



# AWOnews



**Produced by The Amateur Winemakers of Ontario**

**A forum for the exchange of news and opinions on home**

**winemaking in Ontario**

**May 1997 Newsletter No. 5**

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**The Convention issue:**

***"Welcome to AWO 1997 in Toronto!"***

## **IN THIS ISSUE:**

**by Paul Dunseath**

**The 1997 AWO Festival is now only a few weeks away, and promises to be a weekend filled with informative and enjoyable events. If you have not yet sent in your registration forms, read the back page of this issue with information on all of the events awaiting you, then fill out your registration form and run, not walk, to your nearest mailbox. In addition to news of the Festival we also have Don Eastman's report and analysis of the results of the "Whither AWO?" questionnaire; a new column, "FOCUS ON", which looks at some of the stars of our winemaking firmament; an article on Concentrates; Gord Barnes' notes on AWO Futures; and, as our lead-in article, a whimsical piece by Kawartha Winemakers' Larry Paterson on coaxing wine from the soil in the tropical climes of Peterborough. Cheers!**

## **PETERBOROUGH COUNTY VINEYARDS**

**by Larry Paterson**

**1993: I planted 4 Vidal vines donated by Paul Bosc Sr. against the south wall of my house. There is a reddish brick wall one foot behind them, and a black driveway three feet in front. Our house and our neighbour's house manage to shelter the vines from any North or West winds. Despite my best efforts, the vines grew reasonably well, with one reaching about ten feet of length. They were buried overwinter, surviving multiple cold nights approaching -400.**

**1994: Six partners waited results of the overwintering. The vines came up alive and we decided to go ahead and plant 70 more vines. Two (Merlot and Pinot Blanc) joined the first 4 at my house and the rest were planted on Wally Henry's 100-acre farm south of Buckhorn near Sandy Lake. Wally's Folly was planted with 14 each of Pinot Blanc and Merlot, and 10 each of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Zweigelt and Gewurztraminer.**

**A south-facing slope sheltered to the North and West was chosen for planting. A small creek runs beside this, and it wasn't long before this spot was called Mosquito Creek (in keeping with varietal naming practice, there were more mosquitos than creek). The farm was first settled by a Civil War deserter who**

**planted potatoes. A limestone kiln was later made just off the current vineyard, giving us some hope (ego?) For Pinot Noir. This slope is the last southward extension of the glaciers at this point. The vineyard is a jumbled mess of many rocks and soil types that the glaciers scraped together from points north. The soil runs approximately 25 feet deep, and is located on the edge of the Canadian Shield; the structure is called the Dummer Moraine, or, in our case, Dumber.**

**A highlight of this first year was a visit by a sedate, sober winemaker by the name of Salvatore d'Angelo. He approved the vineyard site but, in his own inimitable fashion, questioned everything else from viticultural practices to the provenance of the planters. Unfortunately, we couldn't write down some advice as quickly as it arose, and our shortcoming will undoubtedly cost us in the future. We did decide to get the vines to grow from very low (short main stems) to make burial easier each winter.**

**The vines were buried by Wally, Hugh Johnstone and myself. We dug them (partially) underground, consuming some product as we did. A first rule in future is that you can't bury and drink at the same time, as approximately half of the vines died overwinter -- we rushed the job and didn't quite succeed in**

