

Beverage News

A MONTHLY REPORT ON THE BEVERAGE ALCOHOL INDUSTRY

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New wine containers better for Mother Earth

TORONTO—Wine in a box has been around for a long time, in Ontario. However, there's one kind of box that has long been used for dairy products and juice in Ontario, but not for wine—until this summer, that is.

That box is the Terra Pak.

Two different companies recently put wine in this type of octagonal package onto LCBO shelves.

At the end of July, the French wine company Boisset launched three wines in one-liter Terra Paks: a Merlot, a Cabernet Sauvignon and a Chardonnay. These 2004 vintage wines from the Pays d'Oc area are priced at \$12.95.

Ontario was the first stop by Boisset in its planned worldwide launch of the new containers.

LCBO President Bob Peter brainstormed with Boisset America president Jean-Charles Boisset to come up with both the French Rabbit name and the packaging.

In August, two Vendange wines from the Cannadaga Wine Company in California appeared in 500 ml packs, selling for \$6.95.

One is a 2003 Shiraz and the other a 2004 Chardonnay.

They come in Terra Prisma containers, a U.S. equivalent of the Terra Pak.

Corby Distilleries Ltd., represents Boisset in Ontario with a line of Charchill

Vendange wine in a Terra Prisma container



Boisset America president Jean-Charles Boisset with wine in Terra Paks

Ceilars is the agent for the Vendange wines.

The shape of these containers makes them easy to ship and store. They are also good for serving wines by the glass, since the air can be squeezed out of them before they are re-sealed with the screwtop.

And they are handy for places people don't want to take glass, such as poolside or on camping trips.

But the point that the LCBO is making most strongly is that these containers are more environmentally friendly than others.

Terra Pak containers use 90 per cent less packaging than glass wines bottles, says the LCBO. Since they take up one-third less cargo space in transportation, they help conserve fuel.

They can also go in Blue Boxes since they

are recyclable.

At a media conference introducing the French Rabbit wines, Terra Canada president Evelyn Watson said that 1.6 billion litres of wine were packaged in Terra cartons around the world last year.

She said that Argentina is putting 54 per cent of its wine into Terra Paks, while in Chile the figure is 48 per cent and in Spain 26 per cent.

Such packaging for premium wines has proved popular in countries such as Australia, Sweden, and Italy, as well, according to Peter.

He said French Rabbit sold 3,000 cases in the first two weeks it appeared in LCBO stores. "It took Yellow Tail four times as long to achieve the same sales."

Brick to sell American beer

WATERLOO, ON—Brick Brewing is entering the import business.

The 20-year-old company announced last month that in addition to brewing its own premium product it plans to represent imported beer as well. Brick has entered into an agreement of understanding with High Falls Brewing Company of Rochester, NY to be its exclusive import agent for Ontario.

High Falls is best known for its Genesee and JW Dundee families of beers.

The award-winning JW Dundee Honey Brown was one of the first Honey Brown beers in North America.

"Import beers make up a considerable share of the Canadian market," explains Jim Brickman, founder and chairman of Brick. "We want to participate in this segment of the

market and are very excited to be selected as the partner to import Genesee and JW Dundee beers into Ontario. These beers are well known and well liked by beer drinkers in Canada who travel to the United States."

Genesee Lager and Ice have been available in Ontario through LCBO stores but Brick plans to expand distribution to include The Beer Store and to increase promotional efforts for the Genesee brand family.

Imported beers account for approximately 10 per cent of all beers sold in Canada and about 15 per cent of all beers sold in Ontario.

Brick's line of premium craft beers include Brick Amber, Pilsner, Yellow Label and Waterloo Dark. It also produces Laker, Fortnosa Springs Draft, and Red Cap Ale in the famous stubby bottle.

A brew for gays

MONTREAL—Queer beer has arrived.

Called Pride, the pale ale is bottled by Le Chaudron International microbrewery in Montreal for the Worldwide Pride Foundation (Canada).

"We're satisfied with sales so far," foundation president Francois Robert Lemire said from Montreal restaurant Chez Clos, which serves Pride.

A few hundred cases were sold in both June and July, with \$1.20 from each case being donated to gay amateur sports teams in Quebec.

Last month, Lemire told the *National Post* four different flavours of Pride have been on the market in the U.S. since January.

Lemire said he is trying to get a major brewer to take on Pride across the country.

BEVERAGE BRIEFS

Local grapes scarce

NINAGARA—The Wine Council of Ontario says Ontario winners such as Anders Wines and Vincor International could lose up to \$140-million in retail sales this year because a winter cold snap cut the province's grape crops in half.

"There is not a grape available for sale right now," WCO chairman Norman Beal told *The Globe and Mail* last month.

To stem losses, winners have asked the province let them make some wines using 10 per cent local grapes instead of the usual 30 per cent required under government rules.

This would allow winemakers to use more foreign grapes in blended wines for one year.

Blended wines use about 50 per cent of Ontario's grape crops.

Lakeport to licensees

HAMILTON—Lakeport Brewing is now offering its beers—and discount pricing—to Ontario licensees.

The Hamilton-based brewer—which until now has exclusively served the Ontario take-home market—announced last month that it had lowered the prices of 24-bottle cases of Lakeport Pilsener, Lakeport Light, Lakeport Honey Lager, Wee Willy and Sheeler, to the lowest legal price in Ontario, for its licensed-establishment customers, 19.37 plus deposit.

Lakeport has been successful focusing on the Ontario take-home market, and the new pricing initiative marks the company's foray into bars and restaurants.

Food and wine show sold

ST. CATHARINES, ON—Osprey Media Group has purchased The Gourmet Food & Wine Expo, which organizers bill as Toronto's largest food and wine event.

Osprey is the owner of consumer wine and food magazine, *Vines*. The company acquired the consumer show as part of its purchase of Hamilton-based Town Media.

"The Gourmet Food & Wine Expo is a natural fit for *Vines*," says the magazine's publisher, Walter Sendak. "Both the magazine and the expo are outstanding showcases of Canada's emerging wine culture."

The 11th annual event runs November 17-20, 2005, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre.

New winemaker at Hillebrand

NIAGARA, ON—THE LAKE—Australian Darryl Brooker has joined Hillebrand Winery and will now team with fellow winemaker Natalie Reynolds to head the company's new wine and sparkling wine programs.

Before joining Hillebrand, Australian-born Brooker was winemaker at Flat Rock Cellars, a newly opened winery on Niagara's Beamsville Bench. He received critical acclaim for his wines and winemaking style while at the winery.

In a release, Hillebrand said seeking out the right vineyard locations will be (Brooker's) initial goal.