

# BC WINE CLUB NEWS

## BEGUILING

If you were in search of a great new wine, and came across this label (see below), would it entice you? If yes, then you would be fortunate as Salt Spring's wines do indeed live up to their presentation. Unfortunately, many others, as we can personally attest, do not.

So, other than the label, what else can guide you in making a better choice? Looking for the Vintners Quality Alliance designation is certainly one way to weed out some of the better wines from the glut - but it can be limiting; The VQA program is an optional one and some of the

## Feature Winery

SALT SPRING VINEYARDS



As much as we'd like to think we're immune to advertising, we are often truly beguiled by a catchy design or unique moniker. This may be especially true for wine given the many factors that come into play in the choosing of it; color, varietal, look, eco-friendliness, and region to name just a few.

To further prove how we can be influenced by a wine's presentation, note the following scientific study: Various patrons at a restaurant were offered a free glass of wine. Each was presented with exactly the same wine but some groups were told the wine was from California, others were told it came from North Dakota. To no one's surprise, the California labeled wine received a far better approval rating. What was surprising was the food served with the faux California wine was also ranked much higher: proving just how effective & far reaching branding can be.

best small wineries choose not to submit their wines for adjudication.

The BC government, in an attempt to further ensure a certain level of quality is upheld by all wineries in BC, recently legislated changes to the province's Wine Act and formed the BC Wine Authority. This new department states all wine produced for sale in BC must meet the minimum standards set out by its *Wines of Marked Quality Regulations*. Knowing this may then help in your decision to perhaps choose a BC regional wine over others.

Ultimately the final decision is yours, so keep in mind what a multi-millionaire recently told me; "Branding is essential, but you sure as hell better have quality to back it up or your days in the sun are numbered." With that sage advice in mind we offer up this month's pre-tested, quality-conscious wines.

### Inside this issue:

Beguiling	1
Salt Spring Vineyards	2
- The Effect of Cellaring	3
- This Months Selections	
- Food Pairings	4
- Upcoming Feature Column	

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The BC Wine Club Captures  
The Award Winning Spirit of Salt Spring Island

# Salt Spring Vineyards

## More Than a Vineyard - It's a Way of Life

You may call her Gaia, Tellus, or even Ceres, but at Salt Spring Vineyards she is known as Eartha. She is the goddess of the Earth and she appears on Salt Spring's award winning wine label. She, (as well as a local environmentalist that personifies the caricature) represents the winery's mindset; that we are all stewards of the Earth, and nurture, as opposed to intervention will see her offer up a bountiful harvest.

Winery owners Bill & Jan Harkley's investment in non-invasive, sustainable practices appears to have appeased Eartha to no end with recent harvests being plentiful and rich. When Bill, a former commercial pilot, and Jan, a chartered accountant from Calgary, originally planted their vineyard high atop the Fulford Valley in 2000, they were hopeful Mother Nature would be kind to their careful planning. Designating this area of Salt Spring Island, chosen for its sun angles, slope for drainage, and soil proved very fruitful. But this was not happenstance - Bill & Jan were educated through programs at the University of California, Davis to look for and plan for such things. What they didn't put much forethought into, as Jan says "was the availability of water, which on an island is crucial." Thankfully though, Jan is happy to report, they have an ample supply!



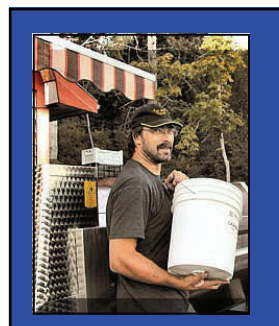
The winery, complete with its own Bed & Breakfast, is not the couples first foray into the world of hospitality. Back in 1991, they started River Run Cottages, a lovely B&B on the Fraser River in Ladner. That, and their Salt Spring venture, have allowed Jan to indulge her passion for all things tourist related. As for Bill, in addition to handling many winery duties, he continues to train Air Canada pilots on 767's, though he still manages to indulge his zeal for boating - a passion he shares with Jan.

## She sure knows how to give a compliment!

As all true wine lovers know, wine offers up so much more if served with the perfect pairing. Colleen Bowen, a native South African, is ceaseless when it comes to ensuring every Salt Spring vintage receives its just dessert... or main, or appetizer! When she presents a pairing, she has personally tried, tested, and retested it to ensure the duo is completely complimentary. So, if you should find yourself fortunate enough to visit the winery and sample Colleen's offerings, prepare your palate for a truly fantastic feast that highlights all that is great about Salt Spring Island!



## Natural Instinct



Paul Troop is one of those rare individuals who is naturally gifted at winemaking. This 52 year old has been making wine since he was 15 years old (unbeknownst to his mother!), but has only been crafting it commercially for the past 5 years. The Harkleys originally planning to hire Jeff Martin (of La Frenz) or one of his assistants as their primary winemaker but, as Jan puts it, "...Paul kept showing up with great bottles of wine he had made, and we took a chance that he could continue to do so." Now with several award winning vintages to his name he has proven their faith justified. Even still, Paul continues to educate himself on the best ways to showcase the amazing aspects of coastal fruit.

## A Connoisseur's Look at How Cellaring Affects Wine

Here's an excellent article that the Club featured back in '05 on cellaring potential. We thought this would provide a great number of our new members with better insight into how best to enjoy our selections.

### Semillon or Riesling: One year old

Very pale green yellow, perhaps with faint straw tinges and at times almost tending to gray aspect, yet always brilliantly clear. There will be little difference between the hue in the middle and the edge, although the density will be much less on the rim. The slightest pink or brown tinges indicate oxidization has been at work and passes an immediate death sentence on the wine

### Semillon or Riesling: Ten years old

Glowing, almost incandescent, yellow at its best, still with green tinges, but at times a vibrant buttercup.

