



British Columbia Wine Appreciation Society Newsletter

November 2011

BCWAS: Discover, Discuss, Experience, and Enjoy

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor's Note

This first issue of the newly resurrected BCWAS newsletter represents a



renewed effort to connect with and unify members outside of BCWAS events, and provide select news and information about BC wine and wineries. It is hoped that the newsletter will allow members to read about BCWAS events, both past and upcoming, as well as developments in the local industry. Issues may include news such as wine reviews, award results, details of new releases, and industry events such as winemaker's dinners. Interviews with members and the many visiting winemakers we host will let us learn more about one

another and what drives our mutual passion. Throughout all this members will be encouraged to provide suggestions for features and content so that we may all tap into the incredible repository of knowledge we hold together!

Although the newsletter is currently provided in a traditional style appropriate for offline reading I anticipate the format and even delivery method to change over time as members provide feedback. A format more friendly to smartphones and tablets will likely take shape as they become the de-facto standard for media consumption. In the meantime please enjoy our newsletter and feel free to contribute ideas and suggestions for improvement so that we can best serve our enthusiastic members!

Russell Ball

BCWAS Newsletter Editor

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Bus Tour Recollections

by Brian Glaum

On a beautiful sunny September afternoon in Osoyoos, intrepid members of the BCWAS began to arrive at the gorgeous [Walnut Beach Resort](#) in Osoyoos. They were there for our annual BCWAS winery tour, which takes us to different areas of the Okanagan valley each year to visit wineries and meet the people behind the wines. This year, we would be exploring the Golden Mile and Black Sage benches on Saturday, followed by a trek to the neighbouring Similkameen valley the following day. We had the biggest group yet, with 47 people!

We kicked things off with an informal get-together Friday evening at the large suite the resort had provided for Kristal and me to host gatherings. Food and wine were in abundance, and everyone had a chance to get to know each other and mingle. I sabered a few bottles of bubbly as a fun demonstration for those who hadn't seen it, and there were several interesting bottles brought by members. Craig and Denise Donnelly brought their three litre jeroboam of 2008 Naramata Meritage, which Denise won at the 2010 Tailgate Party during last

year's tour. Don Weir also brought a magnum of 2007 Vrankenstein, a Cab Franc bottling from [Van Westen](#).

It was nice and sunny on Saturday morning as the group boarded the bus to our first stop, [Cassini Cellars](#), located right on Highway 97 on the Golden Mile. Proprietor Adrian Cassini greeted us in his spacious tasting room with 47 glasses stretched along his long tasting bar, ready for us to sample his wines. We had also arranged for cheese plates to be brought in to make sure that



our day was started in proper decadent fashion: if you're going to start tasting wine at 9 am, why not go all out?

Our next stop was just up the road at [Hester Creek Estate Winery](#), a well established estate winery undergoing a renaissance under new ownership. We toured the vineyards and the winery, having barrel samples in the cellar with

talented winemaker Rob Summers, and enjoying the wines in the tasting room. It was a very enjoyable visit, which was followed by a short walk downhill to their new restaurant, [Terrafina](#), where Chef Jeremy Luypen had created a great lunch to pair with some Hester Creek wines.

Well sated, we crossed the valley to the Black Sage bench and [Church & State Wines](#), where owner Kim Pullen's son John was there to greet us. We proceeded through their modern new facility to the "front yard" and tasted through their portfolio while mingling on the lawn and soaking up an amazing view of the southern Okanagan valley. The Pullens and winemaker Jeff Del Nin are producing some great wines that were well received by the group, judging from the line-up to purchase.

A short trip down the road led us to [Black Hills Estate Winery](#), one of the original "cult" BC wineries. We walked through the vineyards and toured the winery with staff Taryn and Tamara. We then tasted their current releases, including Nota Bene, their signature Bordeaux blend. Sadly, there was none of their rare Carmenere to taste. This is an unusual varietal for the Okanagan, and such a small amount is produced that it doesn't last too long! Those of you who were at our 2010 Black Hills dinner at West will remember that we got to try the 2007 and 2008 Carmenere with one of the courses.

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Meet a Member:

Russell Ball

What's your "day job" and what is your life like when you aren't busy enjoying BC wine?

