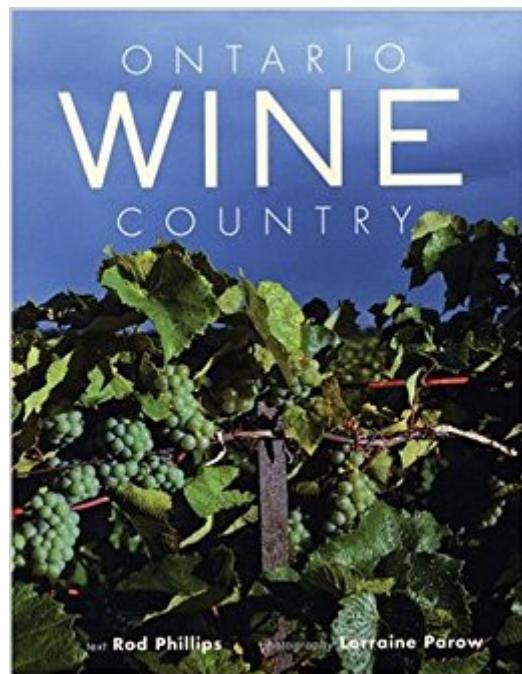


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Ontario Wine Country



Synopsis

A survey of Canada's most important wine region. Ontario's best wines have achieved worldwide recognition -- a stellar achievement for a wine region barely 20 years old. Ontario Wine Country is a guided tour through the major winery locations -- the Niagara Peninsula, Lake Erie North Shore, Pelee Island, and Prince Edward County -- and its premiere wineries, such as Cave Spring Cellars and Pelee Island. Wine expert Rod Phillips describes the history, the present state of the art, and the future of winemaking in this region. He also profiles hundreds of the owners, viticulturists, and winemakers who make the wines that are winning awards around the world.

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Customer Reviews

Rod Phillips's articles and wine reviews have appeared in Wine Spectator, Wine Access, France Today, Tidings and other magazines, and he is the wine columnist for the Ottawa Citizen. A previous book, *A Short History of Wine*, has been translated into several languages. Phillips is a certified sommelier, teaches in a sommelier certification program, and judges at wine competitions internationally.

Introduction It's easy to forget how young Ontario's wine industry is. Wine has been made commercially in the province for a century and a half, and some present-day wineries can trace their lineage back to the beginnings. But two-thirds of Ontario's wineries have opened since 1999. Even in the Niagara Peninsula, the most established of Ontario's wine regions, more than half have opened since that year. The sheer newness of it all was brought home to me in 2004, when I was

talking to Jean-Pierre Colas, winemaker at Peninsula Ridge Estate in Beamsville, and tasting his vintage. He said he'd like to come to Ottawa to do a vertical tasting to show how his wines had evolved. This seemed a good idea, but as I started nodding, a thought struck me, and I said, "But you've only been making wine here since 2000. Your vertical would only cover four vintages." He knew that, of course, but what struck me at the time was how much a fixture on Ontario's wine landscape Peninsula Ridge already felt. It seemed I'd been drinking their wine for many more years than four, and this was true of many Ontario wineries that had opened at about the same time. Ontario's wineries--and therefore the wine region itself--are still in the early phases of development. Many are still finding their feet, trying to decide on the varieties that do best in their vineyards, working out the relationships between their grapes and methods of vinification, their wines, and barrels. Winemaking is always a journey like this--and vintage variation ensures that no one can ever be complacent and adopt a rigid recipe--but in the early years, everything is that much less certain. The picture keeps changing. In the year I finished writing this book, no fewer than ten wineries opened and others merged or changed hands, while a dozen or so winemakers moved from one winery to another, left Ontario, or arrived from countries as diverse as Australia and Romania. Interviews I had written up had to be done again and text revised. Writing a book like this is like painting a bridge: by the time you finish, the first bit has to be re-done. Yet co-existing with the flux of early development, Ontario has also established its shape as a maturing wine region that produces excellent wines. The sheer quality of much of the wine produced by Ontario wineries in the last five to ten years has overcome the prejudices that middle-aged wine-drinkers carried from their youthful forays into cheap Ontario wine. Meanwhile, younger generations, travelling without the same prejudice-packed baggage, have begun to appreciate the province's wine. Establishing a reputation and market in Canada is critical for Ontario's wines, but international recognition (and markets) are important, too. Icewine has created a beachhead among foreign wine-lovers, and Ontario table wines will follow before long. What I've tried to do here is provide a snapshot of the wine regions and their wineries, owners, and winemakers at this dynamic phase of Ontario's emergence as a participant in the new world of wine. This book documents the paths that regions and wineries have taken, and in many cases reveals the winemaker, as much as the grapes, in the bottle.

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