



The World of Wine Comes to Vancouver

By Judith Lane



The air is electric, the excitement palpable as **Vancouver** gets ready to welcome the world. The world of wine that is. We haven't forgotten the 2010 Winter Olympics debuting in Vancouver and Whistler on February 12, but for some of us the main event is the **Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival**, that promises to reward wine lovers with thrilling seminars, wine-soaked lunches, dinners, and soirées, and three nights of no-holds-barred sampling in the Festival Tasting Room.

Due to the Olympics commandeering restaurants, hotels, roads, bridges, public transportation, and the Convention Centre (Festival headquarters) for several weeks in February and March, the VPI Wine Festival has moved to spring and will take place April 19 to 25, 2010. Although it's after the Olympics, the tickets for some events will be just as scarce as Olympic Gold Medal hockey tickets.

The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival has long been one of the top festivals on the continent. From its beginnings in 1979 when a single winery—Mondavi—was the draw, the festival has grown like wildfire. 2010's Festival will see 197 wineries from 14 countries pour 1,700 wines at 61 events for 25,000 people over 7 days.

Overwhelming? No way. Not if you love wine. The only difficulty is trying to squeeze in everything you want to do.

We're here to help, and key is buying tickets for everything that captures your fancy when they go on sale on February 2, 2010.

The first thing to know is that each year there is a featured region—this year it's shared between New Zealand and Argentina, and that there is a global wine focus—rosé does a star turn for 2010. To date, 41 wineries from New Zealand have signed on, and 36 from Argentina. There'll be a large table in the Tasting Room where every rosé at the Festival will be gathered so that you can taste and explore these rewarding wines in all their varied styles side-by-side.

The **International Festival Tasting Room** tickets (Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings) sell out every year. The

cognoscenti opt for Thursday night, which is generally saner. Friday is next most popular and well, Saturday night is 'date night' and gets seriously social.

Working the room requires strategy and it's best to set out with a game plan. Some drink just Champagne and sparkling wines to start, then target whites, reds, and perhaps sweet wines. Visiting a Tasting Station—this year features Rosé, B.C. Wines, Alsace Wines, or Zinfandel tables is a smart option while the Argentine and New Zealand sections offer volume and variety in one spot. What ever your plan of attack, spitting so that you can make it through the evening is strongly recommended.

There is a principal—owner or winemaker perhaps—from every winery at each table to answer questions about their wines. They hold Vancouver wine drinkers in high esteem citing them as some of the most knowledgeable consumers anywhere, and it's why many return year after year.

If you find something you love, dash to the on-site B.C. Liquor Store and buy it. You can check your wine so you don't have to schlep it around for the rest of the evening, and if you like, they'll deliver it to the LDB store nearest your home at no charge.

Once you've got your Tasting Room ticket, consider some of these terrific seminars, lunches, winemaker dinners, and grazing events.

For those with deep pockets, the **Bacchanalia Gala** at \$400 per seat is where you'll rub elbows with some of Vancouver's serious wine collectors while downsing outstanding wine and food. Nicolas Feuillette Brut Rosé NV Champagne is the reception wine, and there'll be ample opportunity to bid on spectacular wines during the wine auction.

Dine Italia at **La Terrazza** is one of the most relaxed, high-spirited, and light-hearted lunches on the planet, and the most in demand at the Festival. You'll be squeezed at tables

together with Italian winemakers, winery owners, and fellow Italian wine and food lovers and have more fun than you thought possible.

Tickets to the **Sunday Vintners' Brunches** are impossible to obtain within a day or two of going on sale. Consider winery dinners like the Champagne-laced **Style & Substance with a Sparkle** at Cru restaurant, **Chateau Pichon Longueville Comtesse de Lalande** at Le Gavroche, and **Tango for Your Tastebuds** at Cobre Restaurant.

Grazing lunches and afternoon soirées like the laidback **France—Ooh la la!** at the Vancouver Rowing Club, and spirited **Salud Chile!** at the Teahouse in Stanley Park are best bets. Ditto the Argentine and New Zealand celebration of wine, food, music, and dancing at the **Big Sky Party & Grill** at Monk McQueen's.

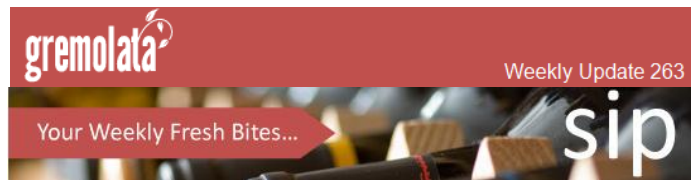
Get serious with dynamic seminars that range from **Diva(s) at the Met** where Vancouver Wine Diva Daenna

Van Mulligen brings together a stellar sisterhood of women in wine including winemakers, and winery principals to dish on all things wine. **Rosé-Rama** digs deep into the heart of rosés, while **Meet Your Match: Speed Dating Meets Wine Tasting** is a modern take on *Pass the Winemaker* where winemakers move from table to table when the gong sounds.

Want to share some rarified air and attend a few special events like the **Curtain Raiser VIP Reception**, enjoy access to the VIP Gold Pass Tasting Lounge, entry to all evening Tasting Room sessions plus the two exclusive afternoon Trade Tastings, and more? The Gold Pass (\$395) is your ticket.

Information and tickets to everything are on sale from February 2 at www.playhousewinefest.com. See you in the Tasting Room.

Note: The Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival will be held in the spectacular new **Vancouver Convention Centre West**.



Vancouver Playhouse Preview.

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