

THIRTY-SIX HOURS IN THE SOUTH OKANAGAN

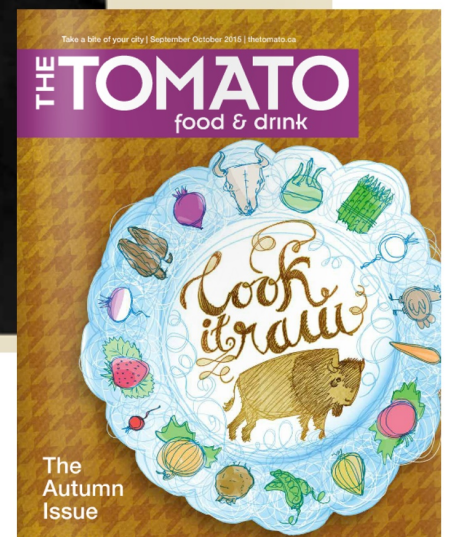
• MARY BAILEY •

Autumn is glorious in wine country. Harvest is on the go, there are concerts and winery dinners to attend and the roadside stands are overflowing with late season stone fruit, apples and pears and colourful pumpkins and squash.

But don't knock yourself out and spend most of your trip driving Hwy 97. Decide to spend your visit in the north, central or south and explore it in a leisurely fashion making time for hikes, swims in the pool, long picnic lunches, *cinq à sept* on a winery patio. Or, take advantage of the guided sit-down tastings several wineries are now offering to learn what's happening in the vineyard and in the cellar. ►



A ray of sunlight, or "God talking" in the barrel room at Tinhorn Creek Vineyards.





TINHORN CREEK VINEYARDS

Mirador Restaurant is a don't miss for the views, chef Jeff Van Geest's sure-footed kitchen style, demonstrated by a dish made with fresh burrata and fruit picked just a few miles away, and for Manny Ferreira's hospitality. The wine list highlights not just Tinhorn but stellar bottlings from up and down the valley.

The 2014's are winemaker Andrew Windsor's first vintage. "I have been working with these vineyards for over 20 years," says Sandra. "I wanted to see our fruit through someone else's eyes. It'll still be Tinhorn but it's exciting to see what Andrew brings to it."

CULMINA FAMILY ESTATE WINERY

"Let's pop up to Culmina to get some photos. It was raining and cloudy the last time I was here."

There's no popping up to Culmina. The spectacular new vineyard perched on the top of the Golden Mile Bench offers a guided tasting which is well worth booking. We were fortunate to be able to join a tasting with some Ottawa visitors led by Donald Triggs and his daughter Sara. Their veteran winemaker Pascal Madevon was in the vineyard, eager to show off the quality of the fruit and the state of the art monitoring system. "Look at these vines," he says excitedly. "We're three weeks ahead and they are impeccable."

MAVERICK ESTATE WINERY

Bertus Albertyn of Maverick Estate Winery may be new to Canada but he is not new to wine—he is an accomplished wine maker and viticulturalist from South Africa. There is an Alberta connection—father-in-law Shalk de Witt practised medicine in Vegreville for a few decades. It is a family affair. My first experience at Maverick saw the entire family hauling in small bins of just-picked Sauvignon Blanc last fall. Just



Photos clockwise from top: Chef Jeff Van Geest in the kitchen at Tinhorn; Culmina winemaker Pascal Madevon; Culmina's vineyard dog Barry, backed by spectacular scenery.

WHERE TO TASTE

Tinhorn Creek Vineyards

537 Tinhorn Creek Road, Oliver, tinhorn.com
Tasting room/wineshop open

Culmina Family Estate Winery

Road 13, Oliver, culmina.ca
Sit down guided tasting by appointment.

Maverick Estate Winery

3974 BC-97, Oliver, maverickwine.ca
Tasting room/wineshop open

Black Hills Estate Winery

4318 Black Sage Road, Oliver
blackhillswinery.com
Sit down guided tasting.

Le Vieux Pin

5496 Black Sage Rd, Oliver, levieuxpin.ca
Tasting room/wineshop open,
plus Celler Chaperone guided tasting.

Stoneboat Vineyards

356 Orchard Grove Lane, Oliver,
stoneboatvineyards.com
Tasting room/wineshop open

WHERE TO STAY

Spirit Ridge Resort

1200 Rancher Creek Rd, Osoyoos
spirtridge.ca

Watermark Resort

15 Park Place, Osoyoos
watermarkbeachresort.com

WHERE TO EAT

Black Hills Estate Vineyard Kitchen

4318 Black Sage Road, Oliver
blackhillswinery.com, 250-498-0666

Miradoro at Tinhorn Creek

537 Tinhorn Creek Road
tinhorn.com/Restaurant, 250-498-3742

Talons Restaurant at Spirit Ridge

1200 Rancher Creek Road, Osoyoos
spirtridge.ca/talons-restaurant, 250-495-5445

Watermark Wine Bar and Patio

15 Park Place, Osoyoos
watermarkbeachresort.com, 250-495-5508

Both Air Canada and West Jet fly to Penticton via Calgary or Vancouver (approximately three hours). Car rentals are available at the Penticton airport.

Please see "36 Hours" on page 28.