

Volume 1
Issue 6

BC Wine Club News

A Drink to Your Health

Feature Winery



Chalet Estate Winery

Inside this issue:

A Drink to Your Health	1
Chalet Estate Winery	2
- Connoisseur Profile	3
- Decanting - How to and Tips	
- Food Pairings	4
- This Month's Wine	

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It would seem the whole world has woken up to the realization, going green is not just a matter of choice, it is a mandate, a necessity should we, as a collective, wish for this earth to continue its eminently giving ways.

Canadians have been quick to embrace this eco-conscious mantra. Where once going green was something less than fashionable, the view now sees these same people as intelligent, even stylish. (The same words we often use to describe club members!)

And trust us, the world of wine stood up and paid notice. But for them, instead of looking forward, they could actually look back - back to the more traditional ways of winemaking. After all, winemaking is a historical discipline, pre-dating the Industrial Revolution by at least a millennium. Things like employing gravity racking, cold stabilization or using non-chemical or synthetic pesticides are old world winemaking practices finding a strong foothold in many of today's wineries.

This month we are featuring an exceptional winery whose terroir-friendly practices and their resulting award winning wines made us stand up and take notice.

Chalet Estate Winery's organic wines, proved to us (and to the Canadian and Northwest wine industry in blind tasting competitions) that exceptional wine with

health in mind exists.

So what exactly is organic wine. There are actually two classifications here. Many wines are made using organic grapes but the process by which the craftsman finishes is not completely commercial additive free.

Wine processed by organic means, using organic grapes, and usually without added sulfites, is generally what one would term a true organic wine.

You might argue that sulfites are organic in nature and occur as a by-product of the fermentation process (in the form of sodium dioxide) anyway. So how can adding additional sulfites be detrimental? Just ask someone who is allergic to them. Sulfites in naturally occurring amounts are largely manageable and offer few repercussions. However, in larger amounts, sulfites can be extreme histamines and those most vulnerable should certainly steer clear. Some smaller wineries offer wines that are completely sulfite free because they add a natural yeast compound that literally eats the sulfur dioxide. These wines tend to be less stable and therefore should be consumed young.

There are many reasons to indulge in a fine organic wine, the best of which is to support earth friendly industries and their practices. So this month we offer our members a wonderful drink - a toast to health and well-being!



Multi-Award Winning Organic Wines

Dennis Coates - This month's profiled Connoisseur, page 3

Chalet Estate Winery

Personality in Every Bottle

Discovering the likes of **Michael Betts** and **Linda Plimley** of Chalet Estate Winery was an amazing stroke of fortune. When researching award winners from the 2006 Northwest Wine Summit and the All Canadian Championships, Chalet's name came up repeatedly. Who were they and would they be of interest to our membership? The answer was, quite simply, Yes... absolutely Yes!

What we found was a small family operated farmgate winery, the first on the Saanich peninsula, and located just across the road from the famous Deep Cove Chalet restaurant. The vineyard had been planted in 1998 on their own property after, as Michael jokingly puts it, he "got tired of mowing the grass.". We then found out something most surprising - these award winning wines were **Organic!** We had been asked several times if we would feature organic wines but knew we could only do so if they were of superior quality. Chalet fit that bill beautifully.

Another beautiful thing about this winery is the engaging owners themselves. Friendly, affable, and so very dedicated to their craft - their exuberance is contagious!



Its All in the Details



Chalet uses their own grapes for their white wines and, understanding warmth to be essential for red varietals, they source the finest grapes from the Okanagan for their darker wines. Regardless, all grapes are grown pesticide free. As for Chalet's vines, Betts employs an aggressive pruning regimen, limiting the yield, but increasing the flavour intensity of these grapes. Grapes are hand picked and crafted, and the resulting wines are unfiltered (Betts knows fine-pored filtering can often strip a wine of some of its best flavour). When you look at these wines they are certainly not cloudy. This is largely due to the superiority of the grapes, coupled with the cold stabilization process Chalet uses to clarify their wine.

But, by far, what most people find exciting is the fact each and every bottle of the 2500 cases Chalet produces each year is guaranteed to be free of added sulfites, and processed organically!

Straight A's

Michael Betts is one smart man! An Englishman, former boat builder and designer of experimental aircraft, this gent knew he would have to learn from the best if his dream of creating a superior winery was to come to fruition. He made an excellent move by hiring the late Frank Supernak, one of the finest Winemasters in BC, to train him for this passionate quest. He wryly admits, though, once he got into it "the learning curve became very intense," (something to be expected if you plan to play with the vine in BC!).



The constant student, Betts can often be found sampling vintages from other wineries to gain a reference. "Training my palate to look for unexpected nuances and different approaches allows me to be a better judge of what we're accomplishing," he says. If Chalet's awards are anything to go by, then it is obvious Betts is one straight A student!

Connoisseur Profile - Dennis P. Coates Q.C.

It would appear becoming a BC wine connoisseur was inevitable for Dennis Coates - perhaps even a birthright! Coates' mother was born in Naramata and raised at, or near, the present day Poplar Grove Winery. He, himself was raised in Osoyoos and now lives in Kamloops where he has practiced law for the past 35 years. You might say he is genetically and geographically predisposed to understanding fine BC wine.

A Partner of the firm Mair Jensen Blair LLP, this Queens Council appointee is a self described fan and champion of the BC wine industry. In fact, decades ago Coates acted for the Inkameep Indian band when the first vineyard was established and planted north of Oliver in conjunction with Andres Wines. In doing so, he helped guide and shape the BC wine industry in its infancy, laying the groundwork for notable wineries such as Nk'Mip Cellars.



