



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario Wine Awards 2006 Results
Saturday, April 22, 2006

Ontario Wine Awards 2006 Map the Way for Winery Visitors

Niagara-on-the-Lake -- "What does it indicate when you have 34 different wineries winning the gold, silver and bronze medals for 24 hotly contested wine awards," mused Tony Aspler at the close of the Gala Awards Dinner held at Queen's Landing in Niagara-on-the-Lake this past Saturday. "It means that there is some mighty enjoyable tasting for the judges, a season full of different wine-tasting routes for consumers, and perhaps more importantly, that from the very small boutique to the large commercial Ontario wineries, there is a continuing commitment to the highest standards of wine production."

Along with the Wine Awards that recognized VQA varietal quality, there were also awards to honour the Winemaker of the Year, Wine Journalism Award, Best Label Design, and introduced in 2005, the Sommelier of the Year. New for 2006, the Small Crush Award, was introduced to recognize the small production lot wines of Ontario with two awards, one each for a dry white and a dry red wine so that these unique wines from boutiques as well as larger wineries, can receive broader exposure and be recognized. Sponsored by NOW Magazine, the award was designed to honour and encourage the efforts of winemakers who are making small experimental batches of wine which will speak to future wine production at their wineries.

The celebration of award winning wines from the 11th Annual Ontario Wine Awards continues during Ontario Wine Week, June 11 to 17, with a **Consumer Tasting** of these wines at The Distillery Historic District in Toronto on **Tuesday, June 13**. The wines will be matched with a celebration of cuisine presented by Chefs from Vintage Inns, a Platinum sponsor of the Ontario Wine Awards. Chefs will demonstrate their wine-and-food-match finesse, and will surely be inviting consumers to join them for a get-away in Niagara.

Chris Mei of Smooth Jazz Wave 94.7FM, Platinum media sponsor from Hamilton, entertained, cajoled and guided the wine-industry crowd through the gourmet dinner, and more notably Wine Awards. Jennifer Mossop, MPP for Stoney Creek and the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Culture addressed and welcomed the attendees.

The 2006 competition drew 411 entries from 52 wineries in 24 categories which were evaluated blind by four panels of professional tasters. Each judge has extensive experience assessing wines from around the world and their selection of gold, silver and bronze awards is a sure indication of a high quality wine that also serves to guide consumers in their wine choices.

The most prestigious 'Wine of the Year' trophy was awarded to Château des Charmes 2002 Riesling Icewine for receiving the highest aggregate score of the competition and was sponsored by The Ideal Printing Company Limited.

The Vintage Inns 'Winemaker of the Year Award' went to Jean-Pierre Colas, Head Winemaker at Peninsula Ridge Estates, in recognition of his consistent quality production across the Peninsula Ridge portfolio, his successes as demonstrated by additional wine awards, and his contribution to the wine industry. The traditional prize, a Movado watch, was presented to Jean-Pierre by Barrie Laver, President and CEO for Vintage Inns.

Peter Bodnar Rod received the 'Sommelier of the Year Award' from Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation in recognition of his skills in a blind tasting of six Ontario wines against fellow sommeliers.

Konrad Ejbich received the 'Wine Journalism Award', sponsored and presented by Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation, for his pocket guide to Ontario Wines, Wineries, Vineyards & Vines. This award recognizes Konrad for the best published work on the Ontario Wine Industry in 2005.

In order to experience these wines firsthand, Ontario Wine Council provides online winery maps that clearly indicate wine-tasting routes throughout all of Ontario's wine regions, and wineries expect a busy season with the early onset of the warm weather.

For a full listing of the Ontario Wine Awards results please visit online or contact:

www.ontariowineawards.ca or www.winesofontario.ca

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Contacts:

Sandy Kurbis

Director of Client and Event Services
The Forefront Communications Network Inc.
1698 Avenue Road
Toronto, ON M5M 3Y4
Tel: 416-398-3335 Ext. 2
Fax: 416-398-6630
sandy@forefrontcom.com
www.ontariowineawards.ca

Tony Aspler

Tony Aspler Enterprises
416-488-8597
tony.aspler@sympatico.ca
www.tonyaspler.com

About Tony Aspler

Tony Aspler has been active in the international wine world since 1964. He received his basic wine education in London, England at Grant's of St. James' Wine School. As a consultant and wine judge, he makes frequent trips to the vineyards and wine fairs of Europe and the new world and is recognized as the leading authority on Canadian wines.

