

Three Wineries – Two Winemakers at Legends by F.G. Couch



On a warm, summer evening in June, over 50 people attended a very interesting event at Legends Winery in Beamsville. On the invitation, we asked our members, “what do Karlo Estates Winery, Legends Winery and Meldville Wines have in common?” The answer, of course, was Derek Barnett. Derek is the winemaker for Karlo Estates in Prince Edward County and he makes his own wine, Meldville Wines at Legends!



Prior to the sit down tasting, we had two reception wines – Legends Sparkling Rosé (a Chardonnay-based wine using Méthode Cuvé Close) and a 2016 Meldville Sauvignon Blanc. To go with the wines, Chef Brad Rempel prepared delicious cheese and charcuterie platters. Derek also poured his Meldville Pinot Noir as a nice surprise for the group.



After the reception we proceeded to the banquet room for a sit down tasting of nine wines. The presenters were Paul Lizak (President of Legends Winery), Serge Papineau (Legend’s winemaker)

and Derek Barnett (winemaker for Karlo Estates and his own virtual winery – Meldville Wines). Paul welcomed everyone and gave us a brief history of Legends. He told us that Legends Estates Winery started in 1999 although the Lizak family has owned the property since 1946. The first grape wine was produced in 2002. There are currently 45 acres on the property and most of the wines are made from grapes on the property with very little outside purchasing.



We started the tasting with a flight of white wines. Derek started with the 2017 Karlo Pinot Grigio. This is a 100% County wine from grapes grown in the Lake on the Mountain area. This is a dry wine with a refreshing pear taste and a nice balance of acidity. There was no barrel contact – only 100% stainless steel. Serge introduced himself to the group and went on to describe the Legends 2013 Semillon. He mentioned that very few wineries in the Niagara area are producing a Semillon. The 2013 is dry with a nice balance of acid. He suggested this would be a perfect wine to go with seafood. Derek then returned to talk about his own Meldville Wines. The name comes from Derek's family home in Swinford, England. His wines are made at the Legend's facility. He started out with three wines and is currently producing five wines. Our first Meldville wine was the 2016 Chardonnay. This is 100% barrel fermented with 2-4 year old French oak.



Our next flight included three red wines: a 2016 Karlo Lake on the Mountain Pinot Noir. The crop was harvested early. It's a lighter style with malolactic and natural fermentation. This is a very elegant wine and well worth the \$35 price tag. Our next wine was the 2012 Legends Malbec Reserve. This was a very small production of only 200 cases. The vineyard is very close to the lake and the wine was light in colour with a nice smokiness and plummy flavour. Serge told us that Malbec is only produced in good years using the best grapes available. The first Meldville red was the 2015 Cabernet Franc. Derek sourced the grapes from the Lincoln-Lakeshore sub-appellation. The wine was fermented in older French oak barrels with some American barrels as well. The wine had herbaceous and raspberry aromas.

Our second flight of reds included a Karlo 2017 Marquette. Derek told us that Marquette is a cold climate wine with a smoky, earthy aroma. I described it as “yummy”. The wine would go very well with smoked meats and would hold up well with a dish with tomato sauce. We went on to try the Legends 2012 Merlo Reserve. Again, this was a limited production of only 200 cases. The wine had a very ripe fruit and spicy aroma. Serge used a combination of new and older oak barrels. The wine spent 20 months in the barrel. Legends currently has six acres of Merlot on the estate. Our last wine was the Meldville 2106 Syrah. Derek told us that Syrah does well in a few places in Niagara such as in some areas on the bench and on the Lakeshore by the Niagara Parkway. This Syrah had a nice aroma of dark fruit with a hint of anise.



After the formal tasting and as the food was being served, Derek treated us to a taste of the Karlo 2016 VanAlstine Red. This is a fortified wine (Port style) made with Frontenac Noir with a spicy black berry and cassis aroma.



While we were tasting wines, Chef Brad was busy in his trailer preparing some of the delicious dishes served later in the evening. The food included Rumaki (bacon wrapped chicken thighs), prime rib sliders, spanakopita and feta & herb-stuffed mushrooms. Desserts included squares, pastries, fruit and Belgian chocolates. This was perfect ending to our evening at Legends.

Thanks to Paul for hosting the Niagara Chapter, Serge and Derek for choosing and presenting the wines and Chef Brad for his delicious food.

Photos are by Niagara Chapter photographer, Bruce Jackson. More of Bruce's photos can be seen at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/photosophlake/albums/72157698480329855>