

OK WINE COUNTRY

# Barrels of fun

I had no idea that several times a year the Okanagan Valley celebrates its blossoming wine industry with festivals. Did you?



**michael schratter**  
ON THE TOWN

With a short five-hour scenic drive to the south Okanagan, a visit to our wine country to tour the Great Estates of the Okanagan proved to be the perfect weekend getaway to decompress and unwind.

I had the privilege of staying at the **Spirit Ridge Resort and Spa**. Overlooking the town of Osoyoos, the elegant four-star accommodations in picturesque and rustic surroundings on the Nk'Mip Resort proved to be just what the doctor ordered. With the award-winning **Nk'Mip Cellars Winery** and the **Nk'Mip Desert Cultural Centre** just outside my villa's door, it would have been easy to stay put with the car parked if I were so inclined. But the weekend's excursions on the Great Estates of the Okanagan tour were beckoning, and I was in the mood for a bit of adventure.

The unique tour had me visiting five of the Okanagan's most exceptional

wineries; the award-winning **Sumac Ridge Estate Winery**, the culturally diverse **Nk'Mip Cellars**, the icewine leading **Inniskillin**, renowned **Jackson-Triggs**, and the historical **See Ya Later Ranch**. All of the wineries had their own unique characteristics that were reflected both in the wines they poured as well as the approach and philosophy of their tours.

## Highlights

The icewine tasting tour at Inniskillin, Canada's leading icewine producer. Their Riesling icewine is pure liquid gold. Did you know that in order to qualify as icewine, the picking and

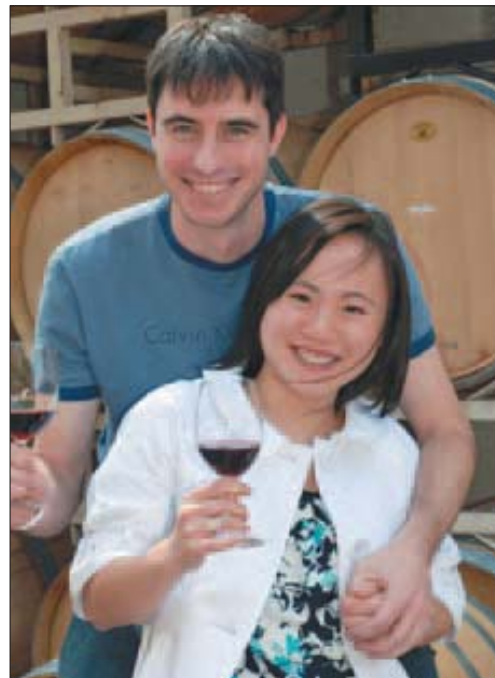
crushing of the grapes has to be done in temperatures of -8 C or colder?

The wine-pairing lunch I enjoyed on the sunny patio at Sumac Ridge Estate Winery's Cellar Door Bistro was truly impeccable. Chefs Roger Planiden and Ryan Fuller have set the bar impossibly high and whether other wineries rise to the challenge remains to be seen. In the mean time, I recommend that you don't take any chances, and simply allow Sumac Ridge to take care of your wine pairing dinner needs.

The **Okanagan Spring Wine Festival** runs until May 10, but if you can't make it this spring, then head up for Okanagan Fall Wine Festival in early October. With the vine leaves turning orange and the grapes plump and ready for picking, it's a perfect way to get away from the city and relax.

Check out [www.greatesstatesokanagan.com](http://www.greatesstatesokanagan.com) and [www.thewinefestivals.com](http://www.thewinefestivals.com) for more information.

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Check out more On The Town photos at [vancouver.24hrs.ca](http://vancouver.24hrs.ca).



Who would have thought that learning can be so much fun? Vancouverites Loreen Lai and Jamie Harrison loved the educational hospitality received at the Inniskillin vineyard as they learned in-depth facts about the icewine making process.



Chef Jeff Miller welcomed Vancouver's Lori Henry and Cassandra Anderson to start their Okanagan wine weekend with a lovely dinner at Promenade Wine and Tapas Bar, located in the brand new Walnut Beach Resort in Osoyoos.



Nk'Mip Cellars and Spirit Ridge Vineyards Resort & Spa hosted their first annual Fire & Ice food and wine pairing event. Sipping icewine while a lithe belly dancer played with fire proved an entertaining culmination of the evening.



Sous chef Ryan Fuller at Sumac Ridge Estate Winery makes a lunch of pear and celeriac soup followed by duck confit a possibility for those dining in the South Okanagan – quite possibly the best bistro in the valley.

# Police ready to retire

The reunion of rock trio The Police will come to an end this summer with a final concert in New York that will benefit arts programming for the city's public television stations, the band announced yesterday.

Singer/bassist Sting, drummer Stewart Copeland and guitarist Andy Summers reunited for a world tour last May and, according to *Billboard* data up to Sept. 30, grossed more than \$171 million from 53 shows seen by more than 1.5 million people.

The band will say farewell to Britain with a concert in London's Hyde Park on June 29. The New York City concert will end the tour, though a date and venue have not been released.

"We kicked off our very first American tour at CBGB's in 1978 and this summer, 30 years later, our journey will come full circle as we play our final show here in New York City," The Police said in a statement.

- Reuters

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