



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006

Upcoming Events

Toronto Chapter

Sauvignon Blanc Tasting

May 16

Sauvignon Blanc (SB) is the vine variety solely responsible for some of the world's most popular and distinctive dry white wines: Sancerre, Pouilly-Fuisse., and Fume. Blanc. SB always shared a certain aromatic "herbaceousness" with Cabernet Sauvignon, and in 1997, DNA showed that SB and Cabernet Franc were its parents!! SB is the variety that introduced New Zealand wine to the world. Thanks to Robert Mondavi who renamed it Fume Blanc, SB enjoyed enormous success in California in the 1980's. Although reported to not be really suited to Ontario's climate, it is one of the most widely planted white vinifera varieties, after Chardonnay.

So, come out and enjoy this refreshing (great for summer) grape, grown in different countries. Which one will be your favorite? The 2004 vintage for Ontario SBs was a good year and they are still showing well. Can you guess which country the mystery wine comes from?

To take us through this 'blind' tasting will be Frank Baldock; an international wine writer and educator, wine judge and industry consultant and longtime president of the Wine Writer's Circle of Canada. Frank has been an editor for Canada Living, TV Guide, Metro and for 5 years had been the wine columnist for the Toronto Star.

http://www.ontariowinesociety.com/flyers/flyer_to_may06.htm

OWS Annual Bus Trip

The Niagara Bench featuring Angel's Gate, Hernder Estate, Kittling Ridge, Vineland Estates

June 10

The Niagara Escarpment or 'Bench' is the area we will be visiting. We expect this to be a sellout (maximum 48 people) so it will be a first come first go. Most wineries are located on magnificent properties. Subject to weather, our private tastings might be conducted outside.

Lunch will be a 3 course meal with matching wine at Vineland Estates' four-diamond restaurant.

As well as having us do the driving, you will have that unique opportunity to buy wines only available at the winery as well as new releases. We include 4 private tastings, 3 tours and a four diamond gourmet lunch with

wine. Lunch will be in an 1857 historic stone Carriage House. At each winery there will be time to stock-up your empty carton with wine purchases.

http://www.ontariowinesociety.com/flyers/flyer_to_jun06.htm

Niagara Chapter

Canadian Terroir from the "Terroir Series"

May 16, 2006 at Creekside Winery

2170 Fourth Avenue, Jordan Station

Reception - 6:30pm, Tasting - 7:00pm

As we continue on our journey to discover the essence of the word "terroir" and how it affects the wine in the glass, we step back from our Ontario focus to look at Canada and its different viticultural areas. These will include Ontario, British Columbia, and Nova Scotia. We'll see if we can find some insight into whether or not there are any "Canadian" similarities, or further, if there are any distinctively provincial characteristics and differences.

Our guest speakers will include:

Craig McDonald: Winemaker from Creekside Winery. Craig has significant international experience and has since settled here in Niagara.

Kellie MacMillan: Sommelier from the Lord Nelson Restaurant in Burlington. Kelly has worked in the Nova Scotian wineries.

Jean Martin Bouchard: Winemaker from Hidden Bench Winery. Jean has worked in British Columbia as the Assistant winemaker for Sumac Ridge in the Okanogan Valley

Our event will be held at Creekside Winery. Creekside's owners Peter Jensen and Laura McCain-Jensen have truly Canadian dreams as they are building a multi-provincial company with wineries currently in Ontario and Nova Scotia. This winery truly reflects the spirit of this tasting. *If the weather is nice, we'll have the tasting on the patio outside so bring a sweater in case it gets a bit chilly!*

As usual, stay afterwards for mingling and delicious nibbles. Hope to see you there!



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006

ONTARIO WINE AWARDS 2006 WINEMAKER OF THE YEAR



We are pleased to announce that winemaker Jean-Pierre Colas was voted by the Ontario Wine Awards judges and the Executive of the Ontario Wine Society to be Ontario's Winemaker of the Year based on his consistent winemaking ability, contribution to the Ontario wine industry and ability to produce fine wines in the range of categories.

