

Small is beautiful

By Lindsay Groves

13TH STREET WINERY PACKS BIG FLAVOURS INTO SMALL BATCHES

If you haven't heard of 13th Street Winery, you may not be alone. But it's about time you did. With brand-new hospitality facilities and some of the best wines in the province, it's worth the drive to Niagara. Or to your local LCBO on Dec. 5, when the winery's spectacular Premier Cuvée sparkling wine will be released. This is a rare opportunity to snap up one of Niagara's finest sparklers at your local retailer.

But 13th Street is about more than bubbles. The winery was founded in 1998 by the Douglas, Funk, Jacobson and Willms families. Among them, they already had extensive winegrowing and winemaking knowledge that was quickly translated into some seriously delicious wines. Showcasing small lot estate grown fruit, 13th Street has raised the bar, especially in terms of traditional method sparkling wines and Gamay.

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A decade later, the original partners decided to move on. Herb Jacobson, one of the original partners and 13th Street winemaker since inception, stayed on with the new owners, continue crafting their 5000-odd cases per year.

A new tasting room opened this summer, located on Fourth Avenue in St. Catharines. The old farmhouse, located kitty-corner to the Whitty Farms Market, was renovated to provide a comfortable and visitor-friendly environment. A nearly wrap-around deck invites visitors to relax with a glass of wine (all wines available for purchase by the glass) and a plate of cheese or charcuterie. With the open design of the facilities and the minimalist approach to retail, 13th Street has done a superb job of ensuring their wines are still the main attraction.

Lindsay Groves studied oenology and viticulture at Niagara College and has worked in wineries both at home and abroad.

The Wines

ALL WINES MAY BE PURCHASED

FROM THE WINERY AND DELIVERED. VISIT 13THSTREETWINERY.COM TO VIEW THEIR FULL LIBRARY. WINERY OPEN TO VISITORS SATURDAYS 11 A.M. TO 5 P.M. 905-984-8463.



2006 Cuvée 13 Rosé Brut

★★★★★ \$25 at winery

This pretty and upbeat Rosé Brut is blends about 55% Pinot Noir and 45% Chardonnay with a touch of Syrah. It's aged 24 months on the lees; six months in bottle. The nose features juicy red fruit aromas, with field berries, dried apricot and fresh floral notes. Dry and medium bodied, it's crisp and lively with a fine, creamy mousse. 12.5% alcohol.



2004 Premier Cuvée Brut

★★★★★ \$28 (Vintages, Dec. 5)

A blend of 66% Pinot Noir with 33% Chardonnay, this beautiful bubbly is aged a patient 36 months on the lees followed by six months in bottle. Delectable aromas of caramel, apple, citrus, yeasty dough and fresh cream preside. Dry and medium+ bodied, with structured acidity, a very fine creamy mousse and medium+ finish. Subtle and refined, it could still use a little time for the flavours to fully integrate. A gorgeously made, premium Ontario sparkling. 12.5% alcohol.

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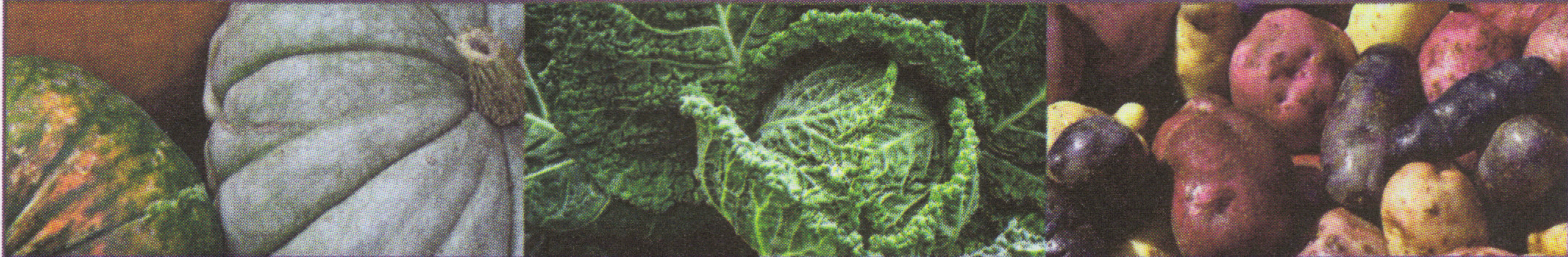


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2008 Chardonnay Musqué

★★★★★ \$18

The 2008 vintage is newly released, featuring grapes from the Sandstone Vineyard. Fleshy, feminine with floral notes, aromas are reminiscent of melon, citrus, applesauce and hints of banana and tropical fruit. In the mouth it's dry and medium+ bodied with medium intensity and soft acidity.

13% alcohol.



