



AWOnews



Produced by The Amateur Winemakers of Ontario

A forum for the exchange of news and opinions on home

winemaking in Ontario

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The Fifth Anniversary Edition

"Without good wine, Spring is not Spring for me."

Hafiz (Persian Poet; d. 1389)

IN THIS ISSUE:

by Paul Dunseath



Our first issue of the true new millennium also marks the fifth year of publication of AWOnews, our twentieth issue. To celebrate, we are producing an expanded version of twelve pages, and have accepted a small amount of advertising from good friends of the hobby in order to partially defray the additional printing and postage costs.

Inside this special edition you will also find, in addition to our President's message below, lots of information (and a registration form) for the AWO 2001 Festival in Niagara; a report by Lary Paterson on the Eastern Ontario Amateur

Wine Competition in Peterborough; news of a new VQA winery in the Erie North Shore area, and an article on Port for your records.

Don't forget to send in your registration for Festival AWO 2001 as soon as possible to ensure your attendance; we'll see you there!

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS"

The next edition of AWOnews will be the last one before Festival 2001. In order to have it in the hands of members in sufficient time for it to provide useful last-minute information, and for the host clubs to receive final registrations in sufficient time to accommodate them, it will go in the mail approximately 1 May.

As Maureen and I will be out of the country for most of April, it will go to the printers in the first few days of that month for pickup and mailing immediately on our return. To ensure sufficient time for editing, composition and assembly of the issue, all contributions must be received no later than March 20, which is about ten days earlier than usual, in order to be included in the pre-Festival

issue.. Your cooperation is appreciated.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Glenn Keown

Welcome to the start of a New Year and the official beginning of the Millennium. I hope the Festive Season has left everyone healthy and looking forward to a fresh start in 2001.

By now all clubs should have sent in requests for the Annual Club Judging. This takes a great deal of planning and organization. Ellen spends a great deal of time on behalf of the clubs to get things set up so that this function runs smoothly.

The Ontario Judging will take place the first weekend in May. Good luck to everyone.

In June we will be holding the Annual Conference at Niagara College. Please mark your calendars accordingly and please make a strong effort to attend. The clubs that undertake this program spend a great deal of time and effort on our

behalf and it would be gratifying for us to show them the support that is required. For those that have not attended a conference, it's a great time to make new friends, renew old acquaintances and last, but not least, gain a better insight into winemaking. Just a reminder here that we are still looking for someone to hold the 2003 Conference. 2002 has gone to Hamilton Ontario, and 2004 to Peterborough Ontario. If there is someone out there to take on the 2003 conference please let us know.

Membership and New Clubs is an item that has been talked about on many occasions by the Executive committee. We are looking for ways to encourage new members to join the existing clubs, or if they have enough interested parties to start up a new club. Your executive has been busy trying to encourage new clubs and we are willing to come out and talk to anyone. I am always looking for new ideas on how to spark people's interest in joining the AWO, so if someone out there has any thoughts, please contact me.

Articles too are published in the AWO newsletter. If anyone has articles of interest and would like to have them published in the newsletter they can forward them to the Editor, Paul Dunseath. Paul spends a great deal of time

working on our behalf. I am sure he would appreciate worthy input for the newsletter.

As you will see when reading the newsletter it has expanded in size. This is the 5th Anniversary of the newsletter and congratulations to all those who have taken part in the publication over those years.

The Website is also a great source of winemaking information.

It appears that a great deal of excitement is growing in Prince Edward County Ontario, with new vineyards being planted and expanded. This enthusiasm has caught hold of two members of the current Executive board, who have purchased property in the area. Both members are hoping to get vines into the ground this spring. On behalf of all the AWO, I extend our best wishes to them.

I have had occasion to be in the County with both members and had the opportunity to meet many of the other growers. The word "enthusiastic" certainly comes to mind. When taking a trip through the wine regions of Ontario, do drop in and sample some of the great wines that are currently being produced in the Province.

THE EASTERN ONTARIO AMATEUR WINE COMPETITION 2000

by Larry Paterson

Sherry is the corrupted name in English for a EOAWC moved to Peterborough for the 2000 competition. Everyone at the Ottawa end was fully occupied running the AWO convention at the time, so a group of Peterborough winos volunteered to take on the job. Normally held in the spring, it was moved to the fall this time. Winston Spratt from Ottawa agreed to be the Ottawa-end organizer, and general father-confessor to the Peterborough newbies.

