



## Meritage Reds - Ontario vs. British Columbia

Tuesday, April 18, 2017

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Faculty Club, Univ. of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$61; Guests'/Non-Members' Fee: \$76

Meritage (from Merit & Heritage) is the name coined in 1988 in Napa Valley for red and white Bordeaux-style wines. A red Meritage must be made from a blend of at least TWO of the following varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petit Verdot, St. Macaine, Gros Verdot or Carmeniere, with no varietal comprising more than 90% of the blend. White Meritage is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon. And by the way, Meritage is pronounced like 'heritage'; don't say it like it's a French word - the Americans coined it after all!

Ontario's Niagara region and British Columbia's Okanagan Valley are well suited for the production of Meritage wines. The Niagara Region is roughly the same latitude as southern France and has the growing conditions to consistently ripen many varieties of vitis vinifera grapes. The Okanagan Valley in BC stretches from the relatively cool Kelowna district in the north to the desert-like conditions of Osoyoos in the south with a latitude similar to Champagne. It experiences temperatures well above 30°C during the summer months, favourable to Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah. B.C. is highly regarded for its Meritage wines: they range from soft to quite tannic; the scope demonstrates the diversity of growing conditions and how they influence the final wine.

Due to the diversity, and varied proportions of the varietals in the Meritage blends, as in the Bordeaux, there is a wide range of bouquets and flavours. Cabernet Sauvignon-dominated wines exhibit a more tannic and acidic character, especially in their youth, than the Merlot-dominated wines, which are lower in acidity and feel softer and rounder. The Cabernet Sauvignon dominant wines initially have more fruit driven scents, which are eventually replaced by tobacco leaf, truffle and earthy scents, whereas the Merlot dominant wines start with licorice, chocolate and black cherry.

We have four Ontario and four BC red Meritage wines. The winemaker at **Stratus** (ON), J-L (Jean-Laurent) Groux, is a native of France's Loire Valley who learned his craft in the vineyards of Burgundy and Bordeaux. **Tawse**, voted Canada's Winery of the Year in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2016, is dedicated to producing terroir-driven wines of exceptional elegance, depth and character. **Hidden Bench's** Terroir series is produced in very limited quantities and represents the very best premium wines that the Beamsville Bench and Hidden Bench can produce; their winemaker studied viticulture in Stellenbosch, S. Africa. Marc Bradshaw originally from Australia, joined the team at **Strewn Winery**; Marc has a wine-related PhD and hands-on experience in South Africa, France, Germany, Australia and Canada. Le Grand Vin of **Osoyoos Larose** (BC) is the pride of their winery and made by winemaker, Mathieu Mercier, who grew up in the vineyard at his family's estate in Cognac. **Culmina**, a family-owned wine estate in BC, works with exceptionally talented Viticulture and Oenology professionals all hailing from France. **Dirty Laundry** in Summerland BC has produced many award-winning wines. **Laughing Stock's** (BC) Portfolio Meritage is a stunning, spectacular wine of incredible depth and length combining Old World structure and New World power.

Our guest speaker is **Marlize Beyers**, Winemaker at Hidden Bench **Winery**. The price of our event includes a reception wine, bread, light appetizes and our main wines. Please refrain from wearing scented products to the tasting. Please join us in April!

**REGISTER/BUY TICKETS.** You must register online and pay by credit card or cheque. **NOTE: ALL ticket sales/reservations are final.** Cheques must be received no later than Monday, April 17<sup>th</sup>. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Wednesday, April 12<sup>th</sup> after which only credit card sales will be accepted. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact [chris@torontovintners.org](mailto:chris@torontovintners.org) before trying to register again.



