

# BC WINE CLUB NEWS

## Great Un-expectations

It is a bright evening, but here, a long shadow is cast. The smell of damp pavement pervades, coexisting with the sites and sounds of the deep city. Does this back lane really lead to one of the hottest wine scenes BC has to offer? A glance to the crowd overtaking us, of-the-moment fashionistas all of them, coupled with a chalked graffiti salt shaker etched on a nearby brick wall clarifies our situation - we're steps from the Vancouver hot spot, 'Salt Tasting Room'!

Finding great things in unexpected places is a definite thrill! Salt's General Manager, Kurtis Kolt, knows this and his backroom-chic establishment, situated in Blood Alley, certainly delivers that delight. This isn't some hokey, funky up space (you know the kind, all design, no substance), this place has great, artful eats, paired with interesting, flavourful wines, all served by a ridiculously wonderful and intelligent staff. It reminds one, simultaneously, of an old Commercial Drive deli, Yaletown (circa 1994), and the West End of London (today). Flavourful, fabulous, and fun.



Perhaps one of the most interesting facts about Salt can be found in its full name, which includes the qualifier 'Tasting Room' - not restaurant. Truth be known, if you're looking for the full meal deal, you've stumbled down the wrong alley. Salt is a tasting experience. They do not have a kitchen. Instead, they offer up a cornucopia of taste with cured meats, spectacular cheeses and condiments galore. You (or, if you prefer, they) choose from their ever-changing blackboard listings to create a taste sensation uniquely yours. Then there is the wine. Salt has a seriously good selection and a fondness for BC brands. You can have it by the glass, the bottle, or a tasting flight if you so choose. If you like surprises of the good sort, let their staff choose a wine pairing or two. We still have fond memories of a clever Venturi Schultz 'Sassi' and Comte pairing, and a match made in heaven - an Oliver Twist Kerner served alongside Finocchiona and apples (many thanks to Brooke Delves & Alex Thornley for those wonders).



Like the thrill we experienced back in '07 upon finding Salt, the discovery of this month's feature winery, Skimmerhorn, was no less a joy. After all, when one thinks of wine country, the Kootenays usually don't register, but several comments about this winery from friends and colleagues made us take a closer look at this out of the way gem.

Impressed? You bet we were! So, this month we're in the mood to share. We invite you to sit back, sip, and enjoy an unexpected treasure...from a very unexpected place.

## A Founding Fugitive, French Cuisine & Foch Discover what makes one of Canada's newest wine regions Fabulous

Volume 2  
Issue 10

### This Month's Feature Winery



### Inside this issue:

Great Un-expectations	1
Skimmerhorn The Trailblazers	2 & 3
-Lee McNish's Summer On-the-Go Food Pairing	4
-Wine Event Update	

## On The Side

With Chef Lee McNish

Lee McNish is currently creating fabulous fare for the cast and crew of the upcoming major motion picture *Farewell Atlantis*. As a result, Lee's column will not appear this month. Lee has, however, created this terrific on-the-go summer pairing to compliment Skimmerhorn's cool climate wines.

This recipe is fast and easy and can be prepared ahead of time so you can bring it along with you and cook it beach side, on a fire pit, or directly on a B.B.Q.

### Ciopinno or Fresh Fisherman's Stew

- 8 litre Pot with Lid
- 1 lb peeled Prawns
- 1 lb Scallops
- 2 lbs fresh Mussels (washed)
- 2 lbs fresh Clams (washed)
- 1 lb fresh Wild Salmon (cubed)
- 2 lbs crab Claws
- 1 lb cleaned Calamari
- 2 Lobster Tails (cut into 4 pieces each)
- 1 Red Pepper (sliced)
- 1 whole Fennel (sliced thin)
- 1 tsp. chopped Garlic
- 2 Tomatoes (chopped)
- 2 Green Onions (sliced)
- 3 Jalapeno (sliced)
- Pinch Saffron
- 1 cup White Wine
- 2 cups Vegetable Stock
- 1/8 lb Butter
- Sea Salt & Fresh Pepper
- Garlic Toast (optional)

This recipe is to be layered so that all ingredients are cooked at the same time. Once you put the covered pot onto the heat - DO NOT STIR. Slice the butter and spread over the bottom of an 8 litre pot. Add the following ingredients in layers, fennel then scallops, prawns, shellfish, peppers, onions, tomatoes, garlic, jalapenos, calamari, saffron and finally put the cubed salmon and lobster on top. Pour in the wine and stock, add salt & pepper. Put on the lid and bring to low boil for 3 minutes - then serve. Serves 6-8

A Perfect Pair

By Lee McNish

## Wine Event Update

Morning Bay Vineyard & Estate Winery presents "Winestock 2008"

Fine Food - Fine Music - Fine Wine

Catch Stellar Band of Neighbours (featuring members of Tragically Hip, Grapes of Wrath, the Odds, Doug & the Slugs), Spirit of the West (original trio), From New York City: Dave Rave, Wyckham Porteuos, Bill Bourne, T. Nile, and the all star backing band The Morning Bay City Rollers