Mid-October was selected to give sufficient notice to possible participants, and to minimize interference with the harvest/winemaking season. The awards were presented as part of the first annual day of seminars of the Central Ontario Grapegrowers Association on November 4th.

A network of pickup points was hastily arranged, with information spread by whatever means were available at the time. 132 entries were received: 67 from Peterborough, 28 from Ottawa area clubs, 10 from Niagara, 9 from Hamilton, 8

from Toronto, 8 from Baltimore(Ont.) and 2 from Nova Scotia.

The connections made in 2000 should encourage many more to enter the 2001 competition.

As organizers, we were quite happy with the quality of judges that volunteered for the day. Jim Lloyd took on the difficult assignment of Chief Judge for the competition. Jim, President of the Kawartha Krushers, is certified by the Wine Judges Commission. He worked over a judging form that yielded numerical scores in a number of categories. His wife Patti, who tastes critically with Jim, was brought in as a judge over her protests of "I'm not qualified!". Yes she is- I heard no winemaker complain about her scores or notes, and we feel she was an asset to the competition. Elia Gallo, Vice-President of Education for the AWO, and a certified judge, was also involved, as were certified judges Gary Koestler and George Pikor who volunteered to drive down from Ottawa for the day.

Burton McLelland and Ken Maley of the Kawartha Krushers also volunteered to judge. Burton is a well-known AWO member and was a prime organizer of the 1998 AWO convention. Ken's most recent triumph was a gold medal for his 1997 Chardonnay at the American Wine Society in November 2000. (His first triumph

was that the first wine he ever entered into competition went on to take best of show at the all-Canada's...). Art Branch is the manager of the largest LCBO in Peterborough and has had many critical tasting opportunities and wine educational experiences. He is well-known in Peterborough-area wine circles, and was assistant chief judge to Jim. Bruce McLean, originally from Australia, works with a wine importing agency, and won the Tony Aspler Award in winetasting competition (and an article in the Toronto Star...). Our panel of judges was rounded out by Hugh Johnstone, Michael Fagan's predecessor as top LCBO wine consultant and head of LCBO product knowledge - and a man well-known for his inability to grow a decent goatee. Hugh is now retired, learning to grow grapes and make wine in Fenelon Falls...

The classes selected were as follows (number of entries in brackets):

RED TABLE WINES(45): Bordeaux blends(17), Rhone blends or Zinfandel(8), Pinot/Gamay(8), Red Hybrid(6) and Other Red(6).

WHITE TABLE WINES (54): Other White (13), Chardonnay (12), Riesling (12), Gewurztraminer (8) and White Hybrid (9).

OTHER CLASSES(33): Dessert (12), Country (11), Rosé (5) and a new class,

Experimental (5). Experimental Blends were required to have at least 20% non-grape content blended with at least 20% grape content. It was a fun class.

On Oct 14, judging day, the Gord-father (AWOer Barnes) showed up to supervise the proceedings and act as the best steward a competition could ask for. He was everywhere all the time, helping everyone. Each wine was judged by three judges, including scores and detailed comments. The judges broke for lunch (many thanks to my wife Barb who worked very hard all day, and allowed her house to be turned into a judging hall...) but otherwise judged straight through for many hours. And what was the first thing the judges wanted after judging wine all day? Seems like a bottle of Sleemans to get rid of all that "wine taste"... We had supper and much conversation and then the judges slowly "filtered away".

Results were recounted and tabulated, and scores and judges comments were methodically entered into a database over the next few days. The database allowed a report to be given to each winemaker who had entered the competition, one page for each wine they had entered. The information included: full comments and scores from each judge, aggregate score, standing in

the class and medal awarded (or not). Certificates were printed and, where earned, medal stickers applied.

