BEST BUSINESS COLUMN OR FEATURE

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BETHANN MERKLE

Quebec Chronicle-Telegraph

Wine making is both an art and a science, and reporter Bethann Merkle provides an in-depth look at the Bordeaux process. Story was well-written, engaging, and made good use of sources.

PAGE 4 WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2013 CHRONICLE - TELEGRAPH

Tradition and sustainability in a Bordeaux bottle

BETHANN G. MERKLE
BETHANN@QCTONLINE.COM

We're in a globalized world. Our red wine is competing against every other red wine," Mario Ros, of Château Larose Trintaudon told the *QCT*. Amélie Durand of Château Doms heartily agreed, saying, "Just having an AOC [*appellation d'origine contrôlée*] doesn't sell your wine. You have to actually market your brand." Both Rios and Durand were in Quebec City this past weekend doing exactly that.

At the Bordeaux fête le vin à Québec, they shared their wines with amateurs and connoisseurs alike. Among them were Durand's award-winning Château Doms labels, all of which are available as private imports through Quebec City native Kenneth Gunn's company, Marchands des Amériques, Inc. (www.marchandsdesameriques.com). Gunn also represents Rios's labels, which will be available in SAQ stores and as private imports this autumn.

Over crêpes at Le Billig, the only place in the city where her wines are publicly available, Durand disclosed that she is the fifth generation of women to run her family estate (www.chateau-doms.fr). "We are run by women because, in each generation there was only one child, every time a daughter," Durand explained. She never had any doubt she would carry on the work. She recalled, "Since I was a young girl, maybe five years old, I always wanted to make wine. I wanted to do what my grandmother did."

Years later, following university degrees focused on agriculture and wine-making, she joined her mother, now at the Château's helm. Thinking back, Durand giggled and admitted, "It took us two or three years to figure out a balance. Now, I look after the wines – from harvest onward, it is my job. And my mother looks after the vines and everything before the harvest."

As a young woman, fresh out of school, though, Durand faced challenges as a woman in business.. She said, "You have to be good. You can't hesitate. It is too easy for people to say, 'Oh, you are just a girl.'" Now, with years of experience and training from her mother and grandparents, she can say, "I face the same challenges as a man. Every year, you have to make good wine. You have to sell your wine, too. You have to keep your vineyard as perfect as you can."

Photo by Bethann Merkle

Surrounded by wines from the Médoc-Graves region, Amélie Durand pours samples of her award-winning wines.

Although tradition is deeply rooted in Bordeaux, time moves on. Improved technology, combined with centuries-old cellars, her personal finesse, the soil that grows only "vines and pines" as she put it, and the wisdom of generations resulted in a great honour earlier this year. Her *Cuvée Amélie*, named not for herself but for her great-great-grandmother, was awarded the prestigious 2013 prix Raisin. Established by Olivier Dauga and Jean-Pierre Xiradakis, formidable forces in the French wine and restaurant industry, the career-making honour recognizes young, little-known Bordeaux winemakers who produce high-quality vintages.

Equally important, Durand notes, "We are more protective of the environment than when my grandmother was in charge. We know it is better for the vines, too." At that, Rios chimed in, stressing the importance his company places on sustainability at their numerous châteaux. As an export sales manager for Château Larose Trintaudon (www.vignoblesdelarose.com), it is his responsibility to sell, not just a bottle of wine, but a brand. For Alliance Insurance, the parent company, this brand is predicated on sustainability.

Although he speaks French fluently, Rios grew up in the Adirondack mountains in upstate New York. He made his way to France to complete an MBA, began working in the wine industry, and never looked back. The Château Larose Trintaudon and their sustainability practices suit his style. Rios described their perspective, saying, "This goes beyond regular organic farming. We also look at waste management, bottle and barrel suppliers, our relationship to the communities where we are based, and how we treat our employees."

"Social ethics," as Rios refers to the approach, includes tracking where their wine goes once it is sold. Each bottle is etched with a reference number, enabling the company to verify that their wines are sold to customers whose ethics meet company standards. Rios recalled, "We actually declined a major sale once, because we weren't able to verify the source of the funds offered by the prospective client."

The three of them, Rios, Durand, and Gunn, represent the past, present, and future of Bordeaux wines. Their youth, passion, and focus on marketing their wines directly to consumers stands in contrast to the historic *négociants* (wine traders). Events such as the Bordeaux fête le vin à Québec offer the best possible hook – the sound of corks popping out of bottles, the wine's burst of colour swirling into glasses, and the taste of wines not yet available at the SAQ. Above all, the festival enables these entrepreneurs to tell their stories, sustaining the traditions as they do.

