



National Capital Sommelier Guild

Newsletter – July 2003

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*And wine can of their wits the wise beguile,
Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile,
The grave in merry measures frisk about,
And many a long-repent'd word bring out.*

Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Alexander Pope

Moderation is a sign of good taste

The National Capital Sommelier Guild strongly supports moderate and responsible consumption of wine and spirits. Guild dinner events allow a designated driver to attend at a reduced price. The designated driver will not be served

alcohol. Guild tasting events provide and encourage the use of spit buckets. As well, at every event, the organizer will arrange a method of safe transportation home for you or your friends, upon request.

Vintages Pre-Release

Thursday, 7 August 2003, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m. (Annual Pizza Night)

Trattoria Caffè Italia, 254 Preston St. (at Gladstone)

Join those who have made this Guild Signature Event a regular feature of their wine life. VPRs provide an opportunity to sample several of the wines to be released by *Vintages* on the following Saturday.

The wines are always tasted blind, allowing the quality of each to shine through without the distortions that often result from knowing the producer's reputation and/or the price range. VPRs give us an opportunity to discover well-made, inexpensive wines, little-known and often ignored quality wines, wines that offer an exceptional price/quality relationship and, to the extent possible, more expensive,

highly-reputed wines that most would not experience otherwise.

Note: On August 7 for only \$5 more, you can sample fine Italian Pizzas after a blind tasting of carefully selected wines from the *Vintages* Catalogue (August 9th release). With the Chelsea Club closed for annual staff holidays we are holding our newest tradition, Pizza night. We will have a chance to socialize, taste great wines and enjoy gourmet Pizza. This may be occasion to introduce a friend to one of the Guild's events.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$30

Summer in the City

Thursday, 14 August 2003, 6:30 p.m. for drinks, 7:00 p.m. for dinner

Bayne-Morrison House, 40 Fuller Street, Ottawa

This year our tribute to the waning days of summer will be held at the historic and elegant Bayne-Morrison House which is the residence of Guild Governor and Ottawa Citizen food columnist **Gay Cook**. Weather permitting, we will dine outdoors on the terrace overlooking the garden. And in keeping with the season, dinner will emphasize the best

fresh fruit & veggies from local markets. Our main course will be a whole poached salmon. A vegetarian option is available if you notify us when you register. Wines suitable for a summer evening will be served with this casual four course dinner. Attendance is limited to forty.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$65

Best Values of the General List II

Monday, 18 August 2003, 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Trattoria Caffè Italia, 254 Preston St. (at Gladstone)

How many times have you been asked to recommend a wine priced below twenty dollars that is always available at the LCBO? Or even better, do you rise to the challenge of finding that exceptional bottle priced below ten dollars?

Join us for an evening designed to discover some of the hidden gems in the LCBO; wines that are well made, ready to drink, attractively priced *and* widely available.

The list of recommendations from LCBO product consultants, Guild Directors and Guild members is growing. Do you have a favourite “best value” wine you would like to recommend? Let us know by sending an e-mail to joe.hatz@sommelierguild.com.

This will be a blind tasting of products from the LCBO General List and Essentials catalogues.

Members and Sponsored Guests: \$20

Guild Business

The Guild Welcomes New Governors

The NCSG is proud to announce the appointment of three new governors. Governors serve as advisors to the Guild, and our new appointees can provide unique expertise in their fields.

Tim Davis' involvement in food and wine spans more than twenty-five years. He led the Eastern Ontario Chapter of the Opimian Society for four years and also organized and led wine tours in North America and France. He is a graduate of Algonquin College's Sommelier Certificate Program and served as a Director of the National Capital Sommelier Guild for six years, including three years as President. Tim currently represents the Guild on the *National Wine Standard Committee* for Canada. During the day, Tim is a Director-General at Statistics Canada where his responsibilities include agriculture, and thus grape statistics.

Daniel Speck is co-owner and one of three brothers who as children planted the Henry of Pelham vineyards. They

founded Henry of Pelham Winery with their parents. Daniel spent his early years (from age 8 on) in the vineyards, completed a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and History of Math and Science, then returned to work on the farm after university. Today he actively promotes and sells the wines, keeping involved in winemaking by helping to define the Henry of Pelham winemaking style.

Cesare Santaguida, along with his brother Domenic, is the co-owner of the Vittoria Trattoria restaurants. They opened their first restaurant in 1992 on Bank Street. Vittoria's first wine list consisted of 13 wine, 6 whites and 7 reds. Customers' requests for new wines encouraged Cesare to expand the list to the point where Vittoria's has won 4 Wine Spectator awards. Cesare is a graduate of the Algonquin College Sommelier Certificate Program and amazingly has no less than 20 graduates on staff.

