

Food & Drink

Top BC Wineries As Voted By Sommeliers

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While we love wine, we wouldn't call ourselves experts. (Expert sippers – yes.) Luckily, we were able to enlist the help of a few of BC's standout sommeliers for their picks of the best wineries in the province!



Tara Viola, Wine Director, *The Settlement Building + Havana*

Tara Viola began with the team at The Settlement Building collective (includes Belgard Kitchen, Vancouver Urban Winery and Postmark Brewing) in 2016. From there she grew into the role of Wine Director and took over running logistics for the Vancouver Urban Winery brand and later Havana on Commercial Drive.

Her previous experience was with the fine-dining team at the highly acclaimed L'Abattoir

restaurant where she worked as a manager & sommelier under Wine Director Lisa Haley & Assistant Wine Director Kristi Linneboe. Today, Tara is responsible for the wine lists at both Havana and The Settlement Building focusing on wines from South America, Spain & Portugal at Havana and an extensive & diverse list of boutique BC wines on tap at Belgard Kitchen that highlight the best of what BC has to offer in a downtown setting.

Tantalus Vineyards, Kelowna

They put incredible care into everything they do, from farming to winemaking and including the winery being the first LEED-certified in BC. Riesling is the real focus but their Pinot Noir shines as well.

Syncromesh Wines, Okanagan Falls

Producing high quality wines, with a focus on Riesling in quite a range of styles. Their Cabernet Franc is also stunning.

Le Vieux Pin, Oliver

A leader in Syrah production. The wines show off terroir & have a lot of finesse. My favourite is the Cuvee Violette Syrah.

Culmina Family Estate Winery, Oliver

The Triggs family has created a winery with a deep focus on sustainability. They produce bold age worthy reds, although my favourite is their 'Unicus' Gruner Veltliner; a really unique wine.

Covert Farms Family Estate, Oliver

All organic farming with minimal intervention winemaking; the care to produce high quality grapes is evident in their wines.

Blue Mountain Winery, Okanagan Falls

100% estate grown fruit (something not common) with 43 years of continuous grape growing by the same family. Their sparkling is a must try.

Bella Sparkling Wines, Naramata

Only producing sparkling wines, with a focus on single vineyard sites. The range is various; there is definitely something for everyone.

Lock & Worth, Penticton

Producing honest wines with a focus on single vineyard & small production. They put real care into pricing their wines reasonably, for everyday consumption.

Meyer Family Vineyards, Okanagan Falls

Focusing on Chardonnay & Pinot Noir, they truly showcase the various terrior of the Okanagan through both. Their list of accolades is one testament to their high quality.

Clos du Soleil, Keremeos

Situated in the Similkameen – the Organic Farming capital of Canada – Clos du Soleil wines really show off what the Similkameen tastes like and are elegant and ageable wines.

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JS Dupuis, Beverage Director, *Tableau Bar Bistro & Homer Street Café & Bar*

Jean-Sebastien, aka 'JS' is not only an expert on wine, he also currently holds the title of the Golden Plates Awards' bartender of the year. A native from Repentigny, Montreal, JS is the beverage director at Tableau and Homer St. Cafe and Bar and is also a treasurer of the Canadian Professional Bartending Association.

Bartier Bros, Oliver

I'm in love with their Cerqueira Vineyard Cab Franc, it is so elegant and delicate and yet powerful with a nice fruit profile and the beautiful natural spice of the varietal. They make great use of the terroir and really showcase what the Okanagan has to offer. We pour the Cab Franc by the glass at Homer St. café & Bar.

Fitzpatrick Winery, Peachland

Acidity is the name of the game in the Okanagan and Fitzpatrick really use it to their advantage, especially in their great sparkling wines. Their Cremant style sparkling is wonderful and offers amazing value. We have their Cremant by the glass at Homer St Café & Bar as well as their 'Pink Mile' Rosé by the glass at Tableau Bar Bistro.

Joie Farm, Naramata

Heidi Noble really plays with the Okanagan terroir and does a wonderful job using aromatic and cool climate varietals. Drawing inspiration from Alsace and Burgundy, she really uses the acidity to her advantage as well, making those aromatic whites pop and her reds fruity and balanced. We pour her Pinot Noir by the glass and her Noble Blend by the bottle at Tableau bar Bistro and her PTG by the bottle at Homer St Café & bar.

