
Larry Paterson INNOVATION IN THE VINEYARD AWARD



Deborah Paskus

Winemaker, Closson Chase Vineyards

Larry, who called himself ‘The Little Fat Wino,’ was a tireless proponent of winegrowing in Ontario and an inspiration to those who wanted to plant vineyards in areas outside VQA’s designated boundaries. The recipient of this award was chosen by the executive committee of the Grape Growers of Ontario and is recognized as being:

- A believer of 100% Ontario grown wines
- Hands on in both grape growing and winemaking
- Good at what they grow
- An innovative thinker
- Radical about Ontario winegrowing – in the true sense of the word
- Passionate about their craft

Larry was a unique human being, a treasure who was a champion and advocate of the underdog winemaker, who strived to succeed in the face of discriminatory government policies and regulations. He was an innovator and promoted creative winemaking, dabbling with additives and unusual ingredients. His passion for making great wine from Ontario grapes and other fruits earned him numerous amateur wine making awards. Larry was a force in standing for the awareness and sale of Ontario wines and led many people to buy Ontario over imports.

Judges Report:

Viticulturalist (and iconoclast) Deborah Paskus is one of Canada’s most celebrated winemakers. Deborah uses innovative viticultural techniques; she is devoted to dirt – rich, pesticide-free and pure as possible. Paskus is a partner and the winemaker for Closson Chase Vineyards in Prince Edward County. The vineyards she manages are farmed organically and moving towards biodynamic. Like many others, she believes that wine is made in the vineyard and to that end works in the vineyard from January till harvest, in the winery from harvest to bottling.

Deborah has always been quick to develop ideas of her own, refusing to be limited by accepted boundaries. After majoring in horticulture at the University of Guelph, she was determined to make her own contribution to the winemaking tradition. Her greatest challenge came when she set out to prove to Steve Temkin, noted Toronto wine columnist, that it was indeed possible to produce an intense, layered Chardonnay in Ontario.

We believe Deborah embodies all of the values that Larry worked so tirelessly to promote in the Ontario wine industry. Deborah is tenacious and passionate about 100% Ontario grown wine with a grower focus.