Regional Events

Wine and Herb Festival

May 6-7, 13-14, 20-21, 27-28—11:00 a.m.—6:00 p.m.
The Wineries of Niagara on the Lake

This May take a visit to Niagara-on-the-Lake and discover how herbs also enhance the enjoyment of wine and play an integral role in food & wine pairings. During weekends in May, each of the 17 Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake will be featuring a different herb & wine pairing. Sip the wine, savor the herb aroma, and sample an herb-flavored food delicacy. Passports cost \$30 and can be used on all four weekends in May. Call 905-468-1950 or order online at

<http://www.niagaraonthelake.com/>

Terroir

“Terroir: The romantic, mystical and scientific notion that all the natural elements in each plot of land—soil, climate, winds and slope—will be uniquely captured in the vineyard, then expressed in the wine.”

May 20 - 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Crystal Palace, Fairgrounds, Picton, Ontario

Included in this ticket price are: an etched wine tasting glass, food samples to complement wine tastings, ticket towards first wine tasting, bread, cheddar cheese from Black River Cheese with wine jelly from Susanne's Specialty Foods and much more.

The Program booklet contains coupons for events on Sunday at the participating wineries. If you visit all participating wineries from May 21 through August 7, 2006, you will receive a commemorative pin and entry in a draw for a getaway weekend and gift basket.

Tickets are \$20.00 pre-purchased or \$25.00 at the door, space permitting. Tickets for wine tastings can be purchased on site for \$1.00 each or 10 for \$8.00; price per tasting will range from 2-4 tickets. For tickets or more information, please visit: www.pecountywines.ca or call 921-7100, locally, or 1-888-313-WINE (9463) toll free.

In the Toronto area, you can contact Ken Burford at yvonknken@pathcom.com for tickets.

Please note that attendance is restricted to those 19 years and over and non-alcoholic beverages will be available.

Winery Events

ARCHIBALD ORCHARDS & ESTATE WINERY

<http://www.archibaldswinery.com/>

7th Annual Fruit Wine & Food Festival

May 27 - 12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.

A great afternoon of Food, Wine & Jazz Music! Plans are well under way for the 7th annual Fruit Wine & Food Festival on Saturday, May 27th from noon to 5:00 p.m. Archibalds' & Big Brothers & Sisters of Clarington host this wonderful event, with proceeds going to the charity. Some of Ontario's top Fruit Wineries are paired with local chefs to offer up samples of award winning wines & wonderful regional cuisine. Last year, some 800 guests were on hand to enjoy this unique culinary experience AND help the charity organization continue their valuable work in our community.

Tickets available at: Archibalds' Winery & Big Bros/Sisters Office - 23 Scugog St., Bowmanville (905)623-6646 - \$8.00 in advance or \$10.00 at the door

Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006



BLACK PRINCE WINERY

<http://www.blackprincewinery.com/>

May 21- 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

As part of the Terroir event, see above, Black Prince is hosting a special event on featuring wines crafted from 5 separate Prince Edward County vineyards/terroir.

Drop by the winery on Sunday and meet the growers and winemakers. Listen to their stories, learn about the wine growing and taste the wines of each of these very different soils. We will also be exhibiting "Terroir" art from the world renowned German Artist Ekkeland Götze

CARMELA ESTATES

<http://www.carmelaestates.ca/index.php>

The Celebration of Wine Dinner

May 19 - 7:30 p.m. at Carmela Estates Winery

Wines will include Chardonnay Sur Lie, 2003 Riesling Reserve, 2004 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay, 2004 Pinot Noir and the 2003 Cabernet Franc. \$97.50 per person Dinner, Wine taxes and gratuities included

For Reservations call 399-3939 locally or Toll Free 1-866-578-3445. Limited Space Available

Terroir

May 20

See Regional Events above for details.

