not all factors have been considered fully from the grapes point of view. Rather than impose the appellation on the grapes, we need to let the grapes, the soil and the climate tell the story.

**OWS:** Do you think each region should focus on a signature grape or is that too limiting?

**TA:** Yes they should but not to the exclusion of the other grapes. In the current issue of Wine Tidings, I have a commentary about this. We shouldn’t try to be all things to all people but we should focus on what we do well while still experimenting to see if there are alternatives.

**ED. Note:** See November Wine Tidings for Tony’s suggestions for the various areas.

**OWS:** Where do you see the Canadian wine industry in the next 10 years? Do you think the current consolidation of small wineries will continue?

**TA:** Yes. The small wineries don’t have the marketing know-how or power. The small, out-of-the-way mom and pop operations will have trouble competing in what is really an global industry. In addition, there are



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differences in the industry in BC and Ontario. In BC, they are totally behind the local wine industry and the local wines are readily available in the restaurants. In Ontario, this hasn't happened. There is one shining example – The Stone Road Grille in Niagara on the Lake has an extensive wine list that is 100% Niagara VQA. They are the exception.

**OWS:** Do you think that Canadians are moving towards the French / Italian view of wine, that it is part of every day life.

**TA:** Canada will not become a wine-drinking nation like the French until you can buy wine in the grocery stores, near the food. You need to see a crisp white on the fish counter and some reds near the meat counter. Right now, wine is treated more like an afterthought. The attitude of the government towards wines needs to change and the laws need to be updated.

**OWS:** Do you have a secret, or not so secret, desire to be a wine maker?

**TA:** I have made some wines but they weren't great. I almost bought property up in The County to produce Pinot Noir. I went up one morning to purchase a property and found out that it had been sold the night before. I took it as a sign.

**OWS:** Finally, the desert island question. If you could only have one wine to drink, which one would it be?

**TA:** Champagne, the real stuff. From Champagne. It's the most versatile wine there is. It goes with everything including breakfast and no one looks at you funny when you drink it.

## THE WINE ATLAS OF CANADA

### The Indispensable Guide

By Tony Aspler

Photography by Steven Elphick

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**REVIEWER: GLEN SIEGEL**

Tony Aspler has produced a book that should be on the reading list for everyone interested in Canadian wine. This book is the first wine atlas that I have found that is interesting to read and informative on several levels.

Aspler reviews the history of the Canadian wine industry, wine tourism, a year in the vineyards and Icewine in the first chapter. He then devotes one chapter to each of the

four major wine producing areas: British Columbia, Ontario, Quebec and the Atlantic Provinces.

In each of the chapters devoted to a wine area, Aspler provides an overview of the province or region with maps and photographs to illustrate the text. In the overview, Aspler tells us the story of wines, the history in the area and introduces us to the people who shaped the industry.

He then discusses the main wine producing areas and covers the important geographic and climatic factors that influence the wines of the region. This is followed by a description of the wineries and their wines.

For each of the areas, Aspler also includes a box with both single day and weekend tours of the areas. For example, in the Winona-Grimsby-Beamsville area, Aspler recommends that you should see Peninsula Ridge, for lunch, Angles Gate, fielding Estates and Crown Bench for the single day tour. For a weekend tour, add in Thomas & Vaughan, Mountain Road and Legends Estate.

Aspler also added in boxes that talk about some of the unique points of the areas. For example, in Ontario, he tells us about wind machines, in Quebec we learn about Réjean Guertin and his harvesting wagon while in the Atlantic provinces chapter we learn about l'Acadie grapes, which are the most widely planted grape in Nova Scotia.

My only negative point about this book is the maps. They provide you with an idea of where the wineries are but very little else. I would have preferred to see topographic maps. The maps make the Niagara Peninsula look as flat as the Lake Erie North Shore. Also, the north indicator and the scale was omitted from the maps which reduces their usefulness to people outside the regions.

Overall, I really like this book. You can read through the area descriptions and get the flavour of the Canadian wine regions. You can also spend more time and read the descriptions of the individual wineries and the people who created them. If you are new to winery tours and just beginning to discover the industry, this book will be an Indispensable Guide to planning your journey.

