



**No. 53: October 27, 2010**

## **New from Ontario wineries**

Hidden Bench is a quite new winery (its first vintage was 2005) in the Beamsville Bench sub-appellation of Niagara Peninsula. All the grapes used in its wines are sourced from its own vineyards. To order these wines, which are available only from the winery, go to [www.hiddenbench.com](http://www.hiddenbench.com). In Ottawa, contact Aaron Shaw at [ashaw@rogers.com](mailto:ashaw@rogers.com).



**Hidden Bench 'Roman's Block' Riesling 2008**

**VQA Beamsville Bench \$34**

This very good riesling is very high in acid, relentlessly dry, and shows well-defined fruit. It's built for food that will take care of some of the acidity and render it merely mouth-watering and zesty.



**Hidden Bench Riesling 2008**

**VQA Beamsville Bench \$24**

There's a little residual sugar in this very approachable riesling, but the acid-fruit balance keeps it pretty dry. Call it dry with nicely extracted fruit. Again, it's an excellent wine for food.



**Hidden Bench Nuit Blanche 2008**

**VQA Beamsville Bench \$40**

This is an terrific white, a blend of 87% sauvignon blanc and 13% semillon. The aromatics are very attractive, the flavours are rich and complex, and there's great texture and excellent balance. It's called Nuit Blanche because they spent all night (nuit) sorting the grapes in 2005.



**Hidden Bench Chardonnay 2008**

**VQA Beamsville Bench \$32**

This is a superior chardonnay that shows lovely flavours that are as deep as they are broad and long. The oak is there to an attractive degree--no more, no less. Winery owner Harald Thiel is a big fan of cool-climate chardonnay and says that the reason people get tired of the variety (if

they do) is that they drink too much made in warm-climate regions. He's behind an international cool-climate chardonnay event to be held in Niagara next July, that will bring together wineries from around the world.



**Hidden Bench 'Tete de Cuvée' Chardonnay 2007**

**Beamsville Bench \$45**

Made from the 10 best barrels, this is a marvellous chardonnay with a plush texture, nuanced fruit and great depth. It has length that runs on forever. It's a little taut right now, so you could decant it or give it a year or two to soften.



**Hidden Bench Pinot Noir 2008**

**Beamsville Bench \$38**

The quality of this lovely pinot noir is a surprise, in the sense that so many Niagara pinots from 2008 are thin and acidic. But here you get really solid fruit right through the palate, together with good structure and very good balance. There's no need to get thin pinot in years like 2008, owner Harald Thiel says. You just have to cut the yield back.



**Hidden Bench 'Locust Lane' Pinot Noir 2007**

**Beamsville Bench \$65**

This is a stunning pinot from one of the best years in Niagara. It was exceptionally dry in the Beamsville Bench sub-appellation, where there was no rain at all from June 7 to September 17. The wine shows perfectly extracted fruit, with excellent complexity and structure and drying tannins. It's drinking well now, but could do with another year or two; it will hold through to 2020.



**Hidden Bench 'La Brunante' 2007**

**Beamsville Bench \$85**

This is a stellar blend of 53% merlot, 23% cabernet sauvignon, 12% malbec and 11% cabernet franc. It's full of concentrated, plush fruit, with very good structure, a winning juicy texture, and supple tannins. It's as good a Bordeaux blend as I've tasted from Niagara.

Cheers!

Rod.

[Rod Phillips On Wine](#)

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