AWOnews

Produced by The Amateur Winemakers of Ontario

A forum for the exchange of news and opinions on home winemaking in Ontario

September 2002 Newsletter No. 26

Address: AWOnews

1056 Harkness Avenue

Ottawa, Ontario K1V 6P1

(613) 523-6320

e-mail: dunseath@cyberus.ca

AWOnews is created using COREL WordPerfect™

AWO Executive 2002/2003

President: Glenn Keown 905-271-4337

Past President: Dan Ostler 905-427-7455

Treasurer: John Laberge 905-896-4758

Director, Membership David Burns 416-251-0307

Director, Awards: Gerry den Hartogh 519-633-0483

Secretary: Ellen Kareckas 905-891-2504

Director and WebMaster: Paul Stuart 905-683-5711

Classes Committee: Steve Gunning 416-237-1029

Education Committee: Elia Gallo 905-891-3617

Chairman, Judges' Commission: vacant

Chief Steward: Gary Maldaver 416-224-0176

Judging Coordinator: Ellen Kareckas 905-891-2504

Archivist/AWC rep: Dan Ostler 905-427-7455

Festival 2003: To be announced

AWOnews: Paul Dunseath 613-523-6320

The 2002 Harvest Edition

***"While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."* Genesis iii, 22"**

IN THIS ISSUE:

by Paul Dunseath

AWO 2002 in Hamilton, "Grape Expectations", was a highly enjoyable weekend with excellent seminars, great food, and fine friends to share it all with. Kudos to the Organizing Committee and all the people from the two Hamilton clubs who put so much effort into it. It certainly showed!

When the dust was settled, John Tummon walked away with the titles of Grand Champion Amateur Winemaker AND Grand Champion Amateur Cidermaker. It was a stellar performance by a talented winemaker, who presumably was driving home.... all that metal in his medals would have sounded every security

alarm in the airport if he'd had to fly! Congratulations, John, on honours well-deserved.

A familiar name also came to the fore as Joanne Anderson of Blue Mountain was again named Grand Champion Amateur Brewer. Joanne's credentials and accomplishment need no embellishment here, and attest to her continuing talents in the art of brewing.

Your editor, Paul Dunseath, who has been making wine for over 30 years and judging it, both here and internationally, for 25, was "surprised and delighted" to be named this year's recipient of the Outstanding Service Award. He would like everyone involved in his selection for this year's award to know how much it was appreciated, and to thank the membership as a whole for their encouragement and support.

On the down side, while we have hosts lined up for 2004 through 2007, no area has come forward to take on 2003, and at the moment - unless there is a sudden surge of interest - there will be no Festival 2003, but we will continue on with the Club Judging, the Ontario Finals, and also the AGM. Details will be announced in these pages in due course, although it seems a shame that those areas that

haven't hosted a Festival in many years are unwilling to step up for next year.

On a positive note, the Eastern Ontario Amateur Wine Competition, now in its 17th year, will be held in September. This competition is open to all amateur winemakers; an entry form is inside and the "official" bottle label, which may be photocopied and which must accompany every entry, is reproduced inside also.

The highlight of EOAWC is the annual awards banquet; this particular event is open only to members of the Eastern Ontario Amateur Wine Association, and is at no cost to those members. Yearly memberships may be obtained by applying to either Winston Spratt at (613) 692-4008 or Morley O'Neill at (613) 836-4799. Memberships for the 2002/2003 association year are $35 if enrolled prior to September 5; a late enrollment, until September 17, will cost $40. No new memberships are available after that date. You do NOT however have to be a member of the Association in order to enter the competition. EOAWC originated the "Medal concept" at its inception and wines will continue to be assessed on this basis.

This competition has proved very popular over the years to winemakers from

across Ontario and indeed outside the province, and is an opportunity to have your wines assessed against those of your peers.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Glenn Keown

I would like to start this message by thanking Pat McPhail, Chairman of the 2002 Conference "Grape Expectations" and members of Hamilton Wine Circle and The Other Hamilton Wine Club, who worked so hard at putting on a great Conference. Everyone that attended had a great time meeting and greeting new and old friends and generally just enjoying themselves.

