

Story Time - Wine



Osoyoos Wine.

Taste, savour, swallow – and never forget.



The South Okanagan – particularly between Osoyoos and Oliver – is considered by many to be the prime grape-growing area in Canada, increasingly revealing itself more and more as the country's best terroir. More than 20 wineries can be found within 20 km of Osoyoos – ranging from six-acre boutique wineries to some of Canada's largest. Large may be relative, however, since the Okanagan's total of about 7,000 acres of planted grapes might be considered just a single wine farm in places like Australia and California!

Two of the best-known vineyard areas in the South Okanagan are the Golden Mile and Black Sage Bench, home to larger wineries such as Burrowing Owl, Jackson-Triggs and Inniskillin, and savvy boutique wineries with a cult-like following such as Black Hills Estate Winery, Le Vieux Pin, La Stella and Orofino.



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In Osoyoos, NK'MIP Cellars – Canada's first aboriginal owned and operated winery – offers a firsthand look at Okanagan wine production while incorporating the cultural history and experiences of the Osoyoos Indian Band and the 'Syilx' First Nations people of the Okanagan. Sourcing its fruit from 254 acres of grapes, owned and planted by the Osoyoos Indian Band in 1968, NK'MIP Cellars' wines have garnered consistent awards around the world in international competitions.

New kids on the block

Twisted Tree Winery opened its stunning tasting room overlooking vineyards and Lake Osoyoos in 2007. This family-owned boutique winery produces small quantities of hand-crafted premium wines – with its "Six Vines" making a visit to the hilltop estate a must. La Stella, whose name means "star", embodies the Tuscan way of life. Organic fruit of high quality is picked in low volume to produce incredibly flavourful yields. This tiny winery embraces the romantic side of wine country and endeavours to tell its story through its wine. Keep your eyes on La Stella – this gem is surely on the road to stardom!

Bring on the medals

The Okanagan has planted primarily viniferous varietals producing international award-winning wines. There is plenty to choose from as you tour this region – from complex rich reds (Bordeaux styles), to fruity whites (Germanic varieties), to organic varietals, interesting fruit wines and delectable ice-wines. Most area wineries are open for complementary tastings and tours, with some offering lunches, dinners, and even outdoor concerts in amphitheatres! You can choose to opt for a self-guided tour or enlist one of the local wine-tour companies to chauffeur you around, offering insight into the region and good tips about the local wineries, winemakers, destinations and activities.

Ode to wine

To experience the best that each of the wineries has to offer, each May and October the region celebrates with annual spring and fall wine festivals. Here you can enjoy the many wine-related activities – from intimate winemaker's dinners, VIP tours, new wine releases, experiential learning, wine education seminars, and lively outdoor music. You can even join in for a taste of grape stomping a-la *I Love Lucy!* www.owfs.com

Taking roost among the vines

A growing trend in wine country is to sleepover amidst the grapes. As seen with the development of vineyard resorts and guest-houses – such as at Spirit Ridge Vineyard Resort & Spa and Burrowing Owl Estate Winery – vineyards are seeing an opportunity to attract visitors to their winery for more than just a drive-through tasting. The newest accommodations are clearly aimed at upscale customers with nightly rates in the high season pushing upwards of \$300. The trend is towards food and wine education with the addition of cooking classes and wine-pairing dinners. Smaller wineries such as La Stella and Le Vieux Pin hope to have a series of boutique villas developed in their vineyards within the next three years.

Here are a few of our favourites...

NK'MIP Cellars www.nkmipcellars.com
Burrowing Owl Estate Winery www.burrowingowlwine.ca
Le Vieux Pin Winery www.levieuxpin.ca
Orofino Winery www.oroфинovineyards.com

Twisted Tree Vineyards & Winery www.twistedtree.ca
La Stella Winery www.lastella.ca
Inniskillin Okanagan Estate Winery www.inniskillin.com

For more information on wineries in the South Okanagan, visit The Wine Institute (www.winebc.ca) or Hidden Wineries of BC (www.winegrowers.bc.ca).