I work for the Ministry of Children and Family Development as a Program Evaluation Officer, which means I evaluate various youth psychiatric and psychological intervention programs to help ensure they are effective and efficient. My wife and I live in a condo in Vancouver's Fairview neighbourhood, near City Hall. We're both quite busy with work these days but when we have occasion to relax we enjoy spending time with our friends, travel, and cooking tasty vegetarian food.

What was one of the first BC wines you can recall enjoying?

My first two years in BC (after moving from Ontario) were spent in Victoria. I was attending graduate school on a very limited budget but on rare occasions I shared a bottle of wine with my (future) wife when she visited from Vancouver. We usually found ourselves enjoying Hawthorne Mountain (now [See Ya Later Ranch](#)) Gewurztraminer and Riesling. I can still remember those all-green labels!

Have your tastes in wine changed over time, and in what way?

As my palate (and budget) matured I have very much come to favour red wines in general. While a nicely chilled crisp white wine is superb in the Summer we don't seem to see

much Summer weather anymore anyway! I find the fuller texture and lower sugar levels in red wines to be much more to my liking these days.

Describe your personal "cellar":

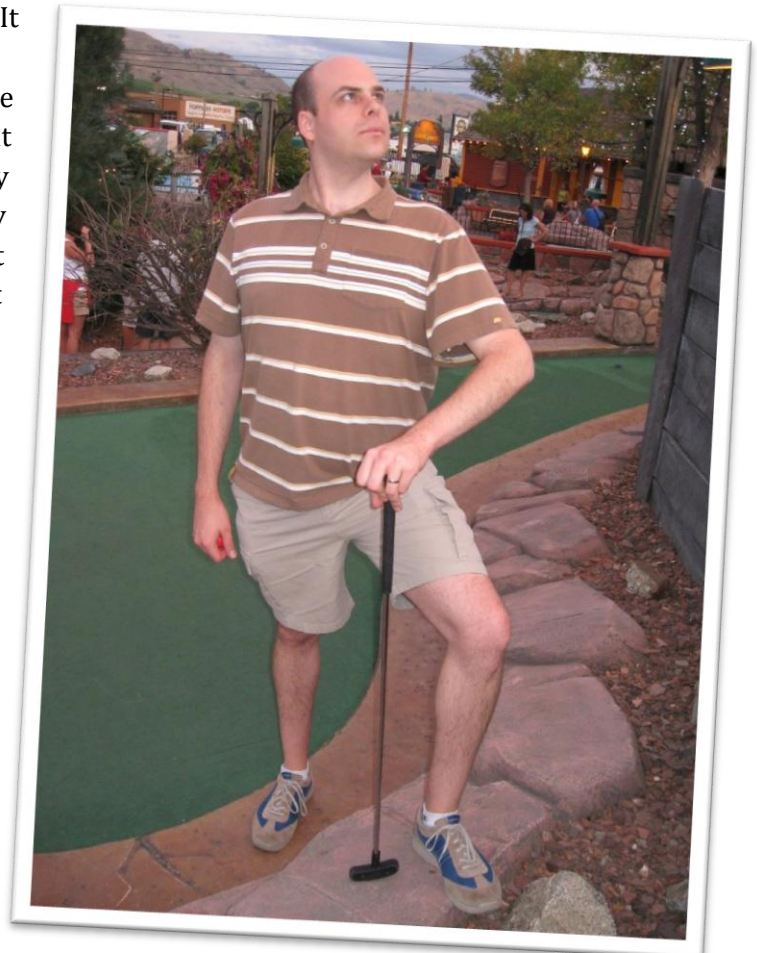
I only started seriously collecting wine last year; it helped that we had recently moved into a much roomier place with somewhere to put it! I collect BC wine almost exclusively, in part to support my friends in the local industry and because buying local is much more environmentally sustainable. I would rather delve deeply into one particular wine region than spread myself thin across the whole globe at this point; maybe one day as my knowledge-base expands so too will my cellar. I currently have about 400 bottles from vintages starting in the mid-2000's, most of it in our bedroom walk-in-closet! It means sacrificing space for clothes but it's relatively cool and totally dark, plus I get to admire it every day when I get dressed!

Right: Relaxing in Osoyoos and enjoying a round of mini-golf, the sport of kings.