It was a busy time handing out all the medals that were won this year. This certainly shows the standards reached by the Amateur Winemakers are moving to new heights all the time.

Congratulations also to those members who received Achievement Awards. Your dedication and hard work has paid off.

To all Medal winners, congratulations, you must feel satisfied with your individual accomplishments.

To John Tummon, Wine Maker of the Year, congratulations. For those who were not there, it was amazing to see John still walking straight up, with all those medals around his neck.

I certainly hope the wines selected to move forward to the Canadian Championship do well, and let's hope that we in this province come out on top.

Unfortunately, AWO will not be having a 2003 conference, no clubs have come forward as hosts. We will still carry on with the Club Judging, Ontario Judging and the Annual General Meeting. Details for venue will have to be worked out during the next few months.

PASSAGES

Members of the hobby will be saddened to learn of the death at the end of April of Jim Justice, due to complications following surgery at Sunnybrook Hospital.

Jim, a long-time member of the AWO and a member of the Georgetown Vintners for the past 27 years, was then the leading Grand Master Cider Maker in AWO, with 584 points.

Our condolences to Jim's family and to his many friends in AWO.

FREE WINE NEWSLETTER OFFER

Ottawa wine writer Natalie MacLean's articles have appeared in the National Post, Saturday Night, Canadian Business, enRoute and Food & Drink. If you'd like to receive her bi-weekly newsletter that covers a wide range topics, from the health benefits of wine to restaurant wine lists and food and wine matching, please e-mail her at nataliemaclean@rogers.com. It's free, there are no ads and your e-mail address will be kept confidential. Natalie does this because she enjoys the occasional feedback she receives from those on her list. You can also visit her web site at: www.nataliemaclean.com.

LADY BIRD BEETLES –

FRIEND OR FOE

by Terry Rayner © 2002

Lady Bug, Lady Bug fly away home, your house is on fire and your children will burn….It's amazing that such a small beneficial insect, such as the Lady Bug, could be turned upon so rapidly over the course of a growing season.

Ladybugs are considered to be a symbol of good luck in many parts of the world. In Japan they are called "Tendoo-muchi", the insect of heaven's path; the French call them les betes du bon Dieu or creatures of the good God; and the Germans call them Marienkafer or Mary's beetles.

In the past we've looked upon the Lady Bug as a protector of our gardens against aphids and other micro insects. The ladybird beetle is considered a beneficial insect and is responsible for significant control of harmful insects such as aphids, psyllids and scale insects. Without Lady Bugs the aphids would prosper, our plants would be limp, there would be more honeydew from the plants, that would in turn attract more ants as well as wasps. The bee's honey

would have a different flavour since honeydew would be easier to come by than pollen. Ultimately we would have less fruit and flowers due to the overpopulation of the aphids, psyllids and scale insects.

Lady beetles belong to the beetle family Coccindellidae which means "little sphere". Estimates suggest that there are about 4000 species found world-wide and over 350 kinds in North America.

When nature's balance is left alone, we see the checks and balances that nature provides in effect, however, when a species becomes overpopulated, or a foreign species is introduced we also see the adverse affects that can happen. This was the case during the 2001-growing season.

During this time, two insects came to the forefront of our attention. Waves of migrating soybean aphids, identified in Ontario in 2001, descended upon the Province. Conditions for rapid growth of the aphids were appropriate and they did proliferate, which also allowed for the population growth of the Lady Bird Beetle. Whether in your own backyard, at the beach, camping, in the vineyard, or in your home we were inundated with Lady Bugs. These Lady Bugs were not the passive Lady Bugs that we have come to know but a new multi-coloured

Asian ladybird beetle (Harmonia axyridis). These beetles are called by a number of names including; Asian Lady Beetle, Multi-coloured Asian Lady Beetle, Japanese Lady Beetle, and the Halloween Lady Beetle.