Bordeaux-Quebec connection gets personal

BETHANN G. MERKLE
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Quebec City and Bordeaux, France, have been "twin" or "sister" cities since 1962. For one local family, the connection goes almost as far back. In 1963, Louise Gunn (née Bernier), found herself harvesting grapes for the Perromat family south of Bordeaux. Decades later, at the first Bordeaux fête le vin à Québec, hosted here last year, Louise Gunn and her relations resumed their friendship on Canadian soil.

Photo by Bethann Merkle

Thanks to a relationship their elders established 50 years ago, Guillaume Perromat (left) and Kenneth Gunn (right) now epitomize the modern Bordeaux-Quebec connection.

Louise explained the rediscovery, saying, "Over time, I had lost contact with them until last year when I went to the [festival] and found out that there was a Guillaume Perromat present. He turned out to be a nephew of Jean Perromat!" It was an unexpected and deeply meaningful reunion, as Louise had worked for his uncle 50 years before.

This past weekend, Guillaume Perromat was in Quebec City again, for the second annual Bordeaux wine festival. Louise's son Kenneth Gunn, a private imports wine and spirits dealer, introduced this reporter to him, and he in turn shared the sweeter side of Bordeaux. Perromat's Château d'Armajan Des-

Ormes (available at the SAQ) is a luscious example of what he and other sweet-wine producers are trying to tell the world. "To call these wines mere dessert wines is to do them a great injustice," he told the *QCT*. "We drink them as appéritifs but also with our meals. It is a tradition we are trying to share."

Perromat recommends pairing these liquid-gold wines with blue cheese, or main dishes that are meaty or crunchy, with flavours that are creamy, salty, buttery or even spicy. Though expanding consumers' horizons is serious business, the Bordeaux-based joint marketing initiative for this Bordeaux – soft and sweet" were jovially distributed by producers and volunteers clad in chic black and yellow "Sweet Bordeaux" attire.

In a logical continuation of the family connection, Perromat and Kenneth Gunn, through his company Marchands des Amériques, Inc. (www.marchandsdesameriques.com), may be partnering to take the award-winning wine farther east, to the discriminating palates of LCBO customers in Ontario. Gunn affirmed, "I think of myself as much more than an agent. I try to build relationships with the producers, and work closely with them."

Perromat sees the wine-

he shared his appreciation for the festival format. "We get to meet the public, and you get to meet us. It is not often the public gets to meet the winemakers, particularly when you are here in Quebec. The public here is well-educated about our wines, too. We are happy to be here. We are even happier *you* are here."

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LUCY SCHOLEY

The Low Down to Hull & Back News

A very readable human interest story that makes good use of short sentences and plenty of direct quotes to capture the essence of this mom-and-pop operation.

Page 8 The Low Down to Hull & Back News Sept. 25 - Oc

Jamboree couple who created village hub ret

By Lucy Scholey

Shirley Brown and Earl Hansen never made any money from the annual antique auctions held on their front yard, but the event was so popular, the owners of Jamboree boutique kept it up for five years. Cars plugged up parking for Ottawa antique storeowner Hoss Bertrand's truckloads of heirlooms, but when Brown asked her neighbouring business owners if they minded, she said the common response was, "No, this is one of our best sales days of the year."

That was back in the 1990s.

Then, Brown and Hansen were running Jamboree boutique out of the building that now houses La Confiserie sweets shop. Wakefield was a sleepier town and the steam train had just started bringing tourists into the region. The auction was a happening event at the time.

Over their 20 years of running Jamboree, the married couple and business partners have kept the boutique a village hub.

Now in their 60s and ready for something new, they are handing over the keys to the Chicoine family Oct. 1.

"Overall, it's been a wonderful ride," said Brown. "It's a great privilege to be in business in this community."

Brown bought Jamboree in 1991 at the tail-end of a recession.

She had previously attempted a career as a real estate agent ("I was terrible at it," she said, with a laugh), but decided to buy the business and the building from her sister-in-law, who also happens to share the same name.

At first, Jamboree's shelves were mostly stocked with homemade jams, chutneys and relishes. It's no surprise that, when Hansen joined three years later, he started a side hot dog business. Passengers coming off the train could buy a hot dog for a buck with Brown's homemade relish. But the 11,000-jar-a-year production was a lot of work and didn't earn much profit. So Brown brought in gardening items, clothes and home decor to appeal to a larger clientele.

The stock quickly filled the 500-square-foot building and soon it was time to move.

So, on Dec. 1, 1999, they opened a second location in the 108-year-old building at 740 Riverside Dr.

