



Niagara River

Wineries to visit: *The Ice House Winery, Inniskillin Wines, Lailey Vineyard, Peller Estates Winery, Reif Estate Winery and Riverview Cellars Winery*

The picturesque Niagara Parkway winds along the narrow band that borders the Niagara River. Vines dig deep into the reddish-hued sandy soils, which tend to warm earlier in the spring. The air currents from the river moderate temperatures protecting vineyards from damaging spring or fall frosts, ensuring the more tender grape varieties grown in the sub-appellation thrive. It seems we're not alone in thinking that that the scenery along the Niagara Parkway is perhaps the prettiest in the country. In the warm months, cyclists and joggers jostle for space along the trail that hugs the gently winding riverbank. Others find a shady spot for a picnic and enjoy the view. History buffs, or those travelling with one, can visit the many historic sites along the way. If you're walking or a casual cyclist looking to explore some of our wineries without covering a lot of distance, this tour is tailor-made for you as the wineries are quite close together.

The Ice House Winery holds a unique position in the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake. It is the only winery that makes Icewine exclusively. The Ice House Winery is housed in a heritage building turned winemaking facility, winemaking lab and winery boutique. Open daily, guests may simultaneously sample Icewine *and* observe it being made. A visit to The Ice House Winery is also never complete without a complimentary Northern Ice N'Icewine Slushie, which is exactly what it sounds like, a perfectly sweet and delicious chilled treat.

Inniskillin Wines, founded by industry pioneers Donald Ziraldo and Karl Kaiser, played a significant role in propelling Niagara's wines onto the world stage. The story of Inniskillin's win of the coveted Grand Prix d'Honneur at Vinexpo, Bordeaux, France in 1991 for its 1989 Icewine is now the stuff of industry lore. Although initially acclaimed for its Icewine, Inniskillin has proven it also excels with classic varietals. Tastings take place in the impressive Brae Burn Barn, a historic building whose design is influenced by famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

Lailey Vineyard specializes in small batch, exclusively estate-grown wines. Over the course of three decades, the Lailey family has transformed the land, replacing orchards with vineyards. A few years ago, the Lailey's decided to eliminate the use of herbicides in the vineyards. Weed removal is now a labour intensive process, but the award-winning wines they are producing have convinced them that soils rich with microbial life are beneficial and add complexity to the grapes.

Peller Estates has come a long way from its humble beginnings, over 40 years ago, with the dream of a Hungarian immigrant, Andrew Peller. His son Joseph and grandson John have realized Andrew's dream with a stunning winery and a wide ranging portfolio of wines that first and foremost are made to be paired with good food. At Peller Estates, the belief is that there is an art to pairing wine with food - a belief the Peller Estates Winery Restaurant adheres to everyday. Headed by celebrity Chef Jason Parsons, he looks to Winemaker and friend Lawrence Buhler for the inspiration he needs to awaken the guests' palates.

At **Reif Estate Winery**, the family heritage of winemaking is now in its 13th generation. President and oenologist Klaus Reif, who hails from the Rhine Region of Germany, moved to Niagara in the 1980s to run his uncle's estate. He currently oversees some of Niagara's oldest vines and creates wines that support his philosophy, 'Great wines start in the vineyard'. Guests can sample wines paired with artisan cheeses in the property's beautifully restored coach house.

Since the first vine break in 1992, the Pillitteri family, who own **Riverview Cellars Winery**, have focused the family's efforts on growing and making award-winning wines, with a focus on French and German cool climate varietals. Gewürztraminer, Riesling, Pinot Gris and Chardonnay have all thrived in the vineyards and cellars. Open daily, tours and tastings are available, as well as private tours led by Winemaker Angela Kasimos. In addition to wine, guests may often buy a basket of local fruit, which, in keeping with the heritage of the farm, is still sold at the winery.