**burying them.**

**In Peterborough, a first crop of 1.5 liters (fermented in 375 ml bottles) oxidized, all but 375 ml.**

**1995: There were no flowers on year-old vines (as there had been in**

**Peterborough). Growth was slow, and we realized we must use some fertilizer.**

**We planted additional vines to make up for poor overwintering; more Cabernet**

**Sauvignon and Merlot as well as some Kerner, Seyval, Chardonnay, Riesling,**

**and, most masochistic of all, 20 Pinot Noir vines. The Seyval produced 10 small**

**bunches of grapes. We took in a seventh partner.**

**We didn't get together to bury the vines until late in the year at which time we**

**had to hack our way through a foot of snow and ice. Wally and I had to work**

**very hard to get ahead of a forecast overnight low that would certainly have**

**killed off the Merlot buds. Had to work too hard for a Swivel Servant (or is that**

**Seyval Servant?)**

**In Peterborough the vines grew over the rooftop, threatening my 14-year old**

**shingles. Chickened out and harvested early (despite 21.5 Brix, too high in acid).**

**Just under 9 liters of finished wine resulted. That's finished, as in what anyone**

**will be who tastes this turkey.**

**1996: Some lousy year, huh? Vines in Peterborough ripened well, but those in Buckhorn suffered from an early frost and didn't ripen well at all. Made "BABY", just over 2 liters of neon pink rosé made strictly from the vinifera grapes grown in Peterborough County. Fermented it in one weekend on top of a fridge (must acknowledge Mr. Redpath's heavy contribution to the eventual alcohol). There was one perfect, completely ripe bunch of Pinot Noir. If only.....**

**Made 8+ liters of Vidal from Peterborough vines which came in at a respectable 18.5 Brix, harvested in early November. Turned out OK but managed to filter the 8 liters into a 5-litre demijohn. Yup, the floorboards got the rest. Live and learn. Took on two half-partners (telling Ivan to speak in a half-voice is hopeless). A crew of 10 buried the vines.**

**1997: Six of us cut cedar posts for new trellising in January (in three hours of pouring rain). Accomplishing this requires real dedication. Purchased**

**Dornfelder and Traminette cuttings from Vineland Research Station to see how these will do. Wish we could get some Magaratch Ruby.**

**Competition rears its ugly head. Winsome Heights is a similar group-effort on**

**the drumlins overlooking the South end of Rice lake, and two of its four partners are partners in Wally's Folly. More vines ordered from Mori-Vin in Niagara (Lloyd Schmidt must really wonder!). We should get a crop this year worth some of the effort, if we can just avoid killing ourselves with bad winemaking. Incidentally, Jim Warren from Stoney Ridge Winery has undertaken to make a small quantity of wine from this vineyard if enough grapes can be produced.....maybe at the Buckhorn LCBO?**

**For fun, we have named each vine after a person who has shown an interest in the vineyard. Think of it - you get a phone call that starts out - "Sorry to let you know that you didn't survive the winter".**

## **[FOCUS ON: Fred Passmore](#)**

**Fred is an authentic "war hero", and we thought that his biography would be a most fitting one for the launch of this column. Thanks to Shirley for the following:**

**FRED CUNARD PASSMORE was born in January, 1924, and raised and**



received primary education in Hamilton, receiving also, before he reached his teens, instruction in the making and tasting of wine from his brother Bert. At eighteen he was to join the RCAF, attend a pre-aircrew education requirement at McGill University, then on to various ground and air training schools, preparatory to an overseas posting and assignment to Bomber Command. By the end of 1944, he had completed 36 bombing missions over Nazi-held territory in Canadian-built Lancasters as tail gunner, for which he was awarded the Gold Operational Wings of the RCAF . (Editor's note: tail gunner was probably the most dangerous of positions in the aircrew of a bomber; 36 missions is an incredible achievement).

Released from the RCAF in mid 1945, Fred entered the construction business .

In 1947 Fred returned to the RCAF and since he was now 23, was found too old for training in high speed aircraft. Instead, he was employed in the police and security branch of the service. In 1952 he was appointed to attend the Canadian Police College of the RCMP and on graduation was assigned to Security Intelligence in Ottawa. In 1954 Fred was selected to Command a Security unit in Continental Europe. This unit found itself involved in counter intelligence operations against incursions of the NKVD and KBG in Central Europe.

**After four years of a "James Bond" existence, and a further honing of his wine appreciation skills, he returned home in 1958, retired from the service and was hired by International Harvester, to become Personnel Manager and finally, Manager, Safety and Security, retiring in 1983 and opening his own business in property management. Fred was a resident of Dundas from 1966, living on 57 acres of land where he, at one time, ran 35 head of polled Hereford breeding stock.**

**He has been a member of the Amateur Winemakers of Ontario for 28 years with 23 of these years as a wine judge. In 1990, Fred was officially appointed by his peers of the Judges' Commission as its first ever, Chief Wine Judge for Ontario, a position he retired from in 1996, but remaining active as Chief Judge Emeritus. In June of 1996 Fred was named Most Valued member of AWO.**

