

Winter 2017

# CCOVInews

A newsletter from  
the Cool Climate Oenology  
and Viticulture Institute



## Online continuing education course breaks new ground for wine industry

Brock University's continuing education offerings are going digital, and when the [Certificate in Ontario Wine online course](#) begins next month, it will also be the Ontario wine industry's first integrated online program specific to Ontario wine.

Offered by CCOVI, the course is designed for a wide audience, from wine enthusiasts to professionals working in a winery, hospitality or retail sales environment.

The five-week program will see students study alongside peers under course designer and instructor Marc Pistor, an Ontario winemaker who is also a Brock Oenology and Viticulture alumnus (BSc '06).

Using an interactive format that includes videos, forums and chat discussions, students will put in about six hours of work each week around their own schedule. They will receive suggestions and recommendations on Ontario wines to taste and will be able to discuss and share their tasting notes with their classmates.

Graduates will receive official certification through CCOVI at Brock University and are also eligible to write the Wine Council of Ontario Certification (if not already completed).

"In Niagara there are options and opportunities for wine education but beyond our region, those opportunities are limited," said Pistor. "Creating this course helps to get the word out about Ontario wine across the province."

The course will run five times each year in February, April, June, August and October. Registration is \$195.

"This is the first online course of its kind," said Barb Tataric, CCOVI's manager of continuing education. "Offering this course online will remove both geographical and time barriers for people interested in a formal introduction to Ontario wine."

Industry partners including VQA Ontario welcome the new course, and are looking forward to working with CCOVI to increase consumer knowledge about VQA wines said Laurie Macdonald, VQA Ontario's Executive Director.

"Consumers will benefit from a better understanding of Ontario's diverse regions including the role grape origin plays in the character and taste of our wines," Macdonald said.

During a pilot run of the course, students were able to test the system and work through the course material.

"I would recommend this course to anyone working, or aspiring to work in the Ontario wine industry as this course would be hugely beneficial," said trial participant Malcolm Lamont, LCBO Product Consultant in St. Catharines.

Taylor Magee, Assistant Cellar Master at Cave Spring Cellars, also took part in the trial course says the course provides a complete picture of the Ontario industry.

"This is a great course for people who appreciate the industry and want



CCOVI continuing education manager Barb Tataric reviews the online Certificate in Ontario Wine course with designer and instructor Marc Pistor.

to learn more," Magee said. "As my career grows, I can use the basic understanding I learned from this course."

Registration for the February session closes January 27 and the course begins February 11. For more details visit: [ccovi.ca/ce/node/2833](http://ccovi.ca/ce/node/2833)

### What's inside

Kestrels as crop cops?	2
Winemakers get in on Fizz Club	2
Research Café showcases graduate work	3
A frosty inquiry brings winemaker back to Brock	3
2017 CCOVI Lecture Series lineup	4
Cider production course to launch this spring	4

## Kestrels as crop cops? It's an award-winning idea

A project involving Brock researchers – in which kestrels protect orchards and vineyards from fruit-eating birds – has won a prestigious award from the Ontario government.

Each year Ontario growers lose more than \$24-million worth of fruit to wild birds. Seeking ways to protect crops, the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association (OFVGA) partnered with CCOVI researchers to install nesting boxes for the American kestrel near orchards and corn fields.

Researchers hit on the idea because these birds of prey feed on smaller bird species as well as insects, mice and voles. Plus, notoriously territorial kestrels drive other birds out of their territory, which could be more than a kilometer in range.

The low-cost approach seems to be working, as nuisance bird populations dropped 20 to 30 per cent in places where nesting boxes were installed. And besides enjoying bigger harvests, farmers can also feel good about helping reverse the decline of kestrels in Ontario.

The clever initiative has been selected for a Regional Premier's Award for Agri-Food Innovation Excellence, which recognizes the innovative contributions of the research.

