

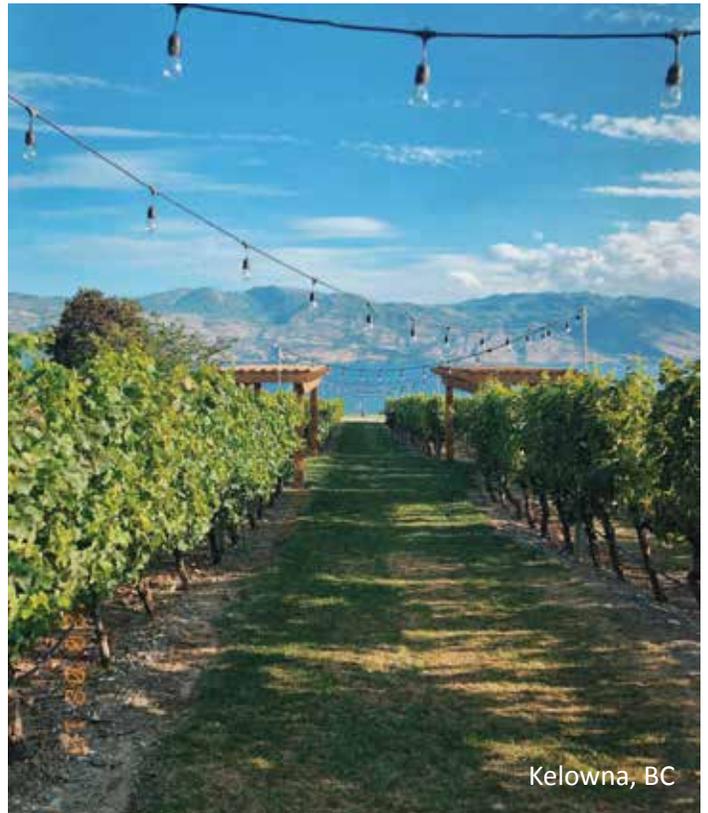
# Wine Advice: Canadian Wine

**M**ost wine consumers think wine and immediately think grapes. Although by far, the majority of this fermented beverage is produced with grapes, it is also produced from various fruits and vegetables, flowers, and weeds, which explains why wine is made commercially in every province other than the Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. This may change.

A University of Texas study projected the effects of global warming will result in the ability to grow grapes in the Yukon by mid-2040's. We have already witnessed wine-making areas in France revise historic laws restricting grape varieties, introducing varieties suitable to a changing climate.

Manitoba's two wineries, Rigby Orchards Estate Winery of Killarney, established in 1999 and Manitoba's first winery, and Shrugging Doctor Beverage Company of Winnipeg, both produce wine from fruit other than grapes. Rigby Orchards produces saskatoon and certified organic apple and haskap wine, while Shrugging Doctor's portfolio includes raspberry wine, and a strawberry rhubarb blend.

Canada is internationally re-known for, and the world's top producer, of Icewine, wine made from grapes frozen on the vine. There is one million litres of Icewine produced in Canada annually and if one requires proof of its international appeal, a trip through Canadian airport duty-free shops serves as confirmation. First produced in BC in 1972, Icewine is made in all four of the largest wine producing provinces. Ontario is responsible for 90% of total Canadian production, made from the grape varieties



Vidal, Riesling, and Cabernet Franc. Although Icewine is the most famous of Canadian wines, Canada has received international recognition for red, white, and sparkling wine.

Basically, there are two types of wine produced in Canada, 100% Canadian (including Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA)) and International Canadian Blended (ICB) wine "made from imported and/or domestic wines".

Liquor stores display 100% Canadian wine separate from "Blended and Bottled in Canada", "Cellared in Canada", and "International Blend from Imported and Domestic Wines", acknowledging 100% Canadian wines as those made with Canadian grapes and others as those whose contents may include foreign grapes or wines. International Canadian Blended wine competes against other wine in the entry-level category. Priced at approximately half that of mid-price VQA designated wine they are a viable option for those seeking value wine.

Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) labelled wines, a term only applicable to wine from Ontario (VQA) and British

Columbia (BCVQA), are monitored by provincial bodies who oversee and enforce VQA standards and regulations, rules that guarantee quality and authenticity, grape and wine origin, production standards, varietal content, and labelling requirements, VQA wine must also undergo tasting and sensory evaluation to ensure the wine reflects regional terroir (the taste and character imparted by the environment where the wine is produced).

VQA wines, thought to be superior, do indeed meet strict regulations, however, wineries must apply for VQA status which includes a fee. Certain wineries within the two VQA provinces chose not to apply while all wineries located outside Ontario and B.C. cannot apply for VQA status simply due to location. 100% Canadian wines, which are not VQA certified, are quality wines made from grapes grown in Canada.

There are over 600 Canadian wineries and 31,000 acres under vine, most vineyards located between 30-50 degrees latitude north. Canada's varied soils, topography and climate affords multiple suitable viticulture areas. Wine Tourism generates 1.5 billion dollars and shows continued growth with public interest in on-site wine tastings, events, dining and lodging. The industry employs 37,000 workers.

Canada's primary grape-growing, wine-making areas are the Niagara Peninsula, Okanagan Valley, other areas in both B.C. and Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia. Most growing areas are considered cool-climate zones. According to Wines of Canada, there are 284 wineries in B.C., where the top red grapes are Merlot and Pinot Noir and top whites Pinot Gris and Chardonnay. Ontario records 185 wineries, with Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc the leading reds, Chardonnay, Riesling, and Pinot Gris top whites, Quebec has 125 wineries, Nova Scotia 22. Both Quebec and Nova Scotia production focuses on hybrid grape varieties.

Most Canadian wine is made from European, *Vitis vinifera*, grape varieties, although there are many hybrid grape varieties employed in Canadian wine production. Vintners chose grape varieties for their flavour and aromatic profile as well as the ability to thrive in the soil, climate, and topography of the area.

Canadian wineries employ a range of grape-growing and wine-making methods including sustainable, organic, and



biodynamic practises, information found on the label. Wines may also be labelled as vegan, gluten-free, and low-calorie.

Canadian wine is produced in a wide range of styles, ranging from dry through sweet, fortified and sparkling, the later produced mainly by the traditional winemaking method, the same method used for Champagne production. Over 200 Canadian wineries produce sparkling wine.

Next to beer, wine is the most popular alcoholic beverage in Manitoba where consumers prefer red wine over white, followed by rosé and sparkling. Canadian wines feature prominently on wine lists in BC, Ontario, Quebec, and Nova Scotia, but unfortunately this is not so, in many other provinces.

**Kate Wagner Zeke, Sommelier(ISG)**  
*Certified Specialist of Wine, Certified Wine Educator(SWE)*  
 wineadviser@wcgwave.ca

**LOOKING TO BUILD YOUR *dream home?***

Now selling lots in Brandon's South End. A variety of lot sizes, & price ranges. Lots starting at **\$67,000 plus GST.**

**ROYAL LEPAGE**  
 MARTIN-LIBERTY REALTY  
 INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED

**For More Information Text or Call**  
**BRIAN BAKER 204-721-0928**  
 www.brandonrealestate.biz