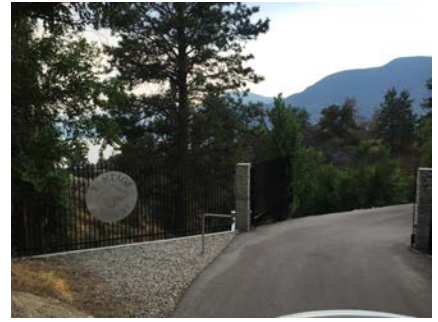


FROM THE CELLAR... PENTÂGE WINERY



YOU HAVE TO VISIT OUR WINERY BECAUSE...

“We have a beautiful granite rock wine cellar. Paul built the cellar right into the natural fault.” – Julie Rennie, co-owner, Pentâge Winery



Outside and inside Pentâge Winery's tasting room.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

July 25th, 2018

Pentâge Winery came highly recommended by someone in-the-know, and we're more than grateful we had the opportunity to discover this hidden gem.

This unpretentious, enthralling estate sits on the eastern slope of the Okanagan Valley, about 15 minutes from downtown Penticton. But don't let the proximity fool you. It took some nerve to navigate the narrow, serpentine road leading to the winery's electronic gate. As soon as we parked, Max, the resident host, a gracious hound with an amiable nature, escorted us to the tasting room, where we met Julie Rennie.

The tasting room, a modest building with two garage doors that open to the spectacular view, felt comfortable and inviting. At the same time, it exuded a touch class, with modern art decorating the walls and tasteful displays, including wine awards, placed in eye-catching locations. This blend of cosiness, sophistication, and style neatly captured our entire experience at the estate.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Paul Gardner and Julie Rennie bought the property in 1996 in the hopes that Paul could spend less time at sea—he's a former naval engineer by training—and more time working on his passion. The couple opened the winery in 2000, with the wine shop opening in 2014.

In addition to the tasting room, the winery has a few surprises up its sleeve. For instance, instead of building a traditional wine cellar, Paul excavated a natural fault formed some 250,000 years ago, then turned it into a stunning building with granite walls flanking the caves and production area.

He also planted many of the varietals common to the region, such as Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, but added several others less typically seen, such as Tempranillo, Zinfandel, Marsanne, and Mourvèdre.

In fact, Pentâge Winery offers its clients **24 different wines from their 35 acres**, which produce only 5,000 cases of wine! As a benefit, this allows them to switch up their tastings, so you don't know what's on offer when you visit, which, for us, was part of the fun.



Inside the natural fault, now Pentâge Winery's cellar

WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Pentâge's owners are on a mission to produce world-class wines, nothing more, nothing less. Of course, this starts in the vineyard. They strive to grow the best grapes using different canopy trellising specifically suited to the varietals plant. The best grape possible is key.

They hand harvest, hand sort, and do gentle pressings. By doing multiple small batch fermentations with a variety of yeasts, further complexity is achieved. Gentleness, minimal intervention, and love of what they do is the doctrine at Pentâge.

ONE-ON-ONE WITH JULIE RENNIE, CO-OWNER, PENTÂGE WINERY

With a smile on her face and an obvious passion for what she does, Julie talked about her and her husband's backgrounds, the history of the estate, their winemaking approach, and, of course, their brilliant wines.

Q: Of all the wines you produce, which one is your favourite and why?

A: I don't have a favourite. I like different wines for different times.

Q: What is your ultimate favourite wine and why?

A: Château Latour. [Author's note: We totally agree!]

Q: What's the best part of your job?

A: Being in the wine shop and meeting customers.

Q: What's the worst part of your job?

A: I don't have a worst part... Maybe the one-minute commute to work?

"We like to do different things. We make Okanagan style wines, not California style. The weather and ripening are different. Our wines have more finesse, they aren't as big." – Julie Rennie

Q: What is your most embarrassing wine moment?

A: Someone, who shall remain nameless, crashed the Kubota into the vines recently (laughs).

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

A: We have a beautiful natural rock (granite) wine cellar Paul excavated. He likes challenges... Oh, and Pentâge is Greek for 5, which was the number of varietals in our blend, though somehow we got to six one year.



Pentâge Winery Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Gamay, GSM, and Appassimento Cabernet Franc wines

THE TASTING...

While Max took a nap during the warm afternoon, though keeping one eye open for new guests, we began our tasting with the 2016 Rosé (price: 20.00 CAD) made from Zinfandel, Grenache, and Mourvèdre, and we ended with the 2014 Cabernet Franc (price: 30.00 CAD).

In between, we tasted the:

- 2016 Pinot Gris (price: 20.00 CAD)
- 2013 Chardonnay (price: 22.00 CAD)
- 2015 Gamay (price: 23.00 CAD)
- 2013 Malbec (price: 30.00 CAD)

Of these, our favourite was the Gamay, though they were all fantastic, as evidenced by the picture above, which showcases five of the wines we purchased.

Half of the Gamay grapes were matured in oak, whereas the other half were matured in stainless steel. They were then blended together to produce the desired taste profile. Of note, only 80 cases of this wine were produced, an exclusive offering to say the least. The pale ruby colour gave way to notes of plum, spice, and, interestingly, rhubarb. On the palate, this medium-bodied red, with high acidity, served up cranberries, plums, and a touch of earth. The long, tart finish left us wanting more.

As you may have noted in the picture above, we also purchased the Appassimento-style Cabernet Franc Reserve, a very interesting offering, which you'd be hard-pressed to find elsewhere in the region. The smaller bottle size hints at the fact this is a dessert wine. We can't wait to try it with dark chocolate and/or cheese!

FINAL NOTES

If we ever wanted to build a winery, Pentâge Winery would be our model. Need we say any more?

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