



The Buzz Behind the Blend

Wineries to visit: *Hillebrand Winery, Reif Estate Winery, Stratus Vineyards, Southbrook Vineyards and Strewn Winery*

Assemblage is the art of blending different varietal wines into one. It demonstrates that sometimes the resulting blend is more than equal to the sum of its parts. Blending red wine is a long-standing tradition that allows the winemaker's art to shine through. Yes, great varietals are made in the vineyard but a great blended wine depends on the finesse of an inspired winemaker.

Hillebrand Winery is perhaps the leader in popularizing Niagara-on-the-Lake blended wines. First conceived of by Winemaker J.L. Groux in 1989, Trius Red, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot (with additions according to the vintage) is one of Canada's most awarded red wines and is well recognized by most guests who visit Niagara. More recently Trius White, a blend of the most outstanding varietals from each vintage was added to the Trius roster. If you want to try your hand at creating your own blended wine, take part in Trius Art of Red. Participants work together to blend their own version of Trius Red that they will label and take home to enjoy at another time.

"Biodynamic blend" might sound like the name of an energy drink, but it is actually **what Southbrook Vineyards** is making every suitable vintage. Connect Red, Southbrook's food-friendly, "anti-snob" red blend is not only organic (as is Connect White and Connect Rosé), but certified biodynamic. The lambs trimming the vines on property could not be more excited.

Stratus Vineyards, now home of Winemaker J.L. Groux, explores the 'art of assemblage' with its flagship wines, Stratus Red and Stratus White. Both are blends of only the topmost quality grapes from each vintage, which are allowed to develop on the vine and are handpicked and sorted, ensuring only the finest grapes make it to the final product. On the last Saturday of each month, take part in Vertical Saturdays@Stratus, a vertical tasting of the Stratus Red and White across three vintages.

Reif Estate Winery is on the leading-edge of making and marketing crowd-pleasing blends that impress every palate. TREND Red & White are the blends in the line of wines made in partnership with popular CBC TV personalities Steven & Chris. Crowd pleasers, these blends were inspired by Steven & Chris' desire to create wines that fit any lifestyle. If wine and animal lovers are looking for a real 'feel-good' wine they do well to taste and buy Reif's Red Dog and White Cat blends. Proceeds from these wines go to the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty Animals.

Strewn Three, made from the classic varietals of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, is the flagship red blend at **Strewn Winery** and truly reflects the art of winemaking. Strewn Three is made in only the most outstanding vintages and with only the very best lots of grapes. As these factors vary with each vintage, each Strewn Three release is unique.