This interesting and multi-faceted man also operated a LRS (Licensee Retail Store) in Kamloops for many years called Duffy's. Ever the connoisseur, Coates ensured the finest selection of BC VQA wines were always at hand. Perhaps included amongst those would be selections from his favorite wineries, Tinhorn Creek and, of course, Poplar Grove.

A long term member of the BC Wine Club, Dennis has been a wonderful proponent of ours. He has even made it somewhat of a family affair with son Darren and daughter Lynda now joining us! The Club is thrilled to count this fascinating connoisseur amongst our highly impressive fold and thank him for his compliments and numerous referrals.

How an Expert Decants

At this year's Vancouver International Wine Festival, a discussion arose about the proper method for decanting and **Connoisseur Richard Finn** referred us to an article he had previously written on the subject for our membership. With this month's **unfiltered wines** from **Chalet**, and with so many of you being new to the club, we felt it would be the perfect time to offer an excerpt from this hugely informative article

Richard's Method

1. A couple of days before you plan to open the bottle, stand it upright.
2. Come serving day, assemble what you'll need: a wide-mouthed decanter or elegant pitcher, a candle, and a cork screw.
3. Carefully remove the foil capsule, shaking the bottle as little as possible.
4. Uncork the bottle.
5. Light the candle.
6. Hold the bottle so you can see the candle flame through the bottle's shoulder, where it flares out under the neck.
7. Tilt the bottle, and gently pour the wine into the decanter. You want a thin, steady stream with no gurgling.
8. Watch the flame through the wine in the bottle as you pour.
9. If there is sediment, you will see it as a thin dark stream moving up the inside of the bottle
10. Continue pouring slowly and steadily until the sediment climbs into the neck of the bottle and then stop.

Tips: 1- Slow and steady is the key. With practice you'll be able to pour all but the last half-inch of wine before the sediment reaches the mouth of the bottle.

2 - Be careful not to hold the bottle directly over the candle flame, or soot will blacken it and you won't see the sediment.

Portobello Mushroom à la Wellington

Here's a recipe long on looks and taste - service for two with Chalet's Pinot Grigio!

Topping

- 1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 shallot minced
- 2 sm. leeks, finely minced
- 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 3 button mushrooms, finely chopped
- 3-4 sprigs fresh thyme
- 5 shiitake mushrooms, finely chopped
- 1 sm. red onion, finely minced

Main

- 2 lg. portobello mushrooms
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 sheet phyllo pastry
- One pack goat cheese

Topping - Heat 1 tbsp oil in skillet over low heat. Stir in the shallot, leek, red onion and garlic and cook about 5 min. Add button mushrooms and 1/2 the thyme. Cook another 10 min. (or until water from mushroom evaporates). Transfer mixture to a bowl. Add remaining oil to skillet, still over low heat, and add the shiitakes. Cook 5 min., then transfer to the bowl with the rest of the mixture. Add chives and black pepper and stir.

Scrape off the inside of the Portobello mushrooms, then place the caps on a greased cookie sheet. (lightly brush mushroom with olive oil). Brush the inside of the cap with mustard. Take your topping mixture and spoon half into each cap. Sprinkle with goat cheese on top of mixture. Cut two large rounds out of the phyllo sheet and drape over the mushrooms. Brush some melted butter on the outside of the pastry. Bake at 425°F until pastry looks done (@ 15min.- but watch carefully)

**Serve with wild mushroom risotto
and spinach salad**

Note: This dish can also be made completely vegan - contact us for details.

Food Pairings

BC Salmon with Roma Tomato, Black Bean & Mango Salad

Chalet's Syrah pairs beautifully with this West Coast specialty - great BBQ'd or oven grilled!

4 healthy-portioned BC salmon steaks to be refrigerator marinated 2-3 hours before grilling

Marinade

- 1 med. Purple onion - sliced
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. rice wine vinegar
- 2 tbsp. sunflower oil
- 1 tbsp. sesame oil
- 3 tbsp. chopped green onion or shallots
- 1 clove garlic chopped

Salad

- 1-15oz can black beans drained, rinsed
- 1/3 lb. ripe Roma tomatoes, small diced
- 1 ripe medium yellow mango, small diced
- 1/2 cup small diced purple onion
- 1/3 cup fresh lime juice
- 1/3 cup plus 2 tbsp. canola oil
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- Freshly ground black pepper

In a med. bowl, combine the beans, tomatoes, mango, onion, lime juice, 1/3 c. oil, cilantro and some pepper; toss gently. Let the salad sit at room temp. while you cook the fish.

If broiling salmon, lightly oil broiler pan and place skin side up in oven 5-6 inches from heat.

If barbequing, lightly brush olive oil on skin side and place skin side down on a grill preheated to a medium heat.

Cook salmon 'til it changes color and flakes. Transfer fish to platter, spoon 1/2 of the salad on top and remainder on the side.

Coastal Cuisine at its Best!

Chalet's Award Winning Selections

Feature Red - 2004 Chalet Syrah is a **Silver** medal winner at the **2006 Northwest Wine Competition**

Feature White - 2005 Chalet Pinot Grigio - this selection is so **hot** its not even May and this one's all but sold out - the BC Wine Club grabbed the remaining cases just for you (our apologies to non-members!!)

Companion Red - 2004 Chalet Cabernet/Merlot - another wine, another award - **Silver** 2006 Northwest Wine Summit