

Volume 1
Issue 9

Feature Winery



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BC WINE CLUB NEWS

Tastes great, but what's in it?

In the early '80's, diet drinks were in and Aspartame was the new thing - a great new additive; it tasted like sugar and it didn't have the nasty side effects of its predecessor, saccharine. At the time, I lived in California and was drawn in by the slick American marketing machine and, even though I didn't like the taste, I drank it like water. Back then, a friend said she experienced headaches every time she had something with Aspartame - I thought it was (not so literally) all in her head. Years later, I find out Aspartame was too good to be true and did indeed carry some baggage.

Now, here we are in 2007, soda pop is out, but wine is HOT. So, leave it to those who cut corners to use science, not craftsmanship, to capitalize on the trend. Enter genetically engineered wine additives - flavour boosters if you will.



Now, we're not talking about what you might find at one of those do-it-yourself wine-making outfits. These are highly advanced chemicals scientists have developed to illicit one's taste buds to sense, for example, "fruity, floral, vanilla-like odor and taste" (4-methoxybenzyl). Now, I'm all for advancement, especially when it comes to wine, but shouldn't I be told if something I think came from ripe, wonderful grapes and careful aging in a French, Eastern European or American oak barrel was actually created in a laboratory in La Jolla, California?!?

Truth be known, many of the larger wine companies throughout the world are turning to such additives so their youthful blends can mimic what master wine craftsmen take years to create. As well, given the small amounts needed to create the effect, these companies don't have to list their presence. So, do you really know what you're drinking?



Pentâgé uses the real McCoy

This brings me to one of the best parts of dealing with smaller estate or boutique wineries - my partners and I get to find out what's actually in the wine being offered...first hand! We get to see where the wine was created, and in what! We talk to the craftsman about their creations and find many go on like doting parents. So when we sit down to write about these wineries and their wares, we can personally vouch for their integrity. No smoke and mirrors, just great wine. Now some of the vintages may not be your favorite but let us assure you, the taste is honest and true. Years from now you won't be questioning what we sent you to drink back in 2007 - our wines, like those from Pentâgé, won't put you over a barrel, or fake one either for that matter.

PENTÂGÉ Winery

Setting the New Standard

PENTÂGE Winery

A Joint Venture

A few months back, in talking with Pentâge's founder Paul Gardner, one never would have known he and Julie Rennie, his ever capable other half, were holding court over one of the hottest wineries in BC. No doubt now, with a treasure trove of medals awarded to their recent vintages, and top wine critics singing their praises, it might just be sinking in.

Paul & Julie's goal, when they purchased this picturesque land on Skaha Lake back in '96, was to be somewhere, at the same time, doing something....together (which was infrequent as Paul was a marine engineer). Julie had a head for business and all things monetary, and in today's wineries that truly is half the battle. Paul, on the other hand, had a passion for all things wine, including the crafting of it, and this land represented endless possibilities to indulge that obsession!

Painstakingly, they planted and tended to the vines. Ever so wise, they kept the plantings small but varied, and the grapes responded well to the personalized attention. Then, in 1999 they offered up their first small lot vintages and it was clear, Paul's passion had paid off! Julie's job of ensuring the dream prove solvent was made that much easier as these wines were wonderful and would, no doubt, sell out quickly.



Now, in 2007, these two are receiving their just desserts; business is brisk, accolades are numerous and, at the end of the day, they have achieved all of it, as wished, together.

Location, Location, Location



Many say beauty is inherent, and in the case of the grapes of Pentâge, they are as gorgeous as the land they were brought up in. The aptly named Vista Ridge and the neighbouring vineyards of Stu & Yvonne Goldberg (where Pentâge have their Pinot Gris) are situated in an area so spectacular it's hard to describe in words. If you are unable to take them in personally, check out the photo gallery on their website (the link is on the BC Wine Club home page) for a glimpse of one of BC's most amazing scenes!

The Passionate Winemaker

As mentioned, Paul is consumed by all things wine and this year he took it to a new level with the construction of a stunning wine cellar. The cellar, which was, quite literally, carved into the rock, sits high atop the property - perfect for housing this man's terrific wines. This wine cellar should be extremely handy given the fact Pentâge now produces 10 different single varietals or blends that are well suited to the BC interior region. As well, as Paul & Julie are not content to follow the crowd, they are now planting an 8 acre vineyard dedicated to Rhone varietals - something they feel will suit "the future palates of the consumer" nicely. Like we said - Pentâge is not a follower - they set the new standard!



Ron Ilmer - Our Feature Connoisseur

Ron Ilmer, President & Partner of the respected accounting and business planning firm of **Ilmer Koehl Associates**, is truly one of the most interesting people one's likely to meet. Brilliant and humorous, we felt he embodied the spirit and personality of our Club members perfectly.

Here now is an insight into how this Winnipegger became a BC Connoisseur...



Having moved from Winnipeg my spirit of choice was primarily beer, with a focus on various lagers. On some more adventurous occasions I'd even attempt a European beer. But, as for wine, well, my exposure ran to the big box variety with names like *Baby Duck* and *Lonesome Charlie (I jest)*. Shortly after my relocation to BC though, I was invited on an escorted trip to the Okanagan, which included a tour of two local wineries, Hawthorne Mountain and Sumac Ridge. We were fortunate to have Mr. Harry McWatters, one of the most prominent vintners in the province, lead the tour. Insight into the production process was extremely informative. He was able to offer information about the many types of grapes and wine- this laid the foundation for my future education process (about wine preference.....etc.) The weekend was capped off by a five-course gourmet wine-makers dinner, whereby every course had a different wine pairing that was fully discussed and explained. Since that time, my wine preferences have evolved from the chilled whites of Gewurztraminer or Riesling, to the point where I now prefer the more full bodied reds like a Merlot or Cabernet.

