



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 2004 Winter Edition

***"Home is where the wine is. "* Michael Cain (actor)**

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Information on the upcoming AWO Festival in London this coming June, as well as a "teaser" for the 2006 Festival in Ottawa. David Burns brings us up to date on winemaking in Denmark, after having had a lengthy conversation with our friend Jens; the President's sage counsel; the "Thrifty Winemaker" brings us some more tips on saving money while having fun; and lots of other stuff. So, throw another log on the fire (don't do this if you don't have a fireplace!); pour yourself a nice glass of home-made sherry, and enjoy!

THE DANISH WINEMAKING SCENE

by David Burns

In May 2004, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit with our Danish AWO

member (yes we have a Danish member!), Jens Madsen. Being on the executive, in charge of membership, I have chatted with Jens by e-mail off and on over the last few years, so I contacted Jens while planning a business trip to Germany. With friends in Denmark, I thought this might be a great opportunity to mix a social visit to meet Jens with my curiosity about Danish amateur wine making.



{left - Linda sampling the 2002 vintage} Jens seemed as pleased with the opportunity as I did. He arranged a luncheon in the vineyard of Dansk Vin Center, also home of the Danish

Amateur Wine Makers. To get there, we took a short train ride to Avedore, a suburb of Copenhagen. Jens drove 3 hours to meet us there from his home in Christansfeld. We met with some amateur and professional vintners including Jens and Michael Gundersen, President of the Society of Danish Winegrowers association and part owner of the Dansk Vin Center. We given a winery tour, were served a traditional Danish lunch and of course a sampling of all the members wines. Amateur winemaking is thriving in Denmark. With a population of about 5 million, they have over 1000 members in their association – maybe we could learn from them!

{to the right: pictured from the left David Burns, Ole Bønsdorff Nurser, Lars Hagermann and Michael Gundersen professional winegrowers, Jens Madsen and Søren Larsen



amateur varietal grape prospectors} With Denmark at the same latitude as James Bay, we were surprised to see as much development in this young wine industry as we did. Denmark is now a recognized wine producing area by the European Union, with 9 active commercial wineries. Global warming and long summer days (the sun goes down after 11 p.m. in the summer) have contributed to the birth of the industry. We were fortunate to be able to sample wine from the Dansk Vins first harvest, the 2001 Norlund, produced from grapes grown in their own vineyard. We also sampled wine from the 2002 harvest - right from the barrel. The preferred wine-making grape is Rhondo, a hybrid, known for producing a high quality full bodied dark red wine (I was told that this hybrid is becoming the grape of choice in many northern european cold climate countries). At the time of tasting the 2002, the tannins were quite strong but it was obvious that the winemaker had achieved high fruit extraction and was on the way to a well made pleasant product.

Our Danish friends in Copenhagen were very suspect on the drink-ability of any

wine grown in their immediate neighborhood. They were quite unaware that wine was being produced in Denmark. At a dinner party that evening, we shared our 2001 Norlund treat with six friends and were quite delighted by their positive comments. We had introduced our hosts to Danish wine. The wine is not cheap however, with each bottle costing \$60.00 CDN (probably due to the small quantity produced). It seemed strange, that it took visitors from Canada to introduce Danish wine to the Danish.

Jens is no stranger to Ontario, having visited the Niagara area on at least two occasions. His primary goal in visiting was to identify grape hardy grape varieties and hybrids that may withstand the harsh Danish viniculture conditions. Jens is always on the look for new cold climate varieties. When I mentioned Larry Patterson, (due to his interest in cold climate varieties) everyone at the luncheon knew I was talking about the little fat wino. Witness, the power of the internet – the power of the AWO!!



Left –Dansk Vin Centre store where they sell wines made throughout the world by Danish wine makers and on the right is Linda talking with Jens in the



vineyard.

Dansk Vin Center www.vincenter.dk Jens can be reached at

jens_madsen@image.dk

BOOK CORNER

Terry Sheehan, a retired member of The Department of External Affairs (now DFAIT; why do I hate that acronym?), Ambassador for Canada in a number of countries, oenophile, wine judge, vintner (in Virginia, and now in Prince Edward County) and author, has recently released his latest book, "Stop and Taste the Wine" (Gary's Printing Service, 2003, \$15.00, and available from Nicholas Hoare Books in Ottawa). It provides a delightful story of his growing knowledge of wine, the travels that the Sheehan family made to several of the world's outstanding wine regions, and his views on wine. I heartily recommend it for its refreshingly open style and pithy comments. And, when you have read it, you will know what "black sugar" is.

