

## **BROCK UNIVERSITY MEDIA RELEASE**

R00016

March 4, 2013

Cool Climate Oenology & Viticulture Institute, Brock University  
905-688-5550 x4471

### **Ontario wine industry's top promoters recognized at Brock**

The manager of the world's highest wine cellar, the chair of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration, a popular wine writer and an LCBO product consultant were recognized on the weekend at Brock University for their outstanding achievements and contributions in the promotion of VQA wines.

The VQA Promoters Awards were announced Saturday, March 2 at the Experts Tasting hosted by Brock's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI). The awards acknowledge individuals who celebrate the Ontario VQA wine industry with unselfish enthusiasm, constructive input and unsolicited promotion.

This year's winner in the hospitality category, James Muir, manages the wine cellar at the top of the CN Tower. Muir provides local and international guests with a window into the array and quality of wines made in Ontario.

"A decade ago tourists were surprised we had a wine industry here," Muir said, "but that's all changed. Today they arrive knowing we have an industry, and have already had a positive experience with Ontario wine. It gives me and my team great pride to extend that experience."

For this year's Promoter-at-Large, Harald Thiel, the success of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration "speaks to the power of co-operation in our industry. If we work together we can do things that are exceptional."

"If we (Canada) want to have a place in the wine world, we have to carve our own place," Thiel said while accepting his award.

The 2013 winners in each category are:

\* Hospitality: **James Muir**, beverage manager and sommelier at CN Tower's 360 the Restaurant. His restaurant lists a VQA wine in every varietal category, side-by-side with international labels.

\* Promoter-at-Large: **Harald Thiel**, vigneron and proprietor of Hidden Bench Vineyards and Winery and chair, International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (i4C). Thiel demonstrated significant leadership in starting the i4C which is now planning its third weekend-long event for this July.

\* Media: **Rick VanSickle**, wine writer. Through his website winesinniagara.com, social media, and as a column writer for several wine publications, VanSickle is known as one of the

references for Ontario wines, opening VQA wines to a much wider audience than ever before.

\* LCBO: **Charles Ronzio**, the LCBO's product consultant in Waterloo, Ontario. He not only promotes VQA Ontario wines, he truly believes in the product. Going beyond his normal duties, he brings Ontario wineries into the store for customer tastings and has received accolades for his high VQA sales volume in what is considered a non-traditional VQA market.

**PHOTO:**

**The 2013 VQA Promoters Award winners (from left) Rick VanSickle, Harald Thiel, James Muir and Charles Ronzio.**

For more info: Kaitlyn Little, marketing and communications officer, CCOVI, Brock University, 905-688-5550 x4471; [klittle@brocku.ca](mailto:klittle@brocku.ca)