



### **Uncorked in Canada's Wine Country.**

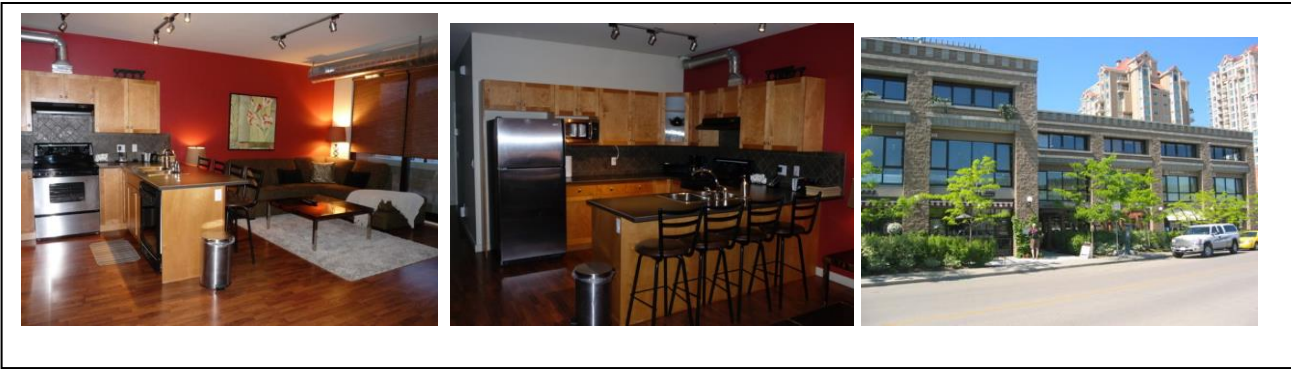
We landed at Kelowna International Airport within minutes of each other, 3 sisters flying in from different parts of the country, meeting up for a long weekend getaway in British Columbia's beautiful Okanagan Wine Region. No husbands, no kids, no jobs. We danced around, hugging each other enthusiastically. It had been far too long since we had seen each other. It was the beginning of September and the long weekend beckoned.

After a joyful reunion we make our way to our vacation rental at 1180 Sunset Drive, a trendy loft located in the Cultural District of downtown Kelowna, conveniently within walking distance of parks, trails, restaurants, shops, and music filled bars. We bound up the set of stairs, the condo is beautiful, gleaming hardwood floors throughout the open kitchen, living room and dining room invite us to explore further. 4 tall stools at the island welcome us to sit a while, catch up while we settle in. The floor to ceiling windows in the living room let the warm light pour in. Two generous bedrooms and bathrooms invite us. Like school children we bounce on the edge of the beds before moving on to discover the two spacious and sparkling bathrooms, always a treat when travelling in a group. Up a flight of stairs we discover the rooftop patio, perfect to relax and enjoy a glass of wine and watch the sunset at the end of a busy day. The vacation rental option is always a good choice, especially when travelling in a group. We have lots of space and can all be together, just like having a sleepover with your girlfriends!



Loft condo on the top floor.

[vrbo.com](https://www.vrbo.com), listing #351663



Kelowna is at the heart of the sun-drenched Okanagan Valley, in Western Canada. The area boasts 131 licensed wineries and a vibrant wine community, including both world-class operations and family-run boutique vineyards whose wines are consistently ranked among the best at international competitions.



**So many wineries, so little time.** But we were up to the task. We had enlisted Okanagan Wine Tours for the Kelowna area wineries and Experience Wine Tours in the Naramata Bench area. I would highly recommend either of these two tour companies, both were friendly, knowledgeable and fun to spend the day with and each added extra little touches to make the day special. All we had to do was enjoy the day while being escorted from winery to winery. Visit [okwinetours.com](http://okwinetours.com) or [experiencewinetours.ca](http://experiencewinetours.ca).

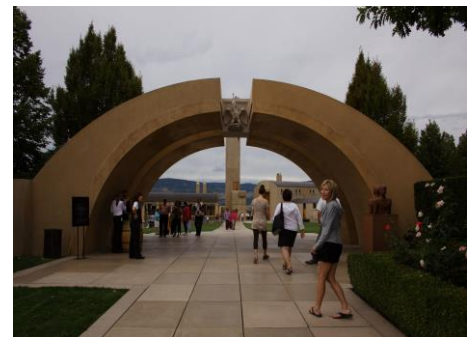
Each winery is different and unique, having created their own personality and niche. All are welcoming and proudly eager to share their passion with the thousands of visitors that pass through each year. See [okanaganwines.ca](http://okanaganwines.ca).

