



# 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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## Executive 2009/10

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## In This Issue

- In my first combined President's Corner/Editor's Notes, I talk about the AWO Board agenda for the next year and what you can do to help out. We are still looking for clubs to volunteer to organize future AWO Festivals.
- Steve McDonald, the new AWO competition Chief Steward, provides a brief summary of the results of the 2009 AWO competition.
- I talk about a recent court case in Nova Scotia and the potential implications for our fellow amateur winemakers in that province.
- An article about using the chemical composition of foods and wines as a new approach to matching wines to foods.
- An article about a diet book that is sure to whet the interest of any avid amateur winemaker.
- We're still looking for volunteers to help out with updating the website and the AWO News. Check out the information in this issue.

## ***President's Corner***

You'll notice that the Editor's Notes are combined with the President's Corner for this issue, seeing as I'm doing both roles now. If anyone is interested in helping with the AWONews that would really be appreciated. I'm looking for folks who can solicit contributions to the newsletter - you don't actually have to write anything yourself, unless you really want to and your contributions would be welcome. You can e-mail me at [awonews@sympatico.ca](mailto:awonews@sympatico.ca).

I'd like to thank a couple of people for their service to AWO. Bob Gibbon stepped down from the President's position at the 2009 Festival. Bob had been the President since 2006 and has done a great job over the past three years. Bob is still a member of the Board as past President and will continue to serve the organization as the AWC rep. Since the 2009 Festival he has been hard at work organizing our entries for the AWC competition. The other person who deserves a hearty round of applause is John Peters, who has served as the AWO representative to the Wine Judges of Canada and the Chief Steward for the AWO competition. John, the modest fellow that he is, always insists that he is just the conductor and he has an entire orchestra working for him to run the AWO competition. However, anyone who has seen him working at the competition or at an AWO Festival knows that from time to time the conductor plays the first violin, occasionally toots on the French horn or bangs away at the cymbals.

Alan Johnson and his organizing committee from the Niagara clubs did a superb job of hosting the 2009 Festival, V.Q. EH!, at Niagara College. There were a host of excellent seminars, great field trips and enjoyable social events. You just knew that you were in for a fun weekend when the person providing directions in the parking lot was dressed up as a grape.



***You didn't have to dress funny to enjoy the 2009 Festival, but it looks like it didn't hurt.***

Speaking of Festivals, the AWO Board is still working on trying to put together a Festival for 2010. Stayed tuned for more information. We are also looking for a club or clubs to volunteer to host the 2011 Festival. If there are no volunteers, it is not going to happen.

The results of the 2009 AWO Competition were announced at the Festival, as John Peter's last official act as the AWO Competition Chief Steward. Once again, the competition was bigger and better than the previous year, with over 800 wines and beers entered. Congratulations to Steve McDonald, top winemaker and the K-W Winemakers Guild as the top club once more. Steve McDonald, our new Chief Steward, provides a summary of the results in this issue.



### ***K-W Winemakers Guild - Top Club for 2009***

The Board has set ourselves a busy agenda for this year. Besides trying to get a 2010 Festival organized, our first order of business is re-writing the Constitution and By-laws. We're not exactly sure when they were last revised, but it was definitely sometime in the last century. Although this seems like a mundane housekeeping item, well written and easy to understand By-laws will help the AGM and other AWO business work more smoothly. We hope to have a draft of the revised By-laws out to clubs sometime in the fall. The other major item that we would like to tackle this year is developing a plan to market the AWO and attract new members. For any of you who were at the 2009, you couldn't help noticing that grey is the new black for the AWO, at least as far as hair colour is concerned. If we want to continue to have a vibrant, viable organization we need to attract more younger members. We have established a committee to put together a strategy for marketing the organization and would welcome all suggestions from AWO members. Please discuss this at your club meetings and if you come up with an idea that you think might help please e-mail me or any of the other Board members.

