

# Winery restaurants offer stunning views

► Okanagan From K12

Free Trade Agreement of 1988. "It was a complete and radical change, as it removed the preferential treatment to Canadian wines. Over 1000 acres of vines were pulled out in the Okanagan and replanted to European varieties," said Ingo Grady, the German-born director of wine at Mission Hill, whose cover, Anthony von Mandl, is of Austrian and Czech descent. His winemaker, John Sines, hails from Marlborough, New Zealand's renowned wine country.

Several Okanagan wineries have won awards in recent years. Mission Hill won for best chardonnay at the International Wine and Spirits Competition in 1994 in London — the biggest award ever for a B.C. winery. Last year, Quail Gate Estate Winery won best red wine of the year (for its 2002 cabernet sauvignon and merlot) at the Canadian Wine Awards, and its 2002 pinot noir and chardonnay were awarded the Queen and Prince Philip during their visit in May to Alberta. Summerhill Pyramid Winery won silver medals at last year's Okanagan Fall Wine Festival for its Pinot Gris, icewine and Pinot Meunier, and a gold medal in 2000 at France's Chardonnay du Monde for its 1991 Cotee Gabriel sparkling wine.

Kelowna has become a culinary destination in recent years, and several restaurants specialize in fresh, local ingredients — French, a restaurant in downtown Kelowna, was opened by Rod Butters, the chef at the Wickaninnish Inn, a Beldia & Chateaux Inn on Vancouver Island. But what's truly enchanting is the gorgeous lake views from some of its winery restaurants.

While the sun sets over Lake Okanagan, you can savour a splendid, six-course dinner at Quail Gate, whose patio restaurant is fittingly, right next to the vineyard. Sake-marinated halibut atop a crispy noodle cake and well-charred vegetables are paired with Quail Gate's Redwing Asian barbecue salmon with wild mushrooms, coconut milk, bok choy, peppers and pasta is paired with its pinot noir, roasted rack of lamb with couscous, spicy grilled eggplant salad and a ciarrino mint vinaigrette is accompanied by its cabernet sauvignon.



Summerhill Winery is distinct for its pyramid, a replica of Egypt's Cheops pyramid, and its blend of New Age mysticism in its winemaking. Summerhill's wines — from organically grown grapes — are aged inside the pyramid for about a month, which supposedly adds to the taste.

Executive chef Judith Knight, a personal chef to actor Kevin Costner for a while, worked at Vancouver's Bishop's Restaurant, and owned a restaurant in Highland, B.C. — Olive Oyle. At Mission Hill, executive chef Michael Allemeier, the South

African-born, Hong Kong-raised ex-chef at Bishop's, offers cooking demonstrations November to April. Themes range from seafood to mushrooms. A pyramid is probably the last thing you expect to see in Kelowna, although it is a desert.

But a replica of Egypt's Cheops pyramid can be found at Summerhill, which blends New Age mysticism with its winemaking. Owner Stephen Cipes said his wines, which are organically grown, are aged inside the pyramid for about a month, and taste

better as a result of their exposure to "sacred geometry." Cipes is particularly proud of his sparkling wines, so — while enraptured by a drop-dead view of the lake from Summerhill's terrace restaurant, Forster's Sunset Bistro — make sure to