What is your current favourite grape variety or wine varietal/blend?

I really enjoy some of the more obscure grapes being tried out in BC lately, some of which are relatively new to BC like Tempranillo, while others, like Malbec, are rarely produced as varietal wines. Wineries that have the moxie to use these grapes usually do a pretty good job with them, like [CedarCreek's](#) Platinum Malbec, or [Moon Curser's](#) Tempranillo (and Tannat); [Stag's Hollow](#) is doing some very exciting stuff with Grenache as well.

Meet a Member will randomly select a BCWAS Member to interview every month!



Harvest Celebration

by Russell Ball

The BCWAS Harvest Celebration took place at the Listel Hotel Friday October 21st, with about forty enthusiastic members and guests in attendance. You would think we wouldn't have trouble with too many wines in the BCWAS cellar, but the time had come to enjoy some of the well-aged gems our society has collected over the past few years. A dozen wines were served alongside the Listel's legendary food, which was provided with great generosity – Executive Chef Chris Whittaker was even spotted putting it all together to ensure perfection. On the menu were the BCWAS favourite Tiger Blue Cheese Puffs, along with Chicken & Bell Pepper Empanadas and Yam & Spinach Pakoras. Heaping platters of grilled vegetable antipasto, marinated bocconcini, and charcuterie were kept stocked, and plenty of Pork Sliders and Wild Mushroom Ravioli were also on hand for pairing with the red wines.

Revellers were encouraged to start the evening tasting [Lake Breeze](#) 2009 Seven Poplars Sauvignon Blanc; rich in grapefruit flavours with a bit of grass; it paired well with the bocconcini due to the presence of fresh basil in the marinade. Two Pinot Gris from [Wild Goose](#) (2008 Mystic River) and [Burrowing Owl](#) (2009) followed, and the peachy

flavours of Wild Goose's version showed nicely against the drier, slightly more mineral characters in the Burrowing Owl. A fourth white in the form of CedarCreek 2008 Ehrenfeller had been planned, but a minor cellar mix-up led to replacement with [Dirty Laundry's](#) 2009 Woo Woo Vines Gewurztraminer: nicely chilled, this sweet and perfumed wine turned out to be the perfect final glass of the evening for some. Before moving on to reds [Jackson Triggs'](#) 2008 Cabernet Franc Rose provided a burst of cranberry cocktail flavours to refresh the palate.



Seven charming and perfectly aged red wines from the BCWAS cellar were next, providing the opportunity for some to taste vintages they had never experienced. Duelling Pinot Noirs

from [Tantalus](#) (2006) and [La Frenz](#) (2005) cried out for the creamy mushroom ravioli, and La Frenz eventually pulled ahead with more body and acidity. [CedarCreek's](#) 2006 Platinum Merlot demonstrated why it deserved a 2009 Lt. Governor's Award by showing off smooth tannins and lots of rich berry flavours. For Shiraz lovers we relied on [La Frenz](#) once again, and were greatly impressed with the 2005 vintage – a few years in the cellar had yielded a beautifully smooth texture to complement the oaky aromas and peppery palate. Next was a 2005 Merlot-Cabernet from recent Bus Tour host [Orofino](#); after years in the cellar it was ready to drink, with ripe fruit flavours still very enjoyable. Our two oldest wines both came from the 2004 vintage, including a Black Sage Vineyard Meritage from [Sumac Ridge](#), and a Grand Reserve Cabernet-Shiraz from [Jackson Triggs](#). Both received mixed reviews from attendees, but the rapidly empty bottles provided abundant evidence that they were more than satisfactory.

There was little left of our stockpile at the end of the evening, as the Listel was happy to let us stick around to empty our frequently refilled glasses. Past-President Tim Ellison was proud to announce that member Leah Wilson won the not-at-all-fixed draw for a signed bottle of [Quinta Ferreira](#) Obra Prima. Let us all hope that current harvest is going as well as our own Harvest Celebration!

November BC Wine Events

Vancouver: November 4th

[Toast to the Coast](#) at the Vancouver Aquarium in support of conservation and education programs. Taste exquisite canapés from leading Ocean Wise Restaurants, sample the best of BC's local wines, enjoy live music from DJ Leanne, and leave with chic items from the silent auction and fashion showcase. Tickets \$85 [online](#).