Both locations stayed open for three years before Brown and Hansen sold the building that is now La Confiserie.

The building where Jamboree currently resides was initially a general store and a craft store before it was rented out to several people over 20 years.

Earl Hansen and Shirley Brown are selling the Jamboree boutique after more than 20 years. But they're not calling their next step a "retirement."
Lucy Scholey photo

The 1,600-square-foot building needed some upkeep. They poured $150,000 worth of renovations – mostly into the upstairs apartment where they lived – within the first six months. They kept the original wood in the main shop (oak and either fir or red pine) and even maintained a sign that says "Cross Bros." from the Cross family, who formerly owned the building.

Apart from its country-style home decor, Jamboree became known for its Christmas decorations.

The rules: no plastic, no trendy decorations and absolutely no Christmas music before Dec. 1. Employees Karen Lalonde and Carol Price decorate every year – and it's usually a three-week job.

Garlands, berries and an iron tree with crystal ornaments are part of the annual flair.

"I've always bought what I like, not what trends are. Never went for purple and pink and blue trees," said Brown.

Hansen describes the store as the "first shot at getting into the Christmas mood."

Brown said the key to staying open for 20-odd years – while other businesses have moved in and out – is a mix of consistent hours, a well-kept storefront, donations to local charities (they donated to 40 groups this year and Brown also volunteers at the Wakefield Hospital) and no discount sales because it's unfair to local clientele.

"I think you can do that when you're in a tourist area where you have millions of people, but when you're in a small town, you e your local people said Brown. The for being stickle comes to maint garden and build

"Every busi take care of the than that," said ing that "first are so importa

Brown and gone beyond th for a success They have eve tomers on tou lage and said t aged to convinc to move here.

Sandra Ch a regular cust boree boutiq became close Brown and H

"I think it's ity," she said remembering chutneys tha her mom's.

Bob Mill of Commerc co-owner of The Wakefield Mill Inn & Spa, said people will come to the village specifically to visit Jamboree.

"I know the new owners have got good experience in small business," he said. "I'm confident the Chicoine family will do just as well."

Brown and Hansen were keen to keep Jamboree as a boutique. They didn't want to sell it off to someone who planned to turn it into a bar.

"You can't turn Wakefield into a Byward Market," said Brown. What Wakefield needs, she said, is a "retail mix with food and beverages."

Yet, she said, Wakefield is a "real" village that's full of unique stores, venues and neighbours. Although they considered living outside the village, they have decided to settle here. But they're not calling it a retirement.

Instead, Brown said, "It's a new adventure."

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ANN TAYLOR

The Equity

Great partnership between the Pontiac Tourism Association and The Equity. The series of stories shows participatory journalism at its best.

The voice of the Pontiac since 1883 THE EQUITY, Wednesday, October 2, 2013, Page 5

PONTIAC TOURISM ASSOCIATION

The guest experience: HorizonX - whitewater rafting on the Ottawa River

A. TAYLOR
Equity Reporter
CALUMET ISLAND
Sept 28, 2013

Considering how much I hate fish, I never thought I would have sympathy for sardine in a can.

Arriving at the base camp of HorizonX at 8:30 a.m., the first item on the agenda was donning a wetsuit. I pulled and tugged as I peeled on a second skin. I heard a fellow rafter say 'I feel like Gumby!' Funny part was, when I looked over, she did resemble one.

A wetsuit is necessary during cooler weather, as it provides thermal insulation. This past Saturday marked the last raft trip of the season for HorizonX, located on Calumet Island.

HorizonX is owned by Martin Bertrand and his wife, Isabelle Gagnon.

"We started in 2000 with a beginner kayak school," said Bertrand in a phone interview. In 2004, the couple introduced rafting to the business.

Bertrand said his guides are trained and have a passion for the sport and are committed to giving guests the best whitewater experience.

"It's rare that the rafting owner is also a guide, but I make about 60 per cent of the trips," explained Bertrand.

This past Saturday, Bertrand had other commitments, so guide Daniel Sanchez was in charge of the group with the assistance of fellow guiders Nick Kannegieter and Tom Paterson.

Before we left base camp Sanchez said, "You need to sign a waiver because at any moment you could get expelled from the boat. That's when the fun begins."

All that did for me, was make my stomach feel worse than it already did.

The group of 22 guests and three guides boarded a bus that took us upriver to Rocher Fendu, located on the north end of Calumet Island.

Upon arrival at the launch site, we were instructed on the proper way to wear a life jacket and helmet. Both mandatory and both not to be removed even when stopped or portaging.

