



AWOnews



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A forum for the exchange of news and opinions on home

winemaking in Ontario

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The Late Winter Edition

"... daffodils, that come before the swallow dares

And take the winds of March with beauty."

-William Shakespeare

"The Winter's Tale"

IN THIS ISSUE:

by Paul Dunseath



With our Year 2000 Annual General Meeting ("Festival Y2K") now fast approaching, you will find information here on the Seminar program, the Registration form, and other late-breaking items of interest. We also include a continuation of the discussion started by Gord Barnes on elderberries, with two recipes from readers. President Dan Ostler and Chief Judge Peter Pigeon provide their welcome insights into the state of the hobby in Ontario; Peter Bennell announces a new Novice class to be judged at AWO Festival Y2K; some changes in rules designed to ensure fairer competitions; and

more. Relax, enjoy, and Register early for Festival Y2K to ensure your accommodation at the host hotel, and your first choice of convention packages.

THE ELLICELLAR ELDERBERRY WINE

by Roy Ellis

(Editor's note: Roy first appeared in these pages with an article on using casein to reduce oxidase in oxidized wines. A member of Capital Amateur Winemakers in Ottawa, he has been making wine for many years and is a frequent award winner. He offers this as an addition to the "chain" on elderberries originated by Gord Barnes in our last issue.)

I read with interest the article about Elderberries in the December issue of AWOnews and felt that something was lacking. Elderberries make a delicious wine which was not mentioned in the article. I have two large shrubs of Common Elderberries, Sambucus Canadensis, from which I collect between forty and forty-five kilograms (90 to 100 lb) of clean berries each year. From these I keep about half for wine and give the remainder to friends who also make Elderberry.

wine. The wine can be made in the full range of dry to sweet. I prefer the dry wine myself. To add a little "body" to the wine I generally add one can of red grape concentrate, but this is optional. As the article pointed out, the berries tend to be mildly unpleasant tasting and that is putting it mildly. Consequently, the wine requires lots of sugar, even for a dry wine. I have four different recipes for Elderberry. wine, but I am attaching a copy of the one I prefer. Perhaps some of our readers may be interested in trying a batch.

NOTE: This recipe is based on making one gallon of dry wine for each four pounds of fresh elderberries, or one pound of dried berries.

INGREDIENTS:

This recipe is for a one-gallon (4.5 litres) batch.

- 1. 4 lb (1.82 Kg) fresh elderberries.**
- 2. 3.5 lb (1.54 Kg) white sugar**
- 3. Burgundy wine yeast (I use Lalvin 71B-1122)**
- 4. Yeast nutrient: I use Lalvin "Fermaid" at a rate of one gram per gallon.**

5. One gallon of boiling water

6. Sufficient K₂S₂O₅ to yield 30 ppm Free SO₂

Special Note: if the volume to be made is about ten to fifteen gallons, I add one can of red wine concentrate to the must to give it more "body".

PROCEDURE:

As stated above, the figures shown are for a single one-gallon lot. It is unlikely that one would make a single gallon, therefore, multiply all of the above figures by the number of gallons to be made.

1. A day, or two, before starting the wine, make a yeast starter and allow it to sit in a warm place.

2. When making the wine, crush as many berries as seems practical and put in the remainder as whole berries. Dissolve the sugar into some water and add to the berries, bringing the volume up to the quantity required. When this mix comes to room temperature, add the balance of the ingredients and stir vigorously. Then add the yeast culture. Cover with a plastic sheet and allow it to sit, stirring frequently for three days.

A VERY SPECIAL NOTE: When the must starts to ferment, a thick mucilaginous sludge may develop on the surface of the must. Using a paper towel, skim off as much of it as you can, then transfer the must to another primary fermenter through a cheese cloth strainer. AT NO TIME should you use warm, or hot water to get rid of the scum. Use only cold water. Warm, or hot water will polymerise the scum into a thick gluey substance which is difficult to clean away.