## Tasting Notes and Information –Meritage Reds

### **2011 Hidden Bench Terroir Caché Meritage, VQA Beamsville Bench, Niagara Peninsula \$38**

“There is so much floral presence in 2011, a showy perfume that parades the relative elegance of Niagara's Bordeaux reds in the vintage. Structure is comparable to 2010, not in beast mode but rather with a delicacy derived from less burning, high-toned fruit.” Michael Godel, WineAlign, Tasted April 2015, Drink 2017-2024 Score: 92

### **2012 Stratus Red, VQA Niagara-On-The-Lake \$44**

“An impressive Bordeaux style blend that would be equally at home in Tuscany, with its high-toned, floral and dusty-herbal red and black fruit, thanks in part to long hang time, and long ageing in wood to develop complexity... the best yet from Stratus.” John Szabo MS, WineAlign, Tasted October 2015 Score: 93

### **2010 Osoyoos Larose Le Grand Vin, BC VQA Okanagan Valley \$45**

Merlot: 67%, Cab Sauv: 20%, Petit Verdot: 6%, Cab Franc: 4%, Malbec: 3% “This iconic Bordelaise blend from the Okanagan has returned to the shelves of VINTAGES and I'm sure it won't last long. Rich and heady with plentiful black fruit on the full-bodied palate offering poise, structure and freshness. Reminiscent of the power and structure of a left bank Bordeaux with the aromatic profile of St. Estephe. Firm, grippy tannins with notes of graphite and violets that linger on the finish.” Sara d'Amato, WineAlign, Tasted November 2015 Rating: 90

### **2012 Culmina Hypothesis BC Okanagan \$40**

“This is a rich and satisfying red, full bodied, firm and well structured, with masses of tannins and firm acids that will need several more years to integrate and mellow I suspect. Only time will tell if this will come together as there's no track record for the site and these young vines, but it was surely made with ambition and the long-haul in mind. Decant if serving now, but leave alone ideally for 2-4 years.” John Szabo MS, WineAlign, Tasted June 2015 Score: 90

### **2013 Strewn Canadian Oak Meritage, VQA Niagara-On-The-Lake \$25**

“An old world inspired Bordeaux blend with a great deal of body, buoyancy and character. Earthy and smoky with notes of bramble, leather and both red and black fruit. Well-structured with nicely balanced acidity. A charming Canadian oaked, ready to drink red.” Sara d'Amato, Tasted October 2015 Score: 88

### **2013 Dirty Laundry Cabernet Merlot, BC VQA British Columbia \$25**

“With a blend of 80% Cab Sauvignon and 20% Merlot, look deep into her spellbinding eyes. She is enchanting & ripe with experience. Tasting notes: With aromas of dark chocolate and black berry this round full bodied red blend develops with every swirl in the glass. Flavors of black cherry and blueberry give way to cassis and vanilla on the finish.” Winemaker's Notes

### **2012 Meritage, Tawse ON \$60**

“Our premium red blend, the 2012 Meritage is comprised of 42% David's Block Merlot, 33% Van Bers Vineyard Cabernet Franc and 25% Hillside Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. This is the best example of Bordeaux that we have experienced in the last 10 years. Aged 18 months in French oak, this wine shows tart dark fruit, cigar box and herbal aromas. The palate is full with bold tannins, dark chocolate and hints of coffee. Definitely a wine for aging, we are curious to see how it changes over the next 9 or 10 years.” Winemaker's Notes

### **2008 Laughing Stock Vineyard - Portfolio, B.C. \$50**

The 2008 vintage is a blend of 53% Merlot, 24% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Cabernet Franc, 9% Malbec and 2% Petit Verdot. “Typical Northwest peppery, tobacco leaf, savoury, dried herb nose with black olive, smoky, coffee, vanilla and light barnyard aromas. Round, dry, fresh palate with some grippy tannin. Vanilla pudding, coffee, peppery, earthy, cedar, tobacco flavours dominate the youthful palate before you get to the black cherry, cranberry, savoury, green tea flavours. Love the youthful, fresh finish but with a big dose of oak to shed.” Anthony Gismondi Rating: 89; Natalie Maclean 90/100