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## VOICES on Wine & Words



■ Raising a glass to toast the wines and the wonderful outdoors at Covert Farms. Photo submitted

# On the winding wine road to southern B.C.



**ERIC HANSON**  
*Sips Happen*

You are only five hours away by car from exploring one of Canada's most scenic wine regions and one that has more wineries per kilometre than any other: Osoyoos and Oliver.

In other words, you should go there and explore the 39 wineries awaiting your arrival.

A convenient and fabulous spot to stay for your wine visit is the Watermark Resort in Osoyoos.

Overlooking Osoyoos Lake and the vineyards and wineries on the eastern shore, this resort has everything you could want in a deluxe getaway, including a pool with a water slide and hot tub, a fitness gym, a full service spa, barbecues, and a gourmet patio restaurant.

From the Watermark, it's a five-minute drive to one of my favourite wineries, Moon Curser.

The Tolley family changed the name of the winery to celebrate American gold miners who smuggled their B.C. nuggets south of the border except on nights when the moon illuminated their illegal activities.

Two of my Moon Curser favourites are the white Rhone blend, *Afraid of the Dark* (\$19.04) and the red Bordeaux blend, *Border Vines* (\$23.39).

But I confess I like almost all of their selections.

Travelling to nearby Oliver, I enjoyed another family winery, Stoneboat owned and operated by the Martiniuk family.

Named after the sledge or boat used by vineyard owners to haul huge rocks from their vineyards, Stoneboat specializes in Pinots. Their Pinot Noir (\$23.90), Pinot Gris (\$18.90), and Pinotage (\$24.90) are delicious examples.

The Stoned (\$21.90), a blend of Pinot and Pinotage has nothing to do with drugs.

Instead it celebrates the rocky terrain that adds minerality and terroir to their wines.

And the Stoneboat bubbly, *Piano Brut* (\$24.90) is extremely popular for adding sparkle to special and just ordinary occasions.

Heading south along the Golden Mile is C.C. Jentsch Cellars on Highway 97.

I was impressed with their Viognier (\$22.90) and their red Bordeaux blend, *The Chase* (\$19.90) and was wowed by their rich and delicious *Small Lots Chardonnay* (\$35.90).

Just north of Oliver, we headed west into the hills where Covert Farms is located.

George Covert began farming there in 1959 and his family planted their

first vinifera grapes in 2006.

I really enjoyed two whites, their Pinot Blanc (\$19.12) and their Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon (\$19.12).

Both are fruit driven with refreshing crisp acidity. Covert Farms is also known for their reds and one I was really fond of was the MDC (\$20.66) a luscious blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Zinfandel, and Syrah.

Expect lots of blackberry and blueberry fruit and enjoy it with a grilled rack of lamb.

It's a great outdoor setting for a picnic and is the gateway to the Bluff Trail climbing McIntyre Bluff, the most prominent landmark in the south Okanagan.

The tasting room is in a rustic log cabin and after you sample you can sit out on the patio and enjoy a glass of their organic wine with cheese and charcuterie from the farm.

In addition to sampling and buying wine, you can also purchase their organic fruit and vegetables as well as take a one-hour farm tour and wine/food pairing for \$49.

If you can't make it to the Okanagan, Save-on Foods at Ironwood recently opened their VQA BC Wine Store!

*Eric Hanson is a retired Richmond teacher and wine aficionado. Reach him at email [EHanson0705@gmail.com](mailto:EHanson0705@gmail.com)*