



Just Off the Vine ...

The Ontario Wine Society's Newsletter

November 2005

Upcoming Events

Toronto Chapter

NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

November 22 - Reception: 6:00 p.m., Tasting: 6:30 p.m.

Members: \$30, Non-members: \$40

The Ontario Club, Commerce Court South, 5th Floor.

Last year's "New Kids" was a sell out! This popular event is now an annual staple for the OWS. This year, eleven wines from five of Ontario's newest wineries will be showcased. Representatives from the wineries, including most of the winemakers themselves, will lead us through samples of their wines and talk about their wineries.

Ridgepoint Wines - '04 Riesling and '02 Nebbiolo

Fielding Estate Winery - '04 Gewürztraminer and '02 Cabernet/Merlot

Stratus Vineyards - '02 Wildass Red and '02 Cabernet Franc

Flat Rock Cellars - '03 Pinot Noir and '04 Nadja's Vineyard Riesling

Mountain Road - '01 Barrel Aged Chardonnay, '01 Cabernet Franc and a special treat of their '99 Vidal Ice wine!

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Bordeaux Blends January 17, 2006

Icewine Weekend February 4-5, 2006

Sparkling Wines February 21, 2006

Wine & Cheese March 14, 2006

Annual Dinner April 25, 2006

Sauvignon Blanc Tasting May 16, 2006

Niagara Chapter

December (TBA) - Blending Wines

January 17 - New Kids on the Block Tasting (featuring 4 of Niagara's newest wineries) - held at Stratus Winery

February - "You be the Judge" tasting - sampling Cuvee Winners

March - Annual Social Night

April - "Cork VS Screw Cap"

May - "Women in Wine"

News from the Vines

FRED COUCH, OWS – NIAGARA CHAPTER

Congratulations to Hillebrand Winery Restaurant, which has just been awarded a 4-star rating by Toronto Life. It's the only restaurant in Niagara with a 4-star rating and one of a few in the province. Check out these new links on the OWS website: www.winlineontario.com is an on-line resource offering tips, event information, news, and a convenient e-shop for consumers to order wine direct in Ontario.

At the Bordo Wine & Cheese Bistro, www.bordo.ca, in Burlington you can stop by to enjoy a glass of wine, do a mini wine & cheese tasting or go for a full-size dinner; There is an amazing amount of information on wine available via the Internet. The problem is knowing where to find what you are looking for. www.torontowine.com solves that problem for the Toronto wine lover by acting as a customized reference guide. If you know of a wine-related website that would be of interest to OWS members, send me an e-mail at beamsville4850@aol.com and I can have a link added to the OWS website

Winery Events

Cave Spring Cellars

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

RELEASE WEEKEND!

November 18 - 19

Enjoy a weekend getaway at our Inn On The Twenty, including a Winemaker's dinner & tasting featuring new & back vintage releases. For details, call 1-800-701-8074.

BY THE GLASS

November 19-20 & 26-27-11:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m.

It's a well known fact that the shape of the glass dramatically affects our appreciation of wine. Discover just 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 3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24 and 31 - 11:00 a.m. & 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 making merry.

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



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Coyote's Run Winery

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

TASTE THE SEASON ~ TOURING PASSPORT PROGRAM

November 19-20, 26-27 - 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Visit Coyote's Run and enjoy a tasting of our 2004 Reserve Chardonnay paired with a Shitake Mushroom and Leek Fricassee. Present your passport at the Niagara-On-The-Lake Chamber of Commerce and receive your "vintage 2005 collectable ornament" as a keepsake of your trip. Passport are \$30 and are available by calling Second Harvest at (416) 408-2594 or online at www.niagaraonthelake.com.

GOURMET FOOD & WINE EXPO ~ METRO TORONTO CONVENTION CENTRE

November 17-20

Visit Coyote's Run at the 'NEW' Wines of Ontario booth for a unique opportunity to sample some of our premium wines.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE

December 3-4 - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Celebrate the holiday season at Coyote's Run Estate Winery, come in and enjoy an array of premium wines, unique gift giving ideas and warm hospitality in a festive setting. There will be wine and cheese pairings, Christmas Caroling from 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., complimentary Christmas gift wrapping and above all some holiday cheer.

