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# CCOVInews

A newsletter from  
the Cool Climate Oenology  
and Viticulture Institute



Cool  
Climate  
Oenology &  
Viticulture  
Institute

Brock University

## CCOVI celebrates 25 years of research excellence

CCOVI recently celebrated the 25-year anniversary of its inception on Oct. 26, 1996.

"Our commitment to our industry and community partners has remained at the heart of what we do, and it's been amazing to see everything we've accomplished together," Director Debbie Inglis said of reaching the milestone.

At the 1996 Queen's Landing Forum in Toronto, 37 individuals from Brock University and the grape and wine community determined the industry needed its own research institute.

CCOVI was created a short time later, in partnership with the Wine Council of Ontario (now Ontario Craft Wineries and Wine Growers Ontario) and the Grape Growers of Ontario (GGO). It is still supported by those partners today and has since inked new partnerships with Ontario Grape and Wine Research Inc. (OGWRI), the Canadian Grapevine Certification Network (CGCN), and others.

In 1999, Donald Ziraldo and John Howard led a multi-million-dollar fundraising campaign from members of the industry, allowing CCOVI to open the doors to its very own building: Inniskillin Hall.

Still a close partner of the institute today, Ziraldo points to the flagship VineAlert program as an example of the game-changing research CCOVI has spearheaded since then.

"Before CCOVI created this, you had to essentially go out and hold a thermometer up in the air. I remember driving around at night to check the temperature of different vineyards, it was just crazy. Now you can set it up so that the wind machine comes on automatically to align with Brock's data."

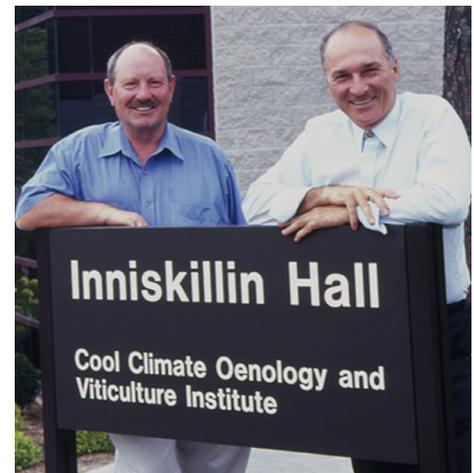
CCOVI's research program tackles industry research priorities from vine to glass and provides Preharvest Monitoring, Analytical Services and Grapevine Virus Testing services to the industry. It hosts thousands of people at outreach events every year, trains undergraduate and graduate students, as well as offering professional certifications in wine, cider, and spirits.

Del Rollo, Chair of The Board Of Directors, Wine Growers Ontario, said the Institute's achievements over the past 25 years "have been, and will continue to be, fundamental to the success of Ontario's grape and wine industry."

"Wine Growers Ontario thanks CCOVI for its dedication to our industry that supports more than 18,000 jobs in Ontario," he added.

OGWRI Chair Matthias Oppenlaender and GGO CEO Debbie Zimmerman also raised a glass to CCOVI.

"CCOVI's ongoing research and support of Ontario's grape growers is crucial in improving grapevine health, including mitigating winter injury," they said in a joint statement from the GGO, OGWRI and CGCN. "The successful development of VineAlert is a



*Karl Kaiser and Donald Ziraldo outside of Inniskillin Hall.*

major accomplishment for CCOVI and an important tool for protecting our vineyards to ensure the local grape and wine industry remains strong and sustainable."

Ontario Craft Wineries President Richard Linley said the organization has been "proud to partner" with CCOVI, highlighting their collaboration on the first-of-its-kind Certification in Ontario Wine.

"We look forward to further building on our partnership with CCOVI as our industry and this valuable institution continues to grow," he added.

As for what lies ahead, Inglis is excited by CCOVI's work on consumer choice using augmented and virtual reality technology, its initiatives to mitigate the impacts of climate change, and the implementation of a national clean plant program for grapevines.

"I can't wait to see what the next 25 years will bring and look forward to celebrating when it's safe to do so," she said.

