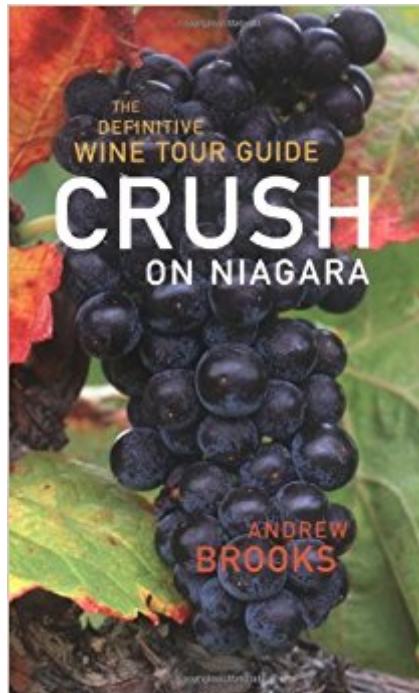




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Crush On Niagara: The Definitive Wine Tour Guide



Synopsis

Crush on Niagara is an indispensable guide to travelling through Ontario's Niagara region. The book begins with an introduction to the region and its industry, soil and climate conditions, and predominant varieties in the area. There are descriptions of over 50 wineries that include a brief history, sommeliers' picks, and where the wines can be purchased. With details on serving, such as glassware and serving temperatures, wine and food pairings, a glossary of wine terms, and a list of must-see Niagara wine events, Crush on Niagara is the only guidebook you'll need to discover all that the area has to offer.

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Customer Reviews

Andrew Brooks is an accredited sommelier and offers tours of the Niagara wine region.

The Niagara Wine Industry Our Wine Past, Present and Future Welcome to Niagara wine country, the Niagara Peninsula produces more wine grapes than any other region in Canada. From Grimsby to Niagara-on-the-Lake, this 40-kilometre stretch of land represents approximately 16,000 acres of vines, with hundreds of new vineyards being planted annually. Despite its small size, Niagara is home to more than 50 wineries. This makes Niagara the most densely concentrated winery location in Canada. The industry ranges from small boutique wineries producing less than 1,000 cases each year to publicly traded corporations steadily approaching 1,000,000-case production. Niagara is fast becoming an international wine destination. Niagara's culinary experiences are also starting to

attract international attention. Cooking schools and fine restaurants feature the best of local ingredients from the "banana belt of the North." This guide has been designed to help you make the most of your wineland journey, with the essential information you'll need to enjoy this extraordinary food and wine destination. To fully appreciate the achievements of Niagara's wine industry, it's important to understand the area's geographical and historical context. In geographical terms, Niagara is defined by Lake Ontario and the Niagara Escarpment. Thousands of years ago, the land below the Niagara Escarpment was the lakebed of ancient Lake Iroquois. This has presented exciting opportunities for today's wine growers because the retreating glaciers left behind rich fossil and mineral deposits that play a vital role in defining the character of Niagara wine grapes and, inevitably, the quality of wine that ends up in your glass. Early settlers to the region cultivated vineyards of the native *vitis labrusca* grape varieties (such as Concord). This hearty and vigorous vine could easily withstand the extreme heat, humidity and winter cold, producing consistent quality. From the mid-1800s to the mid-1900s, these varieties were the staple for wine production of "Canadian" imitation Champagne, Sherry and Port. In the 1960s and 1970s, pioneer grape-growing families, such as Pennachetti, Lenko, Ziraldo and Bosc, focused their efforts on production of the noble *vitis vinifera* (such as Chardonnay), which make superior wines. *Vinifera* are much more difficult to grow successfully in a continental cool climate. With the number of frost-free days required for the vine's fruit to be ripe at harvest, Niagara's shorter growing season creates great challenges for today's wine grower. Between 1988 and 1991, the groundwork for today's winemaking industry was set into place. The Vintners Quality Alliance was formed to guarantee quality to the consumer, and approximately 8,000 acres of hybrid and native grape varieties were removed and replanted with *vinifera* varieties. *Vinifera* now account for more than 55 percent of vineyards in the region. This number is expected to grow as demand for high-quality VQA Canadian wine increases. The future of the Niagara wine industry is bright, with many new and exciting winery projects on the horizon. With this capacity for thousands of new vineyard acres, the greater volume of high-quality wines that will be available to consumers will no doubt increase the market share of Ontario wine from its current 40 percent. Grape varietal and rootstock selection, vine-training systems and new harvesting technology will all play a vital role in improving the quality and value of the Niagara wine on your kitchen table. Millions of dollars are being invested in the industry, not only in new vineyard plantings but in production technology as well. Although less romantic than boutique wineries, large, modern wineries are packed full of equipment designed to add more depth and complexity to wine produced in larger volume. Barrels coopered from Canadian oak are starting to find their way into winery cellars, helping winemakers define the true character of Niagara wines.

And then there's controversial experimentation in replacing natural cork with synthetic and screw cap closures that's still being debated. Perhaps Niagara's most exciting assets are the educational programs training the next generation of winemakers emerging from Brock University and Niagara College. Most of the region's winemakers, and arguably some of its best, began their careers not at school but tending vineyards and cleaning fermentation tanks. This hard work and experience has formed the backbone of today's winemaking industry. Niagara's next generation of winemakers, armed with the knowledge and experience of old-world techniques combined with the finest new-world technology, will meet the future demand of Niagara's growing wine industry.

Andrew Brooks' *The Definitive Wine Tour Guide: Crush On Niagara* comes from a sommelier/Niagara tour director who knows Ontario Canada's wine country quite well. Blending regional history with top wine picks and winery hours, *Crush On Niagara* provides plenty of wine savvy tips to accompany its destination-oriented material on recommended wineries, when to visit, wine features and more.

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