Henry of Pelham

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

For those interested in premium quality hand-crafted wines that focus on terroir, Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery in Niagara has been a leader for nearly 20 years.

Now we've introduced something new: several times a year the Speck Bros. (owners of Henry of Pelham) take you into the winery with their informative newsletter/wine club called **Distinctions**. This wine club is not about the hard-sell. Rather, the newsletter is actually written by the people who plant the vines and make the wines. It's a behind the scenes journey that keeps you informed on how the vintage is shaping up, what's happening in the winery and barrel cellar to push the boundaries of quality and how the wines are aging. And as an added perk we invite Distinctions members to very interesting events. Last October we held the First Annual Harvest with Henry where people brought in the crop with brothers Paul, Matthew and Daniel Speck followed by lunch and a

double vertical tasting of Reserve Riesling and Unfiltered Cabernet-Merlot going back to 1993. Not many wineries in Canada can boast a library with that much depth (and beyond). Next spring **Distinctions** members will be invited to taste the wines from last years harvest both in bottle and barrel – in several cities.

To join go to www.henryofpelham.com or send an e-mail to winery@henryofpelham.com with the word Distinctions in the Subject bar.

Hillebrand Estates Winery

<http://www.hillebrand.com>

FINE ART AND WINE LABELS - A PERFECT PAIRING

Hillebrand, which has a long standing relationship with the artistic community, has just announced its open call to all Ontario artists asking for submissions that could one day be showcased on a bottle of 2005/2006 Artist Series wine. For more information on eligibility, entry, notification and obligations, please contact art@hillebrand.com.

Deadline for entry is December 15, 2005.

Inniskillin Wines

<http://www.inniskillin.com>

TASTE THE SEASON

November 19-20 and 26-27 - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

A Taste the Season passport allows you to sample a wine and a food pairing at each of the participating wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake, either on November 19-20 or November 26-27.

Proceeds go to Second Harvest and its programs to help feed those who would otherwise go hungry. Passport holders will receive a Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake hand-blown glass ornament collectible.

To purchase passports please go to www.niagaraonthelake.com or call 905-468-1950 or at the participating wineries.

A TASTE FOR ALL SEASONS

Let us assist you with your gift giving choices. We can readily recommend gifts for the following: Hostess/ Entertainer, Wine collector, Gourmet chef, difficult to buy for relatives, Family celebration.

While shopping enjoy sampling some wonderful wines for entertaining over the holiday season.

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Jackson Triggs Niagara Estates

<http://www.jacksontriggswinery.com>

TASTE THE SEASON PASSPORT PROGRAM

November 19-20 and 26-27 - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Purchase a passport for a weekend. Enjoy a wine & food pairing at each of the participating 17 wineries AND discover great holiday gift selections. Present your passport at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and receive your "Vintage 2005 Collectible Ornament" as a keepsake of your trip.

Passports are \$30.00, and are available by calling Second Harvest at 416-408-2594, or online at www.niagaraonthelake.com

For each of the above dates, Jackson-Triggs is offering a savoury Ermite Blue Cheesecake with Walnut Crust paired with our Proprietors' Reserve Meritage.

SAVOUR THE SIGHTS SERIES

January 14, February 11, March 3, April 1, May 13, June 3.

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

\$135.00 plus taxes and gratuity
Reservations required
905-468-4637, ext 226

Mountain Road Wine Company

<http://www.mountainroadwine.com>

THIRD ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION!

November 27 - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Mountain Road Wine Company would like to invite you to celebrate with us the successes of our past year and share our new releases including the 2004 Botrytis Affected Riesling, four red Icewines, our 2002 Chardonnays; unoaked, barrel fermented and reserve.

We will be offering complimentary tastings of all of our currently available wines including our Reserve Cabernet Franc, Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon (the big brother of

our sold out 2005 Ontario Wine Award Gold winning regular 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon) and our 2001 Reserve Chardonnay.

