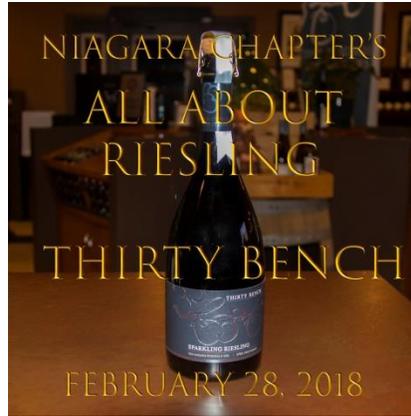


All About Riesling at Thirty Bench Wine Makers by F.G. Couch



Niagara Chapter members and guests enjoyed a very interesting and informative event at Thirty Bench Wine Makers in Beamsville. The reception wine was a bone dry Sparkling Riesling with flavours of citrus and green apple. To go with the wine, Steve and Jacqueline of Zooma Caters provided some delicious hors d'oeuvres. This was a perfect way to start our evening.



After the reception, the group was introduced to Emma Garner, the award-winning winemaker at Thirty Bench who would lead us through a tasting of six different Rieslings. Before we started, Emma gave us a brief history of Thirty Bench. She told us how original owner, Dr. Tom Muckle first planted Riesling in 1980 and between 1980 and 1989 he planted 23 acres of Riesling on the south side of the winery. In 2005 Andrew Peller Limited purchased Thirty Bench and the tradition of making amazing Rieslings carried on. Our focus would be on Riesling but Thirty Bench also makes other varietals including some superb red wines.



We started with four wines from the 2015 vintage – Small Lot, Steel Post Vineyard; Small Lot, Wood Post Vineyard; Small Lot, Wild Cask (from the Triangle Vineyard); and the Winemaker’s Riesling – a blend of all three previously mentioned wines. Emma told us that the 2015 vintage was a warmer one and produced some amazing Rieslings. The Steel post was the driest with a slight hint on petrol on the nose. The Wild Cask was slightly off-dry. The name refers to part of the wine being fermented in neutral-barrels using wild, indigenous yeast. There was no real consensus as to which wine was the group favourite but we all agreed that they were all amazing Rieslings.



We were in for a real treat when we got to try two library wines – the 2006 and the 2007 Small Lot Riesling Wood Post Vineyard. Both these wines show how well Rieslings can age and the group agreed that they were both amazing. Unfortunately, the 2007 is no longer available but the group had the opportunity to purchase a bottle of the 2006.



After the tasting, Zooma Caters brought out some more delicious food including an egg and bacon terrine, thin crust flatbread pizzas, lemon and chicken penne, French beans in chili sauce and a tri-colour slaw with creamy dressing. As the food was being served, we got to try the 2016 Special Select Late Harvest Vidal – 86% Vidal with 14% Riesling. A perfect ending to the event.



From the smiles on their faces, Jim and Helen Lelevicius really enjoyed the evening. Thanks to Niagara Chapter member, Marg Davison for suggesting this event, Sue & Fred Couch for planning and Fiona Muckle, Estate Manager and her staff for organizing as well as setting up this very enjoyable event. Thank-you, also, to Zooma Caters for the delicious food and especially Emma Garner for leading the group and presenting her amazing Rieslings. Be sure to check out the Thirty Bench website for more information - <http://www.thirtybench.com/>

Photos are by Niagara Chapter photographer, Bruce Jackson. More of Bruce's photos can be seen at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/photoshopplake/albums/72157693418440844>