Tony wrote for The Toronto Star for 21 years and is now concentrating on writing for various magazines and is the author of nine novels. He is also the co-founder of the charitable foundation Grapes for Humanity - www.grapesforhumanity.com. Tony may be reached at tony.aspler@sympatico.ca, or visit www.tonyaspler.com for further information.

About The Forefront Communications Network Inc.

Forefront Communications is an acknowledged full-service marketing and communications company dealing exclusively in the alcohol beverage industry. Established in 1979, Forefront has excelled within the industry by offering its clients superior expertise in; strategic planning, creative development, promotion, media planning and placement as well as POS and exhibit design.

By developing successful marketing programs for many domestic and international clients, Forefront's proven track record has earned them the reputation of being one of Canada's premier advertising agencies in the alcohol beverage industry.

Follow-up Events: Tuesday, June 13, 2006

Trade Tasting of Ontario VQA Wines: 2:00 to 4:30 pm
Trade only, no charge

Consumer Tasting and Vintage Inns Chefs: 7:00 to 9:30 pm
\$45+ GST until May 19
\$50+ GST after May 19

To purchase tickets to the Consumer Tasting, please contact Sandy Kurbis at 416-398-3335 Ext. 2, or email tickets@forefrontcom.com

Location

The Distillery Historic District
The Stone Distillery, Building #6
Fermenting Cellar
(1st parking lot entrance south of Mill Street off of Parliament)
55 Mill Street, Toronto

Please take advantage of the complimentary shuttle between The Distillery and Union Station, sponsored by Niagara Airbus. Shuttle times:

1:30 pm to 5:00 pm

6:30 pm until 10:00 pm

The bus departs from the clock tower located in front of Union Station on Front Street.

2006 Ontario Wine Awards - Key Sponsors

The Ideal Printing Company Limited
NOW Magazine
Smooth Jazz Wave 94.7FM
Vintage Inns
Dairy Farmers of Canada
Evian
Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce
Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation
The Wine Council of Ontario
VIA Rail Canada
Wine Access
All Stick Label Design
Crush Wine Bar & Restaurant
Fine Wine Reserve Wine Storage
Grape Growers of Ontario
LCBO
Niagara Airbus
Niagara Grape & Wine Festival
Ontario Wine Society
The Wine Establishment
Higgins Party Rentals
Taps Brewing Company Inc.
The Watering Can Flower Market



