

Vintage's View 9 May 15, 2007

Spring. The grape vines are growing like crazy and the Okanagan Spring Wine Festival saw record numbers and new wines are being released daily. Step up to our bar and sip and sample the changing selection of featured wines at our daily happy hour wine tastings in the lounge. We'd love to hear what you've got to say...

And now that we have your attention, you've probably noticed that all of us at the Executive Hotel Vintage Park have a thing for B.C. wine: we've partnered with many of the province's wineries and named rooms and suites after them; we've hung wine-themed art hither and yon; there's a sweet wine list happening in our lounge and restaurant; B.C. wines are stocked in mini-bars; and in case you hadn't noticed, we offer complimentary early evening/happy hour wine tastings in the lounge. Got a little time to spare? We can arrange wine tours to all of our major wine regions.

Just so you know, we strive to have as much fun with B.C.'s great wines as we can, and that means tasting widely, increasing our partnerships with the wineries, and sharing our finds with our guests. You'll see what we mean and why as we profile some of our partner wineries, their winemakers and best bottles in our wine letters.

Just the Facts

Here's the dirt on B.C. wines and wine country:

- Jesuit missionary Father Charles Pandosy first made wine in B.C. in 1859 in the Okanagan; the first commercial wines were made in the 1920s; and B.C. wines stepped up in 1990 when old varieties of grapes were pulled out and replanted with premium varietals.
- Currently, B.C. has 140 licensed wineries (in 1981 there were just 14 struggling to make a buck) and another 26-or-so in the pipeline. This includes a dozen fruit wineries, cider makers, and sake (rice wine) producers.
- There are 411 grape growers growing 60 grape varietals (48% are white, 52% are red).
- The top whites are chardonnay, pinot gris, and gewürztraminer; top reds include merlot, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon.
- In 2006, 6,632 acres of land were under vine.
- We have five wine regions: the Okanagan

Similkameen
Fraser Valley
Vancouver Island
Gulf Islands

Wine Buys:

Want to take a bottle or two home? Here are a couple of our favourite wine shops, handily within strolling distance.

Marquis Wine Cellars, Vancouver's first wine shop, has a stellar selection of B.C.'s best bottles. Ask for resident B.C. wine guru David...
1034 Davie Street, 604-684-2471,
www.marquis-wines.com

Taylorwood Wines sells only B.C. wines at winery-direct prices. Ask for a taste—there's usually something open.
1185 Mainland Street
604-408-9463
www.taylorwoodwines.com

Spotlight

Wine Region: The Fraser Valley

When Vancouverites want to visit a few wineries, they've merely got to hop in their cars, and in about 40 minutes they're in bucolic farm country, set for an easy loop round five ace wineries within spitting distance of each other. So as not to get looped in the process, most people do spit (very important). Or better yet, bribe a DD (designated driver) with a really good lunch at Domaine de Chaberton Estate Winery's French bistro. Others worthy of a look in and tasting? Award-winning Township 7, the Fort Wine Company (superb fruit wines), Glenugie Winery (this one's organic), and Lotusland Vineyards (The name? Eastern Canada thinks we laid-back West Coasters live in Lotus Land).

Winery: Dirty Laundry

Look too closely at this groovy label and you just might find yourself blushing. The deal? An old fashioned iron puffing out stylized clouds of

steam but look a little closer and you'll see curlicues that just might be fanciful, female torsos. The back label tells a hush, hush tale of a Gold Rush era brothel operating out of the local Chinese laundry...hence the "dirty laundry" moniker. Before you're bewitched by the eye-catching, multi-award winning label, know that there's some fine wine in the bottle. Our current faves? The 2006 Dirty Laundry Vineyards Woo Woo Vines Gewurztraminer and the 2006 Dirty Laundry Vineyards Blush—this one a lip-smacking rosé. Considering the winery was once called Scherzinger Vineyards, we think Dirty Laundry (www.dirtylaundry.ca) is whole lot more fun and way easier to pronounce.

Wine Wiz: Eric Von Krosigk

In 2000, Summerhill Pyramid Winery's sparkling wine the 1991 Gabriel, took one of just five gold medals awarded in France's prestigious *Chardonnay du Monde* competition. Thirty countries entered and of the five golds, four went to French entries, one to this unknown Canadian wine. Gabriel winemaker, Eric von Krosigk, learned winemaking at Geisenheim, Germany's top wine school, apprenticed with a German sparkling wine producer, and returned to the Okanagan where he went on to make the first sparkling wine in the province. As a wine consultant, and one of B.C.'s busiest "flying winemakers," von Krosigk made sparkling wine for nearly everyone of his clients. Today he's come full circle and is back at the helm of Summerhill Pyramid Winery, once again crafting award-winning sparklers.

