

# Vintage's View

JANUARY 15, 2007

As you've probably noticed, all of us at the **Executive Hotel Vintage Park** have a thing for B.C. wine: we've partnered with many of the province's wineries and named rooms after them; we've hung wine-themed art hither and yon; there's a sweet wine list happening in our lounge and restaurant; B.C. wines are stocked refreshment centre; and in case you hadn't noticed, we offer complimentary early evening/happy hour wine tastings in the lounge. Got a little time to spar? We can arrange wine tours to all of our major wine regions

Just so you know, we strive to have as much fun with B.C.'s great wines as we can, and that means tasting widely, increasing our partnerships with the wineries, and sharing our finds with our guests. You'll see what we mean and why as we profile some of our partner wineries, their winemakers and best bottles in our wine letters.

## Wine Wiz: Bruce Nicholson, Jackson-Triggs

Hats off to Nicholson, one of North America's most awarded winemakers. His talents have seen his winery recognized as top winery in Canada in 2003, 2004, and 2006 by Wine Access, Canada's national wine magazine—that's three of the five years the competition has been running, plus *Best of Canada* at the San Francisco International Wine Competition, North America's largest and most prestigious wine judging event. For the third time in five years, he's been named Winemaker of the Year (most recently besting others from 964 wineries repping 21 countries and 28 US states) too in addition to scooping a notable 21 medals at the SF competition. Nicholson's total awards to date add up to more than 1,500 trophies and medals.

Other unprecedented international recognition? Award of Excellence for icewines at Vinexpo in France, and "Best Icewine" in 1999, 2000, and 2000 at the International Wine and Spirits Competition in London, England. Tack on "Best Canadian Wine Producer" at the same competition for 2000, 2003, and 2004, and the aforementioned "Best Shiraz/Syrah in the World" in 2006, too. Alas, Nicholson is heading to J-T's sister property in Ontario to pump up their wines in what will likely be an equally spectacular fashion. Happily we'll be drinking his B.C.-made wines for a few years to come.

## Wine Buys:

Want to take a bottle or two home?

Here are a couple of our favourite wine shops, handily within strolling distance.

Marquis Wine Cellars, Vancouver's first wine shop, has a stellar selection of B.C.'s best bottles. Ask for resident B.C. wine guru David...

1034 Davie Street, 604-684-2471,

[www.marquis-wines.com](http://www.marquis-wines.com)

Taylorwood Wines sells only B.C. wines at winery-direct prices. Ask for a taste—there's usually something open.

1185 Mainland Street

604-408-9463

[www.taylorwoodwines.com](http://www.taylorwoodwines.com)

## Cool Stuff

The southern Okanagan Valley, between the town of Oliver and the U.S. border, is part of the Sonora Desert, which extends south to the Baja Peninsula in Mexico. It's Canada's only desert, and a 'pocket' one at that.

Mission Hill Family Estate Winery's Grand Reserve Chardonnay 1992 walked off with the Avery Trophy for "Best Chardonnay Worldwide" at the 1994 International Wine and Spirits Competition in London, the top dog of all wine shows, and a significant accolade that put B.C. wines on the world map. Judges thought it was a mistake since it was from Canada and retasted it. No mistake. Just damn fine wine.

Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate Proprietors' Grand Reserve Shiraz 2004 was named "Best Shiraz/Syrah in the World" at the 2006 London International Wine & Spirits Competition.

## Top Drops:

**White:** *Dirty Laundry 2005 Gewürztraminer – Woo Woo Vines.* This baby is voluptuous, enchanting, sensuous. Stayed tuned for the scoop on this winery.

**Red:** *Peller Estates Private Reserve Merlot 2004.* A juicy quaff that plays up red berries topped with hits of white pepper.

**Sparkling:** *Sumac Ridge Stellers Jay Brut 2002.* This popular, zippy sparkler is a wine for all reasons and gleefully matches up anything from mussels to Asian food and popcorn.

## What's On?

January 19–February 4, 2007

### 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Dine Out Vancouver

This eating frenzy features 156 restaurants offering either \$15, \$25 and \$35 three-course prix fixe menus with recommended B.C. wine pairings. A good place to start? Our very own Tivoli's, then fan out from here. See [www.tourismvancouver.ca](http://www.tourismvancouver.ca) for details.