Hope you are enjoying the summer and getting ready for the new vintage.  
Burton McClelland

## ***2009 AWO Competition - Chief Steward's Report***

We have had a record number of entries this year into the AWO Provincial Competition. The judging and tabulation went very well due to the work of many volunteers and the leadership of John Peters. There were approx 30 stewards and 26 Judges that contributed over the weekend competition. Thanks to everyone that helped out.

There were a total of 756 wines entered and 48 beers. The total medal count for wine and cider was 597 (Gold 41, Silver 283 and Bronze 273) The total medal count for beer was 19 (4 Gold, 9 Silver and 6 Bronze). It does not appear that the increases in cost had much effect on the total number of entries this year.

In stand up trophies there were a total of 47 new lifetime achievement trophies handed out. They were 3 Ultimate Master Vintner (5000 points), 3 Senior Grand Master Vintner (2500 points), 13 Grand Master Vintners (1000 points), 8 Senior Master Vintner (750 points), 4 Master Vintner (500 points), and 16 Vintner (250 points). This is very positive as it shows that our members are progressing through the different levels of winemaking and are sticking with the competition. In total

we had 165 members enter wine for judging.

The top club was KW Winemaker's Guild (4446 points) followed by St Thomas Grapebuster's (3920 points), Niagara Vine to Wine Circle (2456 points), London Wine Pro's (1662 points) and the Corkscrew Society (1610 points).

Our award winners are as follows:

Grand Champion Winemaker — Steve McDonald,  
Grand Champion Brewer — Steve Quast,  
Grand Champion Cider Maker — Martin Nygard,  
Best White Table Wine - Bill Thorton,  
Best Red Table Wine — Steve McDonald tied with Stewart Wood,  
Best Ontario Red Wine — Larry Patterson,  
Best Ontario White Wine — Larry Patterson,  
Best White Wine from a kit — Patty Polfus,  
Best Red Wine from a kit Marilyn Walters,  
Best Brew — Steve Quast.



**Preparing the Wines for Judging**



**Judges Hard at Work**



**Tabulating the Results**

Submitted by Steve McDonald Deputy Chief Steward



## ***In Nova Scotia Selling Wine Kits Makes You a Bootlegger***

One of the members of our club sent me an article from Nova Scotia that has very ominous implications for anyone there making wine from kits.

Ross Harrington, a Wine Kit franchise holder in Halifax, was charged with manufacture and sale of alcohol without a licence and keeping/storage of alcohol without a licence. These charges stem from Mr. Harrington's attempt to add a u-vint service to his store in 2006.

Mr. Harrington's case finally came to court in November 2008 and the judge just rendered her judgement last month. He was found not guilty on the charge of keeping/storage of alcohol without a licence. Mr. Harrington had obtained a licence from the federal government under the Federal Excise Act and the judge deemed that this was sufficient for Mr. Harrington to legally store alcohol on his premises.

However, Mr. Harrington was found guilty of the manufacture and sale of alcohol in his store. The judge's decision was not based on the fact that he offered the in-store winery service, but rather that under the very broad definition of liquor provided in the Nova Scotia Liquor Control Act, wine kits could be considered alcohol.

Here is the definition of liquor as provided in the Act:

"liquor" means and includes any alcohol, alcoholic, spirituous, vinous, fermented malt or other intoxicating liquor or combination of liquors and mixed liquor a part of which is spirituous, vinous, fermented or otherwise intoxicating and all drinks or drinkable liquids and all preparations or mixtures, whether liquid or solid, capable of human consumption which are intoxicating, and any compound, mixture or preparation whether in solid or liquid form to which the addition of water or any other liquid or any substance will produce intoxicating liquor.

The judge used the last sentence in this definition as the basis for her judgement.

This judgement is too recent to know what the impact will be on other home winemaking supply stores in Nova Scotia, but if you follow the logic in this decision, anyone selling wine kits in Nova Scotia could be guilty of selling alcohol without a licence. It almost makes Ontario's antediluvian Liquor Control Act look enlightened.