Allow the must to finish fermenting in the second tub, then put the wine into a carboy and install an air lock. When the wine has settled, rack off into a clean carboy adding sufficient free SO₂ to maintain 50 ppm then reinstall the air lock. Now follow the normal procedure for cold stabilizing, filtering, etc.

PAUPER'S PORT

by Sandy Burke

Burlington Wine Guild

The first wine I ever made was from elderberries in Ireland, as a teenager some

50 years ago. It was probably the Sambucus Nigra, the commonest variety that grows throughout Europe as far east as Siberia.

The appearance of the bush, leaves, fruit and flowers are all very similar to Sambucus Canadensis and it is probably the source of the dried berries and flowers that we find in wine supply stores.

I grow elderberries in my garden and compete with the birds for the crop. I pick the bunches or clusters as they ripen, stripping them from the stems and freezing them. I use a yeast with a good alcohol tolerance, such as EC 1118 but a true pauper would use some of the residue from another batch of wine. The truly thrifty might use cane sugar all the way but I switch to corn sugar for the final additions as I prefer it for the residual sweetness of SG 1020. Ports on sale at the LCBO range in sweetness from 5 to 13 on their sweetness scale.

I would not use less than 3 lbs. per gallon, my present batch contains 9½ lbs. in an eleven litre carboy. If you are a little short on elderberries, flesh it out with apple juice which is fairly neutral or some other fruit that may enrich. Elder flavour will predominate, anyway.

During primary fermentation the berries deposit a sticky substance that does not

wash off the primary container or the stirring spoon. After 5 to 7 days remove the pulp, add more sugar and continue to ferment in primary and finally move to carboy for later stages. The gummy substance will have deposited as a ring on your primary fermenter and your stirrer and is easily removed with naphtha gas, and possibly other solvents, but lacquer thinner or acetone in particular should NOT be used as they may damage the hard clear plastic of the syphon tube. The main thing is not to get it inside the carboy or siphon hose.

CLARIFICATION OF COMPETITION RULES

by the AWO Executive

In the interests of fair competition, the AWO executive, on behalf of all members of the AWO, proposes the following:

All products entered in AWO sponsored and judged events become the property of the AWO. As such, the wine maker(s) is/are consenting to the possibility of having the product tested for content verification. Products may be randomly or

specifically selected for such testing.

Wine makers entering product(s) found to be verifiably in contravention of competition rules regarding product content at AWO sponsored events may be penalized.

A panel composed of the Chief Steward, AWO President and Chief of the AWO Judges Commission or their designates, may invoke the following sanctions:

Upon first violation: The wine maker(s) in violation of competition rules will forfeit any awards and resulting benefit from such awards, conferred on the product cited. The wine maker(s) will be prohibited from entering the aforementioned product in future competitions.

Upon second violation: The wine maker(s) will forfeit any awards and resulting benefit from such awards, for the entire competition in which the cited product was entered. The wine maker(s) will be prohibited from entering AWO sponsored and judged events for a period of one year from the date that the product was found to be non-compliant with the rules.

Upon third violation: The wine maker(s) will forfeit all standing with the AWO

and be permanently prohibited from competing at any AWO sponsored and judged events. All points, medals or other awards conferred on the offending wine maker(s) will be forfeited.

These rules are not intended to punish wine makers entering wine in inappropriate style classes or who have inadvertently made a minor blending mistake (less than 5% out of class). Wine makers who repeatedly blend out of class, whether deliberately or through poor record keeping may be subject to sanction.

Wines entered in the incorrect style class may be moved in to the appropriate class by the Chief Steward, as is current practice.

Accurate record keeping is a must for competition wines. Competition entries, particularly in classes where varietal and content restrictions exist, must disclose the content in the bottle. All wine makers should be familiar with, and adhere to the class descriptions provided to all clubs. Any member without a copy of the competition rules should ask their club executive to provide one.