**Currently, he and Shirley reside on a 100 acre farm in Caledonia and Fred is a member of the Honourary Crew of the Mynarski Lancaster at the Canadian Warplane Heritage Museum, a member of the International Police Association and the Chairman of the Hamilton Division, Canadian Corps of Commissionaires.**

# **FUTURE OF THE AWO**

## **QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS**

**by Don Eastman**

**Responses to the questionnaire are still dribbling in. It is a bit like pressing grapes. Do you wait for the last possible drop, or do you cut it off and get on with your winemaking? Is the quality of the last hard pressings as good as the free-run juice?**

**So far, there have been exactly 50 responses (very convenient for doing percentages). Only two of the responses were from clubs, the rest were from individuals. By normal commercial standards for a mail-in questionnaire, this would be a pretty good return rate, but in reality, about 85% of you have responded with a resounding "who cares!" by failing to send in a return. Not surprisingly, the responses tended to come primarily from the most active members of our organization. Over half of the replies came from members who have attended 3 or more of the last 5 conventions.**

**Our sincere appreciation to those of you who did take the time to respond. There were many very thoughtful replies with extended comments in the margins.**

**There were others that I am sure were thoughtful, even if I couldn't follow the thought process. I am strongly recommending that everybody on the Executive read through the whole package of replies to get a flavour and depth of understanding that will not emerge from any summary.**

**Of those of you who did respond, 60% want fundamental change to the organization (while likely disagreeing on what those changes should be). The other 40% want it left largely as it is. However, many of that 40% apparently want the AWO to remain the same while getting out of beer, beginning regional seminars, and establishing an effective lobbying presence with the provincial government. Nobody wanted lower dues. Half of you thought the current dues are OK, but didn't want them raised, while the other half wanted more services and were prepared to pay more.**

**For the overwhelming majority of you (over 90%), the primary concern is about improving your winemaking skills. Only 32% of you felt strongly about improving your beer-making skills, while 60% indicated "forget it!" or didn't**

**bother responding to this beer question. We are a gregarious group, with 76% feeling strongly about the opportunity to meet other people with like interests. We are also mostly law-abiding with 72% keenly interested in a positive legal environment for the hobby. However, there were some responses that could be interpreted as a desire to create more excitement in the hobby by making it less legal(?). Recognition of your winemaking skills is important for 44% of you, with another 38% in the "yes, but..." category. Many of you made written reference to the desirability of the AWO to be involved in providing lists of suppliers (grapes, etc), and some of you are looking for AWO member discounts. There was strong support for the newsletter (82%), and it should contain articles on upcoming events (90%), winemaking (88%), wine interest (82%), the upcoming convention (82%), and competition results. (76%). Again, there were several written requests to see supplier lists in the newsletter.**

**There is strong support (82%) for an annual convention, and for a "members-only" competition (74%). There was little support for AWO involvement in "open-to-the-public" competitions (20%). Interestingly, there were some responses that were opposed to a "members-only" competition, and**

wanted "open-to-the-public" competitions to provide a more meaningful testing ground, as well as the opportunity to reach out to potential new members.

Many of you would like the AWO to begin a series of regional seminars focussing on winemaking skills (74%) and wine knowledge (62%). Several of you made a specific request for a seminar about the process of winemaking.

Of those of you who responded, 50% have been AWO members for more than 10 years, 16% have been members for 6 to 10 years, and 32% have belonged for 5 years or less.

Full results (and some discussion) will be available at the convention.

Editor's note: Please read the following article carefully, and make known your views to your MPP. This is a threat to our hobby which would return us to the reactionary days of the 1950s. Thanks to Gordon for highlighting it.