CAVE SPRING CELLARS

<http://www.cavespringcellars.com/>

New Age

May 6, 13, 20 & 27 – 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

Winemakers often remark that a new vintage reminds them of one from the past. See how our '05 rieslings and chardonnays stack up against selected older vintages.

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

Riesling Rules

June 3, 10, 17 & 24 – 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

The oldest riesling vines at Cave Spring Vineyard yield some of Canada's most ageworthy wines. Taste the evolution of our estate rieslings from 1999 onward.

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

Riverwalk Restaurant Winetasting Dinner

May 26- 6:30 p.m.

Riverwalk Restaurant will be hosting their eleventh multi-course wine tasting dinner, which will showcase the fine wines of Cave Spring Cellars, featuring guest speaker, wine-maker Angelo Pavan. The evening begins at 6.30pm. All tickets must be purchased in advance at a cost of \$150.00, which includes all food, wine, taxes and gratuity. For more information, contact Riverwalk Restaurant, Bracebridge, Ontario (705) 646-0711 or club1@muskoka.com.

COLIO ESTATE WINES

<http://www.colio.com/>

Saturday Night Steak Out!

June 17 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. - Father's Day Weekend

Last Day For Tickets is June 7, 2006!

Featuring live entertainment from the Dale Butler Trio and Nicole Barron. Entertainment begins at 4:00pm.

BBQ served at 6:00pm.

Assistant winemaker Tim Reilly talks on wine and food pairing. Bring your Dad, Husband, Brother, Uncle or Friend! Cost: \$25/person or 2 for \$40.

For further information please contact:

Gail Heffernan - Tour Centre Manager, Colio Estate Wines at 519-738-9318 or 1-800-265-1322 or email: cheers@coliowinery.com

COYOTE'S RUN ESTATE WINERY

<http://www.coyotesrunwinery.com/>

Wine and Herb Festival

Coyote's Run Wine: 2004 Cabernet Franc

Coyote's Run Herb: Rosemary

Coyote's Run Food Pairing: Mini Yorkshire with rosemary parsnips & smoked beef with Caramelized onions

Niagara New Vintage Festival

Niagara New Vintage Festival Winery Touring Passport – June 10 - 18 – 10:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Celebrate Summer in Niagara with our newly released 2005 Unoaked Chardonnay with Upper Canada Cheese Company's *Comfort Cream*, a camembert-like cheese from Niagara's newest creamery. Free to passport holders, \$2 for non-passport holders.



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006

HUFF ESTATES

<http://huffestates.ca/main.php>

Terroir

May 20th 1pm to 7pm

See Regional Events above for details.

Jazz on the Patio with the Dan Bone Trio

May 21 - 12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Free of charge "Jazz on the Patio" will be on every Sunday thereafter through to October.

Contact karen@huffestates.com or (613) 393-5802

Winemakers Dinner at the Hillcrest Inn and Spa

June 24

Winemakers Dinner at the Hillcrest Inn and Spa in Port Hope with Frederic Picard and Chef Elaina Asselin.

For more details please visit

<http://www.thehillcrest.ca/>

INNISKILLIN WINES

<http://www.inniskillin.com/>

Wine and Herb Festival

See Regional Events above for more details.

Newly Released Vintages

June 3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 - 11:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Celebrate Inniskillin's Newly released Vintages tastefully paired with some of deLuca's Premium Cheeses. Check out Inniskillin's latest renovations and innovations while you're visiting

Passport holders (June 10-18th) complimentary, non-

passport holders throughout month - \$8

To order your passports please contact

www.grapeandwine.com

KACABA VINEYARDS

<http://www.kacaba.com/>

El Cinco de Mayo Mexican Celebration

May 5-7 - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Hola amigos! Bring the family to the winery for a special sangria tasting made with our Gypsy red blend and or sample our award winning 2002 Pinot Noir with Black olive taponade.