## ***A Different Approach to Pairing Wine with Food***

Beppi Crosariol had an interesting article in a recent Globe and Mail about using the chemical properties of foods and wines to get more complementary pairings.

Francois Chartier, is a sommelier and food and wine columnist for La Presse. He was interested to see if the molecular gastronomy espoused by noted chefs like Ferran Adria of Spain and Heston Blumental of England could be applied to wine.

Chartier has been experimenting with matching wines with foods for two decades. He feels that there are certain bridge ingredients are the most important catalysts for successful food and wine matching. Some of the matches that he discovered included cloves with old vines Grenache from

Spain, fresh mint and basil with Sauvignon Blanc, ginger with Pinot Gris, black olives with Rhone Syrah and sun-dried tomatoes with California Pinot Noir.

To follow this idea further and delve into matching on a molecular level, he met with a number of noted chefs, including Ferran Adria, and molecular biologists, including Herve This of INRA in Paris and Dr. Richard Beaulieu head of the molecular medicine laboratory at Saint-Justine Hospital in Montreal, who offered Chartier the use of his laboratory's services.

As well as confirming some traditional matches, such as muscadet with oysters and sauternes with foie gras, Chartier's research has suggested a number of matches that fly in the face of tradition. One example is high-alcohol wines, such as an Alsatian gewurztraminer or a California zinfandel, with spicy foods. Conventional wisdom has it that the alcohol just makes the spices burn more and that a chilled white wine or beer is best. Chartier feels that beer is probably the worst choice you could make as the CO<sub>2</sub> just makes the burn worse. He feels you need something full-bodied and preferably with a bit of sweetness.

Another interesting recommendation is oak-aged wines with pork. Usually fruit-forward wines are recommended with pork, which is often accompanied by a fruit-based sauce with apricots, plums or apples. Oak tends to de-emphasize the wine's fruit character and add vanilla or butterscotch notes. However, Chartier noted that pork contain lactones, aromatic compounds that provide the aroma to apricots, but are also imparted by barrel aging.

Traditional pairings are often a result of geography. Wines were paired with traditional foods from the local area. Chartier suggests that we break the bounds of geography using molecular characteristics instead. For example, he found that foods spiced with the Mediterranean herb rosemary matched better with northern Alsatian wines than those from the local area. Rosemary is high in terpenes, which are found in such Alsatian grapes as gewurztraminer and riesling.

Chartier has put his findings together in a book *Papilles et Molecules* (Tastebuds and Molecules). However from checking on his website it looks like it is only available in French right now. For those of you whose French is beyond my rudimentary level, this sounds like it might be a very interesting read.

## ***That's My Kind of Diet***

Seeing at this is the time of year when many people are still struggling to keep those brave resolutions that they made on New Year's Day to eat right and lose weight, and losing the battle when that big juicy steak comes off the barbeque, I thought the following would be of interest.

A new diet book out of England, ***The Wine Diet*** by Dr. Roger Corder, sounds like the answer to an amateur winemaker's prayers. However, before you get your hopes up too high, I probably should spell out what ***The Wine Diet*** is not about. It doesn't deliver a magic potion that lets you eat all those high fat, high carbohydrate treats and still shed unwanted avoirdupois by knocking back a couple of bottles a day of Chateau Slim-Fast or whatever else is lurking in your cellar.

The book's subtitle, *A complete nutrition and lifestyle plan*, is a more accurate reflection of the book's message. With a scientist's natural caution, Dr. Corder doesn't want people to drink more, but rather more wisely and selectively.

Dr. Corder is a well-respected scientist, a cardiovascular expert and professor of experimental therapeutics at the William Harvey Research Institute at the London School of Medicine. He and his team has spent years amassing compelling evidence on the potential medical benefits of red wine. The advice in the book is based on this research.