CHIEF JUDGE'S COLUMN

by Peter Pigeon

The first ever Fruit Wines of Canada commercial wine competition was organized and run by the Wine Judges Commission of Ontario on February 12 & 13th. in Toronto. This is the first, large scale commercial judging that the WJCO has been involved with. As well as being a very successful initiation for the fledgling Fruit Wines of Canada organization, it proved to be a great experience for the judges that assess your amateur wines. Simply put, the more experience our judges get the more they learn and the better they get at the wine assessment thing.

Working side by side with many of the best wine writers (and commercial wine judges) in Canada was a great learning experience. The new WJCO wine stewards group did a very professional job of running the event under the leadership of Gordon Barnes. We look forward to more broadening of our horizons in the near future.

The AWO winemakers will see a number of changes in the way the Ontario Finals will be conducted this year. A new assessment form should provide more

useful feedback on your wine entries after the event. Another change in the format will be that no bottles will be seen by judges, as all wines will arrive at the table in glasses for judging. Also of interest to entrants may be knowing that, for the first time all the judges during this event will be computer monitored to assure that they are not suffering from palate fatigue.

We are currently in the midst of contracting with the LCBO laboratory for their services in assuring that wines entered are in compliance with the AWO competition regulations. This incredible new technology will assure the validity of the honest and diligent winemaker's efforts in a way that was never possible prior to now.

The 17 trainees in the new judges' program completed their fifth session on Saturday February 19th. The March meeting will be a major taste and knowledge test session to ascertain which trainees are ready to become certified in time to participate in the AWO Finals.

Best of luck to all winemakers with entries at the AWO Finals to be held at Brock University May 6th and 7th.

NOVICE WINE CLASS

by Peter Bennell

Are You a New Wine maker or AWO Club member ?

Do You shy away from entering competitions ?

Do You not quite "make the grade" in Club competition ?

Do You want to know more about the AWO wine judging process ?

At Festival 2000 during the Friday night Club Showcase the "novice" wine maker has the opportunity to have his/her wines evaluated by judges of the Ontario Judges Commission and all Festival attendees will be able discuss the wines and judging process with the judges.

If you meet the criteria below you may submit as many Red and White Table wines as you wish, at no cost.

Each entry requires the following information attached to it with masking tape or an elastic band:

a. Name and address of entrant.

b. Club affiliation

c. "White" or "Red" Table wine.

d. Primary ingredient and source

All entries should be in standard wine bottles of any size.

Pre-registration is not required. Register your wines at the Festival registration area by 8:30 p.m. on Friday 9th June 2000 or deliver them to Peter Bennell at 618, Mortimer Ave., Toronto (Coxwell & Mortimer) before 5 p.m. Thursday 8th June 2000 (call first: Home 416-421-WINE or Business 416-353-6814. All entrants will receive the judges comments on their wine(s). Certificates will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd and 3rd placed Red and White wines.

The judges may award quality medals where merited.

INTRODUCTION

The intention of this class is to provide a forum which will introduce new wine makers/AWO members to the Ontario judging process, encourage their

confidence to enter competition and improve their wine making knowledge by having their wines judged in an open environment where observation and discussion of the process and wines is possible.

This class should be judged by the normal standards of the Ontario Judges Commission but outside of the annual Provincial Competition, preferably at the AWO NOVICE COMPETITION AT FESTIVAL Y2K.

CLASS DESCRIPTION

The Novice Wine Competition Class is considered a "demonstration" class. No points or trophies will be awarded. Certificates will be awarded for First, Second and Third in each of the Red and White categories. The judges may award medals to wines that in their opinion warrant them.

a. Wines entered in this class may be from any source.

b. This is a class for Red and White Table wines as defined in the "AWO COMPETITION CLASS DESCRIPTIONS (2000)" only.

c. Entrants must have been a member of an AWO club(s) for five years or less, and have never been awarded an AWO Provincial competition medal.

There is no restriction on the number of wines submitted by an entrant, and the First in Red and White will be awarded a \$100 Wine-Art certificate.