For more information call (905) 562-5625

Mothers Day Wine and Roses

May 13-14 - tours at 12:00, 1:00, 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.

Fresh cut roses for every Mother. Wine and Food Pairing.

Special discounts throughout the Wine Shop.

For more information call (905) 562-5625

Your Nose Knows - Aroma Workshop

May 20-21 - 11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

A fun yet informative class. Our sense of smell informs our sensation of taste, so we will "sniff" Kacaba wines, while Winemaker John Tummon describes aromas commonly found in our wine. After this workshop you will see how easy it is to identify these components.

Reservations Required; Minimum 6 Participants

Winemaker John Tummon, Kacaba Vineyards Wine

Educator at 905-5625625 Founder Club Members \$0,

Public \$10

Pates vs. Mousse

May 27-28 - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Do you know the difference? Learn about them as you sample locally available pates and mousse

Aunty who? Antipasti

June 3-4 - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Looking for something new try our award winning wine with fresh vegetable antipasti

New Vintage Wines

June 10-11

Experience a glimpse into the future, get a sneak peak at wines which won't be released for time to come. All New vintages will be available for sale for this weekend only.

Fathers Day

June 17&18 - 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Treat Dad to a tasting and some complimentary cheeses selected to pair with our Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot wines. Dad gets a free Kacaba Vineyards wine glass to take home!

Summer Equinox Observation

June 24 & 25

Raise a glass—Summer is here!!!! The official solstice is June 21, but we're celebrating all weekend. Enjoy a variety of Kacaba wines with Strawberry appetizers.

Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006



KONZELMANN ESTATE WINERY

<http://www.konzelmannwines.com/>

Winemaker's Dinner

June 3 - Reception - 6:30 p.m. Dinner at 7:00 p.m.
Join one of our Winemakers as he toasts the new Spring Season with a specially chosen selection of his own Award Winning Wines paired with a delectable menu created and prepared exclusively by our Chef Darren Stoute.

\$149.95 per couple (tax and gratuity not included)
For more information and to make reservations please call the winery at (905)935-2866. or email wine@konzelmannwines.com

LEGENDS ESTATES WINERY

<http://www.legendsestates.com/>

Legends on the Lake

June 6 - 6:30 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Celebrate the release of Legends Estates Winery's 2003 Reserve Wines while raising funds for Canoe Kayak Canada and Rowing Canada Aviron.

The top chefs in the Niagara region will join Chef Michael Sadtlander, in preparing various culinary delights at food stations interspersed throughout the picturesque Legends Estates Winery.

*Casual attire - (less than an hour west of Toronto)

\$195 per ticket or \$1,800 for 10 tickets

Limousine chauffeur service \$60 per guest

MALETA WINERY

<http://www.maletawinery.com/>

Spring into Summer Event at Maleta

June 10-18, 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., daily
Spring into Summer with Maleta's red, white & pink New Vintage Releases. Sample our off-dry Riesling and Rose, Riesling Icewine, Cabernet-Merlot & Meritage paired with Maleta wine jellies and fruit.

A great opportunity to taste our New Releases including a 3-vintage vertical of our award-winning Meritage.

Free for Festival Passport Holders; \$2.50pp without Passport

PENINSULA RIDGE

ESTATES WINERY

<http://www.peninsularidge.com/>

Jazz on the Ridge - Wine Dine and Jazz Gala

May 26, 2006 at 7:00 p.m.

presented by The Founder's Club of Peninsula Ridge & West Lincoln Memorial Hospital Foundation.

Be sure to mark Friday, May 26th on your calendar for an evening celebration of great wine, spectacular food and celebrity jazz performers. Tickets are Now ON SALE and selling Fast. \$195 per person (includes a \$95 tax donation receipt) call: 905.563.0900 ext. 25 or email: jazzontheridge@peninsularidge.com

Donations: If you wish to make a donation for our live or silent auction please contact Susan Pritchard at 905.563.0900 ext. 28.

