



# 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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## **President's Corner**

Those of you with keen eyesight and who check out the AWO website will note that there has been a considerable gap between Volume 53 and 54. In the past, I would blame the tardy delivery of the AWONews on the delay in the delivery of the President's Message by my predecessor, Bob Gibbon. That excuse is no longer available to me seeing as I am both the President and AWONews Editor - really bad planning. The only excuse that I can offer in my defence is that I seem to be congenitally unable to say no to a volunteer opportunity.

That said another vintage is fast approaching and for some varieties is already upon us. If you are like me pails, presses and other winemaking equipment is being pulled out of the garden shed and cleaned up, ready for another year's crush. If you are also a procrastinator like me you are probably busy doing some last-minute filtering and bottling so you can free up some carboy space for the new wine.

While you are preparing for another winemaking season you might want to think about how you can bring others into our hobby. Fall is the perfect time to introduce somebody to winemaking. The demographer David Foot has said that two of the key principles to understanding demographics are: you get a little bit older every day; and, you tend to act your age. These principles are starting to eat away at the AWO's membership as our membership's average age is slowly increasing. As the average age in an AWO club grows older, they tend to be less attractive to younger potential members and existing members lose interest in making their own wine. We need to reverse this trend if we want to have a healthy vibrant organization ten years from now.

### **HELP WANTED**

**AWC Treasurer** - Charles Plant, the long-serving AWC treasurer is stepping down to take a well-deserved break. The AWC is looking for a volunteer to take over this very important position. For more information contact the AWC Liaison, Patti Polfuss at [polfuss@rogers.com](mailto:polfuss@rogers.com).

**AWO Web Editor** - The AWO is looking for an enthusiastic member to be our Web Editor. The key duties of this position are to gather new information for the AWO website, [www.makewine.com](http://www.makewine.com) and to keep the site updated on a regular basis. Web expertise is not necessary although it would be useful.

### **2011 Paul Dunseath Award Winner**

Given Paul's very enthusiastic support of both the AWO and the Wine Judges of Canada, it is only fitting that our 2011 Paul Dunseath Award winner for Outstanding Service has been a very active participant in both organizations for a number of years.



Anybody who has been to an AWO competition judging or an AWO Festival should be familiar with John Peters, the AWO Chief Steward, for many years, as well as a keen AWO member. For those of you who have never had the opportunity to see an AWO judging, it is a thing of beauty, running like a finely oiled Swiss watch. As Chief Steward, John was always looking for ways to improve the running of the competition and the level of judging in the WJC. John has made a significant contribution to the WJC's ability to carefully judge 800 or so wines on a weekend.

After John stepped down from the Chief Steward's role in 2009, he hasn't rested on his laurels - he has completed the WJC training program and now participates as a judge.

Congratulations to John on this very well deserved award.

## **2011 AWO Competition**



Almost 800 wines were judged at this year's competition. Under the stellar guidance of our Chief Steward, Steve McDonald, things ran very smoothly throughout the weekend. There were a number of new graduate judges on hand to add new blood to the WJC judging cadre. Many of the new judges were not exactly new to the WJC, having been stewards in the past. With the move of a number of stewards into the judging ranks, there were also a number of new stewards on hand who had gone through a one-day steward training program earlier in the spring.

Congratulations to all AWO members who entered wines into the competition and especially to those who were awarded medal or special awards.

The St. Thomas Grapebusters rose to top spot as the top club (combination of wine beer and cider) in the competition, closely followed by the K-W Winemakers Guild. The top five clubs were rounded out by Niagara Vine-to-Wine Circle, Niagara on the Lake and the Kawartha Krushers.



The top winemaker was Don Panagapka from K-W, followed by fellow club member Steve McDonald and Bill Thornton from St. Thomas. The top cider maker was Steve McDonald. The champion brewer was Mervin Quast from Capital Amateur Winemakers.

The best red wine in the competition was a 2007 Bordeaux Blend by Terry McCall of the Kawartha Krushers. Fellow Krusher Burton McClelland had the best white wine with his 2010 Geisenheim.

Member-at-large Marilyn Walters had the best red wine from a kit with her 2009 Barbera. Glen Graham from St. Thomas had the best white wine from a kit with his 2009 Chardonnay. Bill Thornton of St. Thomas had the best beer with his light lager.

## **2011 Amateur Winemakers of Canada Results**

Ontario once again did very well at the AWC competition, ending up in first place - of the 62 wines entered by AWO members 33 were awarded gold medals, 21 silver medals and 8 bronze medals for a total of 4,787 points about 1,200 points more than runner-up British Columbia.