My only quarrel with the book is Mr. Sheehan's assertion, based on a period as a

home winemaker in the 1980s, that wines from concentrate "aren't worth making". This is dated thinking; in fact even by the 1980s, concentrates were appearing on the market having been produced using low-temperature, high-vacuum evaporation, and exhibiting little or none of the cooked flavour of the earlier ones, and the quality has improved steadily ever since. In fact, as recently as last year the only wine awarded a Gold medal at the Amateur Winemakers of Canada national finals was a Cabernet Sauvignon made by Brian Williams, using a Wine-Art "Project Wine Cellar" concentrate. Despite this observation, however, I found the book a highly enjoyable and informative read.

For many years Terry has been a judge for the International Wine and Food Show in Ottawa, and his knowledge of the world of wines shows through in this well-written and knowledgeable collection of his thoughts.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Glenn Keown

As I sit and write this letter, I am listening to the news only to hear it is snowing in the Northern Regions of Ontario. Where did the warm weather go?

It seems like only a short time ago we were in Peterborough at the Annual Festival in June.

After making many trips to Niagara on the Lake and Beamsville Bench area to collect grapes and juice, it seems impossible that the harvest for 2004 is nearly complete. I hope everyone got all the products they needed to make medal winning wines.

December 1st is fast approaching. Club Representatives that is the deadline for Club renewals for 2005. Our Chairman of Membership, David Burns, has informed me very few clubs have submitted their dues for next year. May I stress, getting your Club's dues in on time, helps meet our commitments and keeps your copy of the WineMaker Magazine coming.

I would ask Club Reps to verify members' information (home address, e-mail address and telephone numbers) before submitting cheques for Annual Dues.

Winetalk is still up and running. If you want to be added to this list, so you can

read all the interesting questions and answers regarding winemaking, please contact our Webmaster, Larry Paterson.

Remember the week-end of June 10th to 12th 2005. The Annual Festival will be held at King's College, University of Western Ontario. Theme is "Happy Hawaiian".

We are now approaching the Festive Season, on behalf of myself and family, may I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

THE THRIFTY WINEMAKER

by Blake Galloway ©

If you have a funnel without the impressed narrow groove on the outside of the stem, either (a) buy a better one or (b) wrap a twisted elastic around the base to let the air escape from the carboy or bottle (you know which I do). Put the elastic each time in the sulphite solution in which you soak corks and hang it on the nearest doorknob. I have never bought rubber bands in my life. They are

free on mail, supermarket bunches of onions, etc. I assume we all get WineMaker Magazine through AWO. On the purple page at the back and following listings of stores are many 1-800 numbers (and 877 + 888) so I phoned them all. They are, as you know, free long distance. Most don't go across the border but of those U.S. companies I reached, the following will send Ontario residents free catalogues: A. Northern Brewer 1-800-681-2739 B. Midwest Winemaking 1-888-449-2739 C. Presque Isle Pennsylvania 1-800-488-7492 D. The Beer Essentials 1-877-557-2739 E. Home Brewery, Missouri 1-800-321-2739 (You'll notice "2739" comes up; it spells "BREW" on the telephone dial) Of the three Ontario numbers the most helpful is Woodstick Wines Inc.

3902 Glen Roy Road

RR#1, Apple Hill, ON K0C 1B0

1-888-995-7999

Apple Hill is north of Cornwall, ON just south of highway 43 between Monkland and Alexandria.

Either Betty (the owner) or Nancy gives great advice over the phone. Our club

was looking for an electric crusher/destemmer and she gave us many locations and choices to call. Mention you are a member of AWO when you call.

(Ed. Note: Woodstick is a supporter of AWO Conventions and a friend of the hobby)

The largest catalogue I received was D (The Beer Essentials) and the most informative C (Presque Isle Vineyards). (Ed. Note: Presque Isle has an extensive range of products for sale and, in my experience, has been very user-friendly).

Actually, they are all good. Prices are in U.S. Dollars.

"HEIGHTEN YOUR SENSES"

AWO CONVENTION 2005

KINGS COLLEGE LONDON

JUNE 10, 11, 12

Add the dates to your calendar.

Look for details in February's newsletter.

UPDATE ON FESTIVAL 2006

by the Organizing Committee

The 2006 AWO Festival is planned for the weekend of June 9, 10, 11 in Ottawa; several committees have been struck and are actively working to secure the right accommodation; the wines for the weekend are fermenting as we speak, and the seminar program is being finalised.

A logo has been created, with a Roman theme: Festival MMVI, so organizers suggest that you send your togas out for drycleaning in good time. The organizers also plan on having a brochure available at the end of Festival 2005, with more information.

(ed) Sounds like these folk have their act together!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year