H. axyridis occurs in many colour forms. The proliferation of the Lady Bugs due to the excessive quantities of aphids turned a friendly insect into a significant pest by fall of 2001. Consider that an adult ladybird beetle is capable of consuming 90-270 aphids per day and that each larva can consume 600-1,200 aphids during its development. Now consider the number of ladybird beetles that we experienced last year and think about the huge food source they required to complete their diets. It has been reported that female ladybird beetles are capable of laying 600-800 eggs. These eggs hatch in 3-5 days. With a life cycle of about 1 month, this allows for 5-6 generations per year, which can lead to a very rapid population growth if the food source permits.

Come spring of 2002 we also found that many of these Asian ladybird beetles had taken up residence in our homes over the winter. This is a unique trait of the Asian ladybird beetle. Will they be back this year?? Judging from the number that we found in our own home, and the preference of ladybird beetles

to congregate in large numbers in sheltered areas, would lead one to speculate that we're in for another bout with Asian ladybird beetle. Cool, wet summers tend to favour the growth of new green tissue on plants, which in turn allows the aphid population to build up, which in turn allows the ladybird beetles to also build up numbers. Speculation is that the ladybird beetle is here to stay. Because the Asian lady beetle is here to stay, we must learn what we can in order to live with it. Like any other newly introduced animal, populations will probably gradually subside over the next few years. Experience has taught us that populations of any newly introduced insect, pest or beneficial, increase very quickly in the first few years after introduction. This is due, in part, to the fact that while the insect was introduced from a foreign country, the naturally occurring diseases, parasites and predators that keep it in check were not. These usually follow any new introduction, but there may be a lag time of several years.

Is this beetle new to Ontario?? Though it's appearance is recent, it was first identified by Dr. Steve Marshall at the University of Guelph in 1994. By 1999 this species has become the dominant ladybird beetle in Southern Ontario.

The multi-coloured Asian ladybird beetle, originally from China, was introduced deliberately into the US between 1916 and 1980, becoming established in North America in the 1980s. The USDA made several releases throughout the eastern United States and Nova Scotia in an attempt to introduce this beetle to North America for biological control in orchards. It took a long time for the species to become established but by 1994, H. axyridis was found in most southern states. This was good news for the fruit and nut producers who wanted to control the aphid population, through biological control practices. The issue with these Asian lady beetles is the other habits that they have. The multi-coloured ladybird will bite or nip humans, but they do not pass on any diseases or have any venum. Ladybird beetles don't feed on wood, clothing, carpets, draperies or human food and they don't reproduce indoors, but they do overwinter indoors. The beetle releases an orange coloured fluid (hemolymph) from the joints of the legs (tibio-femoral articulations) when threatened. This is known as reflex bleeding and is a stress- related defensive behavior. Rhinoconjunctivitus (sinus irritations) and mild skin irritations have been reported subsequent to encounters with the multi-coloured Asian lady beetle. These irritations may stem from the presence of various bitter tasting alkaloid toxins in the released

hemolymph. The fluid that they release can also stain both paint and certain fabrics.

How does one control them?? Keep in mind that nature has its own checks and balances and when we disturb those checks and balances we introduce potentially more adverse affects. There are no registered chemical controls for ladybird beetles, and it's unlikely that we'll see pesticides promoted for their control. The issue is that the Asian ladybird beetle was imported and without natural enemies, parasites, predators, etc. their populations may continue to grow as the aphid population grows. North Carolina research has shown that the ladybird beetle can be parasitized by a tachinid fly and a wasp of the Braconid family is another natural enemy, but aside from these two predators the Asian ladybird beetle has few natural enemies. Additional research has found that camphor and menthol repels the ladybird beetle. Preliminary tests have shown that camphor and menthol are an irritant to the beetle's chemosensory organs. There are a number of suggestions for trapping of the ladybird beetles on the Internet, some involving black light traps, others suggesting a trap much like a cardboard box with a sticky inner layer. One way to remove the beetle from the home is with a vacuum; however, be forewarned that the vacuum bag will take

on a particularly offensive odor. How does one remove the Asian ladybug from the field? Some are spraying, some are using high pressure air and some do nothing.

