

# CURRENT

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## Colin Hollett

**Represents NL in the Great Canadian Laugh-Off**

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**CURRENT** Wine

**The Globalization of Wine**

As a "wine geek" it is difficult to be entirely objective, and because wine is a matter of taste, it is not necessary. It is undeniable though, that there is a certain globalization of wine due to the influence of wine writers and Robert Parker in particular. Mr. Parker, an American wine writer, and the man behind the Wine Advocate publication, has been instrumental in causing a stir in the wine world. His preference for highly extracted, fruit forward, low tannin wines have caused many wine makers the World over to adapt their wine making styles to please Mr. Parker's palate and this has, in my opinion, caused many wines from France to Argentina to taste similar. His 100 point scoring system is a guideline a lot of wine buyers use to make their decisions. I find that it is sad to see the sense of place in wines make way for something more "international" in taste. Shouldn't you be able to identify wine with the place it comes from? Shouldn't wine have a distinct "terroir"?

According to Hugh Johnson the definition of "terroir" is: "Properly understood, it means the whole ecology of the vineyard; every aspect of it's surroundings from bedrock to late frosts and Autumn mists, not excluding the way the vineyard is tended, nor even the soul of the vigneron" To me, wines that are not true to their terroir are much less interesting and I try to stay away from them.

It is good to see though that some wine makers vehemently resist this tendency to globalize. A case in point are the Rioja wines of Lopez de Heredia (which we hope to see in the NLC stores soon); I recently visited the winery and was truly impressed with the quality of the wines and the conviction of the owners to stay true to the original Rioja wine making methods, which is very hard to find in the area. Another part of globalization that I find difficult to accept is the fact that grape varieties associated exclusively with a certain place, as for instance Viognier from the Rhone Valley (France), Albariño from Galicia (Spain) or Brunello from Montalcino (Italy), are suddenly being grown in Australia or California. I have a problem with that. To me it is like an artist seeing the work of another artist and saying: "I like this and I am going to try to copy it." To me it is



a form of plagiarism

One could argue that the same applies for Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir etc., but these are the international varieties and they have been grown the World over for sometimes hundreds of years. I think wine makers should try to perfect their wine making, using the varieties traditionally grown in the area, and try to give a true expression of the "terroir"; those are the wines I am looking for!

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