A limited number of our Vintage Library Collection will be re-released, including our Gold winning 2000 Maréchal Foch, 2000 Barrel Aged Chardonnay, 2000 Cabernet Sauvignon Vintner's Reserve and yes a few squirreled away bottles of our 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon. (Some quantity restrictions may apply.)

Join us for food, fun and wine; all for free! (We will be accepting donations for the local Women's Shelter.)

Reif Estate Winery

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

TASTE THE SEASON

Touring Passport Program at the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake

November 19-20 and 26-27 - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Passports holders select a weekend to visit up to 17 wineries to experience a wine and food sample, do some holiday shopping and pick up a 'Vintage 2005 Collectible Ornament'. Your touring passports also supports Second Harvest and its programs to help feed those who would otherwise go hungry.

\$30.00 per passport

Tickets available on-line www.niagaraonthelake.com or contact Second Harvest at 416-408-2594

Southbrook Winery

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

SWEET SENSATIONS DINNER

November 19 - 7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Do you have a sweet tooth?

We have a cure! Join us for our most decadent dinner of the year, where the main course is chocolate! We will be matching our famous fruit wines with delectable chocolate creations, fresh fruits and sweet treats dipped in cascading melted chocolate, pouring from two chocolate fountains! Bill's famous chocolate bread pudding will be fresh and hot out of the oven for sampling alongside many more desserts. To celebrate this sweet sensation, we will also be releasing our 2003 Vidal Ice Wine.

\$55.00 plus tax per person.

To reserve your space, please call 905-832-2548.



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Stonechurch Vineyards

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

WINEMAKER'S DINNER AT STONECHURCH

November 18 - Reception: 7:00 Dinner: 7:30 p.m.

Join us for this special event featuring our winemaker, Terence van Rooyen, as he guides you through a 5 course dinner prepared by chef Oscar Turchi of Savoia and paired with Stonechurch wines (7 wines in all) served in a Ravenscroft Amplifier Glass that you can take home.

Live music will also be featured. The cost is only \$75:00 per person. Seating is limited so call early to reserve your seat at 905 935-3535.

Vineland Estates Winery

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

HISTORY OF RIESLING DINNER

November 16 - 6:30 p.m.

Join us for the 8th installment in our Dining Adventure Series as we celebrate Riesling's renowned history at our estate and on two continents with the Weiss family tradition at Vineland Estates with a 6-course Riesling pairing menu. All dining series events are led by our Winemaker, Brian Schmidt and include a pairing menu designed to enhance the featured theme.

Tickets \$100 per person.

Wine Club Members special pricing \$70 per person

For reservations, call Diane at (905) 562-7088 x33 or 1-888-846-3526 x33.

RIEDEL SENSORY EXPERIENCE

December 3 - 2:00 p.m.

Join us in our Wine Boutique this holiday season to learn how Riedel stemware take premium wines to another level. Guest Riedel Expert, Wayne Bentley will lead you on a comparative tasting or our premium wines to educate about the unique properties of Riedel stemware, designed to maximize the sensory experience for each wine varietal presented. Wines will be presented with a selection of fine Artisan cheeses for your pairing enjoyment. Riedel stemware will be offered at 15% for our entire Holiday Festival from November 25th through the end of December.

Tickets \$30 per person

Wine Club Members Special Price \$20 per person

Seating is limited for this event so reserve early by calling our Wine Shop at 1-888-846-3526 x24 or (905) 562-7088 x24.

BOOK SIGNING BY KONRAD EJBICH

for "The Pocket Guide to Ontario Wineries"

December 4 - 2:00 p.m.

Join us as we celebrate the launch of Konrad's new book, "The Pocket Guide to Ontario Wineries" which gives an in depth story of Ontario wineries and Winemakers. Konrad will be here to answer your questions and sign books – the perfect gift for the wine lover on your holiday shopping list.

If you wish to join us for our 3pm public tour, please call in advance to advise to: 1-888-846-3526 x24 or (905) 562-7088 x24.