Saturday, August 30th, Noon to 8 pm on Pender Island

Tickets: \$25.00 per person, \$50.00 family www.morningbay.ca ph. 250-629-8351



## Trailblazers



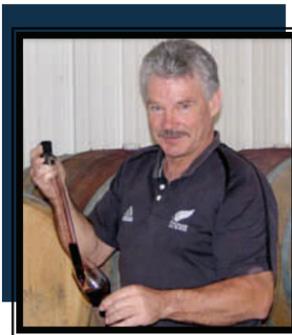
For Al & Marleen Hoag, there was never a question one could grow grapes in the Creston Valley of BC. After all, people have grown tree fruit and berries in this fertile and warm valley for over a century. In fact, Al explains, this area is frost free between 165 and 170 days a year and, unbelievably, the crops here have never been completely decimated by extreme weather conditions. Having owned and managed tree fruit orchards in this area (just west of the Purcell Mountain Range) for decades, the Hoags know a thing or two about this terroir. Therefore, making a foray into the wine business in this new and previously untested region (at least commercially) made sense for this family.

In 2003, the Hoags purchased 20 acres of prime land and Al, in his self described "pragmatic and logical way", studied which of the hardier varieties would grow and thrive in this climate. He decided on Maréchal Foch, Gewurztraminer, Ortega, Pinot Noir and Gris. Then, together with their ever-helpful children, Geordon & Rachel, as well as Al's father Ken, the Hoags planted 14 acres - reserving 3 acres for futures. The resulting vineyard and winery was named Skimmerhorn - a trailblazer to be sure, in this land of opportunity.

Growing the grapes was one thing, crafting them into wine is quite another. The Hoags knew the caliber of wine they were looking for could only be created by a world class winemaker and they found just that in Mark Rattray. Rattray, a Geisenheim-trained winemaker and New Zealand winery owner, agreed to consult for Al and Marleen for several months each year during his country's off season.

Marleen characterizes Mark as "...an awesomely good guy who has done everything in his power to make this venture work for us.". Not only has Rattray created Skimmerhorn's fantastic first vintages, he has also worked to train Al in this difficult discipline. In Hoag, Mark certainly found a good student and one who was most definitely up for a challenge. As Marleen puts it, "He really understands science, and with wine, it's very much like chemistry, so Al does well with it."

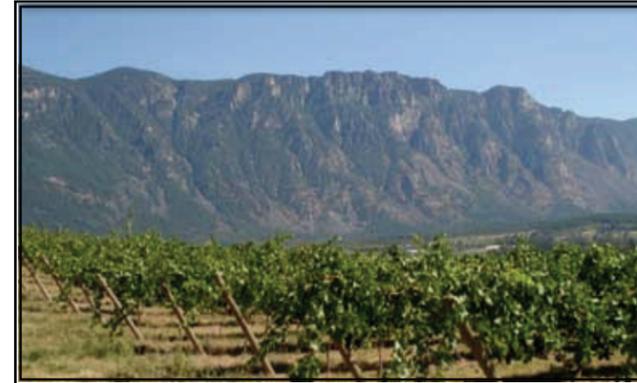
Now it would appear this 'chemistry', a mix of Southern know-how and terrific Northern terroir, has created some truly fine wine - wines the Hoags certainly hope you will enjoy!



## At Skimmerhorn, you can take a step back in time...



Step into the Skimmerhorn wine shop and find yourself in the classic era of the 1940's. The themed décor, with it's fieldstone fireplace, delicate linens and accoutrements taken right out of an old Sears catalog, brings back the warmth of yesteryear. The only thing more inviting are the warm smiles of your hosts.



## Who says you can't change?

Historians who have followed the story of Frank Skimmerhorn might just beg to differ. Legend has it that Skimmerhorn was a 19th century fugitive from the US. Upon arriving in the area of Creston, he promptly changed his ways and became a much respected citizen of his new home. So impressive were his contributions to local society, many landmarks, including the impressive mountains pictured here, bear his name. Obviously, in Skimmerhorn's mind, this truly was a land of opportunity!

## A Touch of Provence in the Kootenays

You're not in France and those aren't the French Alps, but the amazing meal before you is definitely French styled cuisine. Welcome to Skimmerhorn's Bistro at the Vineyard where master chef, Geoff Little, serves up gorgeous and savoury delights. Having crafted cuisine for some of the finest restaurants in Fernie and Lake Louise, Little now creates his magic in the Creston Valley. So if you're in the area, and the weather is warm, drop by for a meal that is simply manifique!



## Our Selections for August from Skimmerhorn

### Feature Red

*Skimmerhorn*

Maréchal Foch  
2006

'88 pts' - John Schreiner



### Feature White

*Skimmerhorn*

Ortega  
2006



### Companion Red

*Skimmerhorn*

Pinot Noir  
2006

'86 pts' - John Schreiner