Meyer Family Vineyards, Okanagan Falls

Focusing on Burgundy style Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, I have been using Meyer Family Vineyards for over 10 years in my programs. I first met Jack Meyer at my bar in Whistler, I didn't know who he was, he asked for a chardonnay, and I went on about this wonderful BC chardonnay that we had, complementing its balance and structure, I mentioned that it was my favourite BC chardonnay. He then smirked and handed me his business card, we laughed. We use the Meyer Family chardonnay by the glass at Tableau bar Bistro and their McLean Creek chardonnay by the bottle at Homer St Cafe & Bar.

La Stella, Osoyoos

I have been a fan of this winery from day one, so much so that we did a wine with La Stella for both of our properties. Once again, a winery that focuses on terroir and varietals, we created our signature blend, called the 3 to 1, with a solid Cabernet Franc base, I'm obsessed with this varietal in BC, cabernet Sauvignon, merlot and Sangiovese. Their wines can range from delicate and elegant, like our 3 to 1, to powerful and full of depth, like their Espresso. I love their dedication to the Super Tuscan style of wine. We pour our signature 3 to 1 by the glass at both properties.

Osoyoos Larose, Osoyoos

An icon in BC, quickly became a staple to showcase what the Okanagan has to offer on the international scene. The commitment of the Group Taillan to making wine in the Okanagan definitely put us on the international wine scene and they've have maintained their commitment to make one of Canada's best wine. This Bordeaux blend ages beautifully and I always really enjoy drinking older vintages and showing them to guests, people are always

surprised on how complex and powerful this wine can be. We sell this wine by the bottle at Tableau Bar Bistro.

Painted Rock, Penticton

If you want to see how well Cab Franc can do in the Okanagan, try Painted Rock. More of a Bordeaux style than the Bartier Bros., this is a powerful wine that showcases a full bodied style wine, with grape maturity, peppery and acidic, bold and rich, but mostly very delicious. I can get enough of it. We sell their Cabernet Franc by the bottle, but often featured by the glass, at Tableau Bar Bistro.

Seven Directions, Penticton

Award winning winemaking consultant Daniel Bontorin's own vineyard, it is the only winery in Canada that solely produces rosé. He had me at rosé. His wines are fresh and pretty, delicate and refreshing, and he uses Cab franc, I'm sold. We sell their Fruitvale Vineyard Cab Franc Rosé by the glass at Homer St Cafe & Bar.

Tantalus Vineyards, Kelowna

An icon in the Okanagan, they produce my favourite Riesling. I love how they make a terroir driven aromatic Riesling, playing with residual sugars and acidity. It is always my go to white wine, especially when I'm eating pork belly. We sell their Riesling by the bottle at Homer St Cafe & Bar.

Unsworth Vineyards, Mill Bay

What a gem from Vancouver Island. They have really put the cool climate hybrids to work, I fell in love with their Sauvignette the first time I tasted it. They make great use of the Vancouver Island's moderate climate and really make the varietals shine. Their wines are unusual and approachable, but most importantly, they are really delicious. We serve the Sauvignette by the bottle, and often featured by the glass, at Homer St Cafe & Bar.



Kelcie Jones, Wine Director, *Chambar*

An East Coast transplant and English Lit Major, Kelcie Jones is equally educated in the world of wine. She has her Level 4 Diploma for Wine and Spirits from the Wine & Spirit Education Trust – the largest global provider of wine, spirits and sake qualifications and was a BC Hospitality Foundation Sommelier Scholarship recipient in 2018.

Blue Mountain, Okanagan Falls

Tradition isn't a word we can too often associate with our young wine industry, but Blue Mountain has been quietly making world-class sparkling wine in Okanagan Falls for more than forty years. They have always been 100% estate fruit and farm without chemical herbicides or pesticides, which you can't say about many wineries of their size or stature in the Okanagan.

Nichol, Naramata

When I go on sommelier trips around the world, Nichol 'Old Vines' Syrah is the first bottle I put in my suitcase to introduce people to Canadian wine. Further, winemaker Matt Sherlock has been committed to farming in an organic way and making wines with as little intervention as possible.