HOLIDAY TASTING AND BOOK SIGNING

Christopher Waters of Vines Magazine

December 10 - 2:00 p.m.

Join us in our boutique as Vines Magazine Wine Writer, Christopher Waters discusses our wines for holiday entertaining and does a fun and educational comparative tasting. We will also offer signed copies of Vine's "2005 Buyer's Guide to Canadian Wine", a great holiday gift idea for any wine aficionado.

Reservations recommended by calling our Wineshop at (905) 562-7088 x24 or 1-888-846-3526 x24.

Guests wishing to see more of the estate, can join us for our public tour at 3:00 p.m. for \$6 per person (No charge for Wine Club Members).

Willow Heights Estate Winery

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

9TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE

November 25 - 27 - 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

To celebrate the holiday season, join us at Willow Heights to sample our favourite holiday cocktail..... The Icewine Martini shaken or stirred with our New Release 2004 Vidal Icewine!

Warm up for Winter with our special VQA Red Wine Release: 2003 Cabernet Franc, 2004 Baco Noir, 2003 Tresette Reserve, and the much sought after 2004 Pinot Noir Reserve.

As Chardonnay continues to be the signature wine of Willow Heights Estate Winery we are excited to release the 2004 Chardonnay Reserve this weekend!

Our fourth annual Bin End Sale* is extended to our valued customers for this weekend only!



Other Events

Niagara Culinary Institute

SHOWCASE OF CHEFS

Monthly dinner featuring chefs and wineries throughout the region.

November 16 - Wine Reception - 6:30 pm

Dinner - 7:00 pm

Featured Chefs: Niagara Culinary Institute

Featured Winery: Niagara College Teaching Winery

Cost \$95.00 per person

Reservations: 905-641-2252- ext.4619

Location: 135 Taylor Rd. Niagara-on-the-Lake

Szabo & Szabo

STRATUS WINEMAKER'S DINNER AT IL MULINO.

December 12 - 7:00 p.m.

Winemaker JL Groux, the "King of Assemblage" of Stratus Vineyards, Executive Chef Allan Hilario & Sommelier Zoltan Szabo of Il Mulino to pair 5 courses in a perfect assemblage of world class cuisine and wines.

\$150 + tax & gratuity/person.

Seating is limited, please call (416)780-1173 or email info@ilmulinorestaurant.com

Book Release

BILLY'S BEST BOTTLES - WINES FOR 2006

Everyone needs a little help with wine shopping, especially over the holidays. Wine writer Billy Munnelly has the solution. Spread holiday cheer for only twenty bucks!

Take the stress out of choosing wine for the holiday season with 'Billy's Best Bottles - Wines for 2006'. It's the ideal gift or stocking stuffer for anyone who enjoys wine, or who would like to.

'Billy's Best Bottles - Wines for 2006' is the most user-friendly wine book available. All of Munnelly's picks are easily found in the liquor store - and each wine featured is shown with its label. All wines are classified by MOOD - a novel approach that makes shopping dead-easy for the reader to make the best wine choice for the situation.

Half of the selections (there are over 200 this year) cost less than \$13, and many cost less than \$10. This book is useful to everyone, even the novice, because Munnelly uses everyday language to interpret wine.

Besides tips on what to buy this colourful handbook also contains down-to-earth information about pairing wine

and food, planning a party, glassware, and basic do's and don'ts. Munnelly also gives a country-by-country analysis of what's going on in the world of wine and gives straight-ahead answers to many frequently asked questions about wine. With loyal followers coast to coast, Billy's handy guide has become an eagerly anticipated favourite. Munnelly does not try to tell you everything about wine. "Just the bits that are important and useful. My idea is to get you the best times, not impress you with tons of wine crap."

Billy Munnelly has been delivering lighthearted and enlightened wine advice to Canadians for the past twenty-five years. Before taking up drinking full time, the Irish-born bon vivant owned and operated restaurants including the original Rosedale Diner in Toronto and Rundles in Stratford.