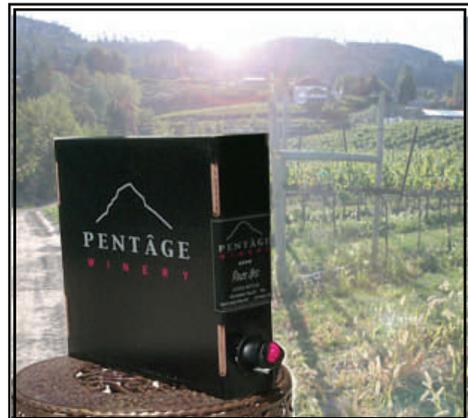
I also found the difficulty in discovering good new wines was very much hit & miss. Having been introduced to the Wine Club by the principals, I find the club to be an excellent vehicle to experience new wines, as well as expand my knowledge on the many different types. Most importantly, many of the wines I have sampled through the club I never would have tried due to my preconceived preferences. The club offers excellent explanations on the atmosphere, condition, and the foods that would best compliment a particular vintage. I now know it is of utmost importance that a wine be given due opportunity if it is to really be enjoyed. I sum it up in saying that the wine club delivery date is a highly anticipated day every month!

The Best Box in the Business

Leave it to our progressive friends at Pentâge to introduce one of their exceptional premium wines - in a box! Witness Pentâge's Pinot Gris in a sleek and stylish 3 litre box.

The intelligence behind this box is vast - It's slim, tall line allows for easy refrigeration. Pouring by the glass is made easy, and the shelf life of the wine is greatly improved with oxidization factors being largely removed.

To be sure, this is not what Mr. Ilmer remembers from his formative wine drinking days! This box is pure smarts - Bravo Pentâge!



Lobster Mushroom & Chicken Stirabout with Pasta

Perfect for patio dining coupled with
Pentâge's Pinot Gris - !

Stirabout

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 1 large clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large red onion, finely sliced
- 1 - 1 inch piece fresh gingerroot, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 large head broccoli, broken into florets
- 1/2 lb. fresh lobster mushrooms (or other wild mushrooms), coarsely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, coarsely chopped
- 1 medium red bell pepper, diced
- 1 medium green bell pepper, diced
- 1 lb. sliced fresh mushrooms
- Salt, freshly ground pepper to taste
- 12 oz. spinach fettuccini or other pasta
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 4 tbsps. grated parmesan or smoked cheese

Chicken

- 4 - 6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tbsp oyster sauce
- 2 tsp minced garlic
- 2 tsp Montreal steak spice

Chicken - Mix oil, oyster sauce and garlic in a dish and mix well. Coat chicken with mixture. Sprinkle chicken with Montreal steak spice. Grill chicken 'til nicely roasted and tender. Set aside and keep warm.

Stirabout - In a large frying pan or wok, heat oil over high heat. Add garlic, onion and gingerroot and stir-fry 5 minutes. Add broccoli and stir-fry 5 minutes longer. Stir in mushrooms, celery, bell peppers, salt and pepper. Stir-fry about 5 minutes, or until vegetables are crisp-tender. Meanwhile cook pasta according to directions. Drain thoroughly. Spoon vegetables over pasta. Slice chicken on the diagonal and arrange over vegetables. Sprinkle with parsley and cheese.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Zesty Salmon Steak

The spice in this dish offers the perfect accent
for the 2003 Pentâge

- 6 Salmon Steaks, about 6 oz. each
- 1 3/4 tbsp. good curry powder
- 2 tbsps. roasted peanut oil (or Canola)
- 1 Spanish onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp. sesame seeds
- 1 tbsp. fresh garlic, minced
- 1/2 tbsp. red Thai curry paste
- 3 cups fresh or canned plum tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup vegetable, fish or chicken broth
- 1 1/2 tsp coriander
- 1/2 cup fresh cilantro
- 2 limes cut into wedges

Wash fish steaks and pat dry with paper towel. Sprinkle steaks with 3/4 tbsp curry powder. Set aside for 10 minutes. Put oil in large, deep, non-stick skillet and heat until hot over med-high heat. Add sesame seeds sauté 'til slightly roasted. Add onion and garlic and sauté until golden. Add paste and remaining curry powder and mix through. Next, add tomatoes and broth and bring to a boil, stirring frequently; boil 5 minutes or until tomatoes have broken down and sauce becomes thick. Remove half the sauce and put aside. In the remaining sauce, gently place fish and cook 3 minutes on each side. Remove fish and sauce to ovenproof baking dish and set aside.

In same skillet over medium heat place the other half of the sauce and add coriander. Bring to a soft boil and simmer 4-5 minutes. Pour sauce over fish and place in preheated 350° oven; cook for another 8 min. Remove from oven: garnish with cilantro and lime wedges. Serve immediately with Basmati rice. Serves six.

Note:

To cool flavour, serve with a side of plain yogurt
To add spice, try a few dashes of cayenne pepper
sauce

PENTÂGE Winery Selections

Feature Red- 2003 Pentâge - Bronze Medal Winner - All Canadian Wine Championship, '07
- Bronze Medal Winner - Northwest Wine Summit, '07
- John Schreiner gives this one 88 points!

Feature White - 2006 Pinot Gris- - Gold Medal - Northwest Wine Summit, '07
- Silver Medal - All Canadian Wine Championship, '07
- Anthony Gismondi BC Wine of the Week

Companion Red - 2005 Gamay- The BC Wine Club Partners favorite Gamay to date!