Lock & Worth, Penticton

The second project from Ross Hackworth and Matt Sherlock of Nichol, Lock & Worth makes

more experimental wines from familiar grape varieties of the Okanagan. This year they've introduced a barely-red Merlot that drinks like Cerasuolo D'Abruzzo. Lock and Worth is the refreshingly familiar, unfamiliar.

Bella Sparkling Wines, Naramata

If I could only drink one kind of wine forever, it would be bubbly. Jay and Wendy Drysdale began Bella following this same principle, and are committed to holistic farming and natural winemaking in a revolutionary way. They're stewards of their land and they are teachers, too, always finding time to mentor young winemakers and share their philosophy with neophytes and wine geeks alike.

Rathjen Cellars, Victoria

I really believe island wine is the next big thing, and though I've only tried the second vintage of Saanich-based Mike Rathjen's wines, I'm already hooked. He just built a brand new tasting room this year that I can't wait to visit, and the Pinot Gris-Auxxerios is one of my favourite new additions to the Chambar list.

Synchromesh, Okanagan Falls

Synchromesh are Riesling specialists that have been converting the "I don't like sweet wines" types of the wine world since their inception in 2010. The wines are some of my favourites because you can truly drink or hold them, as they are delicious in their youth and powerfully finessed with age.

Kanazawa, Penticton

Rich Kanazawa is no-nonsense about winemaking: he makes simple, delicious wines that you can drink all day, none of them too cloying or over-extracted. The wines are especially delicious with ramen, which you can order from a stand right outside the Kanazawa tasting room.

Tantalus Vineyards, Kelowna

Some of the most pure expressions of BC's cool-climate terroir are made by Dave Paterson at Tantalus. Tantalus was also the first LIVE certified sustainable winery in BC, and the beautiful facility is a must-visit if you're in East Kelowna.

Little Farm, Cawston

The Similkameen Valley is the organic capital of Canada, and home to a handful of thoughtful, family-run wineries. Alishan Driediger and Rhys Pender refer to themselves as Wine Growers, not wine makers, because they believe very seriously in the principle that the vineyard is paramount to the cellar when it comes to making wine.



Christina Hartigan, Wine Director, *Wildebeest*

Born and raised in Vancouver, Christina first developed her thirst for hospitality and wine while working in front-of-house roles at local restaurants throughout high school and university. She

fully set her sights on a career in the industry after expanding her knowledge and skills as a cellar hand and stagiaire in chalets and vineyards across France.

A Court of Master Sommeliers certified sommelier and a graduate of the French Wine Scholar Program who has also earned her Level 4 diploma from the Wine and Spirit Education Trust, Christina further developed her nose for fine wine at Vancouver's AnnaLena and Botanist at the Fairmont Pacific Rim before joining the team at Wildebeest.

Tantalus Vineyards, Kelowna

Favourite wine / Old Vines Riesling – It's delicious right away and ages so well.

Bella Sparkling Wines, Naramata

Favourite wine / I love all of their sparkling wines and the fact that they use the traditional method of sparkling. They're dry, refreshing and so well balanced.

Roche Wines, Penticton

Favourite wine / Tradition Chardonnay – This bottle can take you through a meal from start to finish, as it pairs so well with everything.

Syncromesh Wines, Okanagan Falls

Favourite wine / Bob Hancock Riesling – on off-dry Riesling that pairs well with spicy foods.

TH Wines, Summerland

Favourite wine / Cabernet Franc – a medium-bodied red with black fruit and earthy notes.

Echo Bay Vineyard, Okanagan Falls

Favourite wine / Bordeaux blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot – it's full-

bodied, powerful yet elegant.

Sea Star Vineyards, Pender Island

Beautiful wines from the Gulf Islands. The rosé is always delicious but don't miss the Ortega — it's perfect for West Coast seafood dishes.

Orofino Winery, Cawston

Favourite wine / The Beleza is a Merlot-dominant blend that is delicious and easy drinking from the Similkameen Valley.

Little Farm Winery, Cawston

Favourite wine / Similkameen Valley Cabernet Franc — it's juicy and vibrant and best served with a light chill.

Daydreamer Wines, Naramata

This is my favourite BC wine — The 2017 Amelia: a Syrah with a touch of Viognier. I love the black pepper and savoury floral notes. Just how I want Syrah to be.

Looking for something a little closer to home? Check out our guide on [Wineries to visit in the Fraser Valley!](#)



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