

**REGIONAL QUALIFIER FOR THE
CANADIAN CULINARY CHAMPIONSHIP**

Ensuring young Canadians have equitable access to healthy food, music education and sport opportunities.



Wine Report, Ottawa 2024. by David Lawrason

The three finalists poured at the Ottawa Kitchen Party on Sept 25 made judging the Best of Show extremely difficult. The winner goes on to the Wine of the Year Competition at the Canadian Culinary Championship in January 2025.

The elegant, complex and deep Mason 2022 L' Avenir Chardonnay took that honour by a hair. It was the first time Kelly Mason has supported Kitchen Party by donating her own estate Niagara Beamsville Bench wine. She has had an excellent career as winemaker for Domain Queylus, Honsburger and The Farm, but her new property is turning heads in Niagara.

The very close second place nod went to the intense, pure Last House 2022 Hillier Rouge Daniel's Block Pinot Noir, a new Prince Edward County winery by Andre Gagne and veteran winemaking consultant Geoff Heinricks. The tiny winery virtually right on the shoreline of Lake Ontario west of Wellington made its first wines in 2020.

Third spot went to the Tawse 2011 Estate Chardonnay, a mature yet so energized wine poured in the memory of Tawse winemaker Paul Pender. It reminded me of mature Hunter Valley semillon. Many thanks to stalwart Ottawa wine judges Janet Dorozynski a National Wine Awards of Canada judging captain, Matt Steeves publisher of Quercos Vino, and Bill Ellis president of the National Capital Sommelier Guild.

Each judge ranked their top five wines, with a first-place ranking being worth five points, second place four points etc. With the maximum final score being 20, Mason Vineyard Chardonnay scored 16, Last House Hillier Rouge scored 15, and Tawse Chardonnay 10.

Outside of the official judging results, Grange of Prince Edward 2023 Rose was a crowd favourite, along with Last House 2022 Hillier Blanc Christian Block Chardonnay, measured by the most empty bottles at the Elite Canadian Wines pouring station, that was staffed by the wine judges. The winning chef Lizardo Becerra of Raphael Peruvian Cuisine was paired with Charles Baker B-Side Riesling, which will come back to the CCC. This wine placed 4th in the official judging.

Other participating wines included Bench 2021 Felseck Pinot Noir and Thirty Bench Small Lot 2020 Cabernet Franc, both from Niagara's Beamsville Bench and both finishing in my personal top five ranking. From Prince Edward County, guests also enjoyed a pair of excellent 2023 pinot gris from Grange of Prince Edward and Rosehall Run.

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The non-wine beverages served this night included Stranger Than Fiction, Porter, Collective Arts Brewing of Hamilton, Ontario, and a great selection of Beaver's Dram whiskies and ready to drink spirit cocktails by Dunrobbin Distilleries of Vankleek Hill east of Ottawa.

The event had a very energized and warm atmosphere, and I look forward to returning in January for the Canadian Culinary Championship.

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