

# Media Backgrounder and Fact Sheet

Ministry of Agriculture and Lands  
Government of British Columbia

## ***B.C.'S DIVERSE REGIONS PRODUCE AWARD-WINNING WINES***

B.C. has earned a reputation as a world-class hotspot for tourism and fine dining with its vibrant new food and wine culture. In addition to the large number of notable national and international awards bestowed on the quality wines, an outdoor restaurant in the Okanagan has been named one of the top five winery restaurants in the world by the prestigious magazine Travel & Leisure.

- Agri-tourism has become one of the fastest growing sectors in B.C.'s \$10 billion tourism industry. In 2007, culinary tourism, agricultural fairs, wine and food festivals and exhibitions attracted over 1.6 million patrons.
- The exquisite scenery, quality of life and abundance of food produced in B.C. is attracting the finest chefs and has turned many regions of the province into havens for foodies. Many B.C. chefs are strongly committed to sourcing local ingredients, including wine.
- There are 710 vineyards (wineries and independent producers) throughout B.C. located in the Okanagan Valley, Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island that produce over 60 varieties of grapes.
- B.C. wines are grown at the same latitude as many German wines and the Champagne region of France. B.C.'s varied geography and climate provide a unique growing environment. Though B.C. has a shorter growing season than many other wine regions, the long hours of daylight, intensity of light, dry climate and summer temperatures ranging from 35 to 40 degrees Celsius provide exceptional flavour and quality.
- Since 1990 B.C. table wines and icewines have received hundreds of national and international awards for outstanding quality. In the past four years, B.C. icewines alone have earned over 175 top international awards including 64 gold or platinum awards.
- B.C. Vintner's Quality Alliance (BC VQA) is a symbol of quality wine that ensures the wine is 100 per cent B.C. grown, and produced to optimum standards. BC VQA wine sales average \$155 million annually.
- B.C.'s growing boutique wine industry has been a key driver in attracting tourists, and one of the regions, the Okanagan Valley, has been referred to as the Napa Valley of the north.
- In 2008, Mission Hill Family Estate Winery received a number of awards including Canadian Winery of the year, the International Wine Challenge (IWC) Trophy for the World's Top icewine and Mission Hill's Terrace Restaurant was named one of the top five winery restaurants in the world by American Express Publishing's Travel & Leisure magazine.
- Since 1972, when Hainle Vineyards and Estate Winery in Peachland introduced Canada's first icewine, British Columbia has become recognized as a world leader in icewine production.

## CONTACTS

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The B.C. Wine Institute is the lead wine industry trade association that actively markets and promotes the Wines of British Columbia (B.C. VQA) brand on behalf of its membership.

## VISUAL RESOURCES

- Visuals available from wineries and through the B.C. Wine Institute  
[www.winebc.com/imagebank.php](http://www.winebc.com/imagebank.php)

## WEB RESOURCES

- [www.winebc.com](http://www.winebc.com) – B.C. Wine Institute website provides information on the location of B.C. wineries (with maps), lists wine events, describes the flavours of B.C. wines, and where to purchase B.C. VQA wines.
- [www.winegrowers.bc.ca/](http://www.winegrowers.bc.ca/) - The website of the Association of B.C. Winegrowers.
- [www.okanaganwines.ca/wineries/](http://www.okanaganwines.ca/wineries/) - Lists B.C. wineries with address and contact information.
- [www.wineislands.ca](http://www.wineislands.ca) - Wine Islands Vintners Assoc. provides information on Vancouver Island and Gulf Island wineries.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

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- **Northern Vintage: Canada's Wines Rise With Mercury. Growers Try Classy Grapes**, Wall Street Journal, October 15, 2007 page A1. <http://www.cedarridgecottage.ca/?q=node/71>
- **Top Winery Restaurants** - Travel & Leisure Magazine, February 2008  
<http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/insider-eat-top-winery-restaurants/1>
- **Okanagan Valley Wine Region**, Travel & Leisure Magazine, October 2006  
<http://www.travelandleisure.com/articles/okanagan-valley/1>
- **Feast on Vancouver Island's Saanich Peninsula in autumn**, Seattle Times, Aug. 30, 2009  
[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/travel/2009752285\\_trsaanich30.html?cmpid=2628](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/travel/2009752285_trsaanich30.html?cmpid=2628)

- **Canada's Okanagan: Wine Touring in British Columbia**, SF International Travel Examiner, June 3, 2009 <http://www.examiner.com/x-4791-SF-International-Travel-Examiner~y2009m6d3-Canadas-Okanagan-Wine-Touring-in-British-Columbia>
- **Okanagan Winery Goes Beyond Sustainable**, Wines & Vines, May 28, 2009 <http://www.winesandvines.com/template.cfm?section=news&content=55870>
- **New winery association forms in B.C., Area next to the Okanagan being noticed for its award-winning vintages**, Wine Business, May 20, 2009 <http://www.winebusiness.com/news/?go=getArticle&dataId=64647>
- **Boutique wineries thrive in British Columbia's Okanagan**, The Dallas Morning News, April 15, 2008 [http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/fea/travel/thisweek/stories/DN-okanagan\\_0413tra.ART.State.Edition1.2e34bc8.html](http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/fea/travel/thisweek/stories/DN-okanagan_0413tra.ART.State.Edition1.2e34bc8.html)

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