

# So you want to own a winery!

## British Columbia interior and Gulf Islands offer a variety of opportunities

ALISON APPELBE  
Special to the Edmonton Journal

**P**eople go into the wine business for reasons that range from the dream-inspired to the hard-nosed.

“A lot of people are drawn by the romance of it,” says Christa Frosch, of Sotheby’s International Realty Canada, in Vancouver. “They want a beautiful home with a vineyard to enjoy for personal reasons.”

Others, Frosch says, see a winery or vineyard as a money making venture. Of these, there are the do-it-yourselfers; the owners who rely partly or largely on hired expertise; and buyers who live elsewhere and treat the property solely as an investment.

However you approach it, growing grapes and producing wine is usually both hard work and technologically demanding. Having expertise is imperative—from the viticulture, through the production of wine, to the business side, including marketing and sales.

Frosch — the product of a long-established winery family in Germany, and a wine expert in her own right — believes she can help potential buyers of land or wineries determine their needs and suitability for the job.

“Some people simply want to produce their own label, and don’t mind if they make money,” she says from long experience as a realtor.

However, to operate a business with a tasting room, you need a minimum of 10 planted acres, she explains. And if you want to make serious money, you need to produce at least 10,000 cases, keeping in mind that, on aver-

age, the consumer pays no more than \$25 for a bottle of wine.

If you choose to keep your production down at 5,000 cases, says Frosch, you must expect to get anywhere from \$40 to \$70 per bottle (and take your wine to another level).

The largest purveyor of wineries and vineyards in B.C., Sotheby’s currently offers seven wine-related sites — from a sizeable winery on Saturna Island in the Gulf Islands to an upscale guesthouse with a small vineyard in Naramata. All the properties are listed in what Sotheby’s calls its Vineyard Collection.

Currently listed wineries are on the Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island.

The Saturna Island Family Estate Winery sits on a bench at the foot of a granite bluff on the south side this southerly island. Forty of its 78 acres are planted with grapes of the Pinot Gris, Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Noir, and Merlot varieties.

One of the coastal viticulture region’s largest operations, Saturna is capable of producing 20,000 cases (including its specialty sparkling white). With a wine shop, bistro and winery tours, the operation is also a tourist destination. Visitors arrive by ferry, private boat and air. The property is listed at \$9.7 million.

On Pender Island, lying directly west of Saturna, the Morning Bay Vineyard and Farm is on the market at \$2,495,000. With almost 27 acres of sloping waterfront, Morning Bay includes a modern turnkey winery, incorporating sustainable design principles, and a

residence designed by noted Vancouver architect Walter Francl.

Known for hosting events, including an annual music and wine festival, not to mention its widely honoured reserve Merlot, Morning Bay is priced at \$2,495,000.

Frosch describes the Blue Grouse Estate Winery — a family-run operation located just south of Duncan on Vancouver Island — as “a solid business with good branding.”

Widely known for its exceptional Cowichan Valley terroir, and wines that include Ortega, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir and its own Black Muscat, the business is listed at \$2,750,000.

The Blue Grouse package includes the 31-acre farm, main residence, tasting room and newly constructed winery. Given its location in the heart of an increasingly tourist-oriented region, the property is said to invite the addition of a restaurant or bistro.

For those with a bent for hospitality, an option is the distinguished Apple D’Or guesthouse and vineyard on the Naramata Road, just outside Penticton.

Sited on a bluff overlooking Lake Okanagan, the 1.28-acre site (named for an earlier incarnation as an apple orchard) includes a small vineyard that produces a sparkling wine. The guesthouse, with large character rooms, is operated May to October.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY’S REALTY  
Apple D’Or is a luxury guesthouse in Naramata. B.C.



This hand-hewn log building of more than 7,000 sq. ft., with 100-year-old fir flooring, is the only five-star accommodation in B.C. east of Vancouver's Lower Mainland. It's listed at \$3.7 million.

At Kaleden, south of Penticton, a particularly fertile piece of land on which First Nation residents once grew medicinal herbs and plants is known as the Valley of the Healing.

PHOTO: SOTHEBY'S REALTY  
An Okanagan vineyard.

Given the rich soil and good topography, coupled with abundant sunlight and water, the site is said to retain good agricultural potential.

Private owners are selling two acreages, of 80 and 160 acres, for \$2,100,000 and \$2,945,000 respectively.

A neighbouring property is a protected Nature reserve.

The Bella Terra Vineyard acreage is located

on the Black Sage Bench, a primary grape-growing (and Pinot Noir producing) slope in the south Okanagan. This prime land near Oliver, with frontage on the Okanagan River, has newly planted vines on six of its 24 acres. It's listed at \$1,899,000.

For more, visit [www.vineyardcollection.ca](http://www.vineyardcollection.ca) or [www.sothebysrealty.ca](http://www.sothebysrealty.ca) or contact Christa Frosch at 604-306-7742. ■