Another concern associated with the population of ladybird beetles is that of the impact on crops. In the absence of a suitable food source there is some information in Quebec suggesting that the ladybird beetle will attack undamaged, ripe fruit (plums). These reports occur in late fall after the food source has dwindled. What about grapes? There is a suspicion that grapes release chemical cues as they ripen which, possibly combined with other insects in the vineyard, attracts the beetles to the grapes. Kevin Ker has found research that suggests a low level response to some volatiles but the over riding factor in beetle aggregation is visual. The issue for grape growers is that the beetles move into the clusters of grapes close to harvest time and may end up getting processed. The speculation for the movement to the interior of the grape cluster is to take advantage of the sugar content of damaged berries prior to final hibernation. In addition, the presence of the arboreal escarpment, volatiles released from the berries and the attraction to lighter colours, especially lodgings on hillsides and in forested areas may have contributed to the beetle presence. Further, the

locations with micro-climates that allowed late season harvesting may have also supported the late season occurance in Niagara. Since these insects exude a foul smelling scented fluid when threatened there is a possibility of imparting this taint to the wine. Indeed this has happened to the point that a new fault has been identified by VQA, which is best described as the ladybird taint.

The ladybird beetle taint is being researched at Brock University. Some of this research is being done in collaboration with Youngstown State University. This research is still embryonic, but is targeted at addressing the issues of how many beetles are required to produce the taint, measures by which to remove the chemical compounds from the wines, analytical methods that will quantify and identify the specific chemicals that may be involved and finally training a sensory panel to objectively describe the taint. Additional research has been done at the USDA on the chemistry of the excretion from the lady bug. Some research being done in the UK at the Institute of Arable Crops Research is looking at the roles of plant derived semiochemicals. Briefly a ladybird attractant was found to be 2-isopropyl-3-methoxypyrazine, while the ladybird parasitoid attractant is preoccinelline as well as adaline and the aphid parasitoid and predator attractant is nepetalactol. Based on this research could we use ladybird

parasitoid attractant to control the influx of ladybirds into the vineyard using biological means? Contacts at a number of other Universities and Institutions were made but did not reveal any other concerted research efforts to look into the impact and removal of the ladybug taint from wines.

What do we know about the taint? The chemical class is that of the methoxypyrazines. This doesn't mean much to most of us, however, consider the aromas of Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Sauvignon. The grassy nature of Sauvignon Blanc is an expectation and the bell pepper notes of Cabernet Sauvignon are classic. The compounds responsible for these attributes also belong to the class of compounds known as methoxypyrazines. The most important pyrazine is 2-methoxy-3-isobutylpyrazine (ibMP) with its bell pepper aroma, while 2-methoxy-3-isopropylpyrazine (ipMP) with its asparagus-like character and 2-methoxy-3-secbutylpyrazine are found in lower concentrations. The aromas of these compounds range from vegetative to grassy to gooseberry-like. These methoxypyrazines have very low threshold values. The reported sensory detection limit for ibMP is 2 nanograms / liter of water. This compares to one berry in 500,000 tons of grapes. If we try to remove the ladybird taint from a wine using chemical means then we also risk removing other

beneficial aromatic components.

The ladybug taint, thought be from the class of 2-methoxy-3-alkylpyrazines, might best be described as having an impact on both the sensory and palate properties of the wine. The sensory impact is that of a musty, nutty, peanut type odor, while the impact on the taste is that of an astringent and peanut-chocolate character.

There a number of different pyrazines found in the literature. Odor threshold limits vary from 0.001 ppb to 60,000 ppb. While the exact methoxypyrazine composition of the ladybird taint is still being researched, compounds like ethylpyrazine have a musty, nutty, buttery, peanut odor, tetramethylpyrazine has a weak, nutty, musty, chocolate odor and 2-methoxy-3 methyl pyrazine has a roasted, peanut somewhat green character.

UV light appears to strip the flavour components, along with everything else. Strong sunlight degrades pyrazines in grape berries in the field as they ripen, which is an area of research at Brock University to see if a similar scenario could be set up in a winery. Fining agents haven't had much success in removing the taint, however, there is some indication that isinglass might have some utility.

Oaking the wine is a way of masking the impact and does appear to be reasonably effective. The issue with this option is that Riesling seems to have been one of the most affected grapes, but is also a grape that doesn't handle a lot of oak very well.