2007 Funk Vineyard Riesling

★★★★★ \$24

The Funk vineyard is situated on heavy clay, imparting aromas of mineral, lime leaf, floral and green apple. Dry and light-bodied with focused acidity and 12.3% alcohol, it's like taking a big bite out of a granny smith apple. Very pure, well-balanced, perfect.



2007 Merlot

★★★★★ \$26

Classic aromas of fruitcake, sweet spice, red fruit, plum, cassis and cherry. Dry and medium- to full-bodied with bright acidity, 13% alcohol and ripe, approachable tannins. Great finesse and made in a very open and friendly style that can be enjoyed right now.



2007 Cabernet Sauvignon

★★★★★ \$28

Deep ruby in colour with cherry, currant, red fruit preserves, raspberry, spice, pepper and faint old leather notes. On the palate it's dry and full-bodied with medium acidity, 13.2% alcohol and fine-medium tannins. Balanced, smooth and restrained, showing elegance and lovely freshness.



2007 June's Vineyard Riesling

★★★★★ \$17

Delicious honeyed aromas of apple, grainy pear, melon and candied citrus are followed by a sumptuous, off-dry (20 g/l residual sugar) palate. It's medium-ish bodied with balanced acidity and 12.2% alcohol. Rounded, generous and ripe.



2006 Sandstone Old Vines Chardonnay

★★★★★ \$28

The Old Vines Chard is aged 12 months in French oak with 20% new barrels. With a medium lemon colour, it has a fairly intense nose of honey, spice, caramel, apple and tropical fruit. Dry and pronounced on the palate, it's full figured with crisp acidity and a lengthy finish. Rich, concentrated and pleasantly layered. 13.5% alcohol. (Note: 2007 vintage now available.)

