

# An award winning combination at Scotch Block Winery

By DONNA DANIELLI

It was coincidence that led Bert Andrews (owner of Scotch Block Winery) and Fred Bulbeck, (a long time maker of award winning fruit wines) together, but that coincidence led both men to win two gold medals, six bronze medals and a Best of Show Award at the recent

Toronto Wine and Cheese Show. "Bert was looking for a new winemaker," explains Mr. Bulbeck, "And he happened to call Jim Warren, a private consultant and president of Fruit Canada and Ontario Association. I called Jim around the same time looking for

some black currants to make my own wine with and he told me he had recommended me highly to Bert. Bert and I met for a four hour interview and he offered me the job that day."

Mr. Bulbeck has over ten years experience in the wine making field, and was one of the leading pioneers in the current fruit wine industry. Although having worked in a variety of Ontario wineries, he was taught initially by Jim Warren, a man Mr. Bulbeck calls a wizard "because he can fix any wine and he can make wine out of almost anything. The man is the best winemaker in the world."

Mr. Bulbeck actually began his career as a part time bottler at Stoney Ridge wineries. His interest in the winemaking process, and the ceaseless questions with which he peppered Mr. Warren, eventually led to a job as Assistant Cellar Master. Now he is bringing over a decade of experience to Scotch Block Winery and a whole new menu of fruit



Wine maker  
Fred Bulbeck

wines.

"I'm a gut wine maker," says Mr. Bulbeck. "I use my experience and expertise to create a sellable product. When you finish a product, it's all the technical aspects at the end that are most important in creating an award winning wine."

The Scotch Block Winery has been growing steadily each year and currently produces just under 10,000 cases of wine each year. Mr. Bulbeck's goal is to see the winery expand well beyond that.

"This is such an amazing industry," he explains. "There is so much you can do. Right now I have a batch of dandelion wine brewing. People came in and asked for it and so I thought I'd give it a try." He pauses a moment before laughing and adding, "Of course, I'm not sure how it'll turn out yet."

New products that Mr. Bulbeck has brought to the Scotch Block Winery line include a dessert wine called Blueberry Bouquet, Raspberry Rapture, Zweigelt, and a new house wine. He will have a Gooseberry wine available next month, along with a light Black Currant wine.

The Christmas season will hopefully see his Cranberry wine,

Mead and Black Currant Port on the shelves.

"I'm excited about the Mead and the Black Currant Port," says Mr. Bulbeck. "The Mead is from a very old traditional recipe and will have a citrus aspect to it and the Black Currant Port will be barrel aged, 20 per cent alcohol and limited to about 112 bottles."

Scotch Block Winery products will be featured at this year's Renaissance Festival as well. On the menu at the Renaissance Festival will be Cabernet Franc, Vidal House Wine, Black Currant, Strawberry Fields, Raspberry Rouge and True Blue.

Winemaking can be an overwhelming task, but to this father of three, who is also an accomplished and award winning artist in landscapes and portraiture, it's a labour of love.

"It is an incredibly labour intensive market, and the key is consistency," explains Mr. Bulbeck. "Consistency is everything in this business and I create a quality consistent product. That's the hardest thing for a winemaker to do, but when you open a bottle of an award winning wine, and know that you made it, that makes everything else worth it."



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