## **NOTES ON AWO FUTURES**

by Gordon Barnes

**At the February meeting, the AWO Directors discussed suggestions received from members. This included the extensive activities of CABA - the Canadian Amateur Brewers' Association - and the AWO competition restrictions on U-Brew owners and entries made at U-Brews. Feedback is coming through the responses to Don Eastman's survey (see related article). We need to hear more discussion and then formulate the options so that the membership can decide how to move forward in an orderly manner.**

**Watching the current events suggests that we must also be vigilant about the present. We must make our presence known. There are reports that the government is out enforcing the U-Brew regulations. It is legal for licensed operators to make and sell wort, but the consumer is to start the fermentation, do the bottling, and remove the product. If you know of establishments that are in violation, report them to your local police or the RCMP.**

**The February 17 Maclean's magazine ran a business page story under the banner "Stirring up a batch of trouble". This discussed the untaxed U-Brew production in B.C. and noted the effects on the Ontario U-Brews when they were taxed in 1993. The piece ends with this paragraph:**

**"Some BC brewers vow to take matters into their own hands if the government does not tighten the rules on U-Brews. John Sleeman, the Chairman of the Guelph, Ont. Based Sleeman Breweries Ltd., says he has already instructed executives of his company's BC subsidiary, Okanagan Spring Brewery, to explore the idea of opening their own U-Brew shops. 'If the Government isn't going to stop these unfair practices', Sleeman says, "then they should let us all play.'"**

**The latest is a report to the Toronto Board of Health which caused a brief flurry in the press. There are 10 recommendations in a 17-page report. Lest we become complacent, here are the first two recommendations:**

**"That the Board of Health recommend that the Ontario Minister of Finance increase, on a phased-in basis, the provincial tax on U-Brew produced beer and wine from the current rate of \$0.13/litre to \$0.26/litre in 1997, \$0.31/litre in 1998, \$0.38/litre in 1999, and consider further annual increases in recognition of the important role price and taxation of beverage alcohol play in supporting low risk consumption at the individual and population level".**

**"That the Board of Health recommend that the Ontario Minister of Finance and**



**his counterparts in other provinces institute a levy on home beer and wine kits based on estimated yield in litres that is comparable to that proposed for U-Brew produced beer and wine, and explore the feasibility of a similar levy on grape juice and grape concentrates used for the purpose of home production of wine."**

**Read that last sentence again! President John La Berge is responding to the Board of Health on our behalf and, as President of the Amateur Winemakers of Canada, I am alerting the provincial Directors to this threat. We will have a status update at the June Festival.**

**In concluding this appeal for taxation as a method of improving health the author - David McKeown, Toronto Medical Officer of Health - says "The policy framework which has developed in Ontario contains many important components which support the prevention and reduction of the harms which result from alcohol misuse and dependency. These must be maintained and applied as appropriate and feasible across the spectrum of commercial and personal use sources in ways that promote low risk consumption and support the health of individuals and the population."**

**Note the logic leap in this statement:**

**"As described in a February 1996 report, there is significant research demonstrating that levels of alcohol consumption and levels of alcohol-related problems experienced in a population are generally related (References 3, 25, 26). Dose-response relationships between consumption and adverse health outcomes have been found at the level of the individual and the population. Thus, a primary public health goal is to reduce individual and population consumption."**

## **MAKING WINE FROM CONCENTRATES**

**by Paul Dunseath**

**Let's begin by dispelling some of the mystery about wine! We are all familiar with the mystique that surrounds it: the great Châteaux, dreaming behind their lush green lawns; the aged cellar master with beret, bulbous nose and walrus moustache, tip-toeing reverently through the cathedral-like hush of the cellars; the casks of great wine sleeping in the candle-lit gloom; and the tastings; fine linen spread on ancient barrel-ends, silver tastevins, monocles, and gasps of**

**pleasure....**

**Nonsense!**

**To be sure, the great Châteaux are there, and their wines - costing into the three figures a bottle here - are treated with due reverence; but much of the wine on the shelves today can claim no such lineage. The Château on the label owes more to artistic license than to architectural achievement, and the wine travels from grower to shipper down European highways blue with exhaust fumes in tandem tanker-trucks. No mustachioed figure stands guard as the six-inch coupling are snapped together and powerful pumps move the load into stainless-steel tanks. In a few days the bottling line will hiss with pneumatic efficiency, and another case of 12 will roll off to the loading dock, to be acclaimed in due course in stylish parties by self-styled wine experts across North America. You know the type: "Well, perhaps not fully up to last year's standard, but I imagine that's because these were picked on the western slope".**