PILLITTERI ESTATES WINERY

http://www.pillitteri.com/index_1.html

Sante- The Bloor-Yorkville Wine Festival Events

May 2-7 2006

Toronto, Ontario

It is the only Festival of its kind in Toronto and has become one of the world's "must attend" events. Experience the best international and domestic wines and meals that will tantalize your taste buds, and all of this is set in the most amazing venues that the city has to offer.

Sip, Savour & Dine Event

May 6

"Accents" on Sante with Sue-Ann Staff, Winemaster, Pillitteri Estates Winery at the Accents Restaurant & Bar at the Sutton Place Hotel, Toronto Ontario. Savour signature wines and exquisite food!

Reservations: 416-324-6413

Wine and Herb Festival

Begin your journey at Pillitteri Estates Winery and try their "Oregano & Dry Riesling" pairing.

Toronto Tastes

A fundraising event for Second Harvest. Pillitteri Estates Winery is a proud supporter of this benefit, featuring fine wine, exquisite cuisine from Toronto's most talent chef's, and a silent auction as well. For more information about this event visit

<http://www.torontotaste.ca/>



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006

STONE RIDGE ESTATE

WINERY

<http://www.stoneyridge.com/>

Spring Garden Party

May 13 – 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

A spring “Garden Party” on our new garden patio -try our newly released 2005 Reserve Riesling, along with specially selected cheeses . Come and enjoy our new garden patio

Cost \$20.00. RSVP by May 10

Mothers Day Special for Mothers only and their guests

May 14 – 12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m.

Sample our 3 special Mothers day wine drinks- “Cranberry Splash”, “Wild Lady”, “Vidal Tini”

These are sure to “tickle your fancy” 4 stations with wine/drinks and cheese/food pairings at each station \$6.00 per station or all 4 for \$20.00

Music in the garden

May 20 - 12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m.

Accompanied by a special blind taste test - hone your wine tasting skills by identifying basic grape varietals

Cost \$20.00. RSVP by May 15

Charlottes' Garden Party and Wine Tasting

May 21 - 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Join Charlotte Warren for a discussion of unique garden ideas and while sipping “Charlottes Chardonnay” and sampling some selected blue cheeses

Cost \$20.00. RSVP by May 16

Victoria Day Special

May 22 - 12:00 noon – 4:00 p.m.

Come and pre-taste our explosive new sparkling wine not to be released until 2007. \$15.00 per tasting including a cheese platter. RSVP by May 18

BC vs Ontario Wines: A Discussion Over Lunch with Jim Warren

June 3 – 12:00 noon – 3:00 p.m.

Join Founding Winemaker Jim Warren as he compares the best wines of Ontario with those of British Columbia.

Taste a sampling of the wines from both provinces while enjoying lunch.

\$40.00 pp. Limited to 30 people. RSVP by June 1

Rose Garden Opening

June 10 – 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Plan to attend the opening of our newest Garden feature

For more information visit our web site or contact the winery at toll free 1 866 778 -6639 x 25

Niagara New Vintage Festival Passport weekend

June 10-11 - 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m.

Music and wine –live music in the garden

Fathers Day Special

June 18 – 12:00 noon - 4:00 p.m.

Barrel Room Tasting with paired cheeses

\$15 per person

Gardening with Wine and Herbs

June 24 – 1:00 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.

Tapas tasting combining food and wine with fine herbs.

Special guest, Ellen Mitchenson master Gardener from Jordan. \$20.00 per person

VINELAND ESTATES WINERY

<http://www.vineland.com/>

The IRONic CHEF Duel

May 17

On the coat-tails of our sold out April Dining Adventure Series event, ‘The IRONic CHEF Duel’, we are proud to present our next installment on May 17th, 2006 themed ‘Game Profusion’. Our local purveyors provide us with a veritable palette of offerings for the canvas that is your plate. Utilizing quail, duck and venison, perfectly paired with wines of distinction, let the culinary artisans of Vineland Estates compose for you a masterpiece for the senses.

