

The rooms at Inn on the Twenty are the perfect place to reflect on a day of tasting and touring.



## WHERE TO EAT AND STAY

BY MARGARET SWAINE

Wine lovers have much to discover in Ontario. The most important wine region, the Niagara Peninsula, stretches from the town of Winona, just past Hamilton, to the Canadian side of the Niagara River. Home to more than 60 wineries, in certain areas surrounding Beamsville, Vineland and Niagara-on-the-Lake, the wineries are chock-a-block. In summer, activities abound, such as bike tours, concerts in the vineyards, jazz festivals, theatre, cooking classes and dining of all sorts, both alfresco and indoors. In winter, there are icewine celebrations and even opportunities to join in the picking of the frozen grapes.

Prince Edward County, near Kingston, continues to blossom with an ever-improving restaurant scene, additional wineries and special activities. The county's many award-winning festivals include Harvestin' the County ([www.harvestin.ca](http://www.harvestin.ca)), a buy locally-grown program; a wine and culinary route, the Taste Trail ([www.tastetrail.ca](http://www.tastetrail.ca)); southeastern Ontario's epicurean showcase, TASTE!, a celebration of regional cuisine ([www.thecounty.ca/taste](http://www.thecounty.ca/taste)); and the county's sweet tradition, Maple in the County ([www.thecounty.ca/maple](http://www.thecounty.ca/maple)), which features pancake breakfasts, maple taffy on snow and toe-tapping fiddling concerts.

Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island, near Leamington, have their own charm. Pelee Island is both the southernmost point in Canada and our country's oldest commercial grape-growing area. Just 25 kilometres off the mainland in Lake Erie, a short ferry ride takes you to this quiet place of beaches, nature walks and a wine pavilion. The mainland boasts tourist attractions, such as Jack Miner's Bird Sanctuary, historical Fort Malden and the Underground Railway Museum. As might be expected, farm stands selling produce dot the countryside.

In other areas of Ontario, wineries making grape and fruit wines can be found in Toronto, York region, London (and the southwest) and even as far north as Muskoka and Kawartha.

### Inn on the Twenty/On the Twenty Restaurant

3845 Main Street, Jordan Village, Ontario, 800.701.8074

Cave Spring Winery and the Pennachetti family literally put the town of Jordan on the map. They opened the region's first winery restaurant, On the Twenty, in 1993 (named after Twenty Mile Creek, which it overlooks). A few years later, they opened Inn on the Twenty (run by Len Pennachetti's wife, Helen Young), with nine rooms, expanding cautiously over the years to the current 28. The rooms are luxurious and large, some with private gardens, others on two levels. The spa offers vinotherapy, as well as the more standard massage and beauty treatments. The focus with this inn and tavern is to offer stylish accommodation at a modest price. Guests can enjoy breakfast at On the Twenty, just across the road.

### Shaw Club Hotel and Spa

92 Picton Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 800.511.7070

This sleekly modern and hip hotel is just a two-minute walk away from the Shaw Festival Theatre. All the hallmarks of an upscale boutique hotel are standard features in the renovated rooms, including flat-screen TVs (with mini versions in the bathrooms), slate and marble tiles, hip décor, cool glass showers with oversized multi-headed faucets and complementary wireless Internet and iPod stations. The spa offers vinotherapy, as well as treatments using maple or chocolate. It's lively Zee's Patio and Grill has a charming wraparound veranda — a great place to enjoy the contemporary fresh market cuisine.



### The Charles Inn

209 Queen Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 866.556.8883

Permeated with history, this was the home of settler Charles Richardson, a member of parliament for Upper Canada. Its Georgian architecture remains easily recognizable, while the sweeping verandahs and servants' wing on the east were added at the turn of the 19th Century. Totally refurbished in 2004, each of its 12 rooms is different in décor, size and atmosphere. The dining is French contemporary with regional influences. Breakfast in summer, served outdoors on the veranda, is extra special.

### Vintage Hotels

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 888.669.5566

Vintage Hotels own three luxurious hotels in Niagara-on-the-Lake: The Prince of Wales, The Pillar and Post and Queen's Landing. The first is a well-known landmark with Victorian architecture. Queen's Landing, built like a Georgian-style mansion, lies near the banks of the Niagara River, while the Pillar and Post is more country in its charm. The sunlight-filled Tiara restaurant at Queen's Landing offers the best dining experience, while the 100 Fountain Spa at Pillar and Post is the place to go for body pleasures.

### The Oban Inn

160 Front Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 866.359.6226

Another great spot in Niagara-on-the-Lake for spa, rooms and fine dining, it sits at the mouth of the Niagara River overlooking Lake Ontario. Though it is only a 15-minute drive to Niagara Falls, the OSpa feels a world away from the tourist hustle and bustle. Restaurant Tony de Luca in the inn offers regional wine country cuisine in three or four prix fixe formats, or as tasting menus of eight to 10 dishes. The tables in the conservatory with the delightful views of the garden are the best. The Niagara region is well-covered in the wine selection.