Certificates were handed out by Gord Barnes on November 4th at the awards luncheon, part of the first annual Central Ontario Grapegrowers Association day of seminars. Gord took his chance to address certain issues with the nearly 50 people in attendance. He discussed judging issues and some political events in Canadian wine. He did all in his own inimitable fashion. Winston Spratt was there to collect all the materials (including his own medals) and certificates and headed back to Ottawa. Winston will be remembered in Peterborough as the guy with the nerve to take "That Dog" for a walk...

The organizers at the Peterborough end stand ready to sub in or to help the Ottawa end in any way we can to promote future EOAWC competitions.

Results of EOAWC competitions since 1997 are at

www.littlefatwino.com/eoawchome.html and the day of seminars at

www.littlefatwino.com/coga.html

AWOnews WELCOMES

THE GRAPE TREE

Readers may be interested to learn that a new winery has just opened in the Erie North Shore region. The Grape Tree Estate Winery, located at 308 Mersea Road #3, Leamington, ON, opened its doors to the public in December. It has a total of 50 acres, of which 15 are planted; varieties grown include Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Vidal, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cab Franc, Merlot, Marechal Foch, and Chambourcin. The owners plan to have a public area with a view of the vineyard, a sales area, barrel room, and tasting facilities. Initial sales will be at the "farm gate", but the proprietors are seeking a listing also from Vintages. The vineyard can be reached at the above address (postal code N8H 3W5), or by telephone at 519-322-2081.

THE STORY OF PORT

by Paul Dunseath © 2000,2001

Port is a fortified wine and by law in the European Community may only be so identified if it is made in a closely delimited area in Portugal, the remote Alto Douro area (although Port-style wines are made with varied success in Canada, Australia, the United States and South Africa). True Port today averages a production of about 55 million litres annually from an area of 62,000 acres. The soil in the region is poor quality, primarily granite and schist, and the area receives little rain and experiences very hot summers.

Port came into being at the time of the trade wars between England and France in the 17th century. Seeking a replacement for French wines, which were heavily taxed, English wine merchants went to Portugal, an old ally of the British. (Most of the major Port houses indicate this history by their English names, such as Cockburn, Croft, Sandeman, Taylor, Graham and Warre). The wines grown on the relatively cool coast were thin and uninteresting, but pushing up the River Douro they discovered heavy bodied, dry and tannic wines in the hot interior of the country. In order to ensure that they survived the sea journey to England the shippers added brandy to stabilize them. Subsequently a shipper discovered that in a monastery in the Alto Douro the abbot added brandy before fermentation was finished, resulting in a sweet alcoholic red wine, the forerunner of Port as we

know it today.

By about 1730 the Port growers were hit by scandal when it turned out that some were adulterating cheap wine with sugar and elderberry juice. Shippers began to shun the wine, and in order to prevent the collapse of the industry the growers banded together and petitioned the Portuguese Prime Minister to impose regulations on the growing and sale of Port; this resulted in the delimitation of the authorized geographic area, the first such control anywhere in the world.

The grapes grow on terraced hillsides above the river, many of them dating back some 300 years. The climate is dry so irrigation is commonly used, and the vines are trained on wires supported by stone stakes. Over 80 varieties of grape are approved for use in Port, but the most common varieties in use are Touriga Nacional, Tinta Barroca, Touriga Francesa, Tempranillo, Barroca and Tinta Cao. Interestingly, Touriga Nacional and Tempranillo are also used in the production of Dao dry red wine. White Ports, for their part, are usually made from varieties such as Verdelho, Malvasia Fina and Viosinho. The particular grapes in the blend are chosen for their individual contribution to the finished

quality: for example, in the classic Red Ports Touriga Nacional produces a spicy wine but is low in tannin; Touriga Francesca adds fruit flavours and good acidity; Barocca adds tannins and firmness; and the Tintas provide depth of colour.

The grape skins provide both colour and tannin; in normal wines these as you know are extracted during the course of fermentation; however given the fact that the fermentation is short, under two days in fact, other methods are resorted to in order to obtain the maximum extract while avoiding crushing the seeds. In many areas this means the traditional approach of "treading" the grapes - pressing them with bare human feet - for several hours to extract colour and flavour. In some of the newer "quintas" this has been replaced by fermenting in a closed container, using the pressure of the built-up carbon dioxide to cause the must to circulate continuously up a tube reaching almost to the bottom and over the cap. This constant circulation accelerates the extraction of tannins and colour and is claimed to have virtually the same effect as manual treading, and without the labour cost. As noted earlier, the young must is transferred to barrels containing brandy (overproof brandy, in fact, at 77% alcohol by volume) in the ratio of 1 part brandy to 4 parts of wine, the wine at

that point being between 6 and 8 Brix, a point that is reached usually between 24 and 36 hours of the start of fermentation. The resulting wine retains the sweetness and has an alcohol content of 19% or 20%.

