



A VIEW FROM THE HILLS

The Newsletter of Palatine Hills Estate Winery
November 2009 Vol. 2, Issue 2

To everything, there is a season. This one's Harvest!

"Will I only harvest some?" - Neil Young, Harvest

We harvested a lot! In a year of solid rain, it was to be expected that the grapes would be heavier than usual. What happens is that the grapes will absorb a lot of water in a wet season, and usually, this water disturbs the normal *véraison* - the process during which the acid in grapes turn into sugars.

However, with luck and good judgment, John Neufeld Jr in his first season as Vineyard Manager, has given us a very good harvest. In the vineyard business, the quality of the grape is often judged by the *brix* levels, the amount of sugar in the grape. We had some very good grapes, bringing in Baco Noir at 22.80 brix, Chardonnay at 21.10 and Gewurztraminer at 21.90, just to name a few.

Harvest is a hugely busy time - and this year made both a little tougher and a little easier simultaneously by the arrival of some much-needed new equipment. We brought in three cold fermenters, a new crusher/destemmer and a big new press. This equipment took a while for everyone to install and learn how to use (the press is computer automated), but we had to learn fast! An early frost meant no more time to leave the grapes on the vine to develop their sugars further. So it was a quick harvest for the white grapes. And as of this writing the majority of the reds are coming off now.



New Press (left), and the new crusher/destemmer (middle, with David Hojnoski, winemaker). At right, the very first hopper of grapes for the 2009 harvest goes up into the press. Many cold, hard days ahead!

Equipment, Pads and Infrastructure

Palatine Hills is on the move up. With a new tank pad, we've added six new stainless steel tanks with a total capacity of 540,000 litres. That takes us up well over 750,000 litres in total and well on the way to our goal of a million.

Modernization, refurbishment - in short, bringing everything up to date and ready for a new future, making great 100% VQA wines of uncompromising quality on a large volume basis. This is how we're going to make our wines attractively priced and easily available to all Ontario consumers.

This new equipment also means that we can continue to increase our capacity for making single-strength varietal grape juices for interprovincial export - in the process helping wineries in several parts of the country make great wines from a great base.



John Neufeld Jr and John Neufeld Sr inspect one of the six new stainless steel tanks upon arrival at the winery. Our capacity is now up another 540,000 litres.

Coming Events:

Taste the Season - every weekend in November, join us for Icewine and Thai spring roll, as part of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake tour package. Each winery is offering something different, fun and unusual. The tour ticket is only \$40 per person.



21 Stocking Days of Christmas - Make Niagara-on-the-Lake wine country your destination for holiday shopping and cellar stocking! You'll sample an exclusive selection of 21 wines available only at our cellar doors, some available in extremely limited supply for a short time only - great choices for gifting, collecting or to help celebrate the season!

Shopping? Don't forget our new line of embroidered ballcaps, t-shirts, vests and toques! Perfect for the PH fans!

A VIEW FROM THE HILLS

Hemingway The Polydactyl Cat...and his sidekick Merlot

In June, John Jr. brought a couple of new additions to the winery - two tiny kittens, both very pretty, but one with a difference. Hemingway has an extra paw on each front leg. Known as polydactylism, it's not as unusual as one might think. In fact, they are reasonably common in the southern U.S. and Ernest Hemingway preferred their company to the common kitty.

The eponymous museum to his memory in Key West has some 50 polydactyl cats, descendant from the days when The Man himself lived there.

Our cat's name was, therefore, predictable. He is joined at Palatine by his sister - a beautiful black and affectionate lady we've named Merlot (although any wine geek out there would know that a better name would have been Cahors).



Hemingway has two front paws - on each front leg.

Our Restaurant Friends

We would like to take a bit of space in this newsletter to thank those restaurants who have supported us for so long. As a winery in Ontario, we have only a few means to sell our products - our own Retail space, the LCBO and our Licensees. The restaurants play a big role in not just moving our product to the public but providing very and credible visibility to us. We thank you so much for your continued support.

More Than Ever, A Family Affair at Palatine Hills

As of September, and joining his brother John as a full-time member of the Neufeld Winemaking Team is Charles. A graduate of Eden School, and a sought-after rower, Charles has elected - as many high school students do - to take a year to do something different before university. To come and work on the family farm is a great thing to do, and Charles is a great addition.

SCRAPBOOK



David and the Fermenters. Sounds like a bluegrass band.



How happy are we when harvest is nearly over?
Key guy in the Cellar Kurt Meyer grins with the pleasure of harvest proceeding well.



John Digs His New Pad. This is where the six new stainless steel tanks will be placed.



John and Keith jockey a fermenter off the delivery truck using two lift trucks simultaneously to raise then lower this two-ton machine. Not a scratch!

The Holiday Season is fast approaching. If you'd like to give Palatine Hills products as gifts, or order in a supply for yourself, contact us at 905 646 9617. Cheers!