



## **Seven Virtues - Reinventing the winery for the 21st century**

The world's oldest, and simplest, rule of running a business has been reintroduced to the world of wine, thanks to Grapemasters. "We actually ask the client what they want before the wine is made", explains Charles Fajgenbaum, owner and consulting winemaker for Grapemasters.

Every year, we survey our clients, and ask them the types of wines they want in their cellar and on their tables. We combine this with our own insights, and search out the desired grapes from vineyards where Mother Nature has been kind. Because we don't own vineyards, we have the flexibility of buying different grape varieties every year depending on our clients' preferences, and selecting growing areas where the grapes are thriving."

Many wineries do not have this option - if they own vineyards or have long term contracts with growers, they are obliged to live every year with the same grapes and put up with the vagaries of Mother Nature. As well, because of the many years it takes to grow new vines, it is difficult, if not impossible, to alter production on a yearly basis to take into account new trends and wine drinkers' preferences.

"We are calling this year's offerings "The Seven Virtues (and one little sin)", as our service, and the wines people can make with us represent what reinventing a winery should be all about, striving for what is best in all of us, through transforming grapes into wine."

Offerings include Gewürztraminer (Purity of Soul, for its natural fruit character, unadulterated with oak barrels), Monterey Chardonnay (Giving rich complex flavours across the entire palate), Viognier (Modesty for such an extraordinarily delicious grape for winemaking that is not as well known as it should be), Old Vine Zinfandel (Self Restraint as these 60 year old Amador County vines are not trellised for support and must control themselves), Cabernet Sauvignon (Charity as it combines layers of fruit, tannin and acids into flavours that keep on giving), Shiraz (Admiration because of its ability to grow well and be a top tier grape of so many different countries) and Tempranillo "Ripasso" (Initiative for the inventiveness of fermenting Tempranillo, then having it do extended maceration on Cabernet Sauvignon skins). One Little Sin is Organic Baco Noir. Sourced from the Niagara Escarpment, it produces a deliciously dark, beguilingly fruity red.

"I am most excited about Viognier - I believe that it is poised to become the next cult classic grape. That is one thing that we love to do - uncover and help popularize exceptional grape varieties that are lesser known to the general public, but are stars in their own right. Last April, we introduced Carmenere from Chile to our clients, and it is getting rave reviews."

As for One Little Sin? Baco Noir – when grown to be at its best, is a spectacular wine, and one that will be the grape that puts Niagara on many a wine-lovers map.

Grapemasters is the brainchild of Charles Fajgenbaum, a national medal winning winemaker, well respected in the world of wine. The coming fall harvest grape availabilities are the third major endeavor of Grapemasters this year. In the last 6 months, Grapemasters sponsored the Greater Toronto Open Wine Competition, which pitted amateur wines against commercial entries averaging almost \$20 per bottle. The result - amateur wines won 7 of the 8 categories, with wines entered by Charles scoring 4 silver and 3 bronze medals. Last April, Grapemasters trucked Carmenere, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Chardonnay grapes up from Chile. The coming 'Seven Virtues' harvest in California and Niagara is the 3rd major event for Grapemasters.

"We have grown every year and are able to accommodate new clients for Harvest 2007. We treat each client as an individual. We explain to them the various choices they have in the winemaking process, and how these choices can help tailor a wine to their tastes. We even have 'Wine School', where we do formal presentations about wines and winemaking to corporations and groups. It is just amazing to see people gain a greater understanding about wines, and why they like them." Currently operating at 276 Danforth Avenue, a second, larger location is on the verge of being finalized.

Clients are taken on a first come first serve basis, with reservations being taken now. "We generally have grapes available till mid October, but the earlier people make their reservations, the better. We only bring in certain quantities of each grape and when they are sold out, they are gone."

For further information on Grapemasters, visit their web site at <http://www.grapemasters.com> or call Charles directly at 416 526 9856.