



# tasting note<sup>S</sup>

SUMMER 2010

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER PUBLISHED BY MISSION HILL FAMILY ESTATE WINERY, OKANAGAN VALLEY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

*“Okanagan wine is not about grandeur, but readily accessible pleasure, much like the surroundings. And even a 5-year-old can drink up the splendor of the hillsides...”*

*Sara Dickerman, New York Times*

## At the Intersection of Science and Art: Precision Viticulture

BY GUEST EDITOR JAMIE MAW

Just last week, in a south Okanagan barn as red as the August sun—and in an area until recently given to scant growth of tumbleweed and desert sage—I saw the future of winemaking.

The red barn is located where the Sonoran desert reaches its hand over the international border, and where dirt is not dirt at all, but gradations of sand. It is also here where grapes do not natively grow. If the Okanagan's history is written in water, it is man's attempts to defy nature and irrigate it and defy its wild temperature swings that defines modern viticulture in the Valley—ultimately to sponsor the big red wines so that each spring they can begin their life all over again, of times against their will.

Upstairs in the barn, which is bristling with modern electronics and which hugs rows of vines stretching to the distant bluffs, sits a plethora of electronic monitors. They watch what the human eye cannot see over the hundreds of acres of estate vineyards that stretch from Kelowna south to the US border. They are collecting and sorting data from 40 remote weather stations that measure soil moisture and temperature; they interpolate that with irrigation needs, which in turn are compared to aerial images that measure canopy growth, plant health and ultimately, the bottom line: Yield. It is a complex science.

Yield Management – Yield targets in the vineyards vary by varietal and the measurements are meticulously calibrated—it is here where human intervention is required. Where high quality Pinot Blanc might weigh in at four and-a-half tonnes per acre, Mission Hill's Cabernet Sauvignon achieves its mark at approximately two and-a-half tonnes per acre yield.

After the cold of winter departs, vineyard estimates of bud mortality are taken to help determine what the winter damage was and influence upcoming pruning decisions. Last Thanksgiving, a snap frost took down some vines, it is in spring's 'post-set' bud phase that some 200 samples of bud mortality are taken by hand in each vineyard block, with the results fed into the software-driven analytics.

COLLECTING AND SORTING DATA FROM 40 REMOTE WEATHER STATIONS THAT MEASURE SOIL MOISTURE AND TEMPERATURE



## Riesling - The Classic White

BY INGO GRADY, DIRECTOR WINE EDUCATION

Many in the wine business consider Riesling the world's greatest white wine grape. If you seek fresh, distinctive, food-friendly white wines, discover what chefs, sommeliers and a growing number of aficionados have enjoyed for years—the pleasure of Riesling.

Riesling is one of the most versatile, complex and diverse of all the noble grapes. Yet Riesling is still largely misunderstood... thus, our inspiration for a brief portrait of this great grape.

TO PARAPHRASE THOMAS CARLYLE: “A PERSON USUALLY HAS TWO RIESLINGS FOR DOING SOMETHING: A GOOD RIESLING AND THE REAL RIESLING.”

**In the Vineyard** - Riesling is the darling of cool climate growing regions. Native to Germany, it has evolved into a variety with impressive cold resistance, making it suitable for regions subject to bitterly cold winters. The source of Riesling's cold resistance is its exceptionally hard wood, which protects the vine not only against cold itself, but also against the freeze-thaw cycles common to some cool climate growing regions, e.g., Niagara and Okanagan.

The Okanagan's best Rieslings come from three regions that produce wines of varied styles:

The **Kelowna** area offers the classic off-dry style, with mid-weight wines featuring vibrant acidity, citrus and mineral notes; some versions are firm, often austere, with peachy ripeness, spiciness and depth.

**Naramata** Rieslings are similar in weight but aromatically different due to the silty clay soils.

The warmer, drier **Oliver** region produces rich, off-dry styles with grapefruit and spice flavours.

(continued on page 4)

## In the words of others...

REVIEWS OF OUR NEW RELEASES

### Five Vineyards Pinot Grigio 2008

"This is the type of wine I love to spot in BC (an increasingly rare bird). Great value, wide availability, Stelvin-fresh youthfulness and eminently quaffable! I've sold this by the glass and purchased it by the case for wine stores. It's no secret – the Five Vineyards Pinot Grigio is a huge seller in BC. So let's revisit and remind ourselves why new isn't always better. This reliable, unoaked Pinot Grigio is bright and fresh with limey citrus and green apple aromas. The palate is a continuation of what started in the nose – along with ripe pear, mild honey, elegant tropical fruit and a crisp, refreshing finish. I much prefer this \$16 unoaked Grigio to oak-laden versions twice-plus the price."