The rafts used by HorizonX are the smallest used by rafting companies on the Ottawa River.

"Each raft holds seven people plus the guide. If necessary, we can add one extra person at the front of the raft," Sanchez said.

Bertrand said the smallest raft, the Spider, is 13.5 feet long and only five feet wide. It makes for more manoeuvrability and greater high adventure experience, in other words tipping over.

Maybe I should have spoken to Bertrand before the trip instead of after.

Before leaving Sanchez went over safety rules. He explained if you fell out of the raft, or it tipped, huge to float or swim back to the boat or to a safe area where the person would be retrieved.

"Never let go of your paddle if you can avoid it. The paddle floats but it takes time to get it, so try and hang on to it," Sanchez said.

He pointed out a rope around the exterior of the raft. In case of the raft tipping right over, he said to try to swim to the raft and just hang on to the raft.

"Don't hang on to the rope or I won't be able to turn the raft over," said Sanchez.

The group was divided into three rafts. One group got Sanchez as helmsman.

While paddling to the first set of rapids called McCoy, Sanchez gave us the basic commands.

Paddle forward, meaning regular strokes and keeping time with the person in front of you. Paddle hard in attack mode with your feet firmly tucked under the centre thwart (inflated crosspiece). Three is stop paddling and get down which everyone crouches in the bottom of the boat. Last one was back paddle, lean far back and paddle as hard as you can backwards.

At the first set of rapids Sanchez tried to get us to surf the rapid.

We paddled toward the rapids, then he yelled "Paddle hard." I thought my arms where going to fall off. This was 10 minutes into the trip and I thought I was finished.

We floated out of the rapids and Sanchez said, "Let's try that again."

Spirits were high, surely we can make it in. Again I hear "Paddle hard." I think I was paddling more air than water, my arms were aching, and once again, we were unable to make it in far enough to surf the rapids.

I didn't feel too badly when the other groups were also unsuccessful.

We paddled upriver, at least I think, it was upriver, the current seems to swirl in every direction. We portaged a short distance and came out on top of McCoy rapids.

Sanchez explained, as he continued to do at each set of rapids, which side of the river to swim to if you happen to fall out of the raft.

As we approached you could hear the roar of the water. 'Oh,' is all I thought.

We were just paddling forward at a comfortable pace. The roaring of the water was getting louder. I'm thinking can I get out now, when Captain Bly, I mean Sanchez, yelled "Paddle hard!"

"What?" He's crazy, we're heading fast enough thanks. But I obediently paddled hard.

We head over the falls and plunge into the rapids. Water spraying everywhere. The raft tips left, then right. The inexperienced crew leaned left and right. Wrong move people.

Once we wear, turtled. With the wetsuit and life-jacket you are very buoyant.

I popped up under the upside down raft. Then two other people popped up under there with me.

Everything and everyone was floating downstream. I came out from under the raft and immediately gripped the rope on the side. I still had my paddle.

Then I hear someone on the other side of the raft saying, "Let go of the rope so I can turn the raft over."

I was wondering who was hanging onto the rope. Oops, I guess he's talking to me. I let go of the rope and Sanchez uprighted the raft. He slid in and promptly pulled me and another in. The rest of the gang had swam to the meeting point.

That was great. What a thrill. What an adrenline rush. This is what whitewater rafting is about.

My arms seemed to cease aching and the sick feeling in my stomach left as I realized this was going to be a great day.

We paddled gently over calmer watrer between sets of rapids while Sanchez gave history of each rapid and the Ottawa River.

Each set of rapids had its unique trait and the guides did an excellent job of steering us through.

We went over Phil's Hole, Horseshoe, The Lorne, which includes Garburator and Wallkid, Butcher's Knife, named because of the shape rock, through Slice of Dice and Norman.

We then came to Jump Rock. We stopped at the side of the river just below the rapids and climbed up to the top of the 25-foot-high rock.

One by one, we jumped into the river. It took me a minute but I knew I would regret not "taking the plunge." It wasn't just the jump but you land in swift flowing water and have to swim to shore. Of course, two guides were stationed down river slightly with rescue ropes just in case a swimmer experienced difficulty.

I mentioned to Sanchez I was glad I had jumped. "The way I look at it is, it's like eating the cake without the icing," he said.

The next rapids is one of the largest, Calaeum. It is a class five rapid. Rapids are classed from one to five and the Ottawa River is known for the best rafting in Canada.

We made it through the Centre Slot, a class three rapid, and then to Black's Rapid, known as Farmer Black's Rapid. We stopped and tried to surf this rapid.