Billy's Best Bottles Wines for 2006

author / publisher: Billy Munnelly

publication date: November 15th, 2005

ISBN 0-9693717-7-2

number of pages: 200

spiral bound, laminated cover

retail price: \$21.95

Articles

SYRAH – THE NEXT UNIVERSAL RED WINE GRAPE

H BERBEROGLU

Syrah, the predominant grape of northern Cotes du Rhone, is one of the noblest varieties capable of reflecting terroir perfectly.

There are many theories regarding its place of origin, some of which are captivating but untrue. The one most popular but incorrect is that it was brought by the commanders of the fourth Crusade who made detour to the city of Shiraz, in Iran, and brought cuttings to the Rhone delta in their saddles. As intriguing as it sounds, researchers proved the theory wrong, as the grape existed well before the fourth Crusade arrived in the 11th century.

Another theory suggests the city of Syracuse on Sicily to be the birthplace: this was also proven to be just a theory.

DNA analysis shows that a natural crossing of mondeuse blanche (dongine), and dureza from Ardeche, just west of Cotes du Rhone, created syrah.

Syrah was so famous that in the 18th century Bordeaux wines were blended with Hermitage and sold as Hermitagé (i.e. mixed or blended or ennobled with Hermitage wine).

Syrah wines age well, but can also be vinified as a fruit-forward, easy drinking libation, as Australian winemakers have been doing for decades. It can be blended with cabernet sauvignon to soften it, or rendered lighter with a splash of viognier, the preferred white grape variety in northern Cotes du Rhone.

Characteristic flavor descriptors are: blackberry, chocolate, pepper, spice in Australia; and smoke, tar, iodine, herbs, and gaminess with cellaring.

Vignerons in northern Cotes du Rhone distinguish between petite syrah and grosse syrah. The former is small-berried bunches that yield darker and more flavorful wines, whereas the latter yields much more but coarser wines.

Some California vignerons call syrah petite syrah (durif) believing it to be a different strain. In reality durif is not related to syrah at all.

Syrah is a dark thick-skinned grape that likes hot climates, and ripens early if properly pruned for low yields. The soil must be well drained, chalky-clay or mixed with iron as is the case in some Australian regions. Syrah's longevity from the vineyards of Cote Rotie (blonde or brune), Crozes-Hermitage, Hermitage and Cornas are legendary. At the very least these wines need five years of barrel aging.

In 1950's acreage of syrah in France was declining, but thanks to new plantings in Languedoc Roussillon it has reached 40,000 hectares.

In Australia, wineries promoted the variety and invented a new style. It is fruit-forward, low acid, high alcohol and easy drinking, slightly sweet wine particularly suitable to young palates. Australian winemakers also make a sparkling sweet shiraz that is popular with desserts or as refreshing glass of wine during receptions.

James Busby, who many consider to be the father of Australian vitiviniculture, introduced the grape in Australia. He obtained cuttings from Montpellier, France. While at the beginning of 1990 there were only 5 000 hectares of syrah in Australia, today the acreage is well over 30 000 hectares and growing.

Barossa Valley, north of Adelaide, Clare-, Eden Valley, Coonawara, and the Hunter Valley north of Sydney are famous for their succulent shiraz.

Australians call syrah shiraz as distinct from the French and in fact produce a completely different style of wine. Since its introduction in 1832, the grape has also acclimatized to local terroir yielding different wines than those of Cotes du Rhone.

South Africa has been successful with syrah and markets a style that is somewhere between European and Australian

styles. Californian, particularly Sonoma County, Santa Barbara, Napa- and Central Valley, have been very successful with syrah. Mc Dowell in Mendocino, J. Phelps in Napa, Qupe in Santa Barbara, and Cline in Sonoma County produce excellent syrah wines.

Argentina and Chile have had many successes with syrah and will produce better wines in the future as the vines become older.

New Zealand also planted some syrah and prices mid-weight, well-balanced wines.

Ontario, British Columbia and Washington State also boast many hectares of syrah, which are eminently enjoyable. In the future, we can expect to see better and more of them in major markets.