Treve Ring, Edible BC

Silver Medal

Grand Harvest Wine Competition 2010

### Reserve Viognier 2008

\*WINERY EXCLUSIVE\*

"Pale gold with a fresh apricot/peach and floral (orange blossom) nose. It has an inviting, clean and fresh palate that echoes the nose, with good acidity, medium-full body and an elegance that separates it from the competition. A great food wine for pork, veal, chicken, or meaty fish served with a citrus or stone fruit-accented salad or chutney."

Rating: 90/100

Craig Pinhey, Wine Access Magazine

Category Champion

International Value Wine Awards, 2010

Silver Medal

All Canadian Wine Championships 2010



### Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon 2007

"A stand up version of Cabernet in British Columbia. Expect aromas of juicy currants, hints of purple fruits, cigarbox, vanilla and chocolate with earthy/leathery undertones. It is bright on the entry with fresh black and red currants, wild herbs and plenty of oak and char grilled flavours on the finish with ripe tannins lingering."

Rating: 89/100

Daenna Van Mulligan, Wine Diva

## Precision Viticulture (cont'd from page 1)

AN INTERVIEW WITH JOHN SIMES, WINEMAKER

In August, aerial analysis is taken just after veraison, or ripening. The aerial infrared (colour sensitive) photography visually demonstrates canopy growth or vigour by colour coding each vineyard block in remarkable detail, and directs further irrigation and pruning from field crews. Importantly, it also shows areas under stress, and in the time sensitive nature of vineyard management, tells the viticulturists precisely where to assist the vines, perhaps adding from Mission Hill's compost reserves, comprised of some 700 cubic metres of recycled vineyard and winery waste.

A Cure For The Common Cold - The Okanagan Valley experiences some of the most severe temperature swings in the world, certainly for any wine growing region, with spikes to as high as plus 40 degrees Celsius in August, to minus 20 degree temperatures in January – a colossal and continuous change of 60 degrees from season to season.

The first line of defense is healthy plants. "A healthy vine that has been well-managed during its growing season and harvest is better able to face the stresses of winter," says James Hopper, Senior Viticulturist. Hopper, his colleague Graham O'Rourke and Winemaker John Simes are also reliant on the giant wind machines that bring warmer, inverted air down through the rows, fighting winter's sudden freezes and protecting the dormant plants.

In the early spring, after the pruning is finished, row by row, is when the drip irrigation (which saves more than 50 per cent of the water formerly expended by overhead sprinklers) takes the fore, allowing just enough water to percolate through the sand to promote bud break. Drip irrigation is a far more accurate response to each zone's requirements, O'Rourke explains, and carries with it additional benefits: mould loss to botrytis fungus is virtually eliminated, and so is the need to spray for its prevention.

And now the vineyard canopies extend their shade, each leaf a tiny solar panel. Across the vineyards, dozens of them are measured for moisture in a mobile pressure chamber. James Hopper demonstrates, taking a single grape leaf, he inserts it, closes the chamber and watches the stem closely. As a micro-drop of water is forced out, the gauge shows the precise water status of each plant. "This is the most direct measure of plant moisture that we have," Hopper says, as he compares it to the weather station report for that block. Adds John Simes, "This is how we can really fine tune the struggle," he says, "this is science, embracing the art of winemaking."



JOHN SIMES

"DRIP IRRIGATION SAVES MORE THAN 50 PER CENT OF THE WATER FORMERLY EXPENDED BY OVERHEAD SPRINKLERS."

## Feature Summer Wine

### 2009 Martin's Lane Riesling

\*Limited Release\*

Martin's Lane Riesling is an inspired collaboration by winemakers John Simes and Fritz Hasselbach, together with proprietor Anthony von Mandl.

Named for Dr. Martin von Mandl, Anthony's late father, this hillside-grown, limited edition wine was sourced from the finest Riesling grapes grown on the steepest portion of our estate vineyard on Mission Hill Road, adjacent to Anthony's private residence. An auspicious debut for Mission Hill's newest single-vineyard bottling, with only 400 cases produced.

Like all of our top-of-the-line wines this sophisticated and stylish "micro-cuvee" represents the purest and naturalist expression of vineyard, grape and vintage.



An alluring Riesling that combines power and delicacy. Sleek and elegant, the mineral-rich structure frames apple, peach and citrus flavours. This is supple, succulent and beautifully balanced, with all the elements aligning on the long pear-and-mineral inflected finish.

