

APRIL 21, 2018

WINE & DINE

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Drink it all in



Quails' Gate Viognier 2017 (\$24)



Chasselas Pinot Blanc Pinot Gris (\$18)



Quails' 2017 Gewurztraminer (\$16)



Orchard Block Gewurztraminer (\$21)



Quails' 2017 Dry Riesling (\$16)



Fort Berens 2017 Pinot Gris (\$18)



Fort Berens 2017 Riesling (\$18)



Fort Berens 2017 rose (\$18)



Blue Mountain 2009 Reserve Brut (\$40)



Blue Mountain Chardonnay (\$21)



CedarCreek 2017 Riesling (\$19)



CedarCreek 2017 Pinot Gris (\$19)



50th Parallel 2015 Pinot Noir (\$29)



50th Parallel 2017 rose (\$20)



50th Parallel 2016 Chardonnay (\$35)

I love this time of year. Okanagan wineries are tripping all over themselves to release new wine in time for the flood of attention and events of the **Spring Okanagan Wine Festival**, May 3-13.

As such, there's myriad wines to taste, enjoy and write about.

Five from Quails' Gate

The portfolio at West Kelowna's **Quails' Gate Winery** is so extensive it releases its new wines in waves.

A couple of weeks ago, I profiled **Quails' Gate 2017 Chenin Blanc** (\$20), **Lucy's Block rose 2017** (\$25), regular **2017 rose**, **Boucherie Mountain Vineyard Riesling 2017** (\$30) and **2016 Pinot Noir** (\$27).

This week, five more 2017 whites dropped.

Quails' Gate is the only winery in the Okanagan to craft a blend from the Swiss-grape **Chasselas with Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris** (\$18).

Its uniqueness shines after being cold fermented in stainless steel tanks to produce an aromatic sipper with nose and flavours of apple, pear and nectarine.

The **2017 Dry Riesling** (\$16) is light, but complex, with abundant lime and green apple aromas and tastes.

Viognier is often billed as a nice alternative to Chardonnay.

However, Quails' Gate's **2017 Shannon Pacific Viognier** (\$24) doesn't have to be a stand-in for anything.

It's distinctly spectacular as a full-bodied and exotic aromatic with a perfumed nose of jasmine, honeysuckle and orange blossom with flavours of nectarine, peach and ginger.

The winery's regular **2017 Gewurztraminer** (\$16) is classic of the varietal with nose and flavours of lychee, guava and ginger.

Quails' Gate amps up its Gewurztraminer game with the **2017 Orchard Block** (\$21) single-vineyard expression of the grape.

This wine is fuller bodied than the regular and more complex with the addition of rose petal and orange blossom aromas and more peach, nectarine and spice flavours.

Textbook CedarCreek

Expect textbook **Riesling** with CedarCreek's 2017 (\$19) edition of this Germany variety, that's also happy to be known as the king of grapes.

It's a low-alcohol perfect balance of acidity and sweetness that delivers fresh whiffs and tastes of lemon, lime and peach.

The **2017 Pinot Gris** (\$19) is styled after wines made in the Alsace region of France, which are influenced by close proximity to Germany.

A portion of the wine was also aged in oak to add some extra richness to a wine that combines pear, nectarine and baked apple strudel aromas and tastes with aplomb.

CedarCreek is also gearing up for spring wine festival at its Lakeshore Road location in Kelowna.

Taste the 2017 releases for free anytime between 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. during the entire fest.

On May 5, CedarCreek along with its **Lakeshore Wine Route** neighbours, **Summerhill Pyramid, St. Hubertus** and **Tantalus**, is hosting its annual dog-friendly **Unleashed** party.

Bring your pooch and visit any, or all, of the properties for wine-and-canape-paired tastings and activities for canines.

Donations will be accepted for the SPCA.

Looking a little farther out, CedarCreek is starting up lunch service and moving its **Vineyard Terrace Restaurant** to its outdoor pavillion June 1.

The temporary, albeit stunning, location is



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Fill'er Up

necessary while construction is completed on the winery's new year-round restaurant.

Home Block is so named because it overlooks the winery's home block of vineyard, rose garden and Okanagan Lake.

The construction will also result in a new tasting room and shop, ready sometime late summer or early fall.

From Lillooet

It's a good news-bad news story for **Fort Berens'** 2017 releases.

The Fraser Canyon's only winery had a challenging growing season, including a cool and wet spring, delayed grape vine shoot development and no rain for three months during a long and hot summer.

The result was a grape harvest 30 per cent lower than usual.

However, the reduced crop from the vineyards in Lillooet produced smaller berries bursting with concentrated flavours.

And that has shown up in the new release wines.

The **2017 Pinot Gris** (\$18) is a rich and juicy byproduct of most of the fruit being fermented in stainless steel tanks, but 15 per cent also seeing some time in oak barrels.

It all makes for a medium-bodied wines with extra texture to its pineapple, beach and mango profile.

Slightly off-dry, but zippy, the **2017 Riesling** (\$18) serves up pear, pineapple, lychee, apple and lime aromas and flavours.

The 80 per cent Pinot Noir and 20 per cent Gamay blend built a robust **2017 rose** (\$18).

Dry and vibrant pink, its profile of strawberries and cream is delicate enough to be paired with salads and light

cheeses, but lively enough to match with barbecue.

After two years as sous chef, **Jean-Sebastien Ouellette** will be taking over as executive chef when Fort Berens' **Kitchen** opens for the season May 18.

Ouellette's background includes time cooking in France, Italy and Whistler and a passion for small-town living, mountains and pairing wine with local ingredients.

The **Kitchen** will be open daily for lunch and on the weekends for dinner and special even

Blue Mountain

The Mavety family is doing amazing things at **Blue Mountain Vineyard and Cellars** in Okanagan Falls.

Grapes for all wines are grown on the property overlooking Vaseux Lake and winemaker **Matt Mavety** turns them into expressive vintages.

The Champagne-method **2009 Reserve Brut** (\$40) benefited from aging in the cellar and is now drinking beautifully with a fine mousse backed by citrus, strawberry and toast aromas and flavours.

An elegant blend of wine from new and used oak barrels and stainless steel tanks allows minerality, peach, citrus and lemon curd to jump from the glass with the **2016 Chardonnay** (\$21).

50th Parallel

My wife and I took a mini-road trip Sunday to **50th Parallel**, Lake Country's most far flung winery.

It was worth the little extra drive to taste the new releases.

Some surprising, but welcome, pomegranate flavours emerge from the **2017 rose** (\$20) along with strawberry, watermelon, vanilla and rose hips.

From a full year in new and neutral French oak barrels, the **2016 Chardonnay** (\$35) has emerged full-bodied and California-style-complex with a nose and tastes of pineapple, butterscotch, brioche and toasted cashews.

The **2015 Pinot Noir** (\$29) gives you raspberry to start, followed by some dried herbs and anise.

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