January 19-22, 2007

### 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Okanagan Icewine Festival

#### Sun Peaks Resort (near Kamloops)

This most unique of all B.C. wine festivals combines brilliant Okanagan icewines and a spectacular ski resort. Take in winemasters' dinners, icewine and dessert pairings, a progressive wine tasting, and there's still time to ski. [www.owfs.com](http://www.owfs.com)

March 14-15, 2007

### 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Victoria Festival of Wine

A side trip to Victoria to take in this popular festival that bills itself as "two days of indulgence" is highly recommended. On tap are scads of seminars, a massive tasting (100+ wineries) including many hard-to-source Vancouver Island wines, winemaker dinners, and a musical "Sideways" evening featuring plenty of pinot noir.

[www.victoriafestivalofwine.com](http://www.victoriafestivalofwine.com)

March 22–April 7, 2007

### Up Your Glass!

UYG! is an evening all about the vast subject of wine with award-winning broadcaster and writer Jurgen Gothe. Get ready for "lore and legend, fact and fable, spoofs and silliness, rants and raves, all surrounded by lots of music." beyond restaurant + lounge; tickets are \$35 at 604-684-3474

March 26–April 1, 2007

### 29<sup>th</sup> Vancouver Playhouse International Wine Festival

If you haven't already booked in for this amazing event (it's one of the top wine festivals in North America), there's no time like the present. This year—Australia is the feature country and riesling the featured varietal—will see more than 180 wineries pouring 1480 wines at 53 events over 8 days. You're waiting for what?

[www.playhousewinefest.com](http://www.playhousewinefest.com)

## Just the Facts:

Here's the dirt on B.C. wines and wine country:

- Jesuit missionary Father Charles Pandosy first made wine in B.C. in 1859 in the Okanagan; the first commercial wines were made in the 1920s; and B.C. wines stepped up in 1990 when old varieties of grapes were pulled out and replanted with premium varietals.
- Currently, B.C. has 140 licensed wineries (in 1981 there were just 14 struggling to make a buck) and another 26-or-so in the pipeline. This includes a dozen fruit wineries, cider makers, and sake (rice wine) producers.
- There are 411 grape growers growing 60 grape varietals (48% are white, 52% are red).
- The top whites are chardonnay, pinot gris, and gewürztraminer; top reds include merlot, pinot noir and cabernet sauvignon.
- In 2006, 6,632 acres of land were under vine.
- We have five wine regions:
  - the Okanagan
  - Similkameen
  - Fraser Valley
  - Vancouver Island
  - Gulf Islands

## Spotlight

### Wine Region: Okanagan

The Okanagan wine region may be B.C.'s biggest but it's pretty piddling in size when you compare it to say, Napa. While it's said to have North America's most scenic vineyards—hectares of them rise from lakeshores to climb up mountain slopes—it's got plenty more going for it. Like a four-lake daisy chain running the length of the Okanagan Valley providing optimal growing conditions with long warm sunny days and cool nights with the heat from the lakes tempering the chill. The valley runs from the US border about 160 kilometres (100 miles) north, and all of this combines to provide superb growing conditions for wines that run the spectrum from auxerrois to zinfandel. Wine touring is a breeze with wineries running the length of the lakes; tasting rooms are open year-round; many of the wineries have on-site restaurants, delis, and picnic areas. Accommodation ranges from campsites to lakeside resorts. Local wines are found in abundance in restaurants everywhere.

### Winery: Jackson-Triggs

If you get a chance to visit the Okanagan, J-T's sleek and chic new tasting room is a must—it looks more like a design gallery than wine shop/tasting room. Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Cellars (there's also a Jackson-Triggs Niagara in Ontario) was established in 1992 and grows grapes on some of the best land in the country resulting in some of the best wines anywhere. Currently the winery makes in excess of 40 wines under four different labels, Proprietors' Selection, Proprietors' Reserve, Proprietors' Grand Reserve and SunRock Vineyard. Dive in anywhere—you won't be disappointed.