### Here is our Favorites list. Seven Wineries Not to Miss:

1. ***Mission Hill Family Estate***, Kelowna's Westside.

This world renowned winery is one of the largest with its wines readily available across the country and internationally. Entering the estate we pass through a set of massive curved arches into the courtyard, dominated by a 12 storey bell tower of Italian marble.

Equally impressive is the Loggia, an outdoor room offering stunning views of the valley and lake below, or the outdoor amphitheatre which plays host to Shakespearean plays, operas or jazz concerts.



The Terrace Restaurant sits along the embankment overlooking rows of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grapes. Or enjoy a tour of the Barrel Cellars and wine tasting in the Estate Room amidst the family's art collection.

✚ **Try 5 Vineyards Pinot Grigio**, one of their best.





The Loggia provides an outdoor room for visitors of Mission Hills Estate Winery to relax and enjoy the stunning views.

## 2. *Quails' Gate Winery*, near Kelowna.

Arguably one of the most beautiful sites in the Okanagan Valley, Quails' Gate sits overlooking beautiful Okanagan Lake. Rows of grapes extend from the winery toward the lake like pathways drawing you toward the spectacular vista.





Enjoy wine tastings on their rambling terraces or dine in Old Vines Restaurant where you can linger over a leisurely dinner or savour their al fresco bistro luncheon, perfectly paired with carefully selected wine flights. Cheers! We lift our glasses in a toast savouring the mouth-watering flavours as we overlook the vineyards of the Boucherie Mountain Bench.

I have it from good authority that Quails' Gate also provides the perfect romantic atmosphere to pop the question to the woman of your dreams. And I have a wonderful new niece to attest to the success of this move.

✚ Try **Quails' Gate Pinot Noir**, she's guaranteed to say Yes.

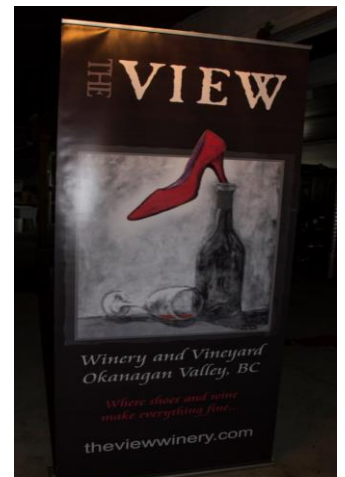
### 3. *The View Winery & Vineyards*, South East Kelowna.

A fun little family winery, the property has been in the Turton/Ward family for 5 generations. Converted from an apple orchard to a vineyard about 20 years ago, The View now produces some excellent wines with creativity and unique branding.

A red stiletto is the core of their branding and label, it's a cute story about dancing, red shoes and wines. You can imagine the rest.

We had a great time at The View, the wines were excellent and the atmosphere was light and fun.

We were hosted by Colin, our entertaining and amusing young sommelier as he joked and teased with his guests, sharing little anecdotes and tidbits with us.



✚ Try these fun loving wines: **Red Shoe White (or Red), 2013 Well Heeled, Hail Mary.**

✚ Going on a picnic? Try the only wine in a can, **BLING Sparking Wine Spritzer.**



4. *The Vibrant Vine*, Kelowna



From Vibey, the psychedelic painted little truck, to sipping a glass of *Woops* in an Adirondack chair on the expansive lawn while listening to live music, this family run winery is all about the experience. One of Kelowna's Fab Five, this unique operation is run by the Lewis Brothers, one who makes their award winning wines and one who is a renowned graphic artist who creates their unique and inspiring labels and art that adorns the winery.

They proudly let us know they were selected as the 2013 Best White Wine in the World at the 2013 World Wine Competition in Geneva, Switzerland.

Check out their cool and colorful bottles, especially their **2013 Woops** with its upside down label... there's a story there.



✚ Try: **2013 Woops**, award winning white blend.

5. *Dirty Laundry Vineyard*, Summerland, BC.

Sisters Weekend pick for favorite winery, Dirty Laundry is fun, quirky and clever right down to the last detail.