CCOVI viticulturist Jim Willwerth has been working on the file for four growing seasons. He and technician Mary Jasinski have monitored bird pressure, deterrent methods and bird damage at trial sites.

"This award recognizes OFVGA's commitment to research new ways to reduce crop loss in agriculture," said Willwerth, "and demonstrates how strong partnerships between industry and research institutions such as Brock can produce



Farmer's friend: A kestrel leaves its nesting box at a research trial site.

innovative solutions."

Willwerth said many bird deterrents have mixed results. Methods like bird bangers make for poor relations with neighbours, while netting is cumbersome, costly and difficult to remove when growers need to harvest quickly. And as birds become accustomed to different deterrence methods, they become less effective over time.

"This project has been a true collaborative effort with Jim and Mary from Brock conducting the research," said apple grower and OFVGA member Brian Gilroy. "For fruit and vegetable farmers, predators are challenging to deal with and we greatly appreciate the relationship we have developed between OFVGA and Brock."

The OFVGA plans to invest the award's \$5,000 prize back into bird deterrent research at Brock.

The OFVGA's Susan Fitzgerald, the project coordinator, called the kestrel initiative a natural approach to what has been a stubborn problem.

"Crop losses and damage can be very frustrating and disheartening to growers," she said, "especially in crops where margins are already slim."

In addition to grapes, the research team is examining the effectiveness of this deterrent strategy in other fruit crops including cherries and blueberries.

## Winemakers get in on 'secret' Fizz Club

In December, 40 of Canada's top sparkling winemakers journeyed to Brock for a clandestine meeting that has come to be known as Fizz Club. No media or sales agents here: this off-the-record gathering is where industry professionals compare notes, discuss production and talk candidly in a closed-door setting.

Organized by CCOVI and led by oenologist Belinda Kemp, the meeting also gives winemakers the opportunity to hear about research developments and openly discuss issues relating to sparkling wine production.

This year's fourth annual Fizz Club focused on rosé sparkling wine, drawing attendees from across Ontario and Quebec, while one British Columbia winemaker sent in wines for feedback.

Bernard Richet, an expert from France's Institut Oenologique de Champagne, also spoke for more than an hour about techniques that European winemakers use to deal with the delicate challenges of holding the colour and fruity flavours in rosé sparkling wines.

For Marc Théberge, a sparkling winemaker from Quebec, attending Fizz Club gave him an opportunity to hear insights in Ontario trends.

"It's always fun to hear different perspectives," Théberge said. "It was nice to be able to see production trends in Ontario rosé and the differences between our provinces."

## Brock to host industry seminars

This spring, CCOVI will host two workshops of interest to the grape and wine industry.

On March 21, Laffort USA, Hunter Bottling and Cork Supply USA will come to Brock for a one-day bottling seminar.

On March 28, Nuance Winery Supplies Inc. will be at Brock for a session on shaping bubbles in sparkling wine production. Speakers include CCOVI oenologist Belinda Kemp, Denis Brunner from Champagne Bollinger and Prosecco consultant Marcello Galetti. This seminar will be repeated the following week in British Columbia.

Details on these seminars will be posted on the CCOVI website as they are available.

## Research Café showcases graduate work

Three up-and-coming oenology and viticulture researchers shared their work with more than 65 members of the Brock community, industry personnel and the public Nov. 28 at Brock's 2016 Research Café.

The annual event organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies featured CCOVI research for the first time.

"This is outstanding work that needs to be shared and recognized more widely in our community," said Jens Coorssen, Dean of Graduate Studies.

MSc student Andréanne Hébert-Haché shared her work examining the biochemical markers on clone and rootstocks responsible for winter hardiness. She works under the supervision of Debbie Inglis and Jim Willwerth.

PhD candidate Jennifer Kelly, who works under Inglis and Gary Pickering, shared how she's studying Appassimento wine and is unlocking its potential for Ontario's cool climate.

