

WINE *by* DESIGN

Second Edition



SEAN STANWICK LORAIN FOWLOW

FIELDING ESTATE WINERY

SUPERKÜL INC ARCHITECT

LOCATION: BEAMSVILLE, ONTARIO, CANADA

COMPLETION DATE: 2005

Ask anyone who has spent their summers in Ontario's 'cottage country' and they will share fond stories of leisurely afternoons on a dock by the lake, of long walks in the forest with the colourful autumn leaves underfoot, or of cosy gatherings around stone fireplaces in the depths of winter. In fact, so deeply ingrained is their love of life in the rustic lodge in the woods that they will readily admit it's an important part of defining who they are.

But what does this have to do with wine? Speak to Ken and Marg Fielding and you'll understand. Having lived most of their lives in northern Ontario's Haliburton Highlands, recreating a sense of Canadiana was critical when they decided to move to the Niagara peninsula and start a winery. Fielding Estate is a relatively young winery in Ontario's Niagara wine region, about an hour's drive from Toronto. Produced in small batches by traditional methods (the Fieldings still select, inspect and sort the grapes by hand), the wines soon garnered numerous awards. Fielding literally burst onto the scene winning five medals for their 2002 and 2003 vintages at the Ontario Wine Awards with skilled winemaker Andrejz Lepinski at the helm.

But as their popularity grew, so too did their need for a purpose-built facility on a new site. After a lengthy search, the Fieldings found the perfect *terroir*: an 18-acre plot at the foot of the Niagara escarpment that gently rolls down towards Lake Ontario. Blessed with dramatic views of the surrounding landscape and covered with healthy 15-year-old vines, the site proved the perfect complement to their hands-on approach to winemaking. The Fieldings also own another 40 acres on the lakeshore where new vines blend nicely with the old.

Of course, all that was missing was the new winery. Hiring Toronto-based superkül architects the Fieldings – unsurprisingly – presented the designers with a dual challenge: to bring the feel of cottage life to Niagara and to meet their need for a functional agricultural building. In Ontario, more often than not cottages look like lodges rather than houses, with plenty of wood, stone and glass. And a wine lodge for all seasons is exactly what architect Margaret (Meg) Graham and her team delivered, their highly successful solution joining the likes of Frank Gehry's Le Clos Jordanne in taking Niagara's quality and reputation to new heights.

From the outside, the low-slung wooden winery appears to tuck itself with ease into the side of a grassy hill. Resting upon a stone base, exposed cedar beams capture the comfortable feel of a summer cottage while the running bands of windows expose the winery operations for all to see. Sited just

Opposite: In Ontario, more often than not cottages look like lodges rather than houses, with plenty of wood, stone and glass. Knowing this, the architects designed their own version of a wine lodge for all seasons

Below: Resting upon a stone base, exposed cedar beams capture the comfortable feel of a summer cottage while the running bands of windows expose the winery operations for all to see



FIELDING ESTATE WINERY

ADDRESS	4020 LOCUST LANE, BEAMSVILLE, ONTARIO, CANADA
TELEPHONE	905 563 0668
WEBSITE	WWW.FIELDINGWINES.COM
OPENING HOURS	OPEN SEVEN DAYS A WEEK; MAY TO OCTOBER: 10.30AM TO 6PM; NOVEMBER TO APRIL: 10.30AM TO 5.30PM
WINE AND GIFT SHOP	OPEN YEAR ROUND, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. MAY TO OCTOBER FROM 10.30AM TO 6PM; NOVEMBER TO APRIL FROM 10.30AM TO 5.30PM.
TOURS	DAILY AT 10.30AM, 1.30PM, AND 3.30PM FROM MAY TO OCTOBER. SPACE IS LIMITED TO 12 GUESTS
DESIGN STYLE	NORTH AMERICAN WOODEN RUSTIC WITH CONTEMPORARY DETAILS
RECOMMENDED WINES & ICEWINES	RIESLING ICEWINE RESERVE 2006; RIESLING RESERVE 2006; CHARDONNAY MUSQUÉ
TASTINGS / SPECIAL EVENTS	NIAGARA WINE FESTIVAL – LATE SEPTEMBER
VINTNERS / PROPRIETORS	PROPRIETORS KEN AND MARG FIELDING
SPECIAL FEATURES	A RELAXING EVENING BY THE STONE FIREPLACE DURING THE AUTUMN



Above: Approaching from the south along a short and winding uphill road through the vines, once through the entrance guests immediately find themselves in the tasting room overlooking the production areas below

Opposite: Inside, clean white stone counters, warm grey slate floors and birch cabinetry are offset by a backdrop of rich greens from the vines and blues of the sky

off the shoreline of an adjacent pond, three original farm buildings finish the composition. Nearby at the southern tree line, the Beamsville leg of the Bruce Trail passes through, a popular route for hikers.

Approaching from the south along a short and winding uphill road through the vines, once through the entrance guests immediately find themselves in the tasting room overlooking the production areas below. Functionally, spaces for wine production and wine retailing are nested beneath the heavy, timber framed and gabled roof. Running along the entire northern edge, a wooden deck gives guests a clear view of the rolling green landscape, Lake Ontario and, on a clear day, the Toronto skyline.

Below, the wine production areas are laid out in an order that follows the winemaking process. Beginning at the east end grapes are unloaded, hand-sorted and crushed before being transferred to stainless steel fermentation tanks. Once aged, the wine is put into barrels which are stored in the cellar, portions of which are buried in the slope of the land to take advantage of its temperature moderating effects. Tours follow a similar sequence, moving along a stainless steel catwalk that also gives unobstructed views of the vines outside.



The winery features a number of sustainable design elements in an effort to curb its overall carbon footprint. A gravity fed filter treatment bed and septic system reduces the need for mechanical pumps while a permeable granular drive minimises surface water run-off. Natural ventilation and passive cooling are achieved by bands of remotely operated windows and a central skylight with venting at the roof ridge. Building materials including concrete and wood were also left in their natural states to minimise labour during construction.

Fielding has gained a reputation for its fragrant and floral aromatic whites. Inside the architects have responded in kind with crisp, uncomplicated finishes. Clean white stone counters, warm grey slate floors and birch cabinetry are offset by a backdrop of rich greens referencing the vines and blues of the sky. Brushed metal accents throughout the retail store also lend a modern touch



Above: Spaces for wine production and wine retailing are nestled comfortably beneath the heavy timber framed gabled roof. Tours follow a similar sequence to the winemaking process, moving along a stainless steel catwalk that gives unobstructed views of the vines outside

to the rustic look. During the cool autumn months, a stone fireplace adds warmth to the experience. On crisp evenings, visitors could ask for nothing better than a relaxing evening by the fire with a glass of Merlot, watching the orange light from the setting sun as it touches the ripened vines.

Their Haliburton cottage experience notwithstanding, the Fieldings are well acquainted with life in the fast lane – they helped create Subway, the world's largest fast food sandwich chain. Their son Curtis, who now acts as general manager, was racing high octane cars on the professional stock car circuit just a few years ago. What is wonderful, though, is how they have eschewed the bustle of chain stores and race tracks and moved into the world of Slow. Visit their website and it is easy to understand how the 'slow journey from grape to table' now influences everything they do.

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