As the name suggests, this winery is named and themed after its history. Originally the property was a Chinese Laundry during the Gold Rush years. When the proprietor realized the miners were not too interested in clean clothes he introduced a benefit - adding a Bordello upstairs. Suddenly the miners didn't mind dropping off their clothes for a couple of hours. The Dirty Laundry theme is everywhere, from the names of the various wines and their labels, to the décor with its bordello theme, and clever, unique gifts in the gift shop.



Make sure you stop for lunch here. Pick up a picnic basket and fill it with snacks like cheese, meats, crackers, grapes (and of course a bottle of wine) and head out to the patio

✚ **Try Laundry's Secret Affair Blend or Say Yes Pinot Gris.**



6. ***Laughing Stock Vineyards (LFNG)***, Narmata Bench near Penticton, BC.

Living the Dream. This husband and wife winery is the brainchild and dream of David and Cynthia Enns who dared to leave their Bay Street jobs and follow their dream of owning a winery. They were the laughing stock of their peers, hence the name. But who's laughing now...



Their clever stock ticker branded labels are a reminder of their past. Their award winning wines are a tribute to the present.

✚ Try: **Laughing Stock 2012 Blind Trust Red Blend**

7. ***Red Rooster Winery***, Naramata Bench

“Above all, we make great wine”. That’s their motto, and I have to say I agree. Perched high above Lake Okanagan along the rolling hills of the Naramata Bench, Red Rooster produces one of the Top 5 Chardonnays in the World. Renowned for their unique style of hospitality, interesting and provocative art and sculpture throughout the property and their signature red rooster evident in the Coop gift shop, Red Rooster offers guests an unforgettable experience, not to mention my favorite Pinot Gris.

✚ Try: **Melt in Your Mouth-** wine and chocolate pairing. Need I say more.



**What else can you do in and around Kelowna? I'm glad you asked ...**

- Take in Kelowna's Saturday Farmers and Crafters Market.  
[www.kelownafarmersandcraftersmarket.com](http://www.kelownafarmersandcraftersmarket.com)
  - Saturday's from 9 AM – 1 PM
  - Local fresh produce, crafts and art
  - Enjoy the many food stalls for lunch
  - Visit in September to enjoy the fresh fruits from the many local orchards, you can even buy by the case for your own home preserves
- Golfing.
  - Try your game at the many professional calibre golf courses in the area. With over 2,000 hours of sunshine every year the area boasts the longest golf season you'll find.
- Lake – Beaches, boating, fishing
  - Okanagan Lake is 68 miles long with some 30 beaches in the area. Try Stand Up Paddle Boarding, house boating, ski boats, sail boats, or kayaking or canoeing. Or just walk on the beach or enjoy the setting sun. The choice is yours.
- And much much more. Visit [tourismkelowna.com](http://tourismkelowna.com) or [hellobc.com/thompsonokanagan](http://hellobc.com/thompsonokanagan).



We pack up and say Good-Bye to our beautiful home away from home and make our way to the airport where we will go our separate ways, back to our own little corners of the world. Embracing each other, we promise to get together again, sooner this time. As the plane takes off I wave good-bye to the Okanagan Valley and know that I will return to this magical place again. Soon. I'll see you there!



**How to get there:**

Kelowna is just a short connector from either Vancouver or Calgary International Airports, or a leisurely four hour drive from Vancouver through British Columbia's spectacular mountains.

**Where to stay:**

There are over 300 VRBO rentals around Kelowna – downtown, lakefront, on a golf course- the choice is yours. Or try Penticton, Summerland or one of the other small neighbouring communities. Visit [vrbo.com](http://vrbo.com).

**When to go:**

The Okanagan Valley has some of the mildest weather in Canada. In fact many people from other areas spend their winters there. But it is best known for the hot, dry summers with never-ending sunshine and spectacular sunsets. And the falls are unparalleled.

My favorite time is September and October when the Valley is dressed up in its finery, painted and glowing in Mother Nature's golds, oranges and reds. Try the Okanagan's Fall Wine Festival in October with over 165 events throughout the region.

***You can't go wrong. Book your Okanagan Wine Tour now.***



Enjoying a Weekend Wine Tasting Getaway in the Beautiful Okanagan Valley in British Columbia.