

## **Vintage's View 8 – May 1, 2007**

This is a great time to be in Vancouver or B.C. for that matter. It's spring and that means it's time for the Okanagan Spring Wine Festival. While it may be too late to get there, we townies can still check out the latest spring releases that are flowing into local wine shops—many have samples to taste—and restaurants that'll be stocking their wine cellars.

As you've probably noticed, 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 spar? 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.

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### **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 varieties.
- 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 varieties (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

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### **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](http://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](http://www.taylorwoodwines.com)

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### **Spotlight**

#### **Wine Region: The Similkameen Valley**

The Similkameen Valley's Wild West history is as colourful as it comes—gold, cowboys, and railway speculation. Today, the gold's all been prospected, the railway built. Ranching, farming and fruit growing and more recently, vineyards rule. The vineyards are planted near the Similkameen River (the Similkameens are a B.C. Indian band) that runs through the valley and enjoys the same bone-dry climate as the Okanagan, which lies to the west. The Similkameen currently has about 200 acres of vineyards and 13 wineries. The valley's poor soils are gravel, stone and silty glacial remnants and hugely grape friendly. Merlot is the most planted grape, followed by chardonnay; others that do well are gamay noir, pinot noir, pinot blanc, cabernet sauvignon, and cabernet franc.

#### **Winery: Herder Winery & Vineyards**

This is one of B.C.'s most unique wineries: Winemaker Lawrence Herder contracts and buys small quantities of premium quality grapes from select growers in the Similkameen and the Okanagan and makes a neat half a dozen wines that range in quantity from 21 cases of the Cabernet Franc to a mere 340 cases of Pinot Gris. Others in the lineup include a red blend, Josephine (184 cases), a white blend called Three Sisters, plus Merlot (22 cases) and Pinot Noir (65 cases). Other occasional bottlings have included Gamay Noir, a Blanc de Noir sparkler, and Gewurztraminer. The winery's labels are a rare treat, each sporting distinctive, magical renderings of female faces. What makes Herder wines so sought after? The expertise of winemaker Lawrence Herder who made wine at B.R. Cohn in Sonoma, Herder Vineyard in Paso Robles, and in B.C. at Jackson-Triggs and Golden Mile Cellars. Best chance of trying these seriously boutique wines? Get on the mailing list at [www.herder.ca](http://www.herder.ca), or try your luck in local wine shops and restos.

### **Wine Wiz: Tom Doughty**

This guy's a little unusual: He's co-owner of a new Vancouver restaurant called Fuel, was named B.C.'s 2006 Sommelier of the Year, and is a huge fan of sparkling wines, Champagne, and German wines. And he's a winemaker. His fledgling winery, Montagu Cellars is on the Naramata Bench in the Okanagan where he commutes to make just two wines—Three Barrel Chardonnay and One Barrel Merlot—in teensy, weensy quantities (so far), one barrel and three barrels exactly. The inaugural vintage—the Montagu Cellars One Barrel Chardonnay 2005 disappeared in a heartbeat, mostly at Fuel. The newly released 2006 Chard is almost gone too. The 2004 Montagu Cellars Three Barrel Merlot has just been released. Production? Seriously limited. It can be had by the glass with a paired appy at Fuel, if you're curious. "Is it any good?" you ask. Yes. Very good.

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### **Top Drops:**

#### **White: Jackson-Triggs SunRock Vineyard Chardonnay 2005**

This buttery chard charmer is packed with citrus, peach and mango flavours with notes of appetising baked apple, peach and spicy vanilla making a pretty attractive quaff that rang a few chimes at the 2007 14<sup>th</sup> Chardonnay du Monde Competition in France where it waltzed off with a gold medal. Scoop this one up quickly – it's \$19.99 at wine shops. Great with lobster, mussels, halibut, and chicken.

### **Red: Golden Mile Cellars Rd. 13 Red 2005**

This tasty blend comes from one of the brightest new wineries in the Okanagan. While the owners and winemaker don't take themselves too seriously, they do their wines. This one roars out of the glass with ripe cherry, berry aromas and gussied up with hints of vanilla and spice. Perfect with grilled chicken.

### **Rosé: Joie Rosé 2006**

This *garagiste* winery does nothing in half measures, which explains why their wines were a hit from the second their first bottle came off the line. The ultra delish Joie Rosé—its label suggests we “Re-Think Pink”—is dry and food-friendly with an intense nose that's all strawberries and black cherries. The winemakers recommend pairing this with “sunshine and anything grilled or salty.”

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### **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.

**Aroma:** Aroma is what a young wine smells like before it has had enough time to develop nuances of smell usually from bottle aging that are then called its *bouquet*. (Translation: a young, unevolved wine's smell is called aroma; sniff an old one and that's bouquet.)

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### **What's on?**

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

May 1, 2007

#### **New Zealand Wine Fair 2007**

New Zealand's sauvignon blancs and pinot noirs rock. Come out and taste these and others among the 120+ wines being poured by 25 of New Zealand's finest wineries.

Fairmont Waterfront Hotel

[www.nzwine-events.ca](http://www.nzwine-events.ca)

May 3-6, 2007

#### **Okanagan Spring Wine Festival**

There's hardly a prettier time to be in the Okanagan than early May when the sun is shining, cherry and apple trees are blossoming, and grape vines budding. The four-day Okanagan Spring Wine Festival

described as "one of Canada's best small festivals" offers over 100 events that mix wine, food, and fun.

[www.owfs.com](http://www.owfs.com)

May 6, 2007 (1 p.m.)

**Cinema Uncorked!**

Artfully indulgent, pairing of fine B.C. wine and food and the film, Saint Ralph.

Vancity Theatre, 1181 Seymour Street

604-983-5373 or [www.firstweekend.ca/email/cs\\_cinemauncorked.html](http://www.firstweekend.ca/email/cs_cinemauncorked.html)

May 16

**Sake Tasting Dinner**

Don't know much about sake? Here's your chance to learn plus enjoy a sake-paired dinner too.

Pacific Institute of Culinary Arts

1505 W.2nd Ave

604-734-4488 or [@picachef.com](http://picachef.com)[www.picachef.com](http://www.picachef.com)

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.

B.C. Place Stadium

[www.eat-vancouver.com](http://www.eat-vancouver.com)

May 28 and 29

**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

604-732-4218 or [lesamis@buycheese.com](mailto:lesamis@buycheese.com)[www.buycheese.com](http://www.buycheese.com)