Top Drops:

Bubble: Cipes Brut NV

If you think that sparkling, organic wine aged in a four-storey concrete replica of an Egyptian pyramid is a bunch of hooey, so did we until we tasted an un-pyramided wine beside one that had seen the insides of "the structure's 'sacred geometry' that enhances everything produced at Summerhill Pyramid Winery". Made using the classic bottle-fermentation "champagne" method, this Cipes Brut sparkler is brightly effervescent, and toasty with crisp, vibrant notes of citrus and apples.

White: A Noble Blend 2006

This choice bottling "inspired by Alsace" and Okanagan husband and wife (Michael Din and Heidi Noble) winemaking team's love of fresh and fruity table whites from the north of France is a heady mix of gewürztraminer, kerner, pinot blanc, ehrenfelser, and riesling. Pale as water, it packs a glorious flavour punch that will leave you with a face-

splitting grin.

Rosé: Joie Rosé 2006

Another from the Joie team, who suggest that we "rethink pink." A no brainer since we adored their first Rosé release last year so much, that we laid in enough to drink all year long. This one's a nifty blend of pinot noir and gamay, and we agree with Dinn and Noble who state, "Well-balanced rosé in its various incarnations is the most versatile wine we know." Amen.

Cool Stuff

There's no one more current or knowledgeable about B.C.'s wineries than Vancouver wine guru, John Schreiner. His just published, revised and updated ***British Columbia Wine Country*** (Whitecap Books) is the *must have* guide to B.C. wineries, all 175 of them, and wine touring. Schreiner offers an up close look at B.C. wineries, and introduces us to the people behind the labels. The book is lavishly illustrated with colour photographs that put you smack into wine country, and face-to-face with winemakers and winery owners. Schreiner, as ever, is on the money with his impeccable timing, exhaustive research, and unerring palate.

Wine Speak

Don't know a fat wine from a thin one? Woody from wooly? Here's where we let you in on some of the lingo that goes along with wine. Drop a few of these babies and you'll sound like a pro.

Barnyard: This one's pretty obvious. It's the smell of farm animals or manure and is generally negative, however many find gentle aromatic hints attractive. Believe me, you'll recognize when it's too much.

What's on?

If you're around or you'll be back soon, put some of these on your calendar:

May 15-31

The Power of Pink

For the month of May, Vancouver's premiere French restaurant is donating \$5 to the BC Breast Cancer Foundation, from every \$75, pink wine-paired, four-course, "Power-of-Pink" meal served.

Le Gavroche
1616 Alberni Street, 604-685-3824

May 19th, 2 p.m.

"Fresh" with John Bishop, A Wine Tasting Event

Here's an opportunity to visit B.C.'s largest liquor store, enjoy a few nibbles, and sample wines from Bishop's (one of Vancouver's finest restaurants) wine list. The nibbles are from restaurateur/chef John Bishop's hot new cookbook, *Fresh*, which focuses on eating what's fresh and local.

39th & Cambie BC Liquor Store

May 25-27, 2007

EAT! Vancouver, The Everything Food + Cooking Festival

Which of course mean plenty of wine, beer, and spirits for sampling, drinking, learning, and paring, together with plenty of entertaining presentations on the Grapes and Hops Stage.

www.eat-vancouver.com

May 28 and 29, 7 p.m.

Cheese & Wine Pairing with Black Hills Estate Wines

les amis du FROMAGE

An evening of fine cheeses and brilliant wine with Vancouver wine scribe and author, John Schreiner (this man knows more about B.C. wines and wineries than anyone on the planet).

1752 West 2nd Avenue

June 2, 2 - 4 p.m.

Book Release, Signing, and Wine Tasting

Don't miss this opportunity to meet Heidi Noble of Joie Wines and Farm Cooking School as she celebrates the launch of her new cookbook, *Menus from an Orchard Table*. Noble will talk about her book's recipes and the wines that inspired them. Taste the latest vintages of Joie's just-released, excellent food-friendly wines.

Marquis Wines, 1034 Davie Street