**Increasing cost, decreasing quality, and a sense that there must be a better way has resulted in the growth of one of the most pleasant and enjoyable of hobbies, home winemaking.**

**Mind you, I would not want to suggest that a home winemaker, using readily available fresh grapes, grape concentrates, or garden fruits, can produce a wine to challenge the Mouton Rothschilds, Château Lafites, or Wolf Blasses of this world; thankfully, there is always room for the outstanding, which these wines represent. However, I would attest that a knowledgeable amateur, using concentrates or fresh grapes, can produce commercial-quality wine which will compare favourably with store-bought wine costing four to five times as much. In repeated blindfold tastings, not only have home-made wines been preferred to commercial wines of the same types, but the tasters, being informed that one bottle was home-made, have been unable to identify it!**

**Concentrates have the advantage of compactness, ready availability, and convenience of use. These virtues are not, of course, without their accompanying vices; not all concentrates are created equal, and some are simply not very good. It pays, therefore, to deal with suppliers who are known for the quality of their products and who will stand behind them. In addition, they do not last indefinitely (of course, fresh grapes have an even shorter "shelf life"). Finally, red concentrates are less successful than whites in equalling fresh grape quality, although more than one expert has been fooled by a red wine from concentrate**

**which has been barrel-aged, and the AWO '91 "Best in Show" was a red wine from Concentrate!**

**The production and use of grape concentrates dates back, according to some authorities, at least as far as Roman times when the "concentration" of grape juice was used as a means of preserving excess grape production, or for increasing the sugar content (and therefore the ultimate alcohol level) of low-sugar wine musts. In those days, and even until about 30 years ago in some countries, the process consisted of boiling grape juice in an open kettle until the liquid content was reduced to the point that the juice had become a thick syrup. A simple and - in terms of the times - effective process this was, but not one which produced a quality product. The high temperatures produced a cooked, and sometimes caramelized, flavour, and also resulted in the release of pectin from the cell walls of the pulp. This made any wine made from the concentrate at least cloudy, and at worst jelly-like; the open kettle in turn resulted in oxidation and the loss of volatile elements which are responsible for much of the character in wine.**

**Nonetheless, the process persisted, being slowly supplanted, beginning in the late**

**1940s, by the use of low-temperature concentrators which depend on the use of a partial vacuum to compel the juice to "boil" at temperatures well below 100 C. Initially these concentrators acted at temperatures in the range of 60 C, and coupled with devices to recover some of the volatile fractions, and the use of pectin-destroying enzymes, these early products at least made it possible to produce acceptable wines from concentrates, although even so the wines tended to be dark in colour, and often had a "jammy" flavour about them.**

**Anyone who has bought frozen orange juice concentrate will realize that this doesn't have to be the case; orange juice from concentrate has no cooked or jammy flavour, and is difficult to distinguish from fresh juice. The reason is that orange juice is typically concentrated at low temperatures (as low as 15 C, or 60 F) with very high vacuum applied to cause the juice to boil at this temperature**

**What works well for white juices does not work as well for reds, primarily because good red wines are made with a period of fermentation on the skins to extract tannin, polyphenols and aromatics. Several technological tricks are used to ensure that the juice has as many of these elements as possible, but I would have to say that wine made from red grape concentrate alone often still lacks the**

**quality of a wine from good fresh wine grapes of the same type. Note the use of the word "alone"; I'll return to that point shortly.**

**The home winemaker is able to buy the juice to make 4 1/4 gallons (19 l) of wine in a container which can be easily carried home, rather than in the form of grapes weighing upwards of 90 lbs (40 kg, +/-). The retailer also supplies a recipe showing how much water, sugar, acid, tannin, pectic enzyme, nutrient, and yeast to add, and off the winemaker goes.**

**What appears not to make sense is that, here you are, adding not only water (which was removed during the concentration process), but also sugar, acid, nutrient, and tannin, which were not. What's going on?**

**The reason, basically, is that producers of concentrate are catering to the trade.**

**While many winemakers are prepared to wait for a year or two for a fresh grape wine to mature, the idea of doing the same for a wine from concentrate is, to many, anathema, and the recipes are intended for people who may be prepared to wait for a few months, but not for a few years. We can do something about this.**