2006 Ontario Wine Awards – Final Results

Evian Sparkling Wine Award

Gold: Hillebrand Estates NV Trius Brut

Silver: Henry of Pelham Family Estate NV Cuvée Catharine Rosé Brut

Bronze: Pillitteri Estates NV Due

Crush Wine Bar & Restaurant Dry Riesling Award

Gold: Flat Rock Cellars 2004 Riesling Nadja's Vineyard

Silver: Château des Charmes 2003 Riesling

Bronze: Strewn Winery 2003 Riesling Strewn Vineyard

Smooth Jazz Wave 94.7FM Off-Dry Riesling Award

Gold: Mountain Road 2004 Botrytis Affected Riesling

Silver: Vineland Estates 2005 Riesling Semi-Dry

Silver: De Sousa Wine Cellars 2004 Riesling Semi-Dry

The Forefront Communications Network Inc. Other White Award

Gold: Lakeview Cellars Estate 2005 Kerner Morgan Vineyard

Silver: Hernder Estate 2004 Vidal

Bronze: Château des Charmes 2004 Aligote Estate Bottled

Bronze: Pillitteri Estates 2004 Vidal Semi-Dry

LCBO Gewurztraminer Award

Gold: Magnotta Winery 2004 Gewurztraminer Medium Dry Special Reserve

Silver: Château des Charmes 2004 Gewurztraminer St. David's Bench Vineyard

Bronze: Birchwood Estate 2004 Gewurztraminer-Riesling

Wine Access Pinot Gris Award

Gold: Vineland Estates 2004 Pinot Gris

Silver: Pillitteri Estates 2004 Pinot Grigio

Bronze: Pelee Island Winery 2005 Pinot Gris

The Wine Establishment Sauvignon Blanc Award

Gold: Creekside Estate 2004 Sauvignon Blanc Reserve

Silver: Vineland Estates 2004 Sauvignon Blanc

Bronze: Vineland Estates 2004 Sauvignon Blanc Rosomel Vineyard

The Distillery Historic District Oaked Chardonnay Award ~ Under \$20

Gold: Creekside Estate 2004 Chardonnay Reserve

Silver: Mountain Road 2002 Barrel Fermented Chardonnay

Bronze: Stoney Ridge Estate 2004 Chardonnay Reserve

Vintage Inns Oaked Chardonnay Award ~ Over \$20

Gold: Peller Estates 2004 Signature Series Chardonnay Sur Lie

Silver: Stoney Ridge Estate 2002 Chardonnay Reserve

Bronze: De Sousa Wine Cellars 2004 Chardonnay Oaked Reserve

Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce Unoaked Chardonnay Award

Gold: Château des Charmes 2004 Chardonnay Musqué

Silver: Fielding Estate 2005 Chardonnay Musqué

Bronze: Stoney Ridge Estate 2004 FSC Charlotte Chardonnay

Niagara Grape & Wine Festival Gamay Award

Gold: Mountain Road 2002 Gamay Noir Reserve

Silver: Mountain Road 2002 Gamay Noir

Bronze: Thirteenth Street Winery 2003 Gamay Noir

Grape Growers of Ontario Pinot Noir Award

Gold: Inniskillin 2003 Pinot Noir Montague Estate Vineyard

Silver: Norman Hardie 2004 Pinot Noir

Bronze: Niagara College Teaching Winery 2004 Pinot Noir Reserve

Bronze: Reif Estate 2001 Pinot Noir

Ontario Wine Society Red Hybrid Award

Gold: Henry of Pelham Family Estate 2004 Baco Noir Reserve

Silver: Mountain Road 2002 Mountain Road Red

Silver: Stoney Ridge Estate 2004 Baco Noir Reserve

Bronze: Hernder Estate 2002 Chambourcin

Smooth Jazz Wave 94.7FM Cabernet Franc Award

Gold: Stoney Ridge Estate 2004 Cabernet Franc Reserve

Silver: Stoney Ridge Estate 2002 Cabernet Franc Reserve

Bronze: Mountain Road 2002 Cabernet Franc Reserve

The Ideal Printing Company Limited Cabernet Sauvignon Award

Gold: Peninsula Ridge Estates 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve

Silver: Kacaba Vineyards 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve

Silver: Ridgepoint Wines 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon

Bronze: Château des Charmes 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon Paul Bosc Estate