Emily Aubie, a post-doctoral fellow in Andrew Reynolds lab, spoke about how she's examining the impacts that materials other than grapes have on the aroma compounds of red wine cultivars after a frost.

Eleanor Hawthorne from Ontario Grape and Wine Research Inc. told the audience how the projects CCOVI works on impacts the industry.

## Nominate a top VQA promoter today

Do you know someone who's made a significant contribution to raising the awareness of and promoting Ontario VQA wines?

Nominations are now open for the 2017 VQA Promoters' Awards. The awards recognize promoters in the areas of retail, hospitality, media, education, non-Ontario promoter, promoter-at-large and lifetime achievement.

Nominations close Feb. 22 and the winners will be announced at the Cuvée Grand Tasting and presented at CCOVI's Experts Tasting April 19.

Nominate someone today at: [brocku.ca/ccovi/outreach-services/experts-tasting](http://brocku.ca/ccovi/outreach-services/experts-tasting)

## A frosty inquiry brings winemaker back to CCOVI

When Niagara vineyards were hit by an early frost during the 2015 harvest, Emily Aubie, an OEVC '13 alumna, was one of the winemakers curious to examine the impact of the frost on the wines she was producing.

What Aubie and other Ontario winemakers were noticing was that when Cabernet sauvignon and Cabernet franc were machine-harvested after a frost, the wines had an unfavourable floral/green aroma and taste, decreased colour intensity and a bitter taste that lingered on the palate.

Frosted leaves and petioles—referred to as MOG (materials other than grapes)—that weren't present when the grapes were hand-picked were thought to be impacting the wine fermentations.

After the problem was posed to CCOVI Researcher Andrew Reynolds, he invited Aubie to return to Brock to get to the bottom of what was happening based her winemaking knowledge and PhD in chemistry.

To start, the team gathered samples of impacted wines from two commercial wineries for analysis while planning a research trial during the 2016 harvest.

Preliminary chemical analysis on the commercial wines has showed elevated levels of the unfavourable floral compounds. Next Aubie will look to a sensory panel to see at what levels consumers can detect these compounds at.

To understand what compounds are impacting the fermentation, a trial examining the impact of frosted leaves and petioles—the stalk that joins the leaf to a stem—is also underway.

"Traditionally people have been more concerned about the addition

of petioles," Aubie said. "But no one has ever looked at the impact of increased leaves after frost."

The control wine in the trial has no MOG added, and then the trials either add four increasing amounts of frosted petioles into the wine, or four increasing amounts of frosted leaves. This will allow the researchers to see how each MOG is independently impacting the wine.

"The goal is to help improve the quality of wines in Niagara," Aubie said. "However, this work could have a global impact in the face of climate change when regions who don't typically have frost exposure during the growing season encounter an early frost."

Reynolds noted that during the past few vintages, growers are letting grapes hang longer on the vine to mature longer, which could increasingly bring them head-to-head with frost.

"As a researcher it's always exciting to be looking at something that hasn't been examined before," Reynolds said.

Understanding the impact of the frost will allow the researchers to provide the industry with best practice guidelines and details on managing the unfavourable characteristics.

Aubie and Reynolds are looking to secure funding to continue this work. Next they would like to examine how the unfavourable characteristics are impacted by alcohol and heat extraction; the amount of time grapes and MOG are soaked prior to ferment; and the choice of yeast.

This project is funded by Ontario Grape and Wine Research Inc. and through in-kind support from Andrew Peller Ltd. and Diam.

## Latest research to be highlighted at 2017 Lecture Series

Grape and wine experts from across Canada will share their latest findings as CCOVI's Lecture Series returns for its ninth season.

All lectures are free and take place in H313 of the Mackenzie Chown complex at Brock. Except for the Feb. 24 talk, the series runs Wednesdays at 2 p.m. For those not able to join in person, the lectures are available via live webcast and are posted online.