**It is possible to modify a recipe by adding more or less water than is called for in**

**the recipe, and adjusting the other additives. This will result in a heavier or lighter bodied wine; however there are limits to the extent to which this can be done satisfactorily.**

**How? The following is based on concentrate which produces 19 litres of wine, and which has an assumed concentration ratio of 4:1, which is commonly found with commercial concentrates (although NOT with 4 week kits, or any in which the instructions read "just add water"). To make a lighter-bodied wine, add an extra 4 litres of water and double the amount of sugar, acid and tannin called for in the recipe. For heavier-bodied wines, try reducing the amount of water added by 4 litres, and adding no sugar or acid. Again this is based on the assumption that by limiting the dilution to 4 to 1 we should not need any extra sugar or acid.**

**In both cases, it's important to ensure - through measurements of S.G. and acid - that your results are going to be satisfactory. The foregoing hints cannot guarantee success, since concentrates vary in their degree of concentration, but with careful measurement should provide an interesting experiment.**

**The primary failing of red wines from concentrates is that they lack some of the**



**tannins and volatiles present in fresh grape skins. Why not add grape skins to red concentrate wines?**

**Think about it. 40 kg (90 lbs) of fresh grapes provide about 19 litres (4 1/4 gallons) of juice, and just under 20 kg (44 lbs) of skins, stalks and other vegetable matter. If those skins were to be pressed, and added to another 19 l of wine from concentrate, and the whole treated as if it were a fresh grape wine, might not the result be the same as if one were using fresh grapes? The answer is a qualified "yes". In our experience this is capable of producing a wine with a fully commercial character, provided that the wine is treated as if it were fresh grape only (thus, punching down the cap on a daily basis, and removing and pressing the skins after the desired period of skin contact), and that the skins are wholesome and compatible with the wine being made. (Concord skins will not, repeat not, improve a Cabernet Sauvignon concentrate!). After the "second run", most of the flavour will have been extracted from the skins, although some of our acquaintance have been known to repeat the process with a "third run", producing a wine which is lighter in character but still interesting and pleasant on the palate. Note however that the addition of skins to a concentrate wine renders it invalid for competition in the Red Concentrate and White**

## **Concentrate classes at the Provincial Finals.**

**As with fresh grape wines, concentrates may legitimately be barrel aged or use oak chips to obtain true oak flavour.**

**What about quality? A while ago we were invited by the local CBC station to talk about wine and wine- tasting on the morning program. We brought along three bottles of wine, two of which were commercial and about \$12.00 each in to-days' prices, and one made from a concentrate at under \$2.00. We asked the host, in a blindfold-tasting test, simply to identify the home-made wine. He did... but only on the third try!**

## **MULTIPLE ENTRIES**

**Chief Judge Peter Pigeon has announced a change in the rules for multiple entries. Currently, in a class judged at the club level by a member of the Wine Judges' Commission of Ontario, two entries may go forward to the AWO competition if the judge concludes that both are of Gold Medal standard. This has now been changed; if the judge is a member of the Judges' Commission and**

**concludes that, in his or her opinion, additional wines should go forward, they may do so. There is no limit on numbers, except that no individual may put forward more than one wine in any class, and the judge must certify the multiple entries on the club's entry form. This will make it easier for members of clubs which have traditionally produced award-winning wines to have their entries considered at the provincial finals, and is good news to all serious entrants.**

## **HAPPY 35TH**

**Congratulations to Ottawa's Defalco's wine cellars on achieving 35 years of service to home winemakers. The latest flier contains a number of news items from 1962, the founding year. Our favourite is the following:**

**"April 1962: crippled U.S. spacecraft Ranger Four crash-lands on the far side of the moon, and NASA decides to send more instruments up to see if they crash too."**

## **END NOTES**

**In the next issue: where to get your grapes and juice from Ontario producers and retailers, as well as an article on "The making of a Judge". If you would like to become qualified as a judge, learn what it involves!**

**Please see over for further information on this year's Festival, including some changes to the schedule. We'll see you there!**