## Sommelier's Corner

JESSE HARNDEN, SOMMELIER



### 2008 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc

Lovely and crisp, this citrus infused Sauvignon Blanc is grassy and zesty. Pink grapefruit, lime and green apple notes combine for a rich, delicious mid palate. A hint of mandarin accentuates the dry clean finish.

### 2008 Reserve Pinot Blanc

\*WINERY EXCLUSIVE\*

Our single-vineyard Reserve Pinot Blanc reflects the 2008 Okanagan vintage with its concentrated flavours, elegant balance and subtle oak influence. The grapes were grown on a steep, west facing hillside along Lake Okanagan at our Lakeshore Vineyard Estate. This site's favourable position and the lake's moderating influence and cooling breezes are ideal for Pinot Blanc grapes. The prevailing gravel and sandy loam soils provide excellent drainage and contribute a mineral undertone that defines the lush elements of this elegant, distinctive and food-friendly wine.

This Pinot Blanc is rich and pure. Lovely Fuji apple and mineral notes are complemented by luscious acidity, producing an elegant, juicy wine. The finish features the harmonious lingering of citrus and minerality - complex and delicious.

### 2007 Select Lot Collection Syrah

At every stage of grape cultivation, harvest and wine-making only the very finest lots are selected for Mission Hill 'Select Lot Collection' wines. The grapes are chosen from blocks and rows within 100% winery owned estates in Oliver and Osoyoos, having been meticulously cared for throughout the growing season in the vineyard. Hand harvested, and hand sorted during grape-receiving, they are then gravity fed to small fermentation vessels, and barrel aged in tiny lots to allow for ultimate selectivity. The Syrah has been aged in French and American oak for 18 months.



## Citrus Marinated Pacific Octopus

WINERY CHEF MATTHEW BATEY

### *Enjoy with our Reserve Pinot Blanc*

*What a lovely way to celebrate this single vineyard produced Okanagan gem! Our Reserve Pinot Blanc is made exclusively from a vineyard located straight across the lake from us in East Kelowna. The quality of the fruit is a true testament to our Viticulture team. Octopus is very similar to this varietal, lesser fame than many other high quality Pacific seafood, but when properly prepared and crafted, equally exquisite and unique.*

Yield 6

#### INGREDIENTS

Octopus	
2	octopus legs – precooked (we braise whole Octopus and peel, suckers kept)
3	garlic cloves – crushed
1/2 cup	extra virgin olive oil
1/3 cup	pinot blanc verjus
1/4 cup	citrus juice
1/4 cup	chopped parsley
Pine Nuts	
1/4 cup	toasted pine nuts
1 cup	carrot juice
<b>Garnishes</b>	
1	thin skinned cucumber, halved and seeded then thinly sliced
18pcs	orange segments
12	dragon carrots, scrubbed and blanched in water with orange zest
	fresh dill
2 tbsp	dill oil

#### METHOD

- Rinse the octopus and pat dry.
- Slice thinly with a sharp knife.
- Combine the remaining ingredients for the octopus and then pour over the octopus.
- Let stand for 24 hours covered in the fridge. Mix occasionally.
- Remove from the marinade and reserve.
- Puree the pine nuts and carrot juice, season with salt and strain through a fine sieve. Reserve or charge with no2.

#### To assemble

Place the sliced cucumbers on a chilled plate. Place the marinated octopus on top of the cucumber next and garnish with the carrots and orange segments. Sauce with the pine nuts and then place the dill. A final drop or two of the dill oil, a few flakes of Maldon Salt and you are ready to enjoy with a glass of Mission Hill Pinot Blanc

## Complements to the Chef

BY GUEST EDITOR JAMIE MAW

### ENDLESS SUMMER

More than once, a jar of Mission Hill preserves has saved a dinner party at our house. Just recently, we served Chef Matthew Batey's quartered pears right from its outsized jar—country style. The pears (estate-grown at Mission Hill) had been preserved in a lightly-sugared syrup and were redolent of their skinny pod of vanilla; we paired them with some local Carmelis goat cheese. The sighs were audible as we bit into summer in the middle of February. Or the night our neighbour's clafoutis burned, and we rescued the occasion with good ice cream topped with brilliant Oculus cherry conserve.

Mission Hill's preserved goods are a year-round staple in our pantry – we call their jars of fruit our 'life preservers' when the weather's gray. "We really try to bottle the essence of summer fruit at its peak," says Chef Batey.