Wine Club Member menu price is \$70 per person ++, flights of wine included with each course. Please call reservations at 1-888-846-3526 x 33 or e-mail reservations@vineland.com.

Strawberries and Pinot Noir

June 21

Our fourth Dining Adventure Series event of this year, ‘Strawberries and Pinot Noir’, will be on June 21st, 2006 in our own Winery Restaurant starting at 7pm. When the berries come in from the fields, it means two things: the advent of Niagara’s limitless bounty and the flurry of culinary inspiration that follows. At Vineland Estates Winery, this also initiates demand for our fruity pinot noir, the ultimate complement of the strawberry. Come,

Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006



explore and discover with us the magic of Pinot Noir & Strawberries.

Wine Club Member menu price is \$70 per person ++, flights of wine included with each course. For reservations please call 1-888-846-3526 x 33 or e-mail reservations@vineland.com.

Saab Vine Dining

June 25

Saab Vine Dining will once again be held on the grounds of Vineland Estates on Sunday, June 25th, 2006. This unsurpassed gourmet picnic takes guests through our picturesque vineyards with leading chefs and caterers setting up kitchens along the route sampling their creations, and area wineries sampling some of their finest VQA wines as well. This is a major fundraising event for Theatre Aquarius in Hamilton, and sells out every year! General ticket price \$125 (with tax receipt portion of \$75). Vineland wine club members receive 10% off the ticket price when ordering through the winery. Please visit www.theatreaquarius.org for more details. To order tickets please call 1-888-846-3526 x 29 or e-mail bbonfoco@vineland.com.

WILLOW HEIGHTS ESTATE WINERY

<http://www.willowheightswinery.com/>

Uncork Spring in Wine Country - 6th Annual Spring Open House

May 20-22 - 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Uncork new releases that include 2005 Gewurztraminer, 2004 Riunisi Vidal VQA, 2005 Riesling Reserve, 2004 Tresette Reserve VQA, 2004 Cabernet VQA and 2004 Special Select Late Harvest Vidal VQA.

For more information contact us at 905 562 4945 or visit our website.

Restaurant Events

ALLEN'S

<http://www.allens.to/>

Paul Pours

June 1 - 6:00 p.m.

A summer wine evening in the backyard with Henry of Pelham Estate featuring Paul de Campo, Director of Sales and Ron Giesbrecht, Winemaker

A Summer Wine Evening

June 8 - 6:00 p.m.

In the backyard with Peninsula Ridge Estate Winery featuring Jonathon Kuhling, Director of Sales and Jean-Pierre Colas, Winemaker

Visit our website for all our news. Music starts at 9:30 pm.

Niagara Parks Creates New Wine Cellar at Queenston Heights Restaurant

(Niagara Falls, ON) The Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) is pleased to announce that a fine selection of Niagara VQA wines will soon highlight the Queenston Heights Restaurant experience. A diverse wine collection called *Best of Niagara* was selected exclusively for NPC by renowned wine writer and consultant, David Lawrason.

The *Best of Niagara* is a comprehensive list of Niagara VQA wines that together reflect the quality, diversity and excitement of one of the fastest-growing New World wine regions. Arranged by style and grape variety and selected for quality, wines will be available to suit any mood, occasion or menu selection.

David Lawrason created a custom wine catalogue for this exciting new venture. Formerly wine columnist for the *Globe & Mail*, he is founder of the Canadian Wine Awards program and Canadian Editor for *Wine Access* magazine. David tastes virtually every variety and wine Niagara produces and he has reported on these great offerings for over twenty years.

The extensive selection will be reviewed monthly with new choices available throughout the year. The list includes a Niagara wine library selection and in future will feature an Appellation selection. As labels bearing Niagara's 12 new 'sub-appellation' names come to market.