Credit Card Authorizations

If you have authorized the Guild to charge specific events to your credit card, please inform us of any changes to the status of your card, such as changes in the expiry date, etc. In addition, if your card is overextended, please provide us with an alternate method of payment.

Please send credit card information to **Bruno Fioravanti** at bruno.fioravanti@sommelierguild.com or leave a message on the Guild line (613-237-7911).

Your Ship is Coming In!

Did you order wines from the 'Vins de Vienne' dinner? The wine agent has notified us that you should expect your wine to be delivered by the end of July. At present they are on the Atlantic. The agent will contact you directly to determine the LCBO store you would like to have them delivered to.

Corrections to June 2003 Newsletter

President James Bertrand's phone number was incorrectly transcribed. The correct phone number for James is 613-830-6994. Director Joe Hatz' phone number was also incorrectly transcribed. The correct phone number for Joe is 613-226-0912.

Items of Special Interest to Guild Members

Special Offers to Guild Members!

CA Paradis has been serving Ottawa restaurants and wine lovers for 80 years. Guild member Diane Paradis would like to offer a **10% discount on all regularly priced merchandise** to all Guild members. Next time you're shopping at CA Paradis discreetly identify yourself as a member of the NCSG and enjoy the savings.

Vines magazine is a bi-monthly, up-scale glossy that has a primary focus on the Canadian wine scene. It offers tasting notes and evaluations on easily available wines, articles on wineries and wine makers and feature articles on regional cuisine. The publisher has agreed to accept subscriptions from Guild members at a **50% discount**. This makes the yearly subscription of 6 issues only \$7.50! Order your subscription by writing to: **Vines Magazine, 159 York Street, St. Catharines, ON L2R 6E9**. Simply send them a cheque for \$7.50, include your name and address and let them know you are a member of the National Capital Sommelier Guild. Good wine reading!

An Offer for Collectors of Wine Implements Many Guild members are also collectors. Obviously they collect wines, but many others collect wine paraphernalia: corkscrews, carafes, foil cutters, etc. ... and some even collect antiques. Those who harbour a passion for antique wine accessories might find that rare piece missing from their collection at **Ernest Johnson Antiques**. Ernest is a long time Guild member and informs us that he can show you some fine antique decanters, funnels, spirit tags, wine coasters, and corkscrews. Guild members will benefit from a discount of at least 10% on their purchases. The shop is located at 292 MacKay Street at the corner of Dufferin Road in New Edinburgh. It is open Thursday to Sunday. You can call Ernest at (613) 741-8565 for more information.

Cheese and Wine Complement your discerning taste for wine with the sumptuous taste for gourmet cheese! The **House of Cheese** in the Byward Market specializes in a variety of Canadian cheeses and gourmet cheeses from around the world. **Guild members are offered a 10% discount** from regular priced cheeses. What better way to discover the unique flavours of raw milk cheese or to explore the increasing diversity of Canadian cheeses. Let their experienced staff help you add another dimension to your enjoyment and that of your guests. Open 7 days a week at 34 Byward Market, Ottawa, ON K1N 7A2, tel: (613) 241-4853.

Passing Scene

June VPR *Reported by Keith Hearn*

A Guild VPR tasting offers many advantages. You have the opportunity to scope out new wines ahead of other wine enthusiasts. You do it "blind" which clears away all preconceived notions of price, origin or grape. And last but not least, you have the opportunity to hone tasting skills with an array of different wines. We did all of this on June 5th at the Chelsea Club and had fun to boot.

According to our straw poll, taken after the first flight of white wines, the 2002 Sauvignon Blanc from Australia was the favourite. Second place was evenly divided between the Weingut Dr. Burken-Wolf Riesling and the Stoney Ridge Chardonnay. Globe & Mail wine reviewer Beppi Crosariol

recommended the German Riesling as a wine to cellar and enjoy in future years. The French Colombard didn't garner many votes, but once everyone found out that it only cost \$8.95 many tasters recognized it as a 'good buy' for summer sipping.

The second flight of light red wines included one of the Wines of the Month, a Chianti Classico 2000. By a small margin it was second in our straw poll after the Bogle Vineyards Merlot 2000. The Bogle Merlot is an LCBO 'best buy' and our tasters agreed.