Much of that fruit is delivered from Cross Farms in the Belgo area of Kelowna. Owned by the Cross family since 1946, the farm has supplied Mission Hill with orchard and berry produce for six years. "Tayberries (a cross between raspberries and blueberries) have become a big hit," says co-proprietor Loretta Cross, "but of course we also supply a lot of orchard fruit and other berries, as well as vegetables, and now 20 varieties of heirloom tomatoes."

Lots of that carefully nurtured produce sees its way to Mission Hill's Terrace Restaurant, where Chef Riley Bennett weaves it into his warm weather menus. "The secret," he says, "is to completely respect the raw ingredient, and know exactly when to step out of the way so that its' natural flavours can shine through."

Off-service hours, the two Chefs and their brigade step into high canning gear. "We talk to our growers every day, and schedule precisely," says Chef Batey. "It's key that the preserving line steps into the raw product on the very day the fruit or vegetables peak, and that's a narrow window."

The earliest product to hit the line is springtime's first crop, rhubarb, which is bottled with Mission Hill's Vidal. Then asparagus is pickled. Later, in the summer, peach chutney (a perfect pairing with chicken roasted on the outdoor rotisserie) is next, followed by the three types of whole cherry preserves: Rainier (or ivory) cherries, sweet 'lapins', and finally, the deeply resonate Oculus.

But I may have held back the best for last: Last night we picked a jar of Batey's Plum + Pinot Sauce from the pantry. We roasted fresh pork belly slowly on the quiet side of the barbeque until it was fully rendered, but still moist, and its skin properly crisped. We sliced it quite wide, and then, concentrating, dipped each chunk in the plumy sauce. The sighs—but now heard on our summer patio—were audible, yet again.



MISSION HILL PRESERVES

*“Here we are passionate about food, wine and the arts and want guests to enjoy the incredible bounty and beauty that the Okanagan has to offer whether it’s dining alfresco on our Terrace, touring our estate vineyards with our sommeliers, or watching a world-class performance under the stars. We are privileged to share our love of this region and its wines with them.”*

*- Anthony von Mandl, Proprietor*

## Reserve Concert Series

The season’s cultural highlight, is the exciting introduction of the Mission Hill Family Estate Reserve Concert Series, which features noted jazz artists and highly acclaimed Canadian operatic and symphony performers. The concerts afford a unique opportunity to enjoy a live performance in an unrivalled natural setting. The outdoor amphitheatre provides a stunning view of the Monashee Mountains and Lake Okanagan, sure to enchant audiences on a fine summer evening.

Opening the series on July 17 is the **Midsummer Magic Okanagan Symphony Gala** celebrating the OSO’s 50th anniversary. Guests will enjoy dining *alfresco* with musical interludes throughout the evening showcasing OSO musicians and special guest artists. On August 7, musician **Wil Campa** will perform

his unique blend of Afro-Cuban jazz music. On Labour Day weekend, Friday September 3, Juno award winning jazz guitarist **Jesse Cook** will look to repeat his previous 2008 sold out show at the winery. The finale to the season is a benefit concert on September 18 by the Canadian Tenors with their eclectic mix of classical and contemporary pop, in support of a Vancouver-based charity doing work in Africa.

Special pre-concert dinner packages to celebrate the cultural festivities are available at the Terrace Restaurant, which offers guests breathtaking vistas of the vineyards and lake. Gourmet fare and Mission Hill’s award-winning wines will also be available. For more information please visit: [www.missionhillwinery.com/reserveconcertseries](http://www.missionhillwinery.com/reserveconcertseries)



THE AMPHITHEATRE AT MISSION HILL FAMILY ESTATE

## RIESLING (continued from page 1)

### From Vine to Glass

In winemaking, the delicate nature of the Riesling grape requires careful handling. Here at Mission Hill, once the fruit reaches the winery it is crushed and gently de-stemmed, and then fed to the vats where it sees a slow, temperature-controlled fermentation to preserve the mouthwatering fruit character of this grape.

To preserve the fresh quality of Riesling, the grapes are night harvested where possible and juice is chilled throughout the vinification process. Riesling fermentation usually takes place in temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks kept between 8-12°C. Unlike Chardonnays, most Rieslings do not undergo malolactic fermentation, which alters the lovely floral characteristics that make Riesling the special grape that it is.

### As Pure as It Gets

Few would dispute that Riesling does not like new oak; new wood generally stomps all over Riesling’s delicate flavours. Finally, Riesling generally prefers not to be blended with other grape varieties.

