

FROM THE CELLAR... HESTER CREEK ESTATE WINERY



Photo credit: Hester Creek

YOU HAVE TO VISIT OUR WINERY BECAUSE...

“You’ll get a whole new appreciation for the vine, a true wine experience.” – Robert Smith, Director of Sales, Hester Creek



Robert Smith, Director of Sales, Hester Creek Estate Winery, and the view in the tasting room.
Photo credit: Emilie Ryan

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

July 25th, 2018

Driving through some of British Columbia’s oldest vineyards, we instantly felt welcomed by the friendly staff at Hester Creek Estate Winery. We would later come to learn this is part and parcel of an **all-inclusive wine experience** Hester Creek offers its guests.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

The winery’s name comes from the creek bordering the property, which was named after the daughter of a local pioneering family. The logo depicts Hester holding onto the tail of a dolphin, a symbol of sociability in Greek mythology.

The winery’s first vines were planted in 1968 on the Golden Mile Bench near the quaint town of Oliver in the Okanagan Valley. Today, the winery produces about 50,000 cases on its nearly 115 acres of spectacular land.

Visiting Hester Creek means you get a whole wine experience. On the property, you not only have the winery and the tasting room/boutique, but you’ll find a popular Tuscan-inspired restaurant, Terrafina, that sources local food, and six B&B villa suites—at the time of our visit, all villas were sold out until the end of September! There are BBQs on Fridays, live music on Saturdays, and a Garlic Festival during the first weekend of the Fall Okanagan Wine Festival.

WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Hester Creek’s winemaking philosophy, simply put, is to over-deliver on quality by the gentle handling of the grapes and to provide the consumer with exceptional value. Hester Creek makes Okanagan wines, meaning the wines reflect the Okanagan terroir. Hester Creek’s biggest competitor? The world.



The inside of the winery was very clean, just like these clamps. Photo credit: Emilie Ryan

ONE-ON-ONE WITH ROBERT SMITH, DIRECTOR OF SALES FOR HESTER CREEK

In a private tasting room, which had wines already laid out on a mat with our names on it—we appreciated the personal touch—Robert Smith shared a little about himself and a lot about Hester Creek’s wines. His enthusiastic delivery exuded passion for the industry, as well as pride in his work.

Q: What do you like most about wine?

A: It’s about bringing people together. I grew up in the Italian community in Toronto. I grew up with the industry.

Q: Of all the wines Hester Creek produces, which one is your favourite and why?

A: The Trebbiano and the Reserve Merlot. The Merlot has a consistent depth. It lingers in the mouth. It’s a beautiful wine, Hester Creek’s hidden gem.

Q: What is your ultimate favourite wine and why?

A: A DRC (Domaine de la Romanée-Conti) La Tâche from the 1970s. A nice Pinot! That’s what elegance is.

Q: What’s the best part of your job?

A: Wine shows, being in front of consumers. They tell us where our wines are at. Over the years, tables have become more full of people. You also get a feel for the brand.

Q: What’s the worst part of your job?

A: Running out of wine. Everybody wants what they can’t have.

*“The brand is evolving, but it’s about consistency and quality.
Each wine has a target market.” – Rob Smith*

Q: Tell us one thing about you or your winery that nobody else knows.

A: We are true to our promise to over deliver and give value. If you come to the winery, you’ll feel that. You’ll get a whole new appreciation for the vine, a true wine experience. It’s like a full circle with the villas, the winery, the restaurant. It’s about utilizing assets and having the right people in the right places. The owner allows that to happen.

THE TASTING...

We tasted some great wines over the course of our 90-minute visit, which was followed by lunch at Terrafina. We started with the 2017 Pinot Blanc from some of the first vines planted at the winery over 50 years ago by the original owner, Joe Busnardo, an Italian immigrant. As the legend goes, he brought the vines over to Canada in his suitcase, back when you could do that!

We ended our tour by pairing the 2017 Cabernet Franc Rosé with our Tuscan-style lunch (salad, charcuterie, cheese, and a vegan-cheese Margherita wood-oven pizza), and we were more than impressed.



A look at our favourite Hester Creek Wine, the Reserve Merlot Block 3.
Photo credit: Emilie Ryan.

In between, we tasted the:

- 2017 Old Vines Trebbiano (price: 23.95 CAD)
- 2016 Syrah-Viognier (price: 28.95 CAD)
- 2015 Reserve Cabernet Franc Block 3 (price: 28.95 CAD)
- 2015 The Judge (price: 49.95 CAD for 750ml, 110.00 CAD for the 1.5L)

Although Hester Creek is known for The Judge, a blend of almost equal parts Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Cabernet Franc, of the wines we tasted, the Trebbiano stole the show—Joe was definitely onto something when he brought over the original vines in his suitcase. In the nose, we enjoyed white peach, green apple, petrol, white flower, slate, and citrus notes. This medium-bodied white, with high acidity, offered asparagus, minerals, and citrus rind in the mouth.

FINAL NOTES

Our favourite Hester Creek wine remains the Reserve Merlot Block 2. The only reason we didn't taste it today was because it was sold out, a disappointment and, at the same time, a reflection of the wine's quality and popularity.

We encourage you to visit Hester Creek not only for its outstanding offerings, but for the Terrafina restaurant, the warm hospitality, the beautifully-maintained property, the breathtaking views, and the increasingly popular villas. In other words, visit for the whole wine experience.

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