With some really hard paddling, we made it back into the rapids and surfed it.

This was so exciting it is hard to describe. It is just as I imagine surfing but in a raft and not moving, just surfing.

Then the raft shifted slightly to the right and tipped sideways, not enough to capsize but enough to lose about half the people.

We managed to accomplish this two more times, and two more times losing some people, before continuing down the river.

The whole trip, Sanchez kept talking about the best parts of the trip, Hell's Half Mile. This sounded terrifying to me.

It turned out it is because you have to paddle the last half mile.

We covered 12 kilometres in approximately one and a half hours and went over 12 sets of rapids. The temperature was 20°C but no one was cold. In fact, mostly we welcomed being dunked in the water to cool off.

The bus was waiting to take us back to base camp. At first, the wetsuit, I thought getting it on was hard, but peeling it off proved to be more entertaining.

There was Gatorade and drinks waiting for us and when we returned to base camp the group had barbequed hamburgers and hotdogs.

Ask me if I would go again, "Yes."

It is easy to understand why HorizonX won both the regional and the gold for Adventure Tourism in 2012, receiving the top honour in Quebec, Les Grands Prix du Tourisme Québecois.

"What helps set us apart from other rafting companies is group size. We have a maximum of 42 people per day," said Bertrand.

HorizonX is the only rafting company in Canada to offer moonlight trips during the summer.

"We are an all-inclusive rafting company. No charge for photos, wetsuits and no service charges," said Bertrand.

Services offered by HorizonX, besides the high adventure rafting are family raft trips, whitewater kayak introduction and overboard-ing.

During summer months guests can rent a tent or cabin or bring their own tent.

More information on HorizonX, 12 Cadieux, Calumet Island, visit their website at www.horizonx.ca, email info@horizonx.ca or call 1-866-695-2925.

This column is provided by the Pontiac Tourism Association (PTA). For more information on being included in future articles contact the PTA at associationtourisme.pontiac@gmail.com or call Brittany Morin at 819-648-2186 (SADC).

Photo by reporter

Shooting the rapids on the Ottawa River on Saturday with HorizonX rafting company located on Calumet Island. Guide Daniel Sanchez is steering leaning back on the raft and Ann Taylor is in front of him above the letter 'H'.

Photo by reporter

River guide Tom Paterson manoeuvres his raft through the rapids on the Ottawa River on the last HorizonX raft trip of the season on Saturday.

Photo by reporter

Ann Taylor jumping into the rapids from the Jumping Rock during the HorizonX rafting trip on Saturday.

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6:30 to 8:00 pm - Fashion Show - Boutique Gwendoline, Shawville Shoe Shop
8:00 pm - Opening ceremonies with Mark Patrascuk
- Welcome by organizers
- Greetings from Oktoberfest
9 pm to 1 am - Ambush
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5
8:00 to 10:30 am - Breakfast available
8:30 am - Registration for Horseshoes, 10:00 am - Craft Booths Open & Bar Opens, 12:00 pm to 4 pm - Louis Scherer Band
12:00 pm to 6 pm - Dix Bassett (Quang Hall)
12:00 pm - Registration for Truck Pull
1:00 pm - Truck & Tractor Pull
1:00 pm to 9:00 pm - Wagon Rides,
4:30 to 8:00 pm - A Classic Country Revue
9:00 pm to 1 am - The Fabulous Hearthorns
All Weekend: Enjoy German and Canadian Cuisine, Main Dining Hall closes at 9 p.m. (Food will be available at midnight at the Clarence Breitfuss Building) - Beer Garden - Music - Dancing.
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PASSES: Friday $10; Saturday $10; Sunday $8; Children under 12 Free; Weekend: $25
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GERMAN COSTUME DAY
9:00 am to 4:00 pm - Craft Booths Open
8:00 to 11:30 am - Breakfast available
10:00 am - Church Service
St. John's Lutheran Church)
- Registration for Parade
11:00 am - Bar Opens
11:00 am to 12 pm - Registration of Giant Pumpkins and Vegetables, (children and adults)
- Weigh-in for Giant Pumpkins
- Pumpkin Show
12:00 noon - Parade with Renfrew Pipes & Drums
1:00 to 5:00 pm - Edelweiss Band
If you're interested in antique vehicles (cars, trucks, motorcycles) we have plenty that join our parade on Sunday.
OKTOBERFEST LADYSMITH -TCRA Centre, Ladysmith, QC

***Judge**: Chad Stebbins, Director, Institute of International Studies, Missouri Southern State University, Joplin, MO*

• Number of entries in the Best Business Column or Feature category: 13