

# Exploring the Hornby flavour of Carbrea Vineyard

When the Marshwood\* estate and vineyard was being sold in January, 2007 – to folks who have expressed no interest in keeping the winery open! – Stephen and Suzie Bishop, farther south on Hornby Island were reviewing their first summer's hectic sales of 2005's wines after a hectic opening in May, 2006.

Built initially on two thousand Pinot Gris and Agria vines in 2002, Carbrea Vineyard was always a gamble. Growth was slow and the survival rate was poor. The plants that did grow well in that first year were encouraging enough to provoke another planting of grafted-root Pinot Noir and Gewürztraminer dipped in anti-microbial fungus in 2003.

In October of 2005 Carbrea had their first harvest and crush. The addition of a winery building and tasting room and on-site picnic facilities in 2006 catapulted Hornby Island's first commercial winery into fully functional status. Stainless tanks, oak barrels and the help and advice of consulting winemaker Ken Winchester have taken Carbrea to the next level.

Pinot Gris has become very fashionable in North America and particularly fashionable in the northwest – Oregon, Washington and British Columbia – because it thrives in our cooler-climate growing conditions.

**Carbrea Pinot Gris (+519165)** \$18.91 is made from their estate-grown Hornby Island grapes. This full-bodied white is ideal for pairing with oysters, ling or halibut. A sturdy base of lemon rind and lime mingles with green apple and ripe pear notes – but this dry white has more in common with France than the Okanagan Valley.

The spiritual home of Gewürztraminer may be the tiny town of Traminer - "Terlano" in Italian – in Italy's northeastern Alto Adige but the European style with this spicy white is definitely typified by the bone-dry French whites from Alsace.

Another remarkably and authentically European-styled white, the intriguing **Carbrea**

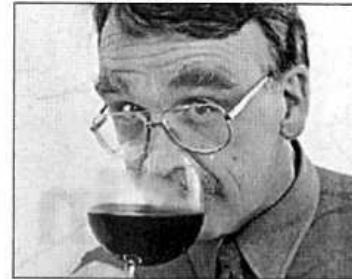


Suzie and Stephen Bishop

**Gewurztraminer (+655738)** \$19.81 is also made from the Bishops' own estate-grown grapes, harvested in October of 2006. The aromas are classically Alsatian - lime, lemon, honey, ginger, rose petal, macintosh apple and pear – and it slides over the tongue full of apricot and textbook lychee fruit flavours. It begs to be paired with oriental foods.

Gulf Island and Vancouver Island Pinot Noirs all seem to have an herby/sassy-cherry signature set of flavours finished with a touch of white pepper. Estate-grown and aged for 14 months in French oak **Carbrea Pinot Noir (+692269)** \$21.81 has that "Island" character – lots of dark black cherry/berry aromas and flavours underpinned by a sprinkle of anise and a dash of spicy pepper. Like most Pinot Noirs and all "Island" Pinot Noirs, this medium-bodied red is perfectly suited for serving with salmon.

Grown on "The Islands" Cabernet Sauvignon, to date, has often been under-ripe, weedy and thin. Fruit came from the Osoyoos area for **Carbrea Cabernet Sauvignon**



Wine Wise

Doug Sloan

(+78006) \$24.81 quite a rich, full bodied red with medium acidity and very soft tannins. Black currant, ripe black plums, fresh-cut bell pepper and subtle vanilla/caramel oak notes meld seamlessly into an exceptionally elegant and superbly balanced red wine.

More than a simple fruit wine but much more delicate than any Port... **Carbrea Wild Blackberry Wine (+59097)** \$19.81 for a half-bottle, smells and tastes like falling into a blackberry patch face-first – without the thorns!

The initial explosion of sweet and pure wild blackberry flavours tweaked by plummy liquorice and pepper – is there a grape or two in the blend? – finishes dry and crisply clean. Pour liberally on French Vanilla ice cream!

Open Wednesday – Sunday, 12 p.m. – 6 p.m. Carbrea Vineyard and Winery is located at 1885 Central Road on Hornby Island. Order wine by the case by calling 250-335-3120 or 250-335-1240. Their wines are available in the Comox Valley at the

Leeward and Coast Westerly Liquor Stores as well as Blackfin Pub.

Also available at the Oyster River Liquor Store and at the Occidental Liquor Store in Nanaimo, Carbrea's wines have just become available in Campbell River at The Riptide Liquor Store and the Mercroft Village Liquor Store. Prices quoted above are at the winery. Expect to pay \$20-\$25 in private Liquor Stores.

\*(North Island winelovers can still find Marshwood Estate's full range of wines in The Riptide Liquor Store in Campbell River – Sparkling Strawberry, Cranberry and Raspberry, dry white Ortega, Melange a Trois blended dry red and their Strawberry and Blueberry dessert wines.)

*Doug's Island opinions are entirely his own and not representative of his employer the BCLDB. Watch for him on CRTV's "News & Views" with John Twigg, exploring Hornby Island's wineries. Reach him by email at douglas\_sloan@yahoo.com*