Canadian giants start to clean up

2 Oct 2009 by Jancis Robinson

The good old *Vancouver Sun* has been keeping up the pressure on the big wine companies in Canada to make their labelling of imported blends as 'Cellared in Canada' less misleading. As reported here, the local head of the dominant company Vincor, now owned by Constellation, and John Peller, president of Andrew Peller Ltd, have pledged to introduce much more explicit labelling and to work with the local liquor retail monopoly to ensure that such wines are no longer displayed so as to suggest they are from British Columbia.

They claim that they never meant to mislead the public but simply never considered the issue. Such wines represent about half of all the volume of wine sold in British Columbia.

One major impetus for change has been the imminent Winter Olympics in BC. With Vincor a major sponsor of the event, and some imported blends carrying the Olympic logo, a major relabelling programme is now admitted to be necessary and underway.

Meanwhile in Ontario, eastern Canada, the LCBO monopoly report they are trying to be much clearer in their merchandising of similar wines labelled 'Cellared in Canada' (which, unlike as in BC, do by law have to contain some local wine - although they can perfectly legally contain added water). You can read about the LCBO's efforts in Canadian labelling saga gathers steam.

They claim they are now clearly merchandising Cellared in Canada wines separately from Ontario ones, but a photograph taken in one of their stores this week (see below) suggests there is still some work to be done.