The hot climate in the Douro, with summer temperatures frequently exceeding 35 Celsius, can result in the wine taking on a faintly caramelized character if it is kept there for long, and so it is the practice to ship it down river to the ocean port of Oporto in the suburb of Vila Nova de Gaia where the processing takes place, originally by specially-designed river boats, but now usually by rail. The lodges, as they are known, are also used to store the young wine in 115-gallon barrels, known as pipes, and aged for anything from 2 to 40 years.

Vintage Port. A few times in each decade the climatic conditions are virtually perfect. The wines produced at such times will not be improved by blending with wine from other years, and so the shipper may seek the approval of the Port Wine Institute (IVP) to "declare a vintage". The IVP is empowered to inspect and analyze the wine, and to determine the amount of wine that may be "declared", and the quantity that can be released for sale in any given year. Only the best grapes are used, from the best vineyards, and picked at optimum

condition. Vintage Ports are bottled at two years of age and marked with the shipper's name and the year. These will almost invariably throw a sediment in the bottle as they age, and are marked to indicate which side should stay uppermost in the cellar - traditionally with a spot of paint - to avoid disturbing the sediment, and are decanted off the sediment prior to serving. It is not unusual for these wines to be laid down for 20 years or more, and to improve constantly during this time. This style is, understandably, also expensive, and should be served after the meal with Stilton cheese. The LCBO suggests using sediment from decanted Port to enrich sauces. Vintage Port requires lengthy cellaring, proper handling and decanting. It is a great gift for a newborn or a christening or as a wedding gift; historically in Victorian England it was the practice in wealthy families to lay down a pipe (equal to 690 bottles) when a son was baptised, with the intention of not consuming it until his marriage or 21st birthday.

Tawny Port. Other Port, from near vintage standard to average quality, goes through a blending process, to produce a wine of predictable and uniform character. This wine, aged in wood, matures much faster than Vintage Port and loses some of its sugar in the process. A very old wood port is comparatively pale

and dry, but particularly smooth. This is called Tawny from its colour (amber to tawny). Expensive tawnies cost as much as vintage port and some people prefer them as they are not as heavy-bodied and fragrant as a good vintage Port. Some tawnies however are made from lower quality grapes without the same depth of flavour and body as other styles, and a few are left in the Upper Douro for a lengthier period in order to pick up what is known as "Douro Bake" from the higher temperatures. Tawny Ports are of two types: a blend aged two years in wood and a mixture of red and white Port. These are often of considerable age, up to 40 years in the case of the most complex and expensive; the best ones will show date of bottling, which is important as aged tawnies suffer a loss of quality if they spend too long in the bottle. While they can be served as an aperitif, they are more often used at the end of a meal.

Ruby Ports are not cellared as long and will not show the same improvement with age. These are best consumed relatively young, within perhaps five years of production. Ruby Port is a blend of young Port from different harvests, matured for 2 to 3 years in wood, stainless steel and/or concrete vats, and possessing a deep colour and considerable body. While suitable for drinking with cheese at the end of a meal, it may also be used as aperitif at room temperature.

chilled or on the rocks . It is ready to drink when purchased and will keep for 3 or 4 weeks once opened.

Late Bottled Vintage. Vintage Port has some drawbacks. It requires lengthy cellaring and careful handling to prevent disturbing the sediment, or "crust".

