



Living History

Wineries to visit: Château des Charmes, Joseph's Estate Winery, Konzelmann Estate Winery, Inniskillin Wines, Marynissen Estate Winery, Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery and Reif Estate Winery

Niagara-on-the-Lake may be well known for its Loyalist history, but a lot of winemaking history was made here too. This tour invites you to rediscover the famous names that transformed the Canadian wine industry into what it is today. Many of these wine pioneers often drew shaking heads and dismissals, but fortunately that didn't stop this visionary group of people. Without these wineries and their creators, it's hard to imagine what Niagara would look like today.

Winemaker, Paul Bosc, founded **Château des Charmes** in 1978 with the planting of Canada's first commercial vineyard dedicated exclusively to European grape varieties. Since then, nothing has stopped this Member of The Order of Canada from breaking new ground. Often hailed as the father of Ontario's modern wine industry, Paul's vision of a world-class industry led by high quality estate wineries can now be seen all over Niagara-on-the-Lake. Today, Paul and the Bosc family represent six winemaking generations hard at work promoting sustainable agricultural practices and continuous improvement through research in order to produce exceptional quality grapes and wine for the future.

Dr. Joseph Pohorly of **Joseph's Estate Winery** founded one of Niagara's original cottage wineries in 1979, Newark Winery, which later became **Hillebrand Winery**. Joseph has a yen for learning and research, still very much active today, which is why he is an early Canadian Icewine pioneer and creator of two unique products, cold-pressed grape seed oil and antioxidant grape skin flour. Joseph has earned the Regional Innovation Award for Sustainable Development/Ontario Region and the Christopher Newton Award for Extraordinary Vision in Business. This locally born grower, winemaker and entrepreneur, can often be found hard at work on new ideas or simply enjoying the company of the winery's visitors.

Konzelmann Estate Winery, Niagara's Exclusive Lakefront Winery, was established in 1984 by Herbert Konzelmann as one of the original seven wineries in Niagara-on-the-Lake. A fourth generation Winemaster with 115 years of family winemaking history, Herbert graduated from the famous Weinbauschule University in Weinsberg, Germany. He chose the winery site on the shores of Lake Ontario due to its meso-climate, which is similar to the Alsace region in France. Herbert's bold spirit can also be seen in Konzelmann's unique architectural building, home to a new wine store and tasting bars, where guests will enjoy a friendly and informative experience.

The modern Ontario wine industry was born in 1975 when **Inniskillin** became the first winery to receive a winery license since 1929. Led by two of the founding fathers of Canadian Wine, Karl Kaiser and Donald Ziraldo, the way was paved for boutique wineries in Ontario to become established. It was a welcome end to an era of Ontario wines made of the indigenously grown concorde and labrusca grapes. The real breakthrough came when Inniskillin's 1989 Vidal Icewine won the Grand Prix d'Honneur at Vinexpo in Bordeaux in 1991. Inniskillin's founders were major supporters of industry-wide quality, as well as wine research. As new generations of Canadian winemakers emerge, it's widely acknowledged that the achievements of these two men are linked to their success. Both now retired, Donald and Karl are still active as ambassadors for Canadian wine.

Marynissen Estate Winery boasts some of the oldest vinifera vines in Ontario. John Marynissen was the first to plant Cabernet Sauvignon vines in Canada in 1978, after appreciating that quality wines could only come from quality grapes. John's expertise in grape growing dates back to the 1950s when he emigrated from Holland to Canada. John established himself as an award-winning winemaker long before opening the doors of Marynissen. John's daughter Sandra and her husband Glen are carrying on the tradition of creating top quality wines.

Stepping into the Hospitality Centre or Deli & Bakery at **Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery** is like taking a step back in time. A true rural estate winery, the lush rolling hillside farm is owned by the descendants of David Jackson Lowrey who established the farm in 1867. Immaculately refurbished to recapture the time in which it was first built, the Woodruff House is considered one of Canada's 50 most architecturally significant homes. Before it could become Ravine's stunning Hospitality Centre it was built, meticulously deconstructed, sold, sold again, put into storage and then rebuilt. The Lowrey Packing Shed (now the Deli & Bakery) was built in the 1920's as a place to store, sort and can the farm's fruit.

Reif Estate Winery is one of a handful of wineries that can lay claim to being in operation for most of the Niagara wine region's existence. Klaus W. Reif, a 13th generation winemaker from Germany, has watched the Ontario wine industry mature over the past 20 years and his estate winery's success has contributed to its growth. Klaus' uncle, Ewald Reif, established their first vineyard in 1977, one of the first European grape vineyards in Ontario. The oldest block of Vidal grapes is still used today to produce alluring Icewine. Today, Klaus continues to seek out the best technology to combine winemaking techniques passed down through his family for generations to bring the best out of the vineyard.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is also known for many other historical milestones. This is birthplace of the Law Society of Upper Canada and where the first anti-slavery legislation was passed. Niagara-on-the-Lake is also home to the first newspaper, the first library, the first Masonic Lodge and the oldest continuously operated Inn in Ontario. North America's oldest golf course with historical Fort Mississauga is in town. Walk or ride a horse-drawn carriage through the Old Town and you'll discover why we call Niagara-on-the-Lake one unforgettable place.