If we can't spray effectively and we can't remove the taint from affected wines effectively how do we approach the potential problem? At this point, there isn't a viable answer until the Asian ladybird population gets under control. Removing the Asian ladybird beetle from the grapes prior to harvest would seem to be the first step, but doing this on a small scale versus on a commercial scale presents some challenges. Is purging the grapes with an air jet a viable or effective option? How effective is the camphor or menthol option and will it impart its own character to the wine? If the grapes are harvested and the lady bugs are still in or on the grapes how do we deal with that scenario?

Once the grapes are crushed then dealing with a tainted wine presents even more challenges and the question arises as to will the general public accept a tainted wine.

From what we know the Asian Ladybird beetle problem was greater on the

bench. Some wineries were affected more than others but the extent of tainted wine is not readily known. The taint in the wine is from too many ladybugs being harvested and processed with the grapes. The problem appears to be more noticeable in whites than reds. VQA does recognize the problem with the ladybird taint, however, we have unfortunately run across wine released that does have the ladybird taint. There is very little information on the internet about wineries or wine and the lady bug taint.

As the results of the research at Brock and Youngstown progress and is published to hope to learn more about to deal with the presence of the Asian ladybug and the potential options for remedial action should a wine become tainted.

Lady bird lady bird fly away home, and please leave our grapes alone.

AWO 2002 COMPETITION UPDATE

by Gary Maldaver

Hello Winemakers. I've just returned from my annual vacation (to recover from this years competition and convention!) digging up dinosaur bones in the Badlands of Alberta. An interesting note is that one of the most prominent paleontologists in the world, Phil Currie, of the Royal Tyrell, is a home brewer and makes his own beer under the label "Fossil". Had a great time and always try to bring my own wine (last time with a dinosaur crushing grapes on the label) with me to Alberta.

This year, 2002, was the seventh year of the two day competitions. Like last year your competition was held at Brock University in St. Catherines. I have returned for another round as your Chief Steward after having the honour of Stewarding the first and second two day competitions in 1996 and 1997. There has been a lot of evolution in the competition process since then and I was very pleased to see what an efficient and professional event the competition has become. This, as in the past, is the result of a dedicated and hardworking group of judges, stewards and other volunteers. I didn't have a lot of time to throw myself into the process and bring myself up the learning curve so my heartfelt thanks to Gord Barnes, Peter Bartl, David Burns, Alan Butler, Lorraine and Michael Charlebois, Joe Dale, Jack Gootjes, Irena Jares, Glenn Keown, Charlotte Panagapka, John

Peters, Steve Skelly and the members of the Judges' Commission for their assistance during the competition.

One major change from last year was in the way the Ontario Grape Growers Marketing Board trophies were judged. All entries made from 100% Ontario grapes are automatically eligible for these trophies. There is no need to send a second bottle or pay an additional fee but you must note whether wines are made from 100% Ontario grapes in the appropriate place on the registration forms.

A change was made to the eligibility requirements for which wines can qualify for the Amateur Winemakers of Canada Competition. In the past we were allowed to send the 4 top qualifying wines and beers per class regardless of quality. With 17 classes we sent 68 entries. Now we are only required to send the 2 top qualifiers per class (totaling 34 entries) and are allowed for the remaining 34 entries to send entries with the best results regardless of class! I'm pleased to report that most of our winning winemakers have confirmed that they will be forwarding their wines to the Canadian Finals.

The judging format was consistent with that used last year. Mostly we had 5

judges and always at least 4 judges. The judges are presented with a flight of wines, in glasses, for evaluation – no bottles were seen. The judging sequence is organized to keep entries of like contents together.

For each entry, each judge fills in a scoring sheet with numeric values under quality headings of faulted, poor, ordinary, good and excellent for visual, nose, balance, flavour etc. The scores out of a maximum 100 are then tabulated. The high and low scores are dropped and the middle scores are averaged. A gold has a score of 85 or higher, silver 80 to 84 and bronze 75 to 79. For a non-point merit award, at least two judges had to score the wine at 75 or higher.