### Chardonnay: One or two years old

Light to medium-full yellow, hopefully with touches of green, grading in depth from the rim to the center. Pink, brown, orange or gray tones, no matter how faint are indications of problems, usually oxidization but occasionally from poor oak. The darker the colour, the shorter the likely cellaring future, as the wine has probably been given extended skin contact during fermentation. This process provides added flavor and texture to young wines but leads to coarseness in the medium term.

### Chardonnay: Five years old

Medium to deep buttercup yellow. The lighter the colour the more promising the future particularly if there is a little green tinge remaining. Whether medium or dark colors there should be luminosity. Orange or brown aspects are surer indications that the wine has turned.

### Pinot Noir: One or two years old

The colour will never be deep or dark, if it is then suspect the addition of other varieties. The hue should be purple/red, with the former rather than the later dominant, with a noticeable progression from rim to center. The wine should be brilliantly clear. Any black or blueish tinge indicates a higher pH level, which leads to premature aging.

### Pinot Noir: Five years old

The colour will have shifted to brick/brown hues that can best be described as onion-skin tones. The depth of colour will be far less than is usually found in red wines, yet it will be clear and bright. Pinot Noir can turn quite brown, red hues excluded, and tend to be quite unpleasant at this age.

### Shiraz & Cabernet Sauvignon: Two years old

At this early age the difference in colour between these two wines are almost indistinguishable. Any differences may be more due to regional influences rather than varietal. The colour will be deep purple/red and grading to crimson on the rim. If the hue strays towards blue or black then this would indicate a high pH level which will cause the wine to age more quickly and without grace.

### Shiraz & Cabernet Sauvignon: Ten years old

The depth will have lightened perceptibly, meaning that the gradation of colour from center to rim colour will be far less profound. Purple will have given away to red and the rim colour will be more of a brick red colour. There may be a fair amount of deposit in the bottle, which will lend itself to decanting. The deposit is a sign of quality rather than otherwise. As the wines progress in age the colour will lighten considerably and all the purple hues will disappear to be replaced by a brick red center and tawny brown on the rim. The deposits will continue and great care must be observed when preparing the bottle for and the decanting process.

## This Month's Selections

**Feature White - 2006 Aromata** is a Silver award winner in the 2007 All Canadian Wine Championships. The Globe & Mail says "very impressive"

**Feature Red - 2006 Millotage** - This wine shows so much promise - the '05 vintage won a Bronze at the '07 All Canadian Wine Championships

**Companion Red - 2006 Leon Millot** - Educate your palate with this wonderful wine

**Specialty Wine - 2006 Blackberry Port (available online only)** - A fantastic & unique gift!



### Limed Chicken Tacos

**A traditional Mexican meal with a Cajun twist compliments Salt Spring's Aromata**

- 6 free range boneless, skinless chicken thighs, diced
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 3 tsp. Cajun spice seasoning
- 3 Tbsp lemon & garlic salad dressing (Wellness brand offers an excellent one)
- 1 tsp lime juice
- 1 cup basmati rice
- 1/2 a red pepper, diced
- 1/2 cup sweet corn niblets
- 1/2 tbsp seasoned pepper
- 1 can refried beans (pinto or black bean)
- 12 corn (or flour) tortillas
- 6 - 8 lime wedges
- salsa and/or sour cream

Cook basmati rice according to directions. Set aside. In large skillet, melt butter, add chicken, Cajun spice, salad dressing and lime juice. Cook chicken 'til firm and well coated with other ingredients. Place in separate bowl (keep warm) while leaving remaining sauce in skillet. Place cooked basmati rice, red pepper and corn in skillet, sprinkle with seasoned pepper and coat with remaining pan sauce. Set aside in separate bowl and keep warm. Heat beans and place in bowl. Warm tortillas according to pkg. directions. Place beans, tortillas, chicken, rice mixture, limes, salsa & sour cream on table so guests may create their own meal.

**Serve with a fresh spring green salad, lemon garlic and roasted sunflower seeds.**

### Creamy Pork and Artichoke Rotini

**This dish has just the right amount of character to match Salt Spring's Millotage**

- 1/2 c. low sodium chicken broth
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 3 cloves garlic crushed
- 1 large pork tenderloin, cooked, and sliced
- 2 c. sliced mushrooms
- 1/4 c. sliced mushrooms
- 1/4 c. sun-dried tomatoes in oil, cut in half
- 1- 6.5 oz. jar of artichokes
- 1 can cream of mushroom & garlic soup
- 1/4 c. half & half cream (10%)
- 2 tbsp. port wine
- 1 tsp. each basil, tarragon, pepper medley & turmeric
- 1 bag rotini noodles
- Grated parmesan cheese (optional)

First sprinkle tenderloin with steak spice and bake at 350°F for 15-17 min. Slice into 1/2" slices when done. Set aside. Next, in a large skillet put broth, mustard, garlic, onion. When onions are cooked add mushrooms. Cook for 3-5 min. longer. Add remaining ingredients, excluding sliced tenderloin and simmer on low heat for 20 minutes. Cook pasta according to directions, drain and pour skillet mixture over pasta, stirring mixture throughout. Place sliced tenderloin artfully over pasta. Sprinkle with parmesan & fresh parsley if desired.

**Serve on organic baby green salad with a raspberry-honey vinaigrette dressing.**

FOOD PAIRINGS

Starting next month, look for our new Food & Wine column  
Featuring Expert Chef Lee McNish