

Christmas in Toronto 2013: The Whole World's Watching

According to the local media, all eyes are on Toronto these days, not just here in Canada but worldwide. Apparently the source of this international fascination is an overweight, rosy-cheeked fellow who acknowledges that he loves to party, and who has been seen from time to time toting a bottle of some alcoholic beverage in one hand.

Finally, we thought, the rest of the world has twigged to the pleasures of the annual Winetasters Christmas Party at Casa Loma. And of course that fellow will be back this year sporting the same red suit, greeting our party-goers with a hearty "Ho, ho, ho!" and pouring a glass of bubbly into every outstretched glass, no matter whether you've been naughty or nice.

The magical setting of Casa Loma and the variety and quality of the wines and foods available make this the biggest and most special Winetasters event of the year. The wines may have been cellared for months, years or decades. Be assured we have tried to cater to every discerning palate. Whether you prefer red wine or white, young or old, New World or Old World, bold or subtle, sweet or dry, there's a memorable wine for you. There's even a Scottish dram for the single malt lover.

If you choose to drink nothing but French wines all evening, we can offer you Alsace, Burgundy (including a 1961 Gevrey-Chambertin Combe Aux Moines), Bordeaux (interested in the 1978 Ch. Beycheville?), the Rhône, and Armagnac. If you would prefer, you could design your own international mini-tasting of Bordeaux versus California's Napa Valley. Or you might try sampling wines chronologically, beginning with the oldest, a 1933 Quinta do Cais Colheita Port (bottled in 1988). Actually, it's not the oldest. Later in the evening, we will serve glasses of this year's marquee wine, the **1913 Barbeito Malvasia Reserva Velha Madeira**. One hundred years young, this wine will be a highlight of your evening; or, if previous Casa Loma Christmases are your precedent, one of many indelible sensory highlights.

As per our tradition, we are attempting to keep a lot of the wines in a 5 or 10 year anniversary cycle. Something special is available for those celebrating significant events or anniversaries. Anybody celebrating an anniversary from any of the years 1933, 1978, 1983, 1988, 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2008 will find something of interest (but there are plenty of other vintages too).

As always, normal tasting-size portions of each wine will be served. Throughout the evening as selections are exhausted, they will be replaced with unadvertised wines. The identity of replacement wines will be prominently displayed at the various serving stations as the wines appear. Toward the end of the evening you can expect delicious dessert-style selections to appear, including Ports. We have also noted that people are definitely moving towards quality (rather than quantity) so we are encouraging you to continue that trend to drink better, not more and be safe getting home. We recommend transportation to Casa Loma be provided by the TTC, a taxi, other exotic livery service; or perhaps you could arrange to have a designated driver collect you.

(Continued on the back of the page)

Date: Wednesday, December 11, 2013
Time: 7:00 p.m.

Casa Loma
 1 Austin Terrace
 Toronto

Cancellations accepted up to December 6, 2013—David Hutchison (416-690-0281). No reservations by phone, please. No confirmations will be issued—you will be contacted only if we are sold out. Please note that supplies of the 1913 Barbeito Malvasia Reserva Velha Madeira are limited and will be allocated to the earlier respondees.

You can register online using a credit card at www.winetasters.ca, or send in this form with a cheque.

Tear and Enclose _____

Cheque payable to:
 Winetasters Society of Toronto
 c/o David Hutchison
 270 Glen Manor Drive West
 Toronto, Ontario
 M4E 2Y2

Name(s) _____

Phone: (H) (____) _____ (B) (____) _____

Cheque enclosed for: Casa Loma Party 2013

_____ Members @ \$110.00 each = _____

_____ Guests @ \$125.00 each = _____

_____ Servings of 1913 Barbeito Malvasia Reserva Velha Madeira @ \$25.00 each = _____

Total = _____

Again this year, Pegasus Hospitality, Casa Loma's exclusive caterer, will serve a mouth-watering variety of foods at separate tables strategically scattered among our nine wine stations. There will be poached shrimp with cocktail sauces, a smoked turkey carving station, and maple-glazed toupie ham (which, contrary to the opinion of one person last year, is not ham bald people wear on their heads. Google it.). There will again be a selection of Toronto's finest fresh and artisanal breads, flatbreads and grissinis (thin Italian-style breadsticks). There will be a bevy of domestic and international cheeses, and fresh and dried fruits. Later in the evening, there will be a seasonal selection of miniature desserts and pastries; and there will be coffee and tea toward the end of the evening.

This is also an opportunity to discover treasures that are relatively unknown. Talk to the other attendees – they'll tell you about some 'discovery' they've made here. Typically, people split their preferences between 'old' and 'new' world – but we encourage you to try something new as well as some familiar favourites.

The main reason for coming is to socialize with your fellow Winetasters in the perfect seasonal setting. So, come on out and bring your friends; that way you can share your 'discoveries' with them. This is our biggest and best social function of the year, the perfect opportunity to relax with old friends and meet our newer Winetasters. And that jolly old bearded fellow pouring the sparkling wine sincerely, sincerely, sincerely hopes you have a great time.

As always with tastings please ask your guests not to wear aftershave, cologne or perfume. We do get many first-timers at Casa Loma who may be not familiar with our etiquette. A scent-free environment ensures we all experience fully this exceptional assembly of wines.

Note: For those who just can't wait, a list of the first 54 wines will be available on our web site in early December. Check it out at www.winetasters.ca.