

## Portfolio Tasting at Between the Lines March 28, 2018 by Ingrid Merola



The Ontario Wine Society - Niagara Chapter members and guests spent a wonderful evening at Between the Lines Family Estate Winery in St. David's. Overall, it was a very enjoyable and educational evening, as the winemakers led members through an interesting flight of wines, sharing insights into winemaking and talking about the family history that led to the development of Between the Lines.

The winery is owned by brothers Yannick and Greg Wertsch. As young boys, they immigrated to Canada from Germany, with their family, and grew up working on the family's vineyard growing passionate about winemaking. Yannick and Greg rounded out their early family experiences with a formal education in winemaking and in 2010 opened Between the Lines on the site of the original family vineyard.

Family continues to play an important role in this winery, as guests had an opportunity to meet with Greg and Yannick's mother, who participated in the evening and chatted with guests about her own journey to Canada, the development of the vineyard and eventually, her sons' winery.



The evening first began with a lovely sparkling Vidal, “Outset”, as the reception wine, served out of individually-sized serving cans. Between the Lines has found this unique presentation of wine is quite popular, offering consumers an opportunity to open a single serving can without the need to open an entire bottle, an inviting option particularly as we head into picnic season! While sipping the wine, members enjoyed a lovely charcuterie platter prepared by Chef Brad Rempel.



**Our hosts owners Greg and Yannick Wertch with Lisa Suarez, marketing and assistant winemaker.**

After initial welcome and introductions, Yannick and Greg, with the assistant wine maker, Lisa Suarez-Tadus, introduced members to a wonderful flight of wines. The tasting started with a 2016 Riesling, and an interesting overview of the many factors Greg and Yannick take into consideration as they work to produce a quality Riesling. In the context of that discussion, the brothers discussed the importance of the terroir, the unique characteristics of their particular vineyards and their focus on flavor.



**The tasting wines.**

The tasting continued with a Pinot Noir, Chardonnay Reserve, a Cabernet Merlot, a Lemberger Reserve and a Pinot Noir. Greg and Yannick led us carefully through each of these wines, pointing out interesting highlights about each of the varieties.

The Cabernet Leon comes from one of Between the Lines’ oldest vineyard, with vines that are 20 years old. The location of this vineyard, and the higher temperatures it experiences, has had a huge impact on the flavor development, with hints of plum and blueberry. Interestingly, this wine is named after Yannick’s son, Leon, a family tradition they intend to continue, with wines named for all of the children in the family. The family experience continues into the next generation.

Greg and Yannick were particularly excited to introduce guests to the Lemberger Reserve, a unique variety with a significant history and popularity in Europe, presenting with lots of potential in the Niagara area, as the

growing conditions here are ideal for this grape. Their decision to produce this wine highlighted the significant investment and patience required by winemakers to bring a wine to production and enjoyed at its optimal age. The Lemberger vines took almost 8 years to reach production, from the time the cuttings were received to the time the vines matured and wine produced. Once released, the wine requires further time for aging before reaching its optimal aging.

The tasting ended perfectly with a Vidal ice wine, paired with an apple/brie pastry prepared by Chef Brad Rempel. The pastry was finished with a glaze developed with the Vidal ice wine, resulting in a delicious pairing experience.



After the presentation, members made their way to the gift shop and tasting room, along a lovely torch lit pathway, where wonderful food and another tasting awaited. Members tasted a Cabernet Franc ice wine and a selection of Chef Brad's hot appetizers, including prime rib sliders, Thai skewered chicken, roasted vegetable flatbreads, spanakopita, as well as incredible dessert offerings of crème brûlée, Tiramisu parfaits and hand dipped chocolates. Thanks to Brad for this delicious menu.



Many thanks to Between the Lines – Yannick, Greg and Lisa - for their incredible generosity and the time they took to prepare a wonderful tasting experience. Each guest was presented with a can of “Outset” wine as a favor to take home and members received a 15% discount on all purchases by members that evening.

Between the Lines is also our newest Industry Partner. We welcome them to the Ontario Wine Society community and we know members will continue the relationship we started with Yannick, Greg and Lisa, as we plan more visits to the winery in the future.

For more photos of this event by Niagara Chapter's photographer, Bruce Jackson, visit:  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/photoshopplake/albums/72157665253740977>