This has led to a sort of compromise, which is termed "Late Bottled Vintage" (LBV). These are from single years, although not always the very best, and are unblended. The "Late Bottled" term indicates that rather than being bottled at two years as is done with a Vintage Port, it is kept in barrel for as much as eight years, during which time it throws a crust which remains behind when it is bottled. It does not require lengthy cellaring and the delicate handling of a Vintage, and has become popular among those who are not prepared to wait many years to enjoy a glass, or who are unable or unwilling to give the wine the delicate handling required by a Vintage Port. Most Late Bottled Vintage Ports do not require decanting prior to serving, although "traditional" LBVs are not stabilized before bottling and may throw some sediment. LBVs are served at the end of the meal, with or instead of dessert and will show well against a strong cheese such as a Stilton. The label will show both the year of harvest and the year of bottling.

Crusted Port can be cellared but will throw a sediment, and thus requires decanting. These will not show a specific year as they are blends, but they are bottled without filtration and will continue to improve in bottle. Although in some respects a creation of marketing departments, they appear to offer a less expensive alternative to vintage Ports with many of the same qualities.

Single Quinta Ports are the best of a given year and are identified with specific shippers (for example, Quinta da Vargellas is owned by Taylor). These are usually ready to drink sooner than Vintage Port but are treated in a similar fashion, i.e. aged in wood for two to three years and bottled without filtration, so that a crust is usually formed. Some of these in fact may be wines which were part of a Vintage blend of grapes, and which are surplus to the amount which the shipper is permitted to "declare".

White Port. As mentioned earlier White Ports are made from different grapes, with limited or no skin contact. Usually grape spirit is added to halt fermentation, as with red Ports, but not as much, resulting in some residual sweetness and fresh grape overtones in a wine of 16% to 17% alcohol. The wines are aged for no more than 18 months, usually in stainless steel or concrete,

although some use wood, which results in a wine with a golden colour and nutty flavours.

Typical examples of the varieties of Port available at the LCBO are the following: Sandeman Ruby Port (LCBO 23366; \$13.75); Paarl Ruby Port (South Africa) (LCBO 28951; \$ 8.95); Churchill 1990 Vintage Port (LCBO 978031; \$55.00); Taylor Fladgate Late Bottled Vintage 1994 [bottled in 1999](LCBO 46846; \$15.55); Offley Tawney Port Colheita 1985 [bottled in 1999] (LCBO 990630; \$24.30); and Dow's Fine White Port (LCBO 990275; \$12.60)

HERE AND THERE ON WINETALK

"A fellow Krusher found an article on how to make Sparkling wine using a specific dialysis tubing. I obtained a sample of the tubing and tried it. It worked!!!

In short the tubing is like a sausage casing with tiny pores so that glucose and carbon dioxide and go through it but yeast cells cannot as they are too big. The tubing is tied at one end with fishing line (alternately you can tie a knot in it)

then 10mls of yeast culture is placed in the tube and then it is closed with fishing line. This tube is placed in the bottle (Canadian sparkling wine type) with wine + sugar + water (as specified in detail instructions) and a crown cap is placed on the bottle. Wait for 3 months then chill bottle, take crown cap off and remove the tube with yeast, add syrup if want it off dry, top up and cork with plastic cork and wire. Voila champagne style wine without daily riddling.

I have a source of the tubing but the minimum order is 100 feet at \$2.10 per foot. One foot is good for 2 bottles of wine if fishing line is used. One hundred feet is too much for any one winemaker. Is any one or club interested to share?

E-mail me at tino@on.aibn.com or fax 905 983 1110.

Tino Montopoli"

WORLD'S OLDEST MAN CELEBRATES 112th BIRTHDAY

TIANA, Sardinia (AP) -- An Italian shepherd listed by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest man celebrated his 112th birthday Monday by downing a glass of red wine -- the secret, he says, of his longevity.

"Just love your brother and drink a good glass of red wine every day," Antonio

Todde was quoted as saying on the Guinness Web site. "You take one day after the other, you just go on."

Along with the wine, Todde enjoyed a birthday cake decorated with candles shaped like the number 112. Italian TV showed a lively, rosy-cheeked man in a jaunty, old-fashioned cap surrounded by his family -- which includes a 97-year-old sister and two daughters, aged 80 and 77.

Agriculture Minister Alfonso Pecoraro Scanio had paid Todde a congratulatory visit on Sunday. Born in 1889 in a tiny mountain village in the heart of Sardinia, Todde has been a shepherd all his life. He left his native island just once, to serve in the military during World War I.