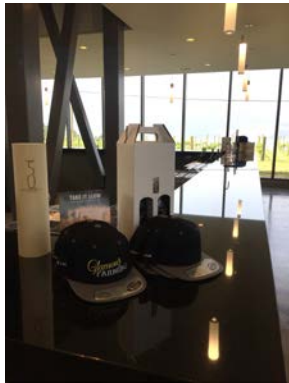


FROM THE CELLAR... 50TH PARALLEL ESTATE WINERY



YOU HAVE TO VISIT OUR WINERY BECAUSE...

“It’s accessible and you’ll get high value. We have a world-class Pinot Noir facility.” – Curtis Krouzel, Co-proprietor, 50th Parallel Estate Winery



The wine tasting room with some merchandise and the patio restaurant at 50th Parallel. (Check out the cool tables.)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

July 26th, 2018

Only 15 minutes from Kelowna airport, we found a hidden gem on our last morning in the Okanagan Valley. If you’re searching for an upscale, swanky boutique-style winery, look no further.

Admittedly, this was an impromptu visit on our part. We had seen 50th Parallel wines in a number of local restaurants, and we were intrigued by this discovery, not having heard of their wines before. Despite showing up unannounced, the winery staff were extremely friendly, accommodating, and knowledgeable, just as we’ve noticed everywhere else in the region.

THE LAY OF THE LAND

Almost 18 years in the making, 50th Parallel Estate Winery is the brainchild of Curtis Krouzel and Sheri-Lee Turner-Krouzel. They acquired the gorgeous property in 2008, a mere three days before their wedding day.

The sloping estate, located on the east shore of Lake Okanagan, gets plenty of sun and lake reflection, ideal conditions for Pinot Noir. In 2009, the couple planted their first 10 acres of vines. Today, they have 61 acres with five different soil types, allowing for strategic planting of vines and varietals. Over 50 acres are currently planted, 40% of which are dedicated to Curtis’s preferred Pinot Noir.

The first wines (700 cases) were released in 2011. By 2016, the estate increased production to 14,000 cases. A part of the winery opened to the public in 2014, with the remainder of the building (the tasting room) and a restaurant opening in May 2018.



*The inside of the winery, all engineered
(and almost all movable) by Curtis.*

WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Curtis and Sheri-Lee’s vision is to create a destination winery, a place to bring people together. The couple wants to make the world’s best Pinot Noir and aromatic whites, a bold objective, no doubt.

They designed a world-class facility for Pinot Noir. The building’s architecture is based on how wine develops. In fact, Curtis built the winery so almost everything is movable, even the fermenters, to control (or minimize) oxygen contact. Curtis, an engineer through and through, sees the vineyards as the winery’s “engine room.”

It’s worth noting that even the labels are “engineered.” 50th Parallel uses a print-screen technique on their bottles, so the label appears directly on the bottle. This came out of the couple’s house-boat party experiences, where they often cooled their bottles in ice water. After the traditional paper labels peeled off, they wouldn’t know what they were drinking—not a bad way to blind taste, actually, but that’s a story for another day. They swore this would never be a problem with their own wines, hence the print-screen technique.

ONE-ON-ONE WITH CURTIS KROUZEL, CO-PROPRIETOR, 50TH PARALLEL ESTATE WINERY

In a whirlwind tour—thank you, again, Curtis, for being so accommodating—the owner and winemaker himself explained his background, his approach to making world-class Pinot Noir, and his winery.

Q: What do you like most about wine?

A: When I grew up, I found only one thing drew people together around the table. Only wine has people come together and talk about it. Historically, it has value. That’s what makes wine special. And this place, with its five different soils, means different tastes can emerge in Pinot Noir.

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

A: The Pinot Noir, whereas Sheri-Lee prefers the Pinot Gris. And the Gewurztraminer is always changing.

Q: What is your ultimate favourite wine and why?

A: I don’t have one. I could never judge any of those creators’ wines. But I just discovered Riesling in Rheingau, Germany, tasting wines from the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. I try to keep an open mind.

Q: What is your most embarrassing wine moment?

A: Nothing yet. Well... I couldn’t find my own secret Syrah on day.

“We want to make better wine. We want to make sure the grape is perfect. We’re not trying to be old world or California. We’re trying to be us.” – Curtis Krouzel

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

A: This is a place that makes flavour. It is about creativity of the human mind. Plus, there’s a whole other side of the business (e.g., the restaurant) to educate people on wine. And, we’ll have wine bungalows in a couple of years to complete the wine experience.



A look at 50th Parallel's two Pinot Noirs and the print-screen bottle labels, so you always know what you're drinking, even if the bottle gets wet.

THE TASTING...

We started our tasting with the 2017 Pinot Gris (price: 19.90 CAD), and ended with a bottle of 2015 Unparalleled Pinot Noir (price: 50.00 CAD).

In between, we tasted the:

- 2016 Riesling (price: 19.90 CAD)
- 2016 Gewürztraminer (price: 19.90 CAD)
- 2017 Rosé (price: 19.90 CAD)
- 2016 Chardonnay (price: 35.00 CAD)
- 2015 Pinot Noir Estate (price: 29.00 CAD)

Like Curtis and Sheri-Lee, we were split on our favourite 50th Parallel wine, although the gender roles were reversed, whatever that means, exactly. Milena preferred the Unparalleled Pinot Noir, whereas John preferred the Pinot Gris. So, in the interest of world-class Pinot Noir, here are our tasting notes on the Unparalleled Pinot Noir:

Unlike the Pinot Noir Estate, which is sourced from the winery’s five Pinot Noir plots, the Unparalleled Pinot Noir is sourced from only two plots. Larger barrels are used to mature the wine. The medium ruby hue gave off delicious aromas of grilled meat, dark cherries, and earth. In the mouth, we experienced a light-to-medium body, soft, round tannins, and medium-to-high acidity. Prominent flavours included gooseberries, plums, wet earth, and a hint of pepper. We also detected some smokiness, as well as a touch of alcohol, suggesting this offering could benefit from a little more time in the cellar.

As an aside, the Pinot Noir Estate tasted a little more fruity.

FINAL NOTES

Though this winery is still in its infancy, so to speak, its potential remains enormous. Having already won some prestigious awards from around the world (including from Decanter!), 50th Parallel Estate Winery is well on its way to producing world-class Pinot Noir, not to mention vivacious, delicious aromatic whites.

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