



## TOURING AND TASTING ITINERARIES

### TERROIR

## ST. DAVID'S BENCH SUB-APPELLATION

The Niagara Escarpment is a rocky ridge that cuts through the landscape of southern Ontario from Queenston to Tobermory. Nature lovers and hikers can access this diverse ecosystem and get up close to the varied flora and fauna via the Bruce Trail. Two wineries sit on a natural plateau called St. David's Bench, below this outcropping. When you stop, look to the skies and you'll see raptors - hawks and perhaps an eagle or two - soaring on the updrafts.

**WINERIES TO VISIT:** Château des Charmes, Maleta Winery, Niagara College Teaching Winery, Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery

It's impossible to miss **Château des Charmes**, a magnificent winery that combines the stateliness of a French château with the New World charm of a historic CN hotel. It's a grand statement by visionary pioneer and founder Paul Bosc Sr., who was among the first to plant vinifera grapes in the late 1970s and was instrumental in transforming Niagara's wine industry. Step through the doors to an inviting and friendly space and try the wines that have established its long held reputation for excellence.

**Maleta Winery** sits adjacent to what was once the Sunnieholme Winery, founded in 1918, and on what was probably the site of Niagara's first commercial vineyard, developed in the mid 1800s. Here the hard Haldimand clay soil was reconditioned with organic materials like straw and horse manure and underdrained at every other row of vines. To ensure continuing quality, vines are bunch- and leaf-thinned for small yields—a recipe for success but small quantity. Vinification takes place in a pink (yes, pink) Quonset hut that houses the winemaking equipment and a mix of French and American oak barrels.

**Niagara College Teaching Winery** is training the next generation of winemakers and this is the place to sample the award-winning wines crafted by talented newcomers under the tutelage of a master winemaker. Tours will take you through the teaching winery and educational vineyards and you can include a visit to the greenhouse and culinary institute. The Niagara Culinary Institute Restaurant dishes up exquisitely prepared local cuisine served with wines that fit.

History, architecture, unique terrior, celebrity cuisine and good old fashioned rural hospitality intertwine to make **Ravine Vineyard** an idyllic vineyard destination experience. Our hospitality and wine tasting centre is located in the 200-year-old Loyalist Georgian Wm. Woodruff House. It is one of Canada's top fifty most architecturally significant ancestral homes. Here you can linger on the porch of the authentically recreated, 1920's Lowrey farm packing shed, home to a delightful bistro featuring wood-fired artisan breads and uncomplicated, delicious country fare.

While Ravine Vineyard's 34 acre site is located in the St. Davids Bench, the property is an anomaly when compared to it's neighbours in this sub-appellation. There are three main sections to the Ravine Vineyard – the upper bench ('the top'), the slope ('the hillside') and the bottom – each with a completely different set of characteristics that has allowed Ravine to match the variety of the grape to the soil's inherent composition. The soils of the precious upper bench and slope, which makes up over 85% of Ravine's vineyard, are radically different not only from other areas in St. David's, but from anything ever found in Niagara. It was discovered that the old Lowrey farm was sitting atop the river channel of the ancestral Niagara River where it once raged, 5,500 years ago as part of an ancient drainage system emptying into what is now Lake Ontario. Geologists refer to the earth below Ravine's vineyard as part of the St. David's Buried Gorge.



TERROIR

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The map above shows the locations of all of the 22 Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake. The list below provides information for wineries included in this itinerary. The Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake encourage you to taste and tour responsibly.

WINERY CONTACT INFORMATION

- Château des Charmes 1025 York Road, 905-262-4219
Maleta Winery 450 Queenston Road, 905-685-8486
Niagara College Teaching Winery 135 Taylor Road, 905-641-2252, ext. 4070
Ravine Vineyard Estate Winery 1366 York Road, 905-262-8463