Syrah as a grape is likely to become very popular because it can be fashioned to please the palate of a large segment of wine consumers. The name is easy to remember and reminds one of both the fruit and flavour of the wine which appeals particularly to young consumers.

Winemakers would be hard-pressed to find a more versatile red grape variety than syrah or shiraz!

MALIVOIRE FALL TOURING EVENT

Glen C. Siegel

Once a year, Martin Malivoire opens the door to his winery so people can see how one of the first gravity wineries in Ontario works. This year, the tours were on the weekend of November 12 and 13. I attended the first tour of the day even though it meant getting out of bed very early on a Saturday.

As we sampled the Malivoire Ladybug Rose, our tour guide, Richard Blackadder, told us about the new Barrel Room. Wines are both fermented, Chardonnay, and aged in this room, most of the reds. Malivoire has American and French oak to give them flexibility.



The Malivoire Barrel Room

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After the barrel room, we boarded the little yellow school bus to drive to the top of the hill. We stopped part way up the hill to talk about the vineyards. Malivoire's grapes are organically produced. Their vineyards, both the ones they own and the ones they control, were certified organic last year.

The Malivoire philosophy means that there is a great deal of hands on work starting with pruning the grapes right after the coldest part of the winter. Canopy management techniques are used to open up the canopy to reduce the risk on mold and increase the ripeness of the grapes. The location on the Beamsville Bench helps with this as the air flows off the Niagara escarpment, down through the sloped vineyards and down towards the lake. They reduce the number of buds on the vines to increase the quality of the grapes. They also remove the "shoulders" off the bunches of grapes to allow the rest of the grapes to fully ripen. When they pick the grapes, they are delivered to the winery in small baskets to reduce the risk of crushing the grapes during transport. The grapes are shaken by the sorting table to persuade the ladybugs to fly back into the vineyards to help control the vineyard pests. After the shaking, they are had sorted to remove unripe or over-ripe berries. Then they move on to the crusher-destemmer.

We then moved on to the top of the hill and the grape intake areas for the winery. Inside we looked at the crusher destemmer and then eagerly approached the second tasting table manned by Malivoire's chief winemaker Shiraz Mottiar. We tasted the 2004 Pinot Gris Laundry Mottiar Vineyard. This Pinot Gris is the first made wine made at Malivoire using grapes from Mottiar's own vineyard. Mottiar explained that this wine was produced with whole cluster pressing following by cold soaking with 6 hours of skin contact. Malivoire prefers to use a process of repeated slow pressings to produce the juice.

The intake area looks out over the oak and the stainless steel fermenting tanks and the crusher-destemmer can be positioned so that the grapes drop right into the appropriate tank. See photograph above right – oak above, stainless steel below. In the case of the Pinot Gris, they dropped into a stainless steel tank for the cold soaking. Six hours later, a trap door at the bottom of the tank was opened and the must fell through into the press area. After pressing, it was then moved to another stainless steel tank for fermentation.

At this point, we walked down the stairs to see the trap door and the bladder press. Some of us peered up into the tanks while those with sharper eyes saw Martin Malivoire at the next tasting table – with food to pair with the 2003 Moira Vineyard Chardonnay. This is an oak fermented and aged wine that is lovely now and will



Oak Fermenters on top, Stainless Steel below

improve with some age. It was paired with Belle Tarts and Crab Cakes prepared by Chef John Pekka Woods of The Epicurean Restaurant & Bistro Niagara on the Lake. Wonderful combinations and flavours!!

After this, it was downstairs to the tasting bar and sales area.

I have been to a couple of these events at Malivoire but this year's was the best. You had to pre-register for a time slot with a credit card. The tours were free but there was a penalty for no-shows. With only 16 people per group, you could see and hear and ask questions. In addition the wine tasting stations and the food and wine pairing station were easier to manage for everyone. If you are not on the Malivoire mailing list, sign up for it the next time you are there. Then watch your email in October 2006 for your invitation.!!!