The last flight presented three heavy reds. We started with a 90 year old vines Zinfandel from California with a gorilla

size concentration of flavour. You have to try one of these old vines products at least once to see what a difference it makes to the fruit. Our straw poll was evenly split between the two Zins for second place. The first place winner—and this was something of a ringer—wasn't from the release scheduled for Saturday. It was from my cellar and has been described as the best red wine in Canada. The point was to see if it could stand up in a blind tasting to international heavy hitters and still win respect. Well folks, I am pleased

to tell you that our twenty-five experienced Guild tasters thought that the best red wine of the night was a Mission Hill Oculus 1999. Point made and congratulations to Mission Hill.

The last wine of the night was something new. Have you ever heard of Zinfandel Port? We tried it, liked it, and recommend you buy a bottle. At \$26.95, it is a decent dessert wine.

Domaine des Cassagnoles 2002, J. & G. Baumann, Vign.-Récolt., France	\$8.95	931212
Sauvignon Blanc 2002, Taltarni Vineyards, Pyrenees, Victoria, Australia	\$17.95	713016
Chardonnay 1998, 'Old Vine', Stoney Ridge, VQA Niagara Peninsula	\$18.95	906503
Riesling 2001, Weingut Dr. Bürklin-Wolf, QbA, Bürklin Estate	\$21.95	991315
Merlot 2000, Lakeview Cellars, VQA Niagara Peninsula	\$17.95	518068
Merlot 2000, Bogle Vineyards, California	\$21.60	701466
Pinot Noir 2001, Tamar Ridge Wines, Tasmania	\$24.00	962415
Chianti Classico 2000, Castello di Monsanto, DOCG	\$22.95	977421
Zinfandel 2000, 'Old Vine', Kenwood Vineyards, Lodi	\$21.95	717611
Zinfandel 2000, 'Sonoma Heritage Vines', Ranch Zabaco	\$19.95	434605
'Gumpr's' Block Shiraz 2000, McLaren Vale, South Australia	\$20.95	600122
Oculus 1999, Mission Hill Winery, B.C.	N/A	N/A
Zinfandel 'Port', Montevina, Amador, California	\$26.95	953695

Champagnes, Sparkling Wines and Fine Dining! *Reported by Bruce Clarke*

Lily Bolinger on When To Drink Champagne: "I drink it when I am happy and when I am sad. Sometimes I drink it when I'm alone. When I have company, I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it when I'm not hungry and drink it when I am. Otherwise, I never touch it—unless I'm thirsty."

This event allowed us to do a comparative tasting of several bubblyies and to test matches with some extraordinary dishes by Chef Arup of Geraldo's Restaurant. The fact that we were but fifteen members and guests, made for a great atmosphere with significant discourse between tables.

Martin Carrière's criterion for selecting the wines:

- at least 2 champagnes from France with other selections from Canada, California, and elsewhere in the world (Italy and New Zealand)
- must be premium selections
- must use the methode traditionnelle
- must use classic grapes—Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier
- must have an alcohol level of 12 to 13%

The resulting selections were wonderful.

The reception selection was a '**Rotari Brut**' from Italy, comprised of 90% Chardonnay and 10% Pinot Noir. It was pale coloured with mineral, grapefruit and apple aromas and flavours, with a medium crisp finish. This light bodied sparkler was an excellent value aperitif which contributed the mixing of the participants and stimulation of our taste buds.

The first wine and food flight featured three North American sparkling wines with a superb Honey-glazed Muscovy Duck Breast with Fleur de Sel and Shitake Mushroom Salad, and Cold Smoked Salmon and Caper Mousse Terrine with Arugula, Pea Shoots and Red Onion Vinaigrette, and Taro Chips.

When the wines were tasted on their own, the '**Cuvée Catherine**' by Henry of Pelham was the favourite. It was

creamy, with pleasant citrus and mineral notes. With the food, the '**Grand Reserve Methode Classique**' by Jackson Triggs had a good yeasty citrus bite and seemed better able to complement the rich meats and sauces. Perhaps the '**Cuvee Catherine**' had undergone partial malolactic fermentation—the '**Methode Classique**' had not, giving it more acidity. They otherwise featured similar grape mixes at 70%/65% Chardonnay and 30%/35% Pinot Noir respectively, picked in early September 1999 at 17 to 18 Brix and 12 gm/litre acidity. Both were aged for more than 2 years on the lees (30 and 25 months respectively). The '**Blanc de Noir**' by Domaine Chandon was judged quite different but similarly elegant. This sparkler featured 89% Pinot Noir, 9% Pinot Meunier and 2% Chardonnay and spent 18 months on the lees. One of the bottles of '**Blanc de Noir**' was corked—a first for most participants who felt this was unusual for a sparkling wine. Martin saved the day as he quickly chilled and produced a replacement. This wine had a slight brown tint and a smokey flavour with some red fruit. On its own, its flavour was too different to rank it with the Niagara wines. It was a better match with the salmon dish than the duck, while the Jackson Triggs, with the Pelham a close second, was judged a good match with both dishes.

