

# TRIVIA NIGHT EVENT AT CALAMUS ESTATE WINERY, OCTOBER 16, 2019

By Dee McLeavey



Who knew that a Wine Trivia Night could be so much fun! This is what members of the Niagara Chapter of the Ontario Wine Society discovered as they demonstrated their excellent knowledge of wine and the wineries of Niagara.

The event was held at Calamus Estate Winery, which was recently bought by Peter and Rosalee Van-Helsdingen. The new owners have expanded the facility to include a Bistro and Wedding venue on the property.

Members and their guests were welcomed by Niagara Chapter executive members (Sue & Fred Couch) and Dan Martin, a member of the chapter and employee of Calamus. To begin the evening, members were treated to a sparkling wine defined by its name “Crackle”, accompanied by cheese & fruit tray.



At 7 p.m. the guests moved downstairs to view the Wine Cellar and were formally introduced to the winery owner, Peter Van-Helsdingen (left) and Winemaker Kevin Panagapka (right). Peter warmly welcomed everyone, reviewed the history of Calamus and shared his philosophy for producing the best wines in Niagara. He also shared with the group a unique process he calls Double Barrel, which has already produced a wonderful Cabernet Sauvignon, carrying the namesake of Peter's father, William.



The Double Barrel Cabernet Sauvignon is first matured over 2 years in French oak barrels and then matured a further 4 months in a True Kentucky Whisky barrel to build additional layers of complexity, making a richer, deeper, and smoother taste.

While answering questions about Calamus and its' wine making, Peter and Kevin treated members to a cellar/barrel tasting of the new double-barrel Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine was withdrawn directly from the barrel and decanted into wine glasses. Members were asked to note the wine withdrawn directly from the barrel was unfiltered and an opportunity later in the evening to sample the same wine in its filtered version would provide an interesting tasting comparison.

Members also had the chance to smell fermenting Chardonnay, still in the barrel. Having removed the cork from the top of one barrel, members took turns sniffing the aroma arising from the fermentation process; a new experience for some members.



The group then proceeded upstairs to the top level of the Calamus Heritage Barn, built in the 1800's-era, where a Charcuterie/Cheese Platter awaited them for some additional nourishment before the Wine Trivia games would begin.



Guests were assigned to one of 5 wine-themed tables, where they worked as a team to answer various trivia questions. Trivia rounds included wine related questions, challenges requiring the matching of wineries with winemakers/owners, and even a CD music round. So much excitement and fun during the avid competition, especially the music round where many were dancing in their seats and singing along. Each trivia round included a question specific to one of the wines offered for tasting at the tables. Once each round was completed, Dan Martin provided a brief review of the highlights of the wine in question.



*Dan Martin, from Calamus, who is also an OWS member, talked about each of the tasting wines.*



*Each round was accompanied by a wine with a question associated with it.*

Tallies were taken after each round and posted on an awesome poster board designed by Margaret Jackson, and the running total was tabulated after each tasting.



*Competition was intense.*



*The trivia night consisted of 6 rounds of questions. It was moderated by Bruce Jackson. Marg Jackson marked the answer papers and Dee looked after the question sheets and wrote the scores on the board.*

Competition was fierce but fun, and by the end of the tally 2 teams - Pinot Gris and Chardonnay were set in a tie. Each member of the two winning teams was awarded a bottle of Calamus Meritage Wine.



Bruce Jackson was the Wine Trivia “Quizmaster” and did an amazing job of asking questions and providing musical scores. A big thank you to Bruce for all of his efforts in making this such a fun event.

Since this was such a strenuous brain exercise, all competitors were treated to an array of delicious pizzas, amazing salad, and fruit and dessert tray to restore their depleted energy.



The Niagara Chapter wish to thank Calamus owner Peter Van-Helsdingen, and Kevin Panagapka; the hosts of the evening, whose friendly manner made us feel welcome and answered all of our questions in such a relaxed atmosphere.

A special thank you as well to event planners, Bruce and Margaret Jackson, Dee McLeavey, and to Dan Martin who assisted the planners in their organization of the event.

Photos were taken by OWS Niagara Chapter members Bruce Jackson and Elaine B. Peters. More photos of the event can be viewed at:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/photoshophlake/albums/72157711405624946>