# Brock University toasts gift of 2,500 historically significant wines

Renowned wine expert Michael Vaughan has CCOVI as the new home of his impeccably preserved collection of award-winning Canadian wines.

The Michael Vaughan Wine Collection contains 2,500 bottles of historical wines from across the country, including extremely rare bottles that date back decades. The collection has been personally curated and preserved by Vaughan and contains some of the last-remaining bottles of their kind that are still in mint condition and drinkable.

Vaughan, who earned his PhD in International Economics from the University of Toronto, was a Professor of Economics at Ryerson University before becoming an award-winning national wine writer and critic. He said his collection was curated with intellectual pursuits in mind. As an educator himself, Vaughan said he felt CCOVI's state-of-the-art facilities and reputation for research and educational excellence made it an ideal partner for both housing and utilizing his unique collection.

"I wanted to make sure the wines I have accumulated went somewhere where they could be a useful learning experience," he said. "I wanted to share them with an academic institution. The most important one for me was Brock, because it made sense that it went to a place where the students, the faculty and the winemakers could experience the evolution of these wines and see how good they still were and how they had changed over all of these years."

Debbie Inglis, Director of Brock's CCOVI, said the Michael Vaughan Wine Collection is a prime example of how gifts of this kind and ongoing partnerships with donors can serve students, researchers and the community for years to come.

"This generous donation, coupled with Michael's expertise, will be a valuable asset to the Institute as we work to address the evolving research and outreach needs of our industry and educate future generations of grape growers and winemakers," she said. "This collection serves as a living history of the evolution of Canadian wine, allowing us to learn from the past and bolster the



*Michael Vaughan*

sustainability and success of our industry in the future."

The collection will be housed in CCOVI's 44,000-bottle capacity wine cellar, where the wines will be climate-controlled, archived and preserved as part of the Institute's Canadian Wine Library.

"This donation contains wines from some of Canada's top wine vintages, including 1998 and 1999, and to have these coming through our doors is very exciting," said Barb Tatarnic, CCOVI's Manager of Continuing Education and Outreach. "It opens up a treasure trove of opportunities for CCOVI to take a deep dive into these wines and to offer tastings and research opportunities that look at things like ageability, the impact that good vineyard practices have on the quality of wines, climate, weather impacts on vintage variation and much, much more."

Vaughan has been studying, collecting and writing about wine for more than 50 years, documenting the 1970s resurgence of the Canadian wine industry first-hand. He is the editor and creator of *Vintage Assessments*, a not-for-profit publication dedicated to professional buyers, sommeliers and wine lovers, and has personally tasted and

critiqued tens of thousands of the world's top wines.

The value of the collection lies in the health of the wines themselves, which he preserved in a climate- and humidity-controlled environment and routinely evaluated for quality using a time-honoured technique to preserve their integrity.

"I keep my wine very cold because I don't want it to evolve, so my secret of having wines that are still drinkable after 50 years is the temperature," Vaughan said. "The wines that have been donated to CCOVI had never moved out of my climate-controlled storage."

Vaughan will continue to offer his breadth of expertise and collaborate with CCOVI on various outreach, research and educational opportunities involving the presentation of these wines going forward.

"This is the fun part," he said. "I really want to continue working with Brock, including on some interesting projects I have in mind."

CCOVI is developing plans for hosting these opportunities, as well as an event to celebrate the donation, in the future.

# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CCOVI

## Foundations in Winemaking course now includes Analytical Services from CCOVI

Thanks to what she learned in a new course from CCOVI, vineyard owner Nicki Hughes has the foundation needed to start making her very own wine.

"I had lots of questions — from governing regulations, equipment and supplies, processing grapes, fermentation of the juice and must, and the final finishing of the wine — and the course did not disappoint," said Hughes, who works in Prince Edward County and was among the first group of students to complete the Institute's Foundations in Winemaking course earlier this year.

The popular 10-week course covers the entire winemaking process, from receiving grapes to packaging the final wine, and students are given winemaking and faults kits, the latter of which was specially designed by CCOVI, to make their own wine. Students in the upcoming instalment of the course will also be able to have their finished wines professionally tested by CCOVI's Analytical Services