

## TRIBUTE TO LARRY PATERSON

BY JIM WARREN

There's something about Larry!

Larry Paterson, aka the very popular Little Fat Wino, is not really little, and not really fat, which says a lot about the word "wino"!

You might wonder why anyone living in Peterborough, land of the pre-Cambrian rock mass, with more than its share of Arctic weather, so unfriendly to vines, would have become obsessed with anything vinous, but surely it all started with his exposure to wine in his job at the LCBO — where I first met him. In one small LCBO store Larry was selling more of my wine than all the other LCBO stores in Ontario combined.

Always ahead of his time Larry actually showed his superiors how to sell wine — at least Ontario wine — and so began our friendship. Larry is a believer — he has long believed that we can produce wine in this country, whether on an amateur or commercial basis, as good as if not better than many highly promoted and highly priced imported brands. And he has put his money where his mouth is, arranging tasting after tasting, often at his own expense, to prove his point. Along the way he has been a strong promoter of artisanal wine producers — he himself is a reigning Canadian champion amateur winemaker — sharing their passion and enthusiasm for making great wine from grapes or other fruits.

Unquestionably he is an innovator attempting to grow grapes in difficult places and always willing to help anyone else with the same goal. He knows more about creative winemaking than most commercial winemakers, dabbling with additives and unusual ingredients, the first man on earth to make wine infused with chocolate and discovering long before the Australians that tannin plus can make a marvelous Shiraz from almost anything.

He is not afraid to speak his mind and as a result he has ruffled a few feathers, from LCBO bureaucrats to self-proclaimed wine connoisseurs. He is the champion of the underdog, the winemaker who is striving to succeed in the face of discriminatory government policies and regulations, and a strong supporter of the freedom of information act, again at his own expense, which he has used to expose inappropriate bureaucratic activities.

In his current role as secretary and director of the Ontario Vinicultural Association he is an advocate for equality of opportunity for all winemakers. Blessed with a lovely wife, Barb, who has endured his various hobbies over the years, and many friends whom he has invited on fishing expeditions to watch his incredible fishing ability, Larry is simply a unique treasure, unique because there really is nobody else like him, and a treasure as a person of immense value.

READ BY TERRY RAYNER