N.B. - Entrants are encouraged to enter their wines in their Club competitions.

NEWS FROM THE TRADE

What had been a persistent rumour for several months was confirmed in February when it was announced that Wine.Art, a long-time supporter of our hobby, and Wine Kitz, with particular strength in marketing, were merging into a new company to be called World Vintners Inc. The new company will be headed by John Dehondt as Chief Executive, with Mike Arthurs as Vice Chairman. The First Ontario Labour Sponsored Fund and the Bank of Montreal Capital Corporation are financial partners in this new venture.

While we might feel a bit sad to see the venerable and trusted name of Wine.Art disappear from the scene, amateur winemakers will hope that the strong commitment to customer service that Wine.Art had epitomized will be carried over into the new company.

Actually the name will linger a bit longer, as Wine.Art generously donated the ingredients for several wines to be consumed by attendees at AWO Festival 2000, and the labels were printed before the announcement was made.

MORE ON AWO FESTIVAL Y2K

On the facing page of this issue you will find information on the seminar program for AWO Festival Y2K, June 9 - 11 in Ottawa, and a Registration Form on the back page. Please indicate your first and second choice of seminars, and if two are registering on the same form, label them "A" and "B". The organizers will do their best to accommodate your preferences. Remember, too, that a draw will be held from among the first 50 registrations received for your choice of package FREE. As of May 1 the price for each package increases, and as well the hotel will release any remaining rooms under our block booking to general sale, so don't delay.

The seminar on "Improving your club activities" is intended to be an interactive one. Chaired by Ralph Buttrum of Perth Tay Winemakers it will give attendees

an opportunity to swap "best practice" experiences, and build on their (and others') success.

The bus tour in the afternoon, for spouses and others who wish to mix in a little sightseeing, is a real bargain. The ticket price for this tour is \$17, but we have negotiated a special rate of \$10 for a 2-hour tour that takes in the major sites in Ottawa and region. Travel on either a classic trolley car or a double-decker bus (it's a surprise, even to us), with pick-up at the hotel at 2 pm and return at 4, in plenty of time for the Club Representatives' meeting.

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Dan Ostler

I would like to start by thanking our retiring Director Rowan Shirkie, who has served as our Web Master since we first went live on the Web 2 years ago.

During this time Rowan has also been an active member of the AWO executive.

He did a fantastic job designing and implementing our web site, in addition to establishing the Winetalk format, which has provided myriad educational

discussions for its members (who now number well over 100 from coast to coast including one Member At Large in Denmark).

Rowan's duties will be assumed by two new additions to the Executive. Glenn Keown of Upper Canada will serve as Director, and Paul Stuart, of the Pickering Wine Guild, will be our new Web Master. Paul cut his web teeth designing the Pickering club page, and now has the challenge of expanding our site, in particular filling out the winemaking reference notes. Welcome Glenn and Paul!

Paul will be assisted by our new Education Committee, chaired by Elia Gallo of the Etobicoke Club, with the help of Director Dan Sullivan of Pickering. The Committee met recently in my cellar to go through our archives and back issues of Better Winemaking and we have identified many good articles. Next step is to scan them and use OCR software to convert them to a format that Paul can manipulate for the web site.

On that same day the Class Description Committee met to iron out the proposals for class changes to be presented at the AGM in Ottawa in June. Your Club Rep should by now have received a package outlining the various proposals. Please consider them carefully and attend the Annual General Meeting in Ottawa to

register your club's vote.

Sue Voege indicates that the Niagara clubs have arrangements well in hand for our 2001 return to the Niagara region. It is not too soon to start thinking about where we will be in 2002. If any clubs are thinking of hosting please contact any member of the Executive and we would be happy to discuss plans.

Also in your Club Rep's package will be a nomination form for Election of Directors. We always need more volunteers to share the load. Please give it some thought. Enjoy your blending and balancing.....the rewards are not far off!