Riesling is on the rise, and there are many top Riesling estates in the world dedicated to pursuing the best quality from vine to wine. The world’s Riesling elite were on display at the bi-annual Riesling Rendezvous [info@rieslingrendezvous.com](mailto:info@rieslingrendezvous.com) in Seattle, WA. Here winemakers showcase their wines among the world’s great producers, share the alluring nature of Riesling with trade, media and consumers and exchange technical and aesthetic ideas with peers. The Okanagan was represented by Mission Hill.

TO PRESERVE THE FRESH QUALITY OF RIESLING, THE GRAPES ARE NIGHT HARVESTED WHERE POSSIBLE AND JUICE IS CHILLED THROUGHOUT THE VINIFICATION PROCESS.

## Out & About

### JOIN US ACROSS CANADA...

Les Dames d’Escoffier Scholarship Dinner  
Vancouver – June 28

Riesling Rendezvous  
Chateau Ste Michelle, WA – July 11-13

Food Day Canada  
Terrace Restaurant, Kelowna – July 31

Pino Posteraro & DiRoNA 20th Annual Gala  
Toronto – September 21

Sauder Family Legacy Series Dinner Fairmont,  
Vancouver – September 22

Chef Meets Grape  
Vancouver – September 23

Mission Hill Winemaker’s Dinner  
Sutton Place, Vancouver – September 28

## Back In The City: Feature Restaurant

Critically acclaimed to be among Canada’s best restaurants, Canoe’s unique tower top location affords breathtaking views of Toronto. The clean and simple, yet absolutely stylish room design is a brilliant reflection of this country’s rich raw environment. That same brilliance is captured through the flavours and textures of Chef Anthony Walsh’s inspired regional Canadian cuisine.

William Predhomme, senior sommelier, Canoe Restaurant + Bar notes “Canoe’s identity is built

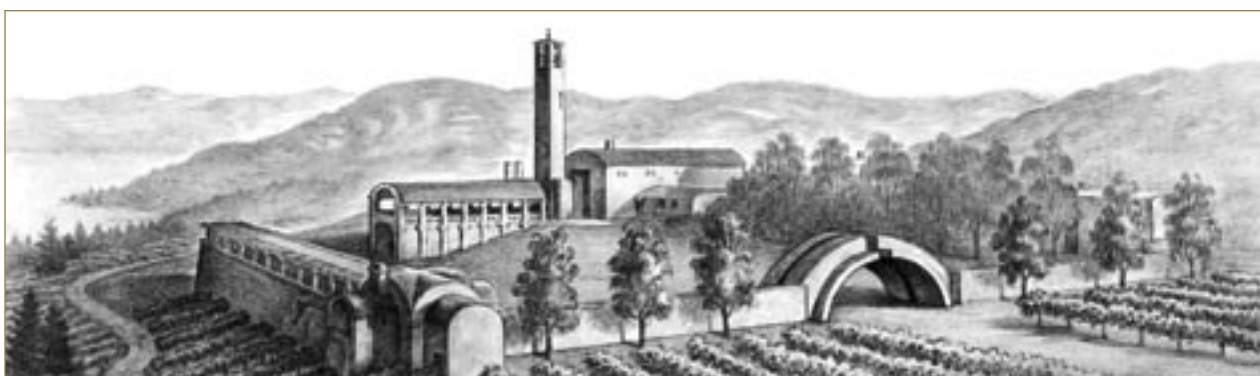
around Canadiana cuisine and wine and the wines of Mission Hill and BC offer the diversity and quality that’s required to make our concept a success. Ontario has been fortunate to see increasing availability of Mission Hill and other wines from British Columbia over the past few years. Mission Hill has been instrumental to the presence of quality BC wine in Ontario, a trend Canoe and Oliver & Bonacini is proud to support.”

“Canoe has poured Mission Hill wines by the

glass for several years”, said Predhomme. “We recently began offering the Five Vineyards Pinot Blanc by the glass at our Oliver & Bonacini Cafe Grill’s, something we’re very excited about, as now all five of our restaurants are pouring this fantastic example of the variety.

We’re very fortunate to host savvy diners and wine enthusiasts. We can confidently recommend Mission Hill and know that the wine will meet our guests’ refined tastes.”

# c a n o e



## From Our Cellar To Yours

Join our Wine Club and enjoy the convenience of fine wine delivered directly to your door. Members have access to library and pre-release wines as well as invitations to exclusive dinners, concerts, and member-only events hosted by our chief winemaker and sommelier.

Visit [www.missionhillwineclub.com](http://www.missionhillwineclub.com)