Bladder Press



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WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN EATING??

GLEN C. SIEGEL

The first in what might be a series of articles about two of my favourite things - food and wine.

People approach food and wine matching as if it is complicated. It isn't.

If you like what you are eating and drinking, and the food and wine work together to improve the experience, it's a match that works. If, on the other hand, you find that you are thinking that you don't like the wine as much as you did before or that the meal is not what you expected, maybe the match isn't quite what it should be.

For example, there is a restaurant near work called the Monte Cristo. It's a good restaurant with great decor, attentive service and really good food. The last two times that I've been there I've ordered seafood. I've asked the waiter for suggestions on the wine and both times a big California oaked Chardonnay was their first suggestion, followed by Pinot Grigio. Both times I went with the Pinot Grigio but it wasn't a great match. The food was great and the wine was OK but they didn't improve each other. The meal tended to overshadow the wine and make it seem washed out, a little bland. My preference would have been a Sauvignon Blanc or a Chenin Blanc, something with more acidity due to the seafood and the way it was prepared. The problem is that they don't sell those wines by the glass.

Now, saying that food and wine matching is simply eating and drinking things together that improve each other is simple to say but unless you are willing to experiment with several wines with every meal some basic things to look for might be in order.

All wine has acid in it, to a greater or lesser extent. Pinot Grigio has less than some wines, Sauvignon Blanc has more. This is why Sauvignon Blanc generally seems "crisper", more refreshing. Since my fish dishes above had acidic things like lemon in them, a wine with some acidity would complement the dish better. The acidity in the two would cancel each other and the other flavours would come out.

As another example, the other night I paired pork ribs and reisling. I made Apple Pork Side Ribs the other night (see the recipe below). Because of the way they are cooked, they have some acidity and some sweetness from the apple juice/cider and the apples on top. The wine that has some acidity, some sweetness with appley flavours - Medium Dry Riesling. I opened a long-time favourite of mine, a 2003 Ridgepoint Medium Dry Riesling. It had pronounced apple and pear notes when I first tried it and it was great with the ribs.

APPLE PORK SIDE RIBS

Start with a couple of racks of pork loin ribs. Cut into manageable pieces, four to six ribs together, so that they can fit into your pan in a single layer.

On the meaty side, sprinkle generous amounts of Cinnamon, Nutmeg and Cloves, more Cinnamon than Nutmeg and Cloves.

Rub the spices into the meat, slowly and with feeling.

Add a sprinkle of salt and, if you have the time, put them back in the fridge for an hour or so.

Place the ribs in a single layer in a pan and pour in a half inch of Apple Juice or Apple Cider.

Cover the ribs with Aluminum Foil - tightly if you like your ribs falling off the bone tender. I place a sheet of foil on top of the ribs but I don't crimp it along the sides so the ribs stay moist but not steamed.

Bake for about 2 hours at 325 degrees fahrenheit. Have a glass of Riesling while waiting.

Baste the ribs occasionally with the juice in the last 45 minutes.

Dice several apples. Remove the foil and cover the ribs with the apples. Bake for another 30 minutes.

Let the ribs cool until you can slice them into serving portions. Serve. Eat. Have another glass of Riesling.

These ribs are even better the next day.

Write for the Newsletter

We are looking for people who would like to write for the newsletter - articles about wines, wineries, wine-related events, restaurants that feature Ontario Wines, book reviews, food. You don't have to be professional, just interested. Tell us about the winery you last visited - what you liked, what you didn't like, would you go back and would you recommend it to a friend. Tell us a story about your trips through wine country.

If you want to run your idea past us first, email it to owsnews@rogers.com.

Word documents attached to emails are preferred but anything that works for you should be OK. Send your material to owsnews@rogers.com or give it to someone on the Board at the next OWS meeting.

What do you think??

What would you like to see in the Newsletter?? More events listings, articles about Ontario Wineries, reviews of wines, books, restaurants?? Let us know what you want to read. Send your comments to owsnews@rogers.com or give them to anyone on the Board at the next OWS meeting.