

<b>The Standard (St. Catharines, ON)</b>			Order/Commande
			<b>124898</b>
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## Help farmers with boosted market access and changes in labelling

The Standard's editorial support for local farmers is much appreciated. I grow pears for processing and the fresh market in orchards started by my parents in 1958. I grow grapes for juice and wine in vineyards that I planted in 1983. We started a farm-based winery in 1999 hoping to remain economically viable by further processing the products of our family farm.

We have seen minister after minister showboating through Niagara during icewine harvest posing for mock harvest pictures. We have seen them engaged in heart-wrenching displays of public hand-wringing over the demise of Niagara's economy.

But imagine a government with a monopoly agency that scours the world for subsidized foreign wines to dump into our Ontario marketplace. Imagine a bloated bureaucracy that effectively blocks from its shelves 100 per cent Ontario wine from more than three-quarters of all Ontario wineries.

Imagine a greedy and gutless government that, with quaking knees, shelved its own study that recommended com-

petition for the LCBO and the foreign-controlled wine retailing monopoly in Ontario.

I don't have great expectations of our government; I do not expect the government to sell my wine in the markets that the LCBO sources subsidized imports from to dump into my market. I

am not asking permission from the **greenbelt** government to sell my now useless pear orchards and juice grape vineyards for residential development.

All I am asking for is some honesty in labelling, access to the marketplace without a bloated LCBO blocking every move and bleeding off all hope of profit for a small winery and the continued support of our local media and consumers to pick 100 per cent Ontario when given a choice.

Perhaps as we see opportunistic and hypocritical governments come and go the integrity of our land and vineyards and wine will outlast them to survive for another generation.

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