www.orderit.ca

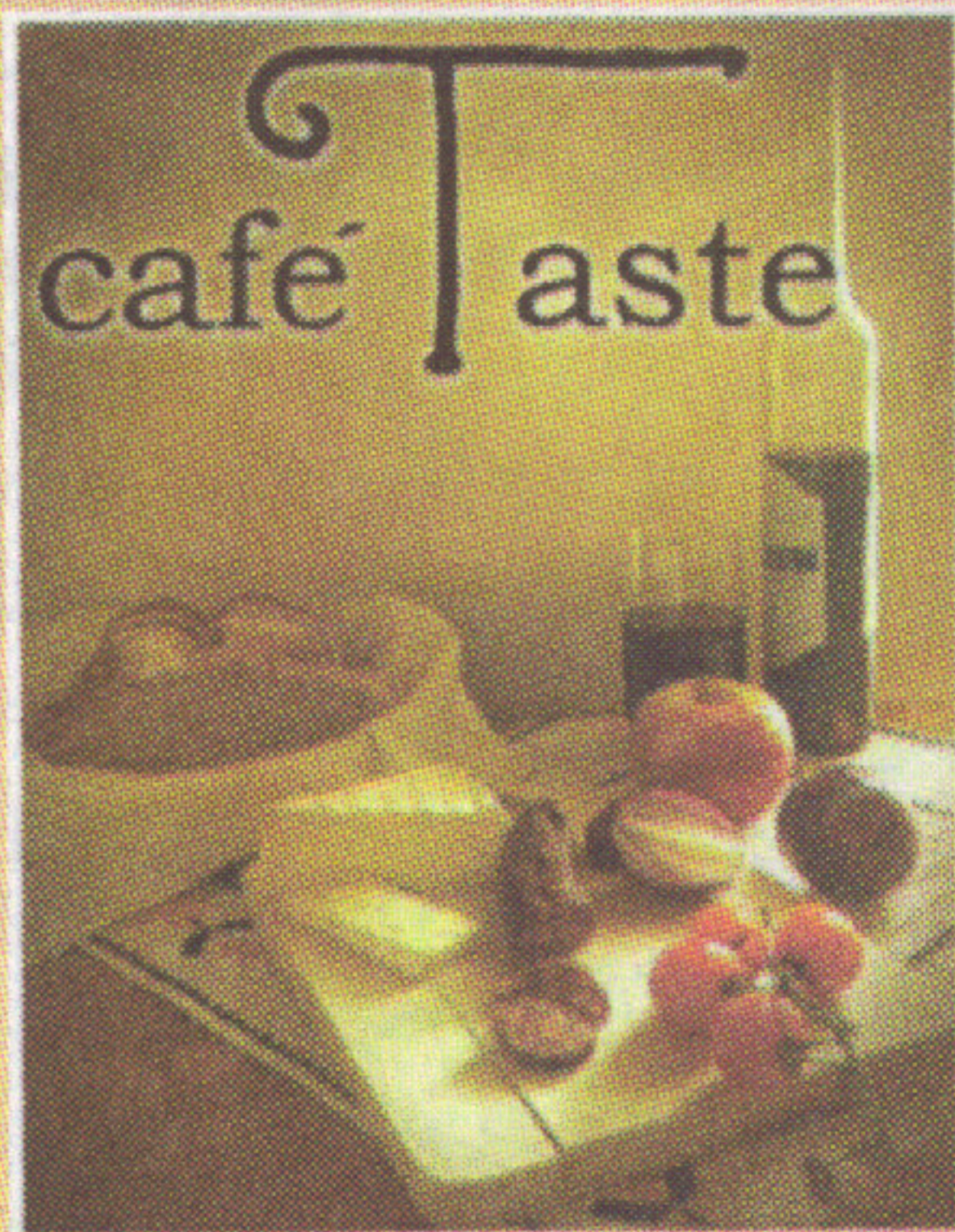
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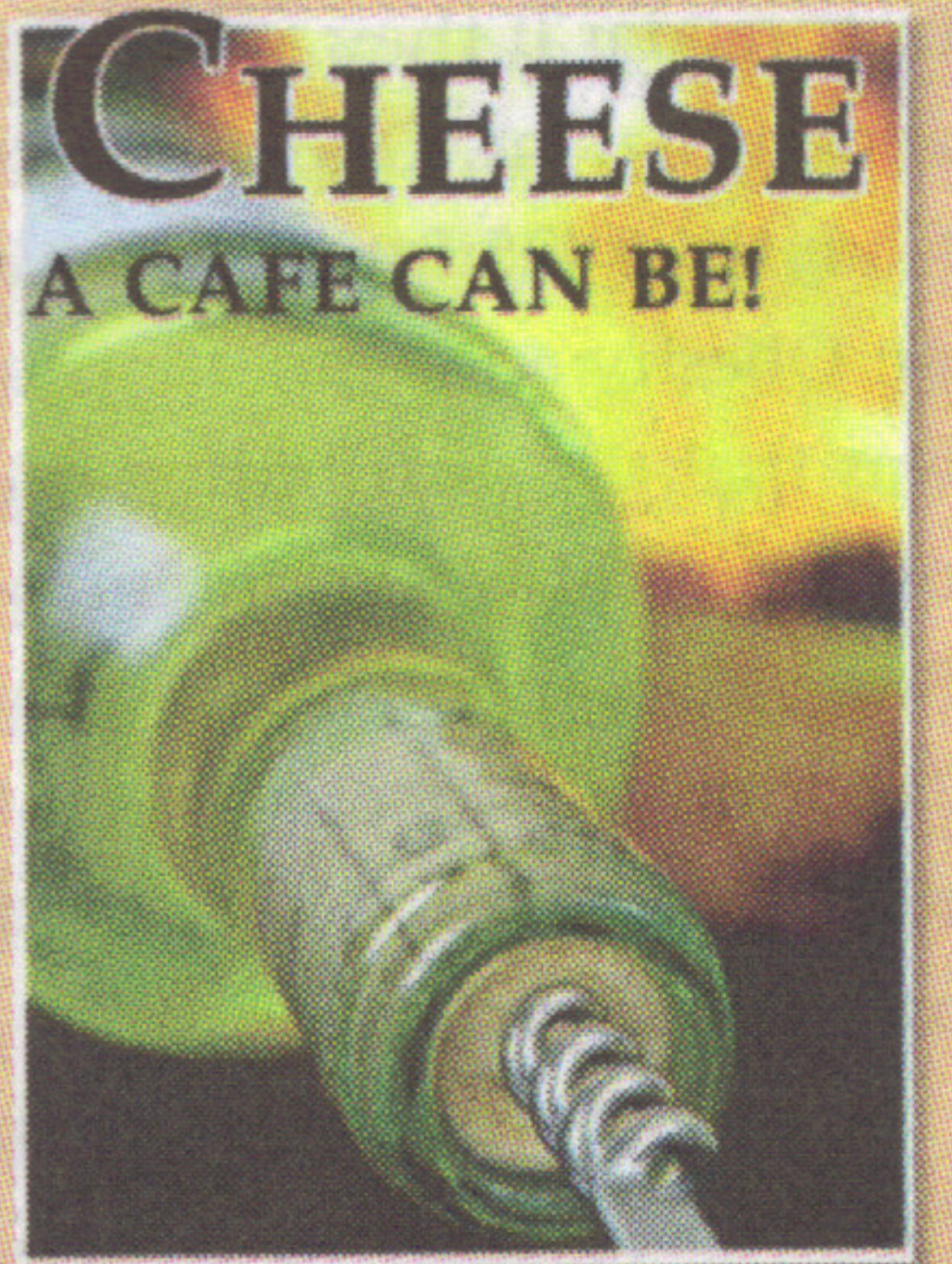


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