Port Moody: November 5th

[Fall Festival: The Best of BC Wines Uncorked](#), is a semi-annual wine tasting event that showcases new and current releases from top BC wineries and raises funds for the Port Moody Arts Centre Society. Tickets \$45 [online](#).

Vancouver: November 9th

Join [Tinhorn Creek](#) winemaker Sandra Oldfield at [Le Gavroche](#) for a Winemaker's Dinner featuring the latest releases of the Oldfield Series Wines paired with a 5-course dinner for \$95 inclusive. Call 604-685-3924 to RSVP.

Whistler: November 10-13th

The annual [Cornucopia](#) event features a sumptuous variety of hands-on seminars, fascinating winemaker dinners, gala tasting events and sizzling after-parties. Featured wineries this year include [Burrowing Owl](#), [Hester Creek](#), [Painted Rock](#), [Quails' Gate](#), and [Sumac Ridge](#). Tickets [online](#).

Vancouver: November 16th

Join winemaker Howard Soon at the [Sutton Place Hotel](#) Fleuri Restaurant as he takes you on a tour through the wines of [Sandhill](#). Enjoy a 5-course dinner that will be carefully paired with several Small Lots wines for \$120 inclusive. Call to 604-642-2900 to RSVP.

Vancouver: November 21st

Join Michael Dinn of [JOIEfarm](#) at [Provence Marinaside](#) for an evening of Southern French cuisine with Alsatian and Burgundian inspired wines. Five courses with wine pairings will be served for \$80. Call 604-681-4144 to RSVP.

Vancouver: November 22nd

Experience Similkameen Valley wine at [Salt Tasting Room](#) when you join [Herder Vineyards](#) owners Lawrence & Sharon Herder to pair their spectacular wines with artisan cheeses and cured meats. Tickets \$40 [online](#).

Vancouver: November 24th

Sit down at [Legacy Liquor Store](#) to enjoy [8th Generation](#) wine and a few fantastic Spanish wines expertly paired by Benton Brothers with cheeses from all over the world. A guided tasting with five or six cheeses and selected wines. Tickets \$30 [online](#).

BC Wine New Releases

- ❖ [Burrowing Owl](#) 2009 Athene & 2009 Cabernet Franc
- ❖ [Cassini](#) 2009 Syrah
- ❖ [Church & State](#) 2009 Coyote Bowl Syrah
- ❖ [DiBello](#) 2010 Chardonnay & 2010 Merlot
- ❖ [Herder](#) 2008 Josephine, 2009 Meritage & 2010 Three Sisters
- ❖ [Hester Creek](#) 2008 The Judge & 2010 Character Red
- ❖ [Howling Bluff](#) 2009 Sin Cera
- ❖ [Joie](#) 2009 Reserve Chardonnay & 2009 PTG
- ❖ [LaStella](#) 2008 Allegretto Merlot & 2008 Maestoso Merlot
- ❖ [Laughing Stock](#) 2009 Portfolio
- ❖ [Le Vieux Pin](#) 2008 Equinoxe Cabernet Franc & 2008 Equinoxe Syrah
- ❖ [Mission Hill](#) 2008 Compendium, 2008 Quatrain, 2009 Perpetua
- ❖ [Nichol](#) 2009 Syrah
- ❖ [Nk'Mip](#) 2008 Qwam Qwmt Merlot & 2008 Qwam Qwmt Syrah
- ❖ [Osoyoos Larose](#) 2008 Petales d'Osoyoos & 2008 Le Grand Vin
- ❖ [Painted Rock](#) 2009 Red Icon, 2009 Merlot, & 2010 Chardonnay
- ❖ [Poplar Grove](#) 2007 The Legacy, 2008 Cabernet Franc, & 2008 Merlot
- ❖ [Stag's Hollow](#) 2009 Renaissance Merlot
- ❖ [Tinhorn Creek](#) 2008 Oldfield Series Merlot, 2008 Oldfield Series Syrah, & 2008 Oldfield Series 2Bench Red

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Following a return to the resort we quickly changed clothes for our trip to [Tinhorn Creek Vineyards](#) and their new restaurant, [Miradoro](#). Owners Kenn and Sandra Oldfield were waiting to greet us and lead us to the barrel cellar, where we sampled some of their wines including the 2010 Pinot Gris with couscous stuffed squid as an appetizer. We also had a chance to enjoy a barrel tasting of the 2009 Syrah, before we walked over to the restaurant. With a commanding view of the valley all the way to Osoyoos and beyond, Miradoro delivers a great dining experience. Kristal and I can speak from experience, as this was our ninth visit! Chef Jeff Van Geest and crew did not disappoint on this occasion either, serving up four more delicious courses paired with Tinhorn Creek's lovely wines.

