

Northwest palate

FOOD, WINE & TRAVEL OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Pick of the Palate

*Our choice of an intriguing wine
you should know about*



Tantalus Vineyards BC

2006 Old Vines Riesling, Okanagan Valley—\$25CDN

Two years ago I first started hearing about a marvelous Riesling coming out of a place called Tantalus Vineyards in B.C. At a tasting in Vancouver, two different friends, knowing of my penchant for Riesling, independently came up to me and said I had to try this wonderful Tantalus wine. I did. They were right. It was great.

Later, I had the opportunity to meet the people behind Tantalus: vineyard manager Warwick Shaw, winemaker Matt Holmes, and marketing maven Jane Hatch. Shaw and Holmes took me on a bumpy, impromptu late evening ride through their vines, touring the source of what I by then knew was one of the most impressive Riesling wines made in North America. A few days after that, Shaw and Holmes showed their wines at the 2007 Riesling Rendezvous at Chateau Ste. Michelle—their

Riesling was one of the most talked about of the conference of global Riesling producers.

The 50-acre vineyard along the eastern side of Lake Okanagan is one of the oldest

continuously producing vineyards in British Columbia. The oldest Riesling vines go back to 1978, and the oldest Pinot Noir, 1983 (Tantalus only produces Riesling, Pinot Noir, and Chardonnay)—so Shaw and Holmes have mature and balanced vines to work with. And they make the most of their blessing!

The 2007 Riesling is a vibrantly crisp wine redolent with tastes of green apples and lime, with pine, minerality, and mango notes throughout. The 2006 Old Vines Riesling is a show-stopper: assertive acidity (which may not be to everyone's taste) pushes forth dry lemon, lime, mineral, and petrol smells and tastes that are powerful from start to finish.

I have long said that fine, dry Riesling wines are among the Northwest's best—and least appreciated—wines. The Tantalus Rieslings are a prime example of this. If you are in Canada, seek them out; if you are in the U.S., go visit them—these Rieslings are worth the effort.

—Cole Danehower



(Tantalus farms one of
the oldest vineyards in
British Columbia)