



# AWOnews

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

Produced by the Amateur Winemakers of Ontario  
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## In This Issue

- Brian Douglas provides a tribute to long-time AWO member Werner Roesner on behalf of the Aurora Wine Circle.
- Carole Frankow, the AWO Judging Co-ordinator, provides a report on how the club judging went this year and provides suggestions for next year.
- The organizing committee for the 2009 AWO Festival - V.Q. EH! - provides a teaser about what they are planning for next year.
- Don Panagapka is back with Gap's Corner. In this issue, Don talks about blending, a tool that should be in every winemakers toolkit if they hope to make top quality wines.
- An article about recent research that suggests that the type of music that you play can influence your perception of the wine you are drinking
- An article about ***The Winemaker*** a new reality TV show that is slated to air on PBS this fall.

## President's Corner

The 2008 AWO Convention in Hamilton has come and gone. A great deal of work was put into the convention and I want to thank all who were involved in the organization of this very successful event. There was a lot of top quality wines available for sampling at the Club Showcase on Friday night as well as the Tasters Choice event on Saturday night. My congratulations to all the medal winners, they represent a lot of wonderful top quality wines. A lot of these wines are also eligible to go forward to the Amateur Winemakers of Canada competition in Nova Scotia. Notes have gone out to all eligible entrants. There is a lot of work being done at the national level by AWC President Larry Paterson (Our Little Fat Wino) to make the AWC competition more accessible and relevant to our winemakers. We will keep you informed of any changes.

A big thanks is due to our retiring directors, David Burns and Gary Collins. On behalf of all members of AWO I would like to thank them both for all the time and effort they contributed to our organization. At the same time we welcome two new directors Winston Spratt and Jim Lloyd. Both gentlemen have a lot of experience to offer our organization and I look forward to working with them.

A new information brochure was introduced at the convention this year. It is designed to show prospective members what our organization is all about and details how to join or start a new club. We need everyone's help in getting these out to reach prospective members. Quantities were given to the club reps to take back to their clubs for distribution.

Planning is well underway for our 2009 Convention in Niagara. With the enthusiasm shown by the Niagara organizers at this year's convention I am sure the 2009 convention will be a big success. The 2010 convention is still open for bids. Organizing this event is a lot of work but also a lot of fun and there is a lot of experienced help available. It's also very rewarding, financially and personally. If your club is interested please contact any member of the executive.

Enjoy the summer!  
Bob Gibbon

## **Editor's Ramblings**

Another AWO Festival has come and gone and the Other Hamilton Wine Club and South Coast Winemakers Guild are to be commended for putting together a fine weekend.

Kudos also have to go out to John Peters and his merry band of judges and stewards for their heroic efforts at judging over the 700 wines entered into the 2008 AWO Competition over the course of a weekend.

The Niagara area folks were there in full force to promote next year's Festival - V.Q. Eh! Alan Johnson's article in this issue will provide more information on what they are planning. The Niagara Wine-to-Vine Circle is also to be congratulated on being the Grand Champion Club in the 2008 AWO Competition.

I plan to try to keep to a regular schedule for publishing AWONews again this year. I work better when facing a deadline, even a self imposed one. It will also help anyone who would like to get some time-sensitive news in the newsletter to know when it is going to go out. My proposed schedule for 2008/09:

### **Fall 2008**

Deadline - September 26, 2008

Issue Available - October 13, 2008

### **Winter 2009**

Deadline - January 9, 2009

Issue Available - January 26, 2009

### **Spring 2009 (Mailed to members)**

Deadline - April 3, 2009

Issue Available - April 17, 2009

## In Memoriam - Werner Roesner

On behalf of the Aurora Wine Circle, and all AWO friends, we would like to acknowledge, and pay tribute to the passing of Werner Roesner.

In 1969, a few amateur winemakers in Ontario started an organization and had a competition with some like-minded souls in British Columbia.



Werner and Ursula Roesner started the Aurora Wine Circle in 1973 and joined the fledgling Amateur Winemakers of Ontario.

Werner was both organizer and teacher as they moved from living room to living room each month.

He found the grape growers in Niagara so they could drive down in the cooling days of fall to get the baskets of Vidal and Muscat sitting in the shade of the trees. They then returned to the Roesner back yard to sit, hunched over a pail, plucking grapes off the stems. As wet fingers got colder, there were samples of Werner's wines from the previous year.

Werner easily won most any class he entered in the annual club competitions, which regularly put him in competition at the Ontario level, and progressively the Amateur Winemakers of Canada. In particular he developed very fine "Port style" and "Sweet Aperitif" wines which were his signature wines.