Feeling no pain the next morning, everyone boarded the bus in good spirits and light jackets for our trip west over Richter Pass into the Similkameen valley. Our first stop was [Robin Ridge Winery](#), where owners Tim and Caroline Cottrill greeted us. What had started out as a rather grey day was improving quickly as we tasted their wines in front of their small boutique winery set amongst the vineyards. Tim explained that he uses the Geneva Double Curtain trellising system in his vineyard, which he feels is better suited to the soil and prevailing conditions at his site.

On we went to [Herder Winery & Vineyards](#), where Lawrence and Sharon Herder welcomed us to their new winery on Upper Bench Road.



We split into groups for touring and barrel tasting with Lawrence and a wine tasting with Sharon. Lawrence is known as one of the top BC winemakers, and the results were there to be tasted. There was also a challenging chipping green that many of us tried our luck at, with varying degrees of success. A fairly good tailwind and a green well below the tee and only 100 yards away made it a hard shot to keep on the putting surface!

Next on the agenda was [Orofino Vineyards](#), for a visit with owners John and Virginia Weber, who have a unique straw-bale

winery. John explained that the straw-bale walls are covered in stucco and work as an excellent insulator, keeping the building warm in the winter and cool during their very hot summers. We then had a chance to taste some amazing wines in the barrel cellar before a delicious lunch catered by [Joy Road Catering](#). Partners Cam and Dana have cooked for us three years in a row, and also run the [Penticton Farmer's Market](#); they are about as plugged in to local produce as is humanly possible. We all sat at a long table set up on the property and enjoyed an excellent lunch by Cam, including an Alsatian tart cooked in Orofino's own wood oven!



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The first stop after lunch was [Seven Stones Winery](#), where owners George and Vivianne Hanson took us down to the barrel cellar and tasted through all of their current releases. Those of you who were at the four-society “Olympic Wine Challenge” event in January 2010 will remember that it was the Seven Stones 2007 Meritage that captured the Bronze Medal against tough international competition. Winemaker George is still keeping up the good work, as was indicated by the amount of wine that went out the door and into the bus.

While at Seven Stones, we noticed smoke from a nearby forest fire to the east, towards our next stop. We arrived at [Forbidden Fruit Winery](#) to find that the fire was on the other side of the highway but still close enough to make owners Steve Venables and Kim Brind’Amour slightly nervous. Smoky aromas notwithstanding, we had a delightful tasting of their fruit wines, all made from their own organic fruit, and accompanied by platters of said fruit for our members to sample. They have a lovely location beside the Similkameen River and I am happy to report that they were unaffected by the fire.

There was no better way to finish the tour than to have another get-together at our suite. Members Marian Waymark and Gloria

Chang both tried their hand at sabering some bubbly to get the evening started and we cooked up some burgers to go with a table full of appetizers. More wine was forthcoming, and we had a chance to taste the jereboam after it had been open for two days; it was big enough that I think it improved!

After what many have told us was our “best tour so far” we are already thinking up ideas to make next year’s even better! Several options were discussed with the group, including the Kelowna area, Vancouver Island, and Naramata bench, but the majority vote ended up being Oliver & Okanagan Falls. The 2012 tour will be held Sept 8-9, and we will stay at Walnut Beach again. Stay tuned!



BCWAS Newsletter
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Editor: Russell Ball
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Photo Credits:

Newsletter Header –
Catherine Rawn

Bus Tour –
Bob Halifax

Next BCWAS Event:

Guest: Bill Eggert

Fairview Cellars

7-year vertical (2003-2009)
tasting of The Bear
Meritage, plus component
tasting from 2008 vintage

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

7:30pm – 9:30pm

Listel Hotel, Robson Street

\$45 members / \$60 guests

Appetizer plate included

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