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Toronto Wine Report

by David Lawrason

It may seem too clichéd to say that the Kitchen Party wine program gets better every year, but that's what keeps happening at the Toronto event, which, along with Vancouver, has become showpieces in Canada's two most important wine regions. Over the years, the Toronto event has built a reputation as being a premier showcase for Niagara wine, attracting some of the region's best. This year, 26 different wines were poured at the VIP Reception, Competition and the Celebration. And new this year was the presence of the Niagara Custom Crush Studio, a winemaking facility with several client winemakers who each produce their own brands in the Vineland winery. It was the first time that NCCS had travelled outside of Niagara to present its portfolio, so special thanks to Graham Rennie and his team for pulling it off. The Best of Show Gold Medal-winning wine by Marlize Beyers - The Long Way Home Chardonnay 2023 – was from the NCCS stable

Two hours before showtime at the decked-out Carlu, five wine judges assembled to taste through all the wines. The judges included four from WineAlign, who are also veteran judges of the National Wine Awards of Canada. Joining me were Megha Jandhyala, Sara d'Amato and incoming National Wine Advisor Michael Godel. We also welcomed Magdalena Kaiser, a Niagara-based wine judge and author who has just published a terrific new book simply titled Niagara Food and Wine. With such a large and high-quality selection, the judging was very close, resulting in a tie for third place. Here are the winning wines.

Gold: The Long Way Home Chardonnay 2023, Beamsville Bench, ON

Silver: Domaine Le Clos Jordanne Chardonnay 2022, Beamsville, ON

Bronze: (tie) Cave Spring Riesling Adam's Step 2023, Beamsville Bench, ON & Bachelder Pinot Noir Wismer Parke 2023, Twenty Mile Bench, ON