As community interest in wines grew, Werner was featured and they wrote some articles in local papers. As home winemaking became more popular, wine interest and consumption increased, the Aurora Tasters Club started. Both Werner and Ursula took judge training and Werner became a member of the Ontario Wine Judges Commission.

At Werner's passing, he was standing 13th in total points in the AWO and 21st in Amateur Winemaker of Canada. For the Aurora Wine Circle, Werner was always the "go to, guy" for questions and guidance concerning our wines. Werner always seemed to find that delicious balance, that is the hallmark of a great winemaker.

So next time you are near a glass, Drink a toast to the quiet guy who taught so many a lot about appreciating life, as well as the good wines in it.

## 2008 Club Competitions Judging

Another successful year of AWO Club Competitions concluded on April 6 & once again I want to thank all the Judges for giving generously of their time & expertise. I appreciate the efforts made by the club reps and competition hosts to make these events run smoothly.

Special thanks also go to John Peters, our Chief Steward, and David Burns, our retiring AWO Membership Director - we couldn't do it without you!

A brief summary to both organizations (my advance apologies to those of you who wear more than one hat since you'll be hearing this several times):

32 of the 37 AWO clubs were judged between Feb 9<sup>th</sup> and Apr 6<sup>th</sup> , requiring a total of 65

- judges (last year was 30 out of 38 clubs & 61 judges). The five remaining clubs historically judge their own. We welcomed back Press Agents and Rideau Tay to active competition but unfortunately the Niagara Wine Guild has disbanded.
- Most clubs again requested judges from their own geographical area first to reduce judging costs. Of the 32 clubs, only 11 wanted a single judge so hopefully they are beginning to appreciate the value of multiple judges. Only three clubs needed four or more judges. The average was two.
- Wherever possible, I tried to find at least one judging opportunity for each WJC judge. Of the 34 active Ontario judges, two opted out of judging this year and two others did not have any assignments.
- The rule of thumb again this year to determine reimbursement of mileage for the judges was that there was no mileage charge for competitions 20 km or less one way. For longer distances, clubs were charged \$0.40 km one way. Putting the onus on the judges to calculate their mileage and add it to the Club Invoice worked quite well.
- There is definite value in continuing to encourage clubs to have a pre-judging (with or without a qualified judge) to weed out those entries that are not really worth putting into competition and to provide advice to help winemakers improve their wines before entering them in competition. Screening entries at the club level increases the overall quality of the wines that are ultimately judged helps to reduce the workload of the judges.
- It worked fairly well to have organizers send me the directions instead of my having to use MSN Maps or Map Quest.
- If your club rep or alternate or any email addresses change, **please let us know immediately**... Membership keeps track of the Club Reps & Alternates database & I'm tracking the Wine Judges of Canada information. The crucial part of this process is to get your club data & dues into the Membership Director BEFORE December 31 so our lists are as current as possible.

As always, I would appreciate any feedback (good or bad), ideas, suggestions etc on ways to improve the whole Club Competition experience.

Cheers!

Carole Frankow  
Judging Co-coordinator



Thanks to the Hamilton and Area clubs for another wonderful event. Everything seemed to go very smoothly and we are sure that it was enjoyable for all.

The NOTL Amateur Vintners and the Niagara Vine to Wine clubs invite you to join us in Niagara for "Amateur V.Q. EH! - AWO Conference 2009"

We are planning a conference which will:

- celebrate amateur winemakers and their accomplishments,
- teach amateur winemakers how to make better wines,
- enlighten amateur winemakers to the Niagara Region and the developing wine world,
- feed amateur winemakers great food,
- entertain amateur winemakers with fun activities and a dance on Saturday evening,
- challenge amateur winemakers to continue to make better wines,
- and much more!

### **Venue**

- As for "2001 A Wine Odyssey", we are negotiating with Niagara College. It is a super facility in a great easy-to-get-to location.
- The Dates will be May 29-31, 2009.
- Accommodations are on-site – there is no need to drive after tasting the odd glass of wine.
- We intend to have access to the Niagara Culinary Institute for some hands-on seminars.
- We will enjoy the facilities of the Wine & Viticulture program for seminars.
- Every class room has the use of multi-media equipment for the best presentations by our seminar leaders.
- The cafeteria is very large and well suited to use for all meals and large-group events.

### **Seminars**

- In addition to the facilities I have already mentioned, we have the pick of many Niagara winemakers, AWO members, and guests from the region to present a terrific set of seminars all day Saturday.