We all welcomed the wonderful sorbet. It prepared our palates well for the next flight and mouth watering dish.

The second flight featured a '**Pelorus**' from Cloudy Bay Vineyards and a '**Vintage Reserve Brut**' Champagne' Veuve Cliquot. Of interest, Cloudy Bay Vineyards is now owned by Veuve Cliquot Ponsardin. Both wines were full bodied with great citrus and yeasty flavours and a crisp finish. When tried alone, both tables preferred the Veuve Cliquot with its wonderful balance and more intense finish. The food was a wonderful Roasted Veal Tenderloin with Prosciutto, Potato Croquette, and a Green Bean Salad with an Orange Vinaigrette. The veal, which must have been an adolescent,

was served rare. A few participants asked if there wasn't a good red Bordeaux (e.g., Leoville Barton '82) available—no such luck. These full bodied sparklers were a good match though, with each table preferring a different sparkler with the veal.

The desert wine was an '**Champagne Demi-Sec**' Extra Cuvée Reserve by Pol Roger. It had a deep colour, a biscuity, apple nose, and somewhat sweet grapefruit and apple flavours. Although fair on its own, this demi-sec

wants food—and wow—it was great with chef Arup's superb Frozen Lemon Souffle with a Soft Champagne and Citrus Centre, Saffron Syrup and Fresh Berries. Several cooks in the group quizzed the chef at length about how it (and some of the other dishes) were made.

The food was great as was the company. The Champagnes and Sparkling Wines were all considered first class—not a bad wine in the lot. Perhaps Champagne does complement a wide variety of dishes!

'Rotari' Brut NV 'Arte Italiana', DOC Trentino	\$15.95
'Prop. Grand Reserve Methode Classique' 1999, Jackson Triggs, VQA Niagara Peninsula	\$24.95
'Cuvee Catherine Brut' 1999, Henry of Pelham, VQA Niagara Peninsula	\$24.95
'Blanc de Noir', Domaine Chandon, California	\$28.50
'Pelorus' 1998 Sparkling Wine, Cloudy Bay Vineyards, NZ	\$34.60
'Vintage Reserve Brut' 1995, Veuve Cliquot, AC Champagne	\$66.95
'Champagne Demi-Sec' Extra Cuvée Reserve, Pol Roger (375ml)	\$24.95

Reds of the Pacific Northwest *Reported by Mike Cowen*

This was the first Guild event ever that focused exclusively on the wines of Washington and Oregon, and based on members' favourable comments, we had to wonder why it has taken the Guild so long to get around to sampling these fine wines. The first flight was exclusively Pinot Noir, though not only from Oregon. We did throw in a Canadian ringer, the Montague Vineyard from Inniskillin. Though it did not have the ripeness of fruit that was evident in some of the Oregon Pinots, it was a delicious wine in its own right—showing strong Pinot typicity and definitely in the same class as the Oregon editions. The Argyle Reserve and the Willakenzie Estate were the clear crowd favourites. Both displayed that ripe but elegant cherry fruit and silky tannins that wine lovers covet in the "heartbreak" grape. We concluded that Oregon Pinots, while not cheap, offered far better value than your typical Burgundy, especially since Oregon has had three consecutive "90+" vintages according to Wine Spectator magazine.

The second flight consisted of a triad of less expensive Washington reds. The overwhelming crowd favourite was

the Columbia Crest Grand Estates Cabernet Sauvignon, which at \$19.95 was rated as the bargain of the evening. Produced in relatively large volumes, this wine is released every year in the LCBO—watch for it!! In the next flight, it was apparent that you get what you pay for. The L'Ecole No 41 Cabernet Sauvignon blew away the competition, but at \$56.93 it was not a bargain, though fairly priced. The last flight consisted of a quatrain of "heavy hitters". Once again, the most expensive wine was both the favourite and from one of Washington's best wineries—the L'Ecole No 41 Merlot.

We concluded that Washington reds, both at the lower and upper end, offer incredible value, especially when stacked against those overpriced Napa and Sonoma wines. Production in both Washington and Oregon is rapidly increasing, so availability should improve. They have yet to garner the attention that Aussie wines are attracting, so they tend to be available in the LCBO the day after the Vintages releases. Try some—I think you will be pleasantly surprised.