This year we had 705 entries. We had 34 gold medals, 103 silver medals, 173 bronze medals and 88 merit awards.

Special thanks again this year to Ellen Kareckas for coordinating and judges who traveled great distances and gave their time to do the club judging.

Congratulations to our winemakers for achieving excellence - keep up the good work! I'm looking forward to a terrific year in 2003. Thank you to our winemakers for their patience as well. We are an all-volunteer organization and glitches do occur but we try our best.

AWO CONVENTION REPORT

From the registrar..Bob Gibbon

It's hard to believe that the 2002 Festival is over. It was more than 15 months ago that the planning actually began. We had many meetings and the concept slowly came together. The hard work of putting all the plans together really didn't start until after Christmas. The help we received from the previous year's Chairperson was a real help in setting up the various committees, as was the assistance from last year's Registrar in setting up the registration computer programs. Once the seminars were set up and the prices and all the other details were decided, the next step was communicating all this information to the AWO members. This was accomplished with the help of the AWOnews, Winetalk, Pat McPhail's website awo.ca and the use of Larry Paterson's website littlefatwino.com and the Club Reps. Now the fun part starts...everyone sends us the money! Computer programs were used to keep track of everyone's seminar choices and package choices, as well as confirmations by E-Mail. The computer

was also used to create the name badges for everyone. When the big weekend arrived, I think everything went as smoothly as could be expected.

Here's some interesting facts from the convention...

160 participants...

150 for lunch on Saturday

123 for the Banquet Saturday night

121 stayed for the Brunch on Sunday

109 people chose the complete package (Pinot Noir)

28 chose the Saturday Lunch and Seminar only package (Baco Noir)

12 chose the Gamay package (Lunch, seminars and Banquet)

3 or four only chose the other packages.

73 chose the 3 Guys seminar

61 chose Competition Preparations

51 chose the Malolactic Fermentation

51 chose Taste with an Expert

27 Host club members helped out during the weekend

From the Chairman - Pat McPhail As chairman let me say TEAMWORK works. Let me thank our team in alphabetical order; Kay Brajer for her help on the registration desk. Dianna Cameron for her help collecting gifts. John & Velma Clark for collection gifts and helping with the tee shirt and AWO button sales.

Robert & Uli Engel - Robert our treasurer and Uli for the work on the gift pails for the seminar speakers. Blake Galloway & Ingrid Nevitt for all they did to collect gifts especially from The City Of Hamilton. Blake also made the sparkling cider.

for Sunday Brunch, Bert Gris for the Riesling wine which was served at lunch and dinner on Saturday. Bob Gibbon registrar - not only did Bob look after registration, but all the seminar speakers schedule all the rooms and times. He also made sure everyone had nametags, and all the other information they needed. Also, he made the red wine for lunch and dinner.

George Gliva & Anne Hughes George ran our tour of the Royal Botanical

Gardens Anne was the secretary keeping us up to date. Harold & Juliane Gruuneberg - Harold for his help at the showcase. Juliane for the ballroom decorations and also the presentation on cooking with beer. Moya Kelly was in charge of the Showcase of Wines Friday night and the Shopper's Showcase on Saturday afternoon. Dorothy Lambeth for her help during the seminars. Ross & Carlies Longbottom. Ross for the excellent job as MC and looking after the hotel accommodations, Carlies for the work with Juliane on the ballroom setup and decorations, Georgina McPhail for arranging and introducing the guest speaker Sharon Orivan, along with answering numerous questions, and keeping me on the straight and narrow. Bert Passmore for looking after the raffle and assisting with the seminars. Fred & Shirley Passmore: Fred for stepping in when Ludvik Furbacker couldn't come to do the seminar; Shirley for driving to the RBG.

Phil Thomas & Marilyn McCaul for all their help on the registration desk and with the seminars. Murray Thompson for his help on the desk and with the seminars. Frank, Victor, & Stephanie VanBeek for the keg of beer for the showcase and the cooking with beer seminar.

Pease send any comments you have to www.awo.ca .

Merry Christmas and Happy Hanukkah to all from AWOnews!