

**Tasting Notes: Hidden Bench Vineyards & Winery**

August 28, 2009

**Hidden Bench Vineyards & Winery 2007 Nuit Blanche Rosomel Vineyard Estate Bottled***Beamsville Bench, Niagara Peninsula* \$40

The new vintage of Hidden Bench's top-notch Nuit Blanche features many of the hallmarks of the 2005 vintage that wow'd wine lovers from coast-to-coast. The blend of barrel-fermented Sauvignon Blanc with a dollop of tank-fermented Semillon reveals appealing concentrated sweet fruit flavour (tropical fruit mixed ruby grapefruit) on the palate that makes a profound impression. More restrained oak and better balanced alcohol than the top-rated 2005 vintage make for better integration and polish. Winemaker J-M Bouchard says the goal was to create an expressive, dry white with lots of personality and complexity. He more than succeeds here.

**Hidden Bench Vineyards & Winery 2007 Chardonnay Estate***Beamsville Bench, Niagara Peninsula* \$35

"People continually call my Chardonnays New World in style, which is funny to me since I use only classic Burgundian methods," says winemaker J-M Bouchard. For instance, Bouchard intentionally allows natural (aka wild or spontaneous), warm fermentation for all of his wines in order to capture more earthy and terroir-derived flavours (as opposed to the fruit-forward aromas and flavours maintained by cool fermentations). Nevertheless, this is a distinctly ripe and rich white, with good complexity and depth of flavour. It has the creamy, rounded texture that is a hallmark of Bouchard's barrel matured wines. This impressive white will continue to improve in bottle – it should hit its stride in six months or a year. Drink 2010 to 2013.

**Hidden Bench Vineyards & Winery 2007 Pinot Noir Estate***Beamsville Bench, Niagara Peninsula* \$45

Beamsville winery Hidden Bench has methodically been setting itself up as a premium Pinot Noir producer. Look for it to break out with the 2007 vintage. Hidden Bench's tiny production Pinots from earlier vintages were quickly snapped up by wine club members; however, the 2007 Estate bottling has been made in volumes that should expand its reputation significantly. A blend of fruit from three estate vineyards, this is a seriously complex and structured Pinot Noir that reveals impressive concentration and youthful, gripping tannins. Like most well made Niagara Pinots, it's likely best enjoyed after a couple of years in bottle. It needs time to integrate and plump up in bottle. Barring that, pairing with duck or well-marbled steak or a long decant (three or four hours if you've got the time) should make for a better impression.

**Hidden Bench Vineyards & Winery 2008 Riesling Estate***Beamsville Bench, Niagara Peninsula* \$24

Here is an exciting white that speaks to the calibre of the 2008 vintage in Niagara and the emerging





style of Hidden Bench Vineyards. Easily the most approachable of the recent crop of Hidden Bench Rieslings, this dry white reveals a fruity/honeyed flavour profile that finishes with an extremely crisp acidic finish. Less assertive than Hidden Bench's house style, this manages to strike an agreeable balance between zesty citrus fruit, minerality and pervasive acidity. It sets the stage nicely for the forthcoming 2008 single vineyard and Old Vines Riesling bottlings to be released in 2010.

More information at www.hiddenbench.com



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