For more information about Queenston Heights Restaurant and the menus created by Executive Chef Elbert Wiersema to compliment this new extensive wine collection, visit www.niagaraparks.com or contact:

Mark Gienow

Director, Food Services

The Niagara Parks Commission

905 353-5401

mgienow@niagaraparks.com



Just Off the Vine...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

May / June 2006

A Farewell to Bruce...

On April 10, 2006 a cunning group of scoundrels AKA your Board of Directors (see below), assisted by Terri Barber, managed to surprise Bruce Barber with a "Thank You" dinner at The Summit House Grill. We had a great evening talking about Bruce's ten years as President with many stories told by the "old-timers" in the group.

The evening was hosted by Henry Shiskoski and the outstanding menu was prepared by Chris Bolland, both old friends from the Tasting Rooms. We even persuaded Henry to join us for the picture below.

For those who want to drop in to see Henry and Chris, you can contact them through the website.

<http://summit.celebrationgrills.ca/>



And don't worry, Bruce isn't leaving us. He just wants to sit in the audience for a while!

Ontario's Wine Industry

H BERBEROGLU

The trend, of late, is to open a boutique winery in Niagara. Wealthy lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, assorted professionals and retired people have all decided to open wineries to fulfill a dream. It is much like 20 years ago when many rich professionals started opening restaurants only to find out how difficult and time-consuming it is to make a go of it. They wanted to say to their friends, family and business associates: "May I invite to my restaurant?"

While suitable land prices have escalated in Niagara, small wineries must struggle to become profitable.

Volume and a well-established distribution network is a

Thirty Bench, a highly touted and quality-oriented winery with approximately 40 hectares of prime vineyards, was recently sold to Andres Wines, one of the two giants of the Ontario wine industry. The founders Dr Muckle and Professor Papandreou are still running the small winery, which they sold. Andres bought the winery as much for its good reputation as for its prime, mature vineyards.

EastDell, Birchwood, Thomas and Vaughn and Lakeview wineries, were also sold to a holding company, more to take advantage of economies of scale than anything else.

Small wineries have very limited access to the distribution network of the L C B O with approximately 600 stores. This is because the monopoly demands steady supply in large quantities and small wineries simply cannot comply. Mark-ups are very high, and boutique wineries prefer to sell their wines in their stores to take advantage of the \$ 1.50 per bottle distribution cost the LCBO charges.

Andres and Vincor, the two dominant winery organizations of the country maintain large distribution networks acquired over decades by taking over small establishments.

Three decades ago Ontario had fewer than 20 wineries. The number has increased to 90, but chances are, by the end of this decade there will be fewer independently owned wineries. It is sad to say that liquor control boards in all provinces, except Alberta, have become revenue sources for provincial governments and profit-oriented, ignoring their prime mandate of orderly alcoholic beverage distribution. They now prefer merchandise, (yes this is how they treat wines) profitable, fast-moving wines and other beverages to domestic wines. Also, out of province wines are subjected to taxes as imports, something no other country in the world does.

Small wineries can only be successful if owners inherit large tracts of land, and maintain other sources of income, i.e Hernder Estates operates a wedding hall, and sells grape juice in bulk, Vineland Estates operates a fine restaurant and B and B, Cave Spring Cellars owns a restaurant and a hotel, and Angel's Gate's owners wisely decided to hang on to their money-managing day jobs.

Wine production depends on the vagaries of nature, particularly in northern climes. In Niagara, 2003 was write-off, and before then, there were many more.

Entrepreneurs must contend with cost problems and pricing (a bottle of wine at

\$ 10.00 in retail nets \$ 3.97 to the winery that includes bottle, cork, label, labour, marketing and prime material costs). The only hope a boutique winery in Ontario has is that it attracts enough visitors that buy significant quantities, (and this is an achievement in itself), and land prices continue to escalate!

Presently neither is taking place.