To watch the webcasts visit: [brocku.ca/ccovi](http://brocku.ca/ccovi)

### 2017 CCOVI Lecture Series lineup

**\*Feb. 15:** Belinda Kemp

"A comparison of clones from Champagne and Burgundy grown in Ontario for sparkling wine production"

**\*Feb. 24 at 10 a.m.:** Kevin Usher

"The effects of pre-bloom, fruit set and veraison leaf removal on yield, composition and wine quality in the Okanagan Valley"

**\*March 1:** Wendy McFadden-Smith

"Sour rotted grapes: Managing

your preharvest breakdown"

**\*March 8:** Don Cyr and Lester Kwong

"The application of copula function modelling to Bordeaux en primeur wine ratings"

**\*March 15:** Tony Shaw

"Climate change and the evolution of Canada's wine appellations and emerging areas: Challenges and benefits"

**\*March 22:** Jim Willwerth

"The potential impact of climate change on grapevine dormancy and cold hardiness"

**\*March 29:** Tom Lowery

"Epidemiology and management of grapevine virus diseases"

**\*April 5:** Gary Pickering

"Proselytizing pyrazines: How to avoid and remediate greenness in wine"

**\*April 12:** Andrew Reynolds

"Opportunities for remote sensing by unmanned aerial vehicles to map variability in Ontario vineyards"

## Cuvée ups the entertainment factor

As details are being finalized for the 2017 Cuvée Grand Tasting March 24, organizers are excited to increase the value for this year's guests.

For 2017, the 50 wineries will showcase not just one but two wines selected by their winemakers, allowing guests to taste an even larger variety of their favourite wine styles.

"Cuvée is proud to highlight the best of the Ontario wine industry," said Cuvée manager Barb Tatarnic, "only now our guests can taste an even larger variety of their favourite wine styles."

Another event features is the 12 renowned chefs preparing their signature dishes at live cooking stations.

Following the Grand Tasting, the Après Cuvée party will feature Orangeman, one of country's most entertaining cover bands. Après Cuvée runs from 9:30 p.m. to midnight and will showcase sparkling wines, Icewine, cider and local craft beer.

Tickets can be purchased at [cuvée.ca/tickets](http://cuvée.ca/tickets)

## Publications

### Geography

- Shaw, A.B. (2016). Climate change and the evolution of the Ontario cool climate wine regions in Canada. *Journal of Wine Research*, October 2016, published online.

### Oenology

- Kemp, B., Hogan, C., Xu, S., Dowling, L. and D. Inglis (2017). The impact of wine style and sugar addition in *liqueur d'expédition (dosage)* solutions on traditional method sparkling wine composition. *Beverages*, 3(7), 1-16.

### Viticulture

- Balint, G. and A.G. Reynolds (2017). Impacts of irrigation level and time of imposition on vine physiology, yield components, fruit composition and wine quality on Chardonnay (*Vitis vinifera*, L.) in a cool climate area. *Scientia Horticulturae*, 214, 252-272.

## Briefs

### Geography

- Shaw, A. B (2016). Climate change and the evolution of Canada's wine appellations. 39<sup>th</sup> World Congress of Vine and Wine, Bento Gonçalves, Brazil, October 23 to 28th.

## CCOVI adds cider production to lineup of courses

Canadians looking to increase their knowledge about fermenting apples and pears into cider and perry will now be able to do so without crossing the border.

CCOVI has become the first Canadian program provider of the Cider Institute of North America's (CINA) renowned training program.

CINA's Cider and Perry Production Foundations course is set to begin running at Brock this spring and covers all aspects of

cider production from growing practices to the economics of cider making and legal framework around production. The hands-on program uses lectures, lab work, workshops and tastings to give learners a step-by-step guide to production.

The first offering of the intensive five-day course will run April 24 to 28, 2017 and cost \$1,500. More details are available at [brocku.ca/continuing-education](http://brocku.ca/continuing-education)