

# FROM THE CELLAR... CAVE SPRING CELLARS



## YOU HAVE TO VISIT OUR WINERY BECAUSE...

"We're one of North America's great Riesling estates." – Thomas Pennachetti, Vice-President, Sales & Marketing, Cave Spring Cellars.



*Outside the winery's boutique (above), and inside the old cellar (below).*

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS

August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016

Arriving at Cave Spring Cellars, you have the immediate impression the winery is distinguished and well-established. The wine boutique's refined, inviting décor blends seamlessly with the passion exuded by the knowledgeable, friendly staff.

## THE LAY OF THE LAND

Cave Spring Cellars lays claim to owning the oldest active wine cellar in Canada, first established in 1870. The winery's first vine plantings date back to 1973, though the oldest vines now date from 1975. Cave Spring's first vintage came to fruition in 1986.

The winery moved to its current Main Street building in Jordan in 1990. Since then, the winery has expanded by purchasing adjacent commercial space, as well as an off-site warehouse.

Cave Spring produces 50,000 cases per year. Of the 164 acres of vineyards, 78% consists of white varietals (Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris), whereas 22% consists of red varietals (Cabernet Franc, Gamay, and Pinot Noir).

Business, technology, innovation, and passion also merge behind the scenes. In an effort to reduce its impact on the environment, water to be more specific, Cave Spring has the world's first BioGill wastewater treatment system, with 'gills' that clean the water used during the winemaking process to 99% purity before it flows back to the municipality.

On June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Cave Spring Cellars became Ontario's first certified sustainable winery in recognition of its sustainable winery operations.

## WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Cave Spring's winemaking philosophy is minimalist, as Thomas (Tom) Pennachetti, Vice-President, Sales & Marketing for Cave



*A look at the rocks forming Cave Spring's vineyards and impart typicity to its wines.*

Spring Cellars, noted. The most important commodities reside in the vineyards and in the workforce, and he holds firmly to the belief one has to maximize whatever one has to work with.

### **ONE-ON-ONE WITH TOM PENNACHETTI, VICE-PRESIDENT, SALES & MARKETING, CAVE SPRING CELLARS**

Cave Spring's reverence for the land emerged during our tour of the vineyards with Tom. He not only showed us where the winery's vineyards were located geographically and topographically, but he showed us the composition of the soil: composition of the soil: limestone, dolomite or dolostone, sandstone and shale.

Understanding the terroir allows the Cave Spring team to understanding which varietals work best on this land, a nod, perhaps, to the 'old world' approach.

Between the vineyard tour and wine tasting, Tom opened up about his wines, the winery, winemaking, and the wine industry in an informed, candid, and diplomatic way.

#### **Q: What do you like most about wine?**

A: I'm interested in wines from cool climates. I like the variations from year to year. Every year brings something different. Interesting wines are dictated by the place. I'm not interested in wine for the alcohol.

#### **Q: Of all the wines you produce, which one is your favourite and why?**

A: The Estate Riesling. It's very consistent and reflective of our estate. I like the Estate Pinot Noir, too.

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*"There are some great vineyard sites in Niagara, but not all these vineyards come with the best varietals planted in them." – Tom Pennachetti*

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#### **Q: What is your ultimate favourite wine and why?**

A: That's hard. Of course I love our region's wines, especially the Rieslings, Chardonnays - including Blanc de Blancs - and Pinot Noirs. I am inspired by European regions that work with these and other varieties that we work with in Niagara, and wines that are similar in feel. Our region is much more like the Northern European regions than anywhere in the New World. So, among whites, Mosel, Rheingau, Nahe and Kamptal/Kremstal Rieslings in particular fascinate me, along with white Burgundy and Champagne. But, if I had to pick one, it's a toss-up between great Riesling and great Blanc de Blancs from anywhere capable of producing it. To choose between them depends on my mood!

#### **Q: What's the best part of your job?**

A: Touring people like you (thanks, Tom!). The best part of my job is being an ambassador for the region.

**Q: What's the worst part of your job?**

A: The worst part of my job is dealing with people who want free stuff and people who are pretentious.

**Q: What is your most embarrassing wine moment?**

A: Any time I am sniffing one of our wines I get the variety wrong.



*A flock of hawks flying above Cave Spring's vineyards.*

**Q: Tell us one thing about you or your winery that nobody else knows.**

A: Not many people know the hawk is our emblem because it embodies the geology and climate of our site. The hawks majestically ride the thermal updrafts that result from thermal lake breezes colliding with the Escarpment cliffs at Cave Spring. And, hawks help the winery because they keep the birds away. It's been our symbol from Day One.

[As we toured the vineyards, a flock of hawks flew high above, like a serendipitous sign, beautiful and majestic. This emerged as a highlight of our visit, if not our entire week in the region.]

**THE TASTING...**

At the smaller tasting bar in the back of the wine boutique, Tom treated us to a wonderful selection of offerings from Cave Spring Cellars. We started with the non-vintage Blanc de Blanc, a 100% Chardonnay sparkling, and ended with the 2012 La Penna, a 100% appassimento-style red wine. We had previously been told La Penna remains Angelo Pavan's – Cave Spring Cellars' Vice-President and Winemaker – nod to Amarone, the red wine of his family's roots in Italy.

In between, we tasted the:

- 2014 Dolomite Riesling
- 2014 Estate Riesling
- 2014 The Adam Steps Riesling
- 2014 CSV Riesling
- 2014 Chardonnay Musqué
- 2013 Estate Chardonnay
- 2013 CSV Chardonnay
- 2014 Gamay
- 2014 Dolomite Pinot Noir
- 2014 Estate Pinot Noir
- 2013 Dolomite Cabernet Franc

Considering The Adam Steps Riesling holds the distinction of 'house white' for us, it was a tall order for anything else to beat it. Sure enough, it earned our highest marks and, deservedly, will continue to reign as our 'house white,' that is, until we find something better (possible, but unlikely). Still, the La Penna came a close second and is definitely worth a try, but not for the faint of heart or anyone lacking patience.



*A look Cave Spring's sparkling.*

To understand how the land, terroir, can affect a wine, try the range of Rieslings or Chardonnays offered by Cave Spring, possibly in a horizontal tasting (different wines from the same year). Even better, try this blind.

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*“I think good Niagara Riesling has typicity.” –  
Tom Pennachetti*

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## FINAL NOTES

To describe Cave Spring Cellars in a few words, we would have to say: typicity, focus, professionalism, ambition, and passion. Though a business, family and loyalty abound in the winery, with some staff members having worked for the winery for more than 20 years and other being there from the start. The estate invites innovation, but always in a measured, well thought out way. Tom and Cave Spring Cellars serve as great ambassadors for Niagara and, more broadly, Canadian wines, especially their decorated Rieslings.

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