He first became interested in the chemical properties of wine and their potential medical benefits in 1999, about the time that theories related to the “French Paradox” were emerging. As a scientist and a long-time wine drinker, he was frustrated that there wasn’t a better understanding of what it was about wine that seemed to be providing cardiovascular and other health benefits.

Professor Corder was skeptical of some of the theories explaining the role of red wine in the French Paradox. One of the compounds found in red wine that was touted as the miracle ingredient was resveratrol. Corder felt that the amount of resveratrol found in wine was much too small to have any clinical benefit. Subsequent research has shown that an average person would have to drink about 1,500 litres of wine a day to get a clinically effective dose of resveratrol.

Corder decided to look for other explanations for the French Paradox. He assembled a team at the institute to look at the chemical properties of red wine and how they might provide the health benefits that seemed to be observed in the French Paradox.

In 2001 Corder and his team announced that they had discovered that red wine reduces the synthesis of a key molecule connected with coronary heart disease, called endothelin-1 (ET-1). The overproduction of ET-1 is a key factor in the development of atherosclerosis or hardening of the arteries. A compound found in young, tannic red wines, called procyanidins, inhibits the production of ET-1, helping to protect the lining of blood vessels and reducing the danger of heart disease and strokes. Procyanidins are also abundant in dark chocolate and cranberries.

Corder followed that work up with a trip to Sardinia, which has the highest proportion of centenarians in Europe. Sardinians had a life expectancy that was much higher than the rest of France and yet they were too far from the sea to benefit from the supposedly healthy Mediterranean diet. The prevailing diet was heavily weighted to high-fat, unhealthy foods such as foie gras and cassoulet. Corder did find that the local, traditionally produced and very tannic red wines, made primarily from the Tannat grape, contains the highest procyanidin levels of any wine yet tested. Corder feels that he has very strong circumstantial evidence to back his assertion of the cardiovascular benefits of high procyanidin red wines.

Although his theory still needs to be tested in clinical trial, Corder was convinced enough to use it as the underlying basis for ***The Wine Diet***. The advice provided there can probably be summed up in two guiding principles: less food, but better quality; and moderate amounts of wine, carefully selected. His nutrition plan leans heavily to fresh fruit and vegetables, nuts and berries and fresh fish.

One of his cardinal rules is that wine should be accompanied by food. He realizes that traditional Sardinian wine is in fairly short supply and recommends other high procyanidin varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese. Grapes grown at higher altitudes or cooler temperature also seem to have higher procyanidin levels. He suggests about three glasses a day for men and two for women as a good compromise between the health benefits gained from red wine and the potential dangers of over-consumption.

Although Corder's work does not give carte blanche to eat, drink and be merry and never expect any consequences, it does provide a sound scientific basis to believe that red wine, especially those varieties high in procyanidins, does provide definite health benefits.

## ***Help Wanted***

The AWO executive is still looking for a creative, enthusiastic member to serve as the AWO Web Editor. The Web Editor will be responsible for updating content on makewine.com, the AWO website. Although basic web skills would be useful, they are not absolutely essential. The Web Editor is not a member of the AWO executive, although they are invited to attend the meetings if they are interested.

We have spent a lot of time and effort in the past couple of years having the AWO website redesigned and having new content added. It will start losing its value as a communications tool for the organization if we don't keep the content current and up-to-date. You can provide a valuable service to your organization by helping to keep the website current. The AWO executive will work with member clubs to help obtain new content for posting.

As mentioned in the President's Corner, I am also looking for someone to assist me with the AWO News. I spend a lot of time trying to come up with ideas for articles and chasing people down to submit material. Having someone to help gather material would free up more of my time to devote to the President's duties.

If you are interested in either of these opportunities please contact Burton McClelland ([awonews@sympatico.ca](mailto:awonews@sympatico.ca)) or any other AWO Board member.