

CHEF & CHAUFFEUR

TOUR 6

The Best of Agassiz and the Okanagan Tour

3 days/2 nights

Day 1

As we drive out to Agassiz, your guide will talk about the region and its wealth of culinary resources, the area's 'food heroes' whom we'll meet, and the glorious food and wines we'll taste.

Feel free to ask questions about the food, wines, restaurants, and history of the area. Your guide, a keen professional and foodie (some are chefs), is your key to inside information about the best eating in Vancouver and the region. They've dined widely and have the inside track with chefs and restaurateurs alike.

Our Agassiz tour includes:

The Back Porch

Wake up and smell the coffee at this cool little country coffee roaster and farm business that roasts its beans in a 1919 Flame Roaster. Character farm buildings, chickens, vegetable crops and antique garden décor and collectibles will whet your appetite for what's to come.

The Farm House Natural Cheeses

Here you'll see herds of contented cows and goats, view the cheese-making process, sample plenty of handmade artisan cheeses and enjoy a milk tasting.

Canadian Hazelnuts

This farm grows organic hazelnuts and produces fresh, roasted, and candied nuts, chocolate bark, protein powder, flour and cold pressed hazelnut oil.

Al fresco lunch

With Fraser Valley wines at Farm House Natural Cheeses prepared by Red House Catering's Chef Sohlberg, or a Quince Express gourmet picnic.

After lunch, we'll head to Hope and take the Coquihalla Highway north through B.C.'s High Country to Merritt, the centre for the valley's five aboriginal communities, in the heart of ranch country. Veering southeast, we take 'the Connector' highway to Westbank on Okanagan Lake. We're now in wine country, minutes from our first tasting.

Mission Hill Family Estate Winery

Our first stop is landmark Mission Hill, perched atop Mount Boucherie, overlooking the Lake Okanagan and nearby Kelowna. On his first visit to Mission Hill, Robert Mondavi remarked to proprietor Anthony von Mandl that he'd "out-Mondavied" him, referring to the stunning architecturally significant winery. We'll tour this outstanding winery and taste award winning wine.

Quails' Gate Estate Winery

Is our second stop. This family-owned winery's vineyards slope gently down to Lake Okanagan. After our tour, we'll step into the tasting room and shop, a quaint old log and stone house built in 1873 by the property's original settlers, and enjoy Quails' Gate's hospitality and some excellent pinot noirs, marechal foch and more.

We check into our hotel, Bellasera Tuscan Villas and Piazza, in nearby Kelowna.

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Dinner:

At 8:00, we'll sit down to a regional six-course Winemakers' Dinner at Fresco, the Okanagan's most lauded restaurant, where we'll enjoy the region's bounty paired with an array of spectacular local wines.

Day 2

After breakfast, we'll check out of our hotel and head south along the shores of Okanagan Lake to the Naramata Bench where we'll find a concentration of excellent B.C. farm gate wineries stitched together by quality and community.

Naramata Bench

We'll visit the best-of-the-best wineries including Laughing Stock Vineyards, Hillside Estate Winery, Lake Breeze Vineyards, Poplar Grove Winery, and Elephant Island Orchard Wines.

Lunch

We'll enjoy a fresh and flavourful meal at The Cobblestone Restaurant in historic Naramata Heritage Inn.

We'll head south and enjoy tastings at the highly regarded Blue Mountain Vineyards and Cellars and the aptly named Blasted Church Vineyards. The stories behind these are fascinating. Do check out Blasted Church Pinot Blanc. Two Chef & Chauffeur guides—Robin Mines and Judith Lane—are depicted on the label together with a 'choir' of their wine-scribe colleagues.

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Spirit Ridge Vineyards Resort & Spa

Traveling further south to the Osoyoos Lake Region, we'll check into our four-star lodgings, Spirit Ridge Vineyards Resort & Spa, adjacent to North America's first aboriginal-owned winery, and situated in Canada's only desert.

Dinner

We'll relish a southern Okanagan-focused dinner with regional wines at nearby Sonora Room at scenic Burrowing Owl Winery paired with elusive Burrowing Owl wines.

Day 3

After breakfast at Passatempo, the restaurant at Spirit Ridge, we'll check out of our hotel.

Nk'Mip Heritage & Interpretive Centre

Mere steps away, affords a fascinating look at the history of the region and the Osoyoos Indian Band who also own nearby Nk'Mip (ink-a-meep) Cellars, North America's first aboriginal-owned winery.

Nk'Mip Cellars.

Ready for the first wines of the day? His striking winery is a joint project between the Osoyoos Indian Band and Vincor Canada.

Golden Mile

Next we'll visit an area called the Golden Mile, just outside of Oliver, "the wine capital of Canada." Our stops include Tinhorn Creek Vineyards and Golden Mile Cellars.

Toasted Oak Wine Bar and Grill.

This happening restaurant is the go-to spot in the area for good food and a huge selection of Okanagan wines. We'll enjoy a hearty lunch and a few more luscious wines.

Jackson-Triggs Vintners.

This is one of Canada's most awarded wineries. We'll taste some of them in the sleekly designed tasting room or on the adjoining patio, weather permitting.

B.C. Wine Information Centre.

Get out your wallets. We'll make a short stop here where you can pick up more information about Okanagan Wine Country, plus stock up on some of those wines you'd wished you bought. The Centre's large VQA Wine Shop has an enormous selection of B.C. wines. And if you're up for tasting, there's always a few bottles uncorked, waiting to be poured.