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To provoke thought and action for the betterment of our communities.

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Please send your contribution to  
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The publisher reserves the right to edit, condense or reject submissions.

Please include your name, the community you're contributing from and contact information. If submitting items that are time dated, send them to us at least two weeks in advance of the event date.

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Going well beyond the wine glass

Tasting Climate Change wine conference delves into challenges, solutions

KRISTIN PERRIN  
SALTWIRE

There's no question about it: we can no longer ignore the glaring signs of nature's response to climate change. Things like extreme frosts killing vitis vinifera vines in Nova Scotia's Annapolis Valley, emerging new insects, and rapidly spreading vine disease on hybrid clones from increased temperatures have become a frustrating reality for many local vineyard owners.

Consumers and producers need to ask what can be done? What's my impact as a wine and beverage patron in climate crisis?

The reality posed at the recent Tasting Climate Change (TTC) wine conference held at Lightfoot & Wolfville demonstrated - with plenty of research and data - precious resources will become more scarce as the planet's population rises from 2.5 billion (in 1945) to a prediction of nine billion by 2050.

TTC founder, author, wine journalist and media personality WSET certified diploma level Michelle Bouffard led a panel of local vineyards, winemakers and viticulturists, wine retail agencies and restaurant owners on supporting sustainable winemaking practices.

With more awareness on the subject, "there is hope in numbers," Bouffard said.

She reiterated despite the wine industry's fragmentation, "we can't undermine what a conversation can do."

But first, we must ask ourselves what our collective responsibilities remain in supporting local vineyards and beverage companies? How can we differentiate between the sustainable companies versus giant corporate? Buying local is one way and was the focus of TTC.

"Challenge means opportunity, we need to work with wine and beverage producers to face climate change collectively," said Dr. Debi Ingis, a biochem professor at McMaster University who began her career at the Cool Climate, Oenology & Viticulture In-



Kathryn Harding, left, and Alana MacIntyre of Bishop's Cellar pour a range of sustainable, biodynamic, organic wines from around the world during a recent Tasting Climate Change wine conference in Wolfville. CONTRIBUTED

stitute at Brock University in Niagara, Ont.

The good news is that there are more sustainable options and practices in the vineyard, winery and beyond: from eco-friendly labels and printers to energy efficient distribution and transportation tactics, to overall packaging of its products. This is something many local producers are open to. However, the cost of equipment is not always favourable for smaller businesses with already razor thin margins.

One thing remained consistent across the panel: research is essential and a helping hand from the government is needed in obtaining a long-term solution and plan.

The wine conference tackled some hard questions and potential solutions for the local wine and beverage industry to consider. For example, how does you know when a wine is made sustainably?

There are label indicators

on labels to look for such as certified organic and biodynamic, as well as energy efficient certifications like LEEDS Canada, a Green Energy Building, a rating system that works with businesses to tweak unnecessary energy use. But the panel strongly suggests to "do your research" ahead of time, as the label might not always tell the full story. Check out the company's website and social media stories.

Also brought up was: when buying local food and drink what should environmentally conscious consumers consider? Consider packaging, carbon footprint, farming practices, such as biodynamic farming, using as little energy as possible and recycling resources.

What about buying organic? Is it the same as buying sustainably? Although consumers seem to resonate most with an "organic" label, organic doesn't necessarily

GO ONLINE

Check out this website for more information: <https://tastingclimatechange.com/en/tcc-in-nova-scotia/>

mean sustainable. According to panelists from Bishop's Cellar, "most consumers remain in the dark."

Europe is answering this dilemma with implementing a mandatory QR-code to obtain the answers to your sustainability related wine questions. When buying wine from local specialty wine shop curators, having knowledgeable staff helps in educating consumers.

For a good breakdown of differentiating between certified organic, biodynamic winemaking practices, The David Suzuki Foundation (<https://david Suzuki.org/living-green/organic-wine-explained/>) is a good resource.

Another question posed was what are some challenges for Annapolis Valley producers?

"Many of the North American clones available come with disease," Jean-Benoit Deslauriers, head winemaker with Benjamin Bridge said.