### **Off-Campus Activities**

- We will have tours to some of the new wineries both "on the Bench" and "in the Swamp!"
- For the spouses who wish to shop, there will be a bus to NOTL which will come back for you in time for the dining and dancing.
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## Friday Welcome BBQ and Showcase

- The College has a wonderful open area where we will welcome you. This is your first chance to reacquaint yourself with friends and fellow winemakers from past Conferences.
- “Niagara’s Best Brewery” has already agreed to sponsor.
- The Showcase will be in the cafeteria which is very large and accommodating.

## Saturday Lunch

- Great food followed by a guest speaker who will entertain and educate you.

## Saturday Dinner & Dance

- Our Saturday dinner will be a “fine dining” experience, followed by a dance with the live music of **Old Plank Road**.

## Fine Wine & Food Experiences

- By making use of the Wine & Viticulture program and Niagara Culinary Institute, we intend to give you the opportunity to taste some special wines and eat great food.

The committee had its first meeting on June 17, 2007. It is made up of enthusiastic and hard working members of both clubs.

Our aim is to present the best AWO Conference yet!

Continue to watch the AWO News for our little “Happy Grapes”. They will let you know about registration and seminars and all aspects of the conference.

At Hamilton 2008, we held a draw for one Full Registration for 2009. The winner was Tom Howard, from Nova Scotia. We will let him know and give him first opportunity for the Seminars.

We look forward to hosting you next year in Niagara.

## “Amateur V.Q. . . . . EH!”

Al Johnson, Chair

Email: [ajohnson44@cogeco.ca](mailto:ajohnson44@cogeco.ca)

## Gap’s Corner

### Blending Wines

In my previous article I mentioned that blending wines is normally better than having a single grape variety to produce a better product. There are exceptions to this of course. For example wines such as gewurtztraminer, pinot noir, plus a few others (e.g. fruit wines) are wines that do not necessarily benefit from blending as their purity of flavour is an important element in their attraction.



One might ask oneself “what is the advantage of blending”? Well, as we know bordeaux blends and meritage blends, for example, are made for a reason. The reason is that they generally produce better and more complex wines (certainly the prices would show that). Another reason to blend wines is to balance them. One wine may be light in fruit and could appreciate an injection of fruit to balance the wine. On the other hand a

wine may be low in acid and adding a wine of a higher acid content would help the low acid wine. Now let's look at areas where you can increase your blending prowess.

### **Maximizing your blending potential:**

First of all having multiple examples of one wine (e.g. different years, different yeast varieties, different winemaking techniques) will allow you to experiment with blending that particular grape variety with different wines made from the same grape. In the end you will have a blend of a single grape variety which should be better than any of the individual wines. In other words when you first make a grape variety (e.g. Cab Sauv) why not make a number of different carboys with different yeasts and winemaking techniques. If you do, then you will have more possibilities to produce superior wines.

Secondly, having a number of different wines that can enter a particular class allows you to blend different types to produce a different blend (e.g. having Cab Sauv, Merlot, and Cab Franc available as single grape wines will allow you to experiment with various blends of these wines.

### **Don't sacrifice a fine wine by blending it with a mediocre wine;**

Often time we will (normally out of convenience) blend a superior wine with a poor wine to make an "acceptable" wine in bulk. The result is usually an "ok" wine but nothing special. So, why not keep the superior wine on its' own and the mediocre wine on its' own. That way you at least have one great wine to be proud of. Take the mediocre wine and see if there are other mediocre wines in your cellar that can be blended together and likely you will produce a "better than mediocre" wine that can be consumed regularly and enjoyed.

### **Blind tasting of blended wines:**

Let's say you want to make the best blend of Cab Sauv, Cab Franc, and Merlot (with possibly smaller amounts of e.g. Malbec). Set up a blind tasting of 5 or 6 blends (differing the amounts of each blend) and bag them so that it is a blind tasting. Then have another person arbitrarily number the wines. Then have at least yourself plus one or 2 others taste the blends and discuss the wines (e.g. balance, taste profile, tannins, finish, e.t.c.) and determine which blend is the best. Subsequent to that tasting you can fine-tune the best blend to perhaps produce a wine that is slightly better. The advantage over doing this on your own is that you are getting feedback from others which may help you make a better wine.

### **Blending young and old:**

So, you have a fabulous young wine but the tannins are too astringent to be drinkable. Why not take one of your older "mature" wines and blend to reduce the overall tannin level and add complexity to the wine. Conversely, a small amount of a newer wine can bring up the fruit of an older wine that is at the top of the hill and ready to descend. You will likely end up with the best of both worlds

### **Some logical blends that you might consider:**

California Cab Sauv with Ontario Merlot – reasoning: the high alcohol content of most California Cabs will be balanced by the lower alcohol content of the Ontario Merlot. The Merlot will also fill in the middle palate and add fruit to the Cab Sauv

Vidal with 5% Muscat – reasoning: the Muscat will bring out more fruit on the nose and the flavour for the Vidal

Apple wine with white wines for Social class – reasoning: apple wine being fairly subtle can add some complexity and flavour to white wines to produce a nice social wine

Cab Sauv/Syrah blends – reasoning: the Aussies are making great wines in this style and are becoming very popular. In the Red Blend class this combination is logical.