Flight A

Amity Winemakers Reserve Pinot Noir 1992, Willamette	13%	\$29.00
Willakenzie Estate Pinot Noir Aliette 1999, Willamette	13.6%	\$54.00
Evesham Wood Pinot Noir Cuvee J 1999, Willamette	13%	\$45.00
Inniskillin Pinot Noir Montague Vineyard 2000	12.5%	\$30.00
Argyle Pinot Noir Reserve 2000, Willamette Valley	14%	\$56.00
St Innocent Pinot Noir 2000 Seven Springs Vineyard, Willamette	13.9%	\$53.00

Flight B

Chateau Ste Michelle Syrah, Columbia Valley	13.5%	\$19.55
Columbia Crest Grand Estates Merlot 1999, Columbia Valley		\$19.95
Columbia Crest Grand Estates Cab Sauvignon 2000, Columbia Valley		\$19.95

Flight C

Hedges Red Mountain Reserve 1992, Columbia Valley	13%	\$24.70
L'Ecole No 41 Cabernet Sauvignon 1998, Walla Walla Valley		\$56.93
Kiona Cabernet Sauvignon/Merlot 1999, Washington State	13%	\$21.95

Flight D

Seven Hills Cab Sauvignon 1998 Seven Hills Vineyard, Walla Walla Valley	12.5%	\$27.00
L'Ecole No 41 Merlot 2000, Columbia Valley		\$42.65
Hedges Three Vineyards 1998 Columbia Valley	13.5%	\$32.85
Chateau Ste Michelle Cab Sauvignon 1998 Canoe Ridge, Columbia		\$29.00

Wyndham Estate Winemaker Steals the Show! *Reported by Vic Harradine*

A fabulous June 18th event was held at the new location of Vittoria Trattoria on Riverside Drive. If you have not tried this venue for lunch or dinner you will want to soon. Exquisitely presented plates were delivered to each person and the wines matched the succulent flavours and the presentation to perfection.

But we were there for the wine and the wine maker as well and, as it turned out, we were in for some surprises.

Surprise number one: Although most of us had tried the Wyndham Estate Bin 222 Chardonnay, Bin 555 Shiraz, and the Bin 444 Cabernet Sauvignon at some time, we were still surprised at the depth of flavours, tremendous balance and sheer enjoyment these wines produced both on their own and with the cuisine. Readily available wines do not usually illicit such overwhelmingly positive table comments.

Surprise number two: When it came time for **Brett McKinnon**, Wyndham's Chief Winemaker, to speak, we had difficulties hearing him! No, he didn't have laryngitis, the restaurant was packed with other guests who were also enjoying themselves and there was just too much background noise. Our nimble Aussie solved it with what may become a Guild tradition, moving from table to table, engaging each group in animated discussion; the entire affair was settled in a most positive manner. Good on 'ya, Brett!

Surprise number three: Along with the aforementioned wines and Brett McKinnon, the agents for Wyndham, **Pernod Ricard**, treated us to their high end Show Reserve

Chardonnay, Show Reserve Shiraz and Show Reserve Cab Merlot. These were succulent show stoppers that were drinking now and had potential for years of cellaring. We may see these in Classics, don't hesitate to lay down a few for hedonistic enjoyment a few years down the road. The Cab Merlot, especially, had everyone drooling for more!

No more surprises: Well maybe one more. Brett led the group on a merry chase trying to guess the "mystery wine" by playing the Aussie game, 'Options'. We ended with one oenophile still standing after all others had been eliminated and the winner was John Kester. His wife, Guild Director and Cellar Master Lori Davis, remarked, "I taught him everything he knows."

Wyndham Estate is one of those premium Aussie wineries that are leading the way in producing excellent everyday wines that have a touch of class, as well as luscious crowd pleasers that are high end, age worthy and deserve your respect.

Vittoria Trattoria is a must visit destination for anyone seeking a spectacular wine list, wine and cuisine service that is easily a cut above most dining establishments, and cuisine that is prepared and presented in a fine dining style.

National Capital Sommelier Guild has become the leading wine group in Canada by putting on unique, interesting and great value events such as this.

Visa or MasterCard Pre-authorization

Members who wish to make charges against their Visa or MasterCard must complete this *pre-authorization* and mail it to the Guild's address at 99 Fifth Avenue - Suite 130, Ottawa, On K1S 5P5. Visa or MasterCard information will not be accepted by phone or by E-mail. This authorization will remain in effect until the expiry date or rescinded by you.

I authorize the National Capital Sommelier Guild to charge my event registrations and membership to my Visa or MasterCard Number provided below.

Visa Account Number: _____ Expiry Date: Mo. _____ Yr. _____

MasterCard Number: _____ Expiry Date: Mo. _____ Yr. _____

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____