Steve McDonald from K-W Winemakers Guild was the Grand Champion Winemaker, while Martin Nygard from the St. Thomas Grapebusters was the Grand Champion Cidermaker.

Full results are available on the Valley Vintners website at: <http://www.valleyvintners.ca>.

## **2011 AWO Festival - Cottage Country in Ottawa**

The Capital Amateur Winemakers hosted the 2011 AWO Festival themed Cottage Country in Ottawa on June 4th.

Although modestly attended, festival-goers were presented with a very busy Saturday. Vic Harridine, a well-known wine writer and wine judge with the Wine Judges of Canada, kicked off the festival with a very interesting and insightful keynote address. There was a very good variety of seminars offered from excellent tasting of commercial wines from Chile and Argentina, private stock Sherry to seminars for the hopheads in the crowd with hop growing and beer making seminars.

Following the seminars, there was a spirited Annual General Meeting, as the AWO continues to grapple with how to increase membership and keep the organization relevant. One of the key topics was how to ensure that there is a well-organized and attended festival every year.

After an excellent buffet dinner, the Festival continued with the 2011 awards ceremony with AWO competition medals and plaques being awarded. The evening finish was the showcase of wines

The Ottawa team is to be commended for pulling together a very enjoyable Festival together on relatively short notice.

## **American Wine Society Conference**

The American Wine Society will be holding their 2011 conference at the Radisson Riverside in Rochester, New York. For those of you who might have been interested in attending an AWS meeting but couldn't justify the travel and expense involved, this is probably the closest it is going to get to us here in Ontario. For more information on the agenda, costs and registration, the brochure is available on the AWS website at [www.americanwinesociety.org](http://www.americanwinesociety.org).

## **WineMaker Magazine Conference 2012**

If you are like me, you have probably looked at the information on previous WineMaker magazine conferences and wished you could rationalize travelling to California to attend one. If so, your problem may be solved as the 2012 WineMaker magazine conference will be held at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York on June 1-2, 2012. Not only will you have the opportunity to take in what sounds like a very interesting winemaking conference but you will be in the heart of the Finger Lakes wine country. More information on this conference will be provided in the December - January issue of WineMaker magazine, so stay tuned.

## **Favourite Wine Tour - Finger Lakes, New York**

In this issue, I'm going to introduce a new feature that I hope will continue in future issues, but it will only happen with your participation. I know that many AWO members plan travel around visiting wine regions or at least make sure that when they are travelling they take in local wineries and wine regions. On that note I'm inviting all of you to send in an article on your favourite wine tour.

Given what seems to be a Finger Lakes theme in this issue, I thought I'd start this with my observations on a recent visit to that area. One thing that struck both my wife and myself was some of the similarities to the Okanagan Valley - not in the wines or vegetation - I didn't see any sage brush in all the time we spent in the Finger Lakes. It was rather in the topography - a number of long narrow lakes surrounded by hills on both sides and most of the vineyards perched on those hillsides overlooking the lakes. As with the Okanagan the scenery is spectacular with many of the wineries we visited boasting gorgeous views.



Where the Finger Lakes differs significantly from the Okanagan is in the wines. The Finger Lakes is much more of a cool climate viticultural area than the Okanagan and it shows in their wines. I found that their whites, especially Rieslings, were much better than their reds. I also found that there were a few interesting grape varieties that we don't see much of in Ontario - one that I particularly like were the late harvest Vignoles that we tasted at a few wineries.



The Finger Lakes area also offers lots of other things to see and do when you get tired of visiting wineries. The gorge at Watkins Glen is spectacular - a great example of what water can do to carve rock if given long enough. There are also a number of different and interesting museums to visit as well: the Glass Museum in Coming has everything you always wanted to know about glass and much more, I particularly enjoyed the glass blowing demonstration where the glass blower produced an elegant wine goblet in about 20 minutes; and for anyone interested in boats, the Antique Boat Museum is a little ways from the Finger Lakes but on the way to the bridge at Gananoque. It has a number of buildings stuffed with a variety of antique craft and motors as well as a restoration shop where the volunteers are more than happy to

bend your ear about their latest project.

## **2012 AWO Festival**

The 2012 AWO Festival is being planned for Peterborough for June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2012. The Friday night is planned as a social evening while the Saturday will be seminars and the awards ceremony. For those of you who plan to take in the WineMaker magazine conference in Ithica, you could take in a tour of the Finger Lakes, with a possible side trip to Prince Edward County, and end up in Peterborough the following Friday for the AWO Festival. What dedicated winemaker could ask for a better holiday? Stay tuned for more information on the 2012 Festival.