Chaotic climate shifts bring more opportunities for diseases and new insects/vineyard pests - and diseases seem to be spreading faster.

Also, new sustainable equipment like tractors with solar panels are often exorbitantly expensive, making them inaccessible to smaller operations.

"Government can do a lot more with collaboration," as Micheal Lightfoot, owner of Lightfoot and Wolfville pointed out, bureaucratic red tape is often a challenge.

There is good news, though. Not only is Nova Scotia in a better position as a cooler climate wine region, it's viewed as a progressive energy-leader province within Canada. "We all have a place, like a drop of water. There is no black and white, and it will never be picture perfect," acknowledged Bouffard, adding if we don't start planning together now, we may reach a tipping point of no-return, sooner than later.

Are aprons all about fashion or function?

ABSOLUTELY FABULOUS IN YOUR HOME



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Aprons have a long history. Medieval man's loin cloth could be considered the first apron as the function of an apron is to protect whatever is underneath.

In the Middle Ages, aprons indicated the wearer's trade or business. Cobblers and blacksmiths wore black, stonemasons wore white and barbers' aprons were checkered. Blue was favoured by butchers, spinners and weavers. By the 16th century, aprons were an indication of status, embellished with embroidery, jewels or family crests, and were fashionable with the upper class.

In the pioneer days, people owned very few articles of clothing. An apron was a necessity. It offered protection against cooking splashes and farm chores, doubled as a pot holder or dish towel, and, if you could find a clean corner, was used as a tissue. Woven material was a precious commodity. Flour and sugar came in sacks made of finely woven cotton. Those sacks were carefully picked apart and re-purposed into aprons, dishtowels and even clothing. Recognizing this, some flour sack manufacturers made the fabric attractive with little colourful prints. Aprons and pinafores were mostly for women and girls and were worn to protect the dresses underneath. Pockets were a bonus feature.

By the 1950s, aprons symbolized the woman's place in the house. She was idealized as mother, happy homemaker, chief cook and bottle washer, and she wore her

DID YOU KNOW?

FYI the word 'apron' comes from the French word 'naperon' which means 'small tablecloth.' The small tablecloth was placed over the big one to protect it from food stains.

apron as a badge of pride. The dirty apron was whipped off before supper was served, with a fresh clean one tied on to reinforce her good housekeeping standards. Aprons were pretty, floral and finished with rick-rack or ribbons. Dad wore a masculine version for cooking on the barbecue. A short decade later, the apron was considered old-fashioned, possibly as clothing was now cheaper, and more available so protection wasn't as necessary. And women were heading out of the kitchen into the work force.

Today, aprons are popular again. We wear them to

protect our clothing as we bake, cook or paint. There are heavy duty aprons for grilling, carpentry or gardening, with lots of pockets. Aprons are available in several styles and endless patterns. The traditional bib apron hangs around the neck and ties at the waist. The cross-over apron goes over the shoulders, crosses on the back and ties. The fabrics are usually cotton twill which is long lasting with good protection. It's the prints and patterns that attract most of us. Flowers, cats, bikes, boats, garden themes, dragonflies, birds, stripes, solids, with or without pockets, there are so many choices.

A fresh apron is still a welcome addition to a wardrobe. Ask your mother if it's worn for fashion or function.

Cathy Reid is the owner of Absolutely Fabulous at Home in New Minas and offers information on consumer products every week.

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taking referrals after the show," Smith recalls. "It was the first time I'd done theatre as a community building

and healing process. I was hooked."

Smith and his family moved to Nova Scotia in 1989.

He continued working in film, but the travel demands, especially after the birth of

his son, made work in the film industry increasingly less appealing.

Directing community oriented videos, by contrast, brought great personal and professional satisfaction.

One 17-minute film, Se-

vere Brain Injury Recovery; Shooting For the Stars, tells the story of three Valley residents living together and helping each other through the lifelong process of recovery.

The film was entered in

more than 40 different film festivals around the world and won five awards.

"There are some really beautiful stories to tell here," Smith says. "These are stories about people taking care of each other."