### Treadwell Restaurant Farm-to-Table Cuisine

61 Lakeport Road, Port Dalhousie, Ontario, 905.934.9797

Buying from small, local farmers who sell direct to the restaurant, chef/owner Stephen Treadwell epitomizes farm-to-table cuisine based on his great connections built up during 11 years at Queen's Landing in Niagara-on-the-Lake. White fish is bought fresh from Port Dover day boats, artisan greens from Wyndym Farm, oils from Persall Naturals and tarts from Niagara Vinegars. Water vistas of the old Welland Canal provide a soothing dining experience. Sommelier and son, James Treadwell, sources rare VQA Canadian and European wines for the restaurant and the newly expanded wine bar area.

### Hillebrand Winery Restaurant

1249 Niagara Stone Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 800.582.8412

The first winery restaurant in Niagara-on-the-Lake, its recent renovation has resulted in a stunning new look that showcases its vineyard surroundings. Chef Frank Dodd creates a seasonally-inspired menu that explores local and Canadian produce. Dishes include Fundy Bay scallops, wild and tame mushroom salad, Ontario lamb rack and shank pudding, Flintshire Farms pheasant and Carmen Creek Ranch bison tenderloin.

### Vineland Estates Winery Restaurant

3620 Moyer Road, Vineland, Ontario, 888.846.3526, ext. 33

Vineland's view is the most picturesque of all Niagara's wineries. Perched on a hillside, it looks down over vineyards to Lake Ontario in the distance. The fare is fresh, local and generally delicious. The Carriage House next door, available for private functions, dates back to 1857.

### Terroir La Cachette Restaurant and Wine Bar

1339 Lakeshore Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 905.468.1222

Relaxed and homey, located in Strewn Winery, this is a good spot for casual Provence-inspired dining. Wine Country Cooking School is also part of this winery's cachet.

Sugar-roasted striploin with grilled seasonal vegetables and garden herbs at the Vineland Estates Winery Restaurant





**Niagara College Dining Room**

135 Taylor Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, 905.641.2252

A hidden gem, this is part of the Niagara Culinary Institute. The culinary stars of tomorrow are in the kitchen, performing their magic under the expert tutelage of their teachers. Meals are inexpensive and good. Excellent wine is also made and served at the college.

**Zest**

1469 Pelham Street, Fonthill, Ontario, 905.892.6474

Located approximately 15 minutes off the Niagara wine bench, almost as soon as it opened, Zest garnered a reputation as one of the best dining destinations in the Niagara area. Its modern Canadian cuisine celebrates ethnic diversity, with a range of flavours influenced by the cuisine of Asia, Italy and France.

**The Bloomfield Carriage House Restaurant**

260 Main Street, Bloomfield, Ontario, 613.393.1087

A fine spot for meals that feature local and organic, its biggest drawing card is the Marshmallow Room, renowned for its artisan breads, pastries and more than 110 loose teas.

**Merrill Inn**

343 Main Street E., Picton, Ontario, 866.567.5969/613.476.7451

An historic inn, it graces a quiet neighbourhood and boasts a fine chef, Michael Sullivan, in the kitchen. Each of the 13 guest rooms is unique and filled with antiques and old knick-knacks. Ask genial owner/hosts Amy and Edward Shubert for day-tripping packages, gourmet picnic lunches or simple advice on what to see in the area and they quickly oblige.

**The Inn at Huff Estates**

2274 County Road 1, Bloomfield, Ontario, 866.484.4667/613.393.1414

A high-tech, slick inn to match the high-tech winery, it's a cool place to spend the night. Some rooms have whirlpools, dual fireplaces and large sitting areas. All at the inn get a complimentary breakfast buffet, but nighttime dining is off-premises — the inn offers a shuttle service to seven options nearby.



Peller Estates Winery Restaurant

**Harvest**

106 Bridge Street, Picton, Ontario, 613.476.6763

Michael Potter's tasting menu is a gastronomic tour in a single setting and the best meal in Prince Edward County. The Chef's Hundred Mile Meal Menu, available in August and September, warrants a trip to Picton for this experience alone. Fully licensed, but also BYO; you can buy from the local wineries and enjoy on the spot.

**Buddha Dog**

172 Main Street, Picton, Ontario, 613.476.3814

A seriously fun place to eat, everything is made locally from local ingredients. The mini beef hotdogs (Amans Meats, Wellington) on fresh-baked buns (The Pastry House, Picton) are served with a large choice of toppings made by creative local chefs and Buddha Dog. Order several of each and enjoy a taste parade. Vickie's organic veggie salads are a recommended side order.

**The Grange Patio and Tasting Room**

990 Closson Road, Hillier, Ontario, 866.792.7712/613.399.1048

This 1820s barn has been spectacularly renovated, keeping all its old-world charm intact. Light gourmet fare made from local ingredients, offered daily on the patio or in the tasting room, makes it easy to hang around and enjoy the atmosphere while sipping well-made wines.

**Angeline's Restaurant Inn and Spa**

433 Main Street, Bloomfield, Ontario, 877.391.3301/613.393.3301

The inn continues to do wonders, despite the untimely death of the well-loved former chef/owner, Willi Fida. His legacy shows in the kitchen's use of local seasonal ingredients to turn out fine cuisine with a delicate European touch. The nine-room Victorian inn makes a charming overnight.

**Pelee Island Winery Pavilion**

20 East-West Road, Pelee Island, Ontario, 800.597.3533/519.724.2469

Between May and October, this is a great place to relax at a picnic table, enjoy a barbecue lunch and take in a concert or wine seminar.



Vintage Hotels! The Prince of Wales