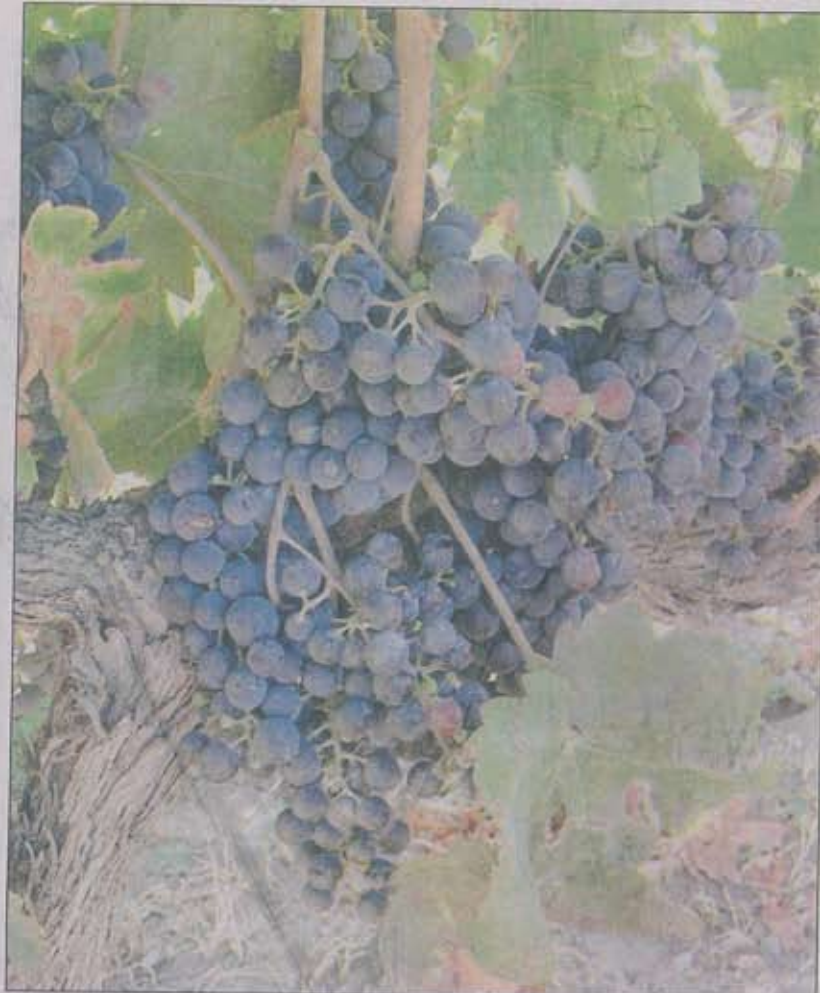


# Village project honours grapes

MARTY HOPE  
CALGARY HERALD  
OLIVER, B.C.



This "wine capital of Canada" has set plans in motion to create a mixed-use village within the town's limits to celebrate the grape.

Town officials, along with Co-operators Development Corp. Ltd. and Bellstar Developments Inc., have announced that a half-hectare of riverfront land has been purchased for the creation of a wine village, almost four years after the idea was originally presented.

The proposed wine village will be an "experiential" community that will celebrate the culture and heritage of the southern part of the Okanagan Valley and its relationship with wine, agriculture and culinary arts, say officials with co-developers

CDCL and Bellstar.

Plans for the site include 100 apartment condominiums and a 100-room condo-hotel. It includes conference facilities, a spa and a restaurant.

There will also be a wine interpretive and culinary arts centre. Oliver is home to 23 wineries and more than 1,600 hectares of vineyards.

The project will be an integrated, pedestrian-friendly village that will extend the downtown commercial district of this town of 4,500 residents (8,000 when the surrounding rural areas are included) located 25 kilometres from the U.S. border.

"We have been working on this exceptional project for a year and over the coming months, we will finalize the financial structure, select the design team and move forward with village thematics, concept and vision," says Matthew McKechnie of CDCL and Jon Zwickel of Bellstar in a joint news release.

The wine village will celebrate the culture and heritage of the area.

They also say they expect project marketing will begin in the spring, with construction getting underway in the fall.

Oliver mayor Ron Hovanes says the town is delighted to see the development of the village get started.

"The benefits to Oliver and area will be enormous, not only in measurable economic terms, but also by enhancing the area's claim of being the wine capital of Canada," he says.

Oliver is home to 10 per cent of Canada's wineries and as much as 25 per cent of the grape-growing acreage in the country.

There are 14 wineries and vineyards in the immediate area.

The vision for the project started in early 2004 when Oliver's town manager and an official for the provincial government's Crown land division wrote a land-use agreement describing the possibility of creating a wine village.

The agreement was later approved by the town's economic development department.

In the spring of 2006, CDCL and Oliver officials signed a memorandum of understanding, with the terms of that document finalized 18 months later.

Following interviews with several resort operators, Bellstar was chosen as the hotel partner.

# Okanagan seen as wine capital

KATHY McCORMICK  
CALGARY HERALD

More than 60 wineries are in the Thompson/Okanagan area, leading it to be referred to often as the "Napa of the North."

The vineyard owners, vintners and sommeliers might argue that the Okanagan is the new wine capital of North America — and its heart is the Osoyoos region.

With its even more moderate climate and dry desert conditions, it has an ideal growing season that has attracted many, and it's been translated into award-winners from almost every locale.

One of the

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best known is Nk'Mip Cellars,

North America's first aboriginal-

owned-and-operated winery that surrounds the resort of Spirit Ridge in the heart of Osoyoos.

The Golden Mile and Black Sage Bench, including the area all the way through to Okanagan Falls just a few kilometres north of Osoyoos, have many other choices.

These include:

■ Inniskillin Okanagan, renowned worldwide as Canada's premier ice wine producer;

■ Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate Tasting Gallery in Oliver;

■ See Ya Later Ranch in Okanagan Falls, which features SYL wine;



Ian Lindsay, Vancouver Sun

Merlot vines in a vineyard operated by the Osoyoos First Nation.

■ Blasted Church, Wild Goose, Stag's Hollow, Blue Mountain, Noble Ridge, Tangled Vines, and Desert Falls near Okanagan Falls;

■ Le Vieux Pin, Silver Sage, Quinta Ferreira, Oliver Twist, Black Hills, Desert Hills, Burrowing Owl, and Twisted Tree in Black Sage Bench;

■ Fairview Cellars, Tinhorn Creek, Gehringer Brothers, Hester Creek, Orchard Hill, Antelope Ridge, Golden Mile and Golden Beaver in The Golden Mile;

■ St. Laszlo, Robin Ridge, Seven Stones, Forbidden Fruit, Crowsnest, Herder, and Orofino, all near Keremeos.

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Golfers ply links  
Golden Mile

K6

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