Dairy Farmers of Canada Merlot Award

Gold: Lakeview Cellars Estate 2002 Merlot Reserve Butler's Grant Vineyard

Silver: Mastronardi Estate 2002 Merlot

Bronze: Stoney Ridge Estate 2004 Merlot Reserve

Fine Wine Reserve Wine Storage Syrah/Shiraz Award

Gold: Lailey Vineyard 2004 Syrah

Silver: Reif Estate 2004 Shiraz

Bronze: Southbrook Winery 2004 Triumphus Syrah

Bronze: Peninsula Ridge Estates 2000 Syrah

VIA Rail Canada Meritage Award

Gold: Stoney Ridge Estate 2002 Meritage Founder's Signature Collection

Silver: Hernder Estate 2002 Cabernet Merlot

Bronze: Jackson-Triggs Winery 2002 Cabernet Merlot Delaine Vineyard

Late Harvest White Award

Silver: Hillebrand Estates 2004 Late Harvest Vidal

Bronze: Château des Charmes 2004 Late Harvest Riesling

Niagara Airbus Select & Special Select Late Harvest Award

Gold: Hernder Estate 1999 Special Select Late Harvest Riesling

Silver: Henry of Pelham Family Estate 2004 Special Select Late Harvest Riesling

Bronze: Pillitteri Estates 2004 Cabernet Select Late Harvest

Vintage Inns Vidal Icewine Award

Gold: Coyote's Run Estate 2004 Barrel Fermented Vidal Icewine

Silver: Pillitteri Estates 2004 Vidal Sparkling Icewine

Bronze: Konzelmann Estate 2004 Vidal Icewine

Dairy Farmers of Canada Vinifera Icewine Award

Gold: Château des Charmes 2002 Riesling Icewine

Silver: Pillitteri Estates 2004 Cabernet Franc Icewine

Bronze: Henry of Pelham Family Estate 2004 Riesling Icewine

NOW Magazine Small Crush, Dry White Award

Gold: Creekside Estate 2004 Pinot Gris Reserve

Silver: Huff Estates 2004 South Bay Chardonnay

Bronze: Flat Rock Cellars 2005 Nadja's Vineyard Riesling

NOW Magazine Small Crush, Dry Red Award

Gold: Creekside Estate 2002 Lost Barrel Red

Silver: Mike Weir Estate 2003 Cabernet Shiraz

Bronze: Konzelmann Estate 1998 Cabernet Merlot Reserve

All Stick Label Design Best Label Design Award

Gold: Norman Hardie 2004 Pinot Noir

Silver: Coyote's Run Estate 2004 Pinot Noir

Bronze: Pillitteri Estates NV Due

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation Wine Journalism Award

Konrad Ejbich

Ontario Tourism Marketing Partnership Corporation Sommelier of the Year Award

Peter Bodnar Rod

The Ideal Printing Company Limited Wine of the Year Award

Château des Charmes 2002 Riesling Icewine

Vintage Inns Winemaker of the Year Award

Jean-Pierre Colas, Peninsula Ridge Estates

ONTARIO WINE AWARDS 2006 - BACKGROUNDER

Judging Process

Wine Judging

Saturday, March 25th and Saturday, April 1st
Crush Wine Bar & Restaurant - 455 King Street West

Icewine Judging

Sunday, April 2nd
Fine Wine Reserve Wine Storage - Located on King Street West at Spadina

Each entry is assessed blind by panels of accredited wine professionals - journalists, LCBO personnel and sommeliers. The judges have both an appreciation for wine as well as in-depth knowledge of wines from Ontario's wine growing regions. For the 2005 Ontario Wine Awards, the four appellations were Pelee Island, Lake Erie North Shore, Niagara Peninsula and Prince Edward County.

In December 2005, the Niagara Peninsula region was further defined and now includes 12 sub-appellations:

Niagara Lakeshore
Niagara River
Four Mile Creek
St. David's Bench
Creek Shores
Lincoln Lakeshore
Beamsville Bench
Twenty Mile Bench
Short Hills Bench
Vinemount Ridge

In order to bear these appellation names on a label, the wine must be made from 100% grapes grown in the stated appellation and meet all applicable VQA quality standards.

In addition, two broader regions were created:

Niagara-on-the-Lake: all land within Niagara Lakeshore, Niagara River, Four Mile Creek and St. David's Bench

Niagara Escarpment: all land within Beamsville Bench, Twenty Mile Bench and Short Hills Bench

It is expected that the introduction of sub-appellation wines to the marketplace will be gradual as individual wineries determine whether they choose to use these new designations.

For more information: <http://www.winesofontario.org/PDFs/SubAppellationsNews.pdf>

Awards

Gold medal opportunities include: Ontario Wine of the Year, Ontario Winemaker of the Year, Ontario Sommelier of the Year and the Ontario Journalism Award, which recognizes the best article published in 2005 on the Ontario wine industry. For a complete listing of all 2005 Awards please see www.ontariowineawards.ca - Awards History.

History

The Ontario Wine Awards were founded in 1995 by Tony Aspler; one of Canada's most acclaimed wine writers. His vision was to catapult Ontario VQA wines into the most successful, most revered wines available to domestic and foreign markets by recognizing and promoting the top Ontario wineries for the quality product they produce. "Our mission is to provide recognition for outstanding Ontario wines and to the men and women who are dedicated to producing a superior product," explains Tony Aspler. "These awards enhance the profile of Ontario wines in the world market, opening doors to new opportunities for Ontario wineries."