Any fruit wine with grape wines – reasoning: this is a classic “social” blend that can produce some great wines

Happy blending, and keep playing with those wines.

Don Panagapka

## Honky Tonk Cabernet

Research conducted at the Herriot Watt University in Edinburgh for the Chilean winemaker Aurelio Montes suggests that playing a certain type of music can enhance the taste of some wines.

Psychology professor Adrian Watts’ research involved 250 students who took part in the study in exchange for a free glass of wine. The students sampled their wine while listening to four different pieces of music: *Carmina Burana* by Orff (powerful and heavy), *Waltz of the Flowers from the Nutcracker* by Tchaikovsky (subtle and refined), *Just Can’t Get Enough* by Nouvelle Vague (zingy and refreshing), and *Slow Breakdown* by Michael Brook (mellow and soft).

North found that the students rated the white wine tasted as 40% more zingy and refreshing when *Just Can’t Get Enough* was played, but only 25% more soft and mellow when *Slow Breakdown* was played. Similarly, with the red wine students reported only a 25% change when either *Just Can’t Get Enough* or *Slow Breakdown* was played, but when *Carmina Burana* was played they felt that the wine was 60% heavier and more powerful.

North explains these results through “cognitive priming theory” where the music primes the brain to respond to the wine in a certain way. Based on this research North feels that winemakers should recommend certain pieces of music to go with their wines.

Montes, who plays monastic chants to his maturing wines, has taken North’s advice to heart and has come up with some musical recommendations for his wines:

**Cabernet Sauvignon** - *All Along the Watchtower* (Jimi Hendrix), *Honky Tonk Woman* (Rolling Stones), *Live and Let Die* (Paul McCartney and Wings) and *Won’t Get Fooled Again* (the Who)

**Syrah** - *Nessun Dorma* (Puccini), *Orinoco Flow* (Enya), *Chariots of Fire* (Vangelis) and *Pachelbel’s Canon* (Johann Pachelbel)

**Merlot** - *Sitting on the Dock of the Bay* (Otis Redding), *Easy* (Lionel Ritchie), *Over the Rainbow* (Eva Cassidy) and *Heartbeats* (Jose Gonzales)

**Chardonnay** - *Atomic* (Blondie), *Rock DJ* (Robbie Williams), *What’s Love Got To Do With It* (Tina Turner) and *Spinning Around* (Kylie Minogue).



At your next club Bordeaux tasting crank up the Stones and see if the music does anything for your Cabs.

## ***Top Chef Meets The Apprentice***

I'm not a big fan of reality TV shows, but there is one coming up next fall on PBS that sounds like it might be of interest. I'm sure many AWO members have fantasized about opening their own winery. Many have actually gone beyond fantasizing and become commercial winemakers, such as Jim Warren, Eddie Gurinkas, John Tummon, Dan Sullivan and Terry Rayner. This show will provide the opportunity for one lucky candidate to realize their dream - at least for one 5,000 case run.

***The Winemakers*** is being produced by Doc City Productions for PBS. Twelve men and women were chosen from over 600 applications to vie for the opportunity to create their own 5,000 case wine company. Applicants were quizzed on their knowledge of all aspects of the wine industry from viticulture and enology to sales and marketing.

The twelve lucky applicants will get to make their wines as Crushpad, essentially a very high-end San Francisco U-vint. Crushpad supplies commercial quality winemaking equipment and lab analysis and have trained winemakers on staff to assist their clients with the winemaking process. Grapes are sourced from well-known Napa and Sonoma vineyards. The aim is to produce high-quality, commercial wines and many of Crushpad's clients have obtained commercial winery licences and sell their wines. All this support is not cheap. A barrel of wine made at Crushpad costs between \$5,700 to \$10,900 per barrel (\$19 to \$36 per bottle) depending on the grape variety chosen, what vineyard the grapes come from and the amount of intervention required by Crushpad staff.

For ***The Winemakers*** each candidate will get to choose the grapes and supplier that he or she will use to make their wine. The program will follow them through their education in the winemaking process over the course of six one-hour shows. At the end of the final show one lucky candidate will get the opportunity to create their own 5,000 case wine label.

I haven't been able to find out when the program is actually airing. You might want to keep an eye on PBS this fall. This sounds like it might be an interesting program.