## Just the facts

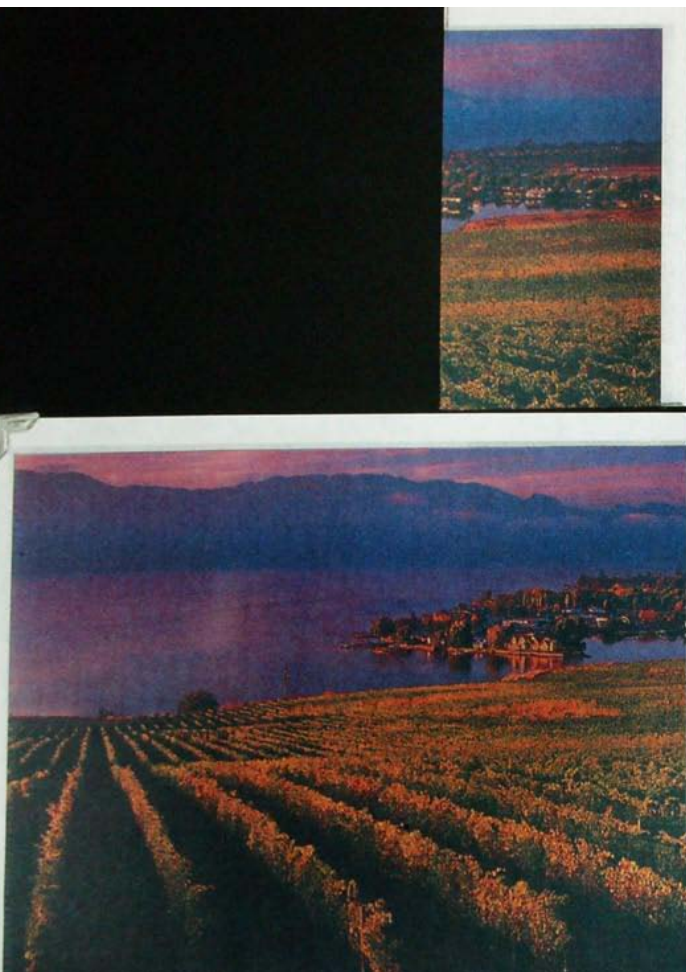


► For information, see Tourism Kelowna's website at [www.tourismkelowna.com](http://www.tourismkelowna.com). Air Canada and WestJet have daily non-stop flights from Toronto to Kelowna.

sample one, as well as the red-dish leucine made from pinot noir grapes. The same inspired chef to pair with Okanagan wines, visit Carmelia Gout Cheese Artisan, a farm overlooking Okanagan Lake 12 km south of downtown Kelowna, owned by a couple from Israel, Ofri and Ofir Ben-Zur. Explaining that the couple, who were farmers near Nazareth, originally came to sit nearby — her husband, Ofir, is wheelchair-bound and she sits — Ben-Zur said they decided to move and start a goat farm.

"We went all over the Okanagan to taste wine and found nobody serving cheese," she said. As a recipe from wine and cheese, you can enjoy an aromatic stroll at the Okanagan Lavender Herb Farm in Kelowna, which grows 3.5 hectares of white wine grapes for Quail Gate Winery as well. Owner Andrea McFadden's family, the Shomers, own the winery. The former apple orchard, which McFadden's grandfather started after emigrating from Ireland, is now planted with over 60 varieties of lavender in purple, pink and white. The patios are interspersed with signs about lavender trivia — like how French doctors used lavender oil to treat wounds in World War I due to its antiseptic qualities and soothing properties.

Sharon McDowell is a New York-based freelance writer whose trip was subsidized by B.C. Tourism and Mission Hill Winery.



Some 15 of the Okanagan Valley's 65 wineries are located in the picturesque Kelowna area and many offer stunning views of Lake Okanagan from the balconies of their restaurants.

# Drinking to the best Okanagan has to offer

Small wineries win over tourists  
Stunning lakes just add to the appeal

SHARON MCDOWELL  
WRITER

KELOWNA, B.C. — People used to come to the Okanagan Valley for the beaches and peaches. Now, they stay for the wine.

As bella pealed relentlessly from the 12-story bell tower, you can enjoy a leisurely lunch on the outdoor terrace restaurant of Mission Hill Family Estate Winery, with its breathtaking view of Lake Okanagan, a shimmering blue below the sloping rows of pinot noir and chardonnay grapes. You can dine on crab and ricotta ravioli and lamb cheeks with lentils, plus too many wines to be prudent.

Then you can stroll the rose gardens above the lake and close your eyes, imagining the concerts and Shakespeare performed on the grand hall. Or you can admire the Marc Chagall tapestry — a riot of blue, red and black animals playing musical

instruments — by a Paris artist in the reception area. About 15 of the Okanagan Valley's 65 or so wineries are in Kelowna, and all offer tastings, so the valley's biggest city (about 100,000 people) is a good base for wine touring. Due to the climate of hot, dry summers but cooler nights, and winters with freezing temperatures, the valley produces a range of wines from Rieslings, Gewurztraminers and Bordeaux-style reds to ice wine.

The first orchards in Kelowna — centered in the valley between Vernon in the north and Osoyoos, near the Washington State border — were planted in this semi-arid desert from 1904-1914, irrigated by Lake Okanagan. Smothered in pink blossoms in spring, the valley has been famed for its peaches, apricots, strawberries, cherries, pears and raspberries ever since.

While French missionaries planted the first grapes in Kelowna for Communion wine in 1859, the wineries came much later. The first Okanagan winery, Calona Vineyards, started making wine from surplus apples in 1912, and grew thanks to funds from a hardware merchant, W.A.C. Bennett, who later became the premier of B.C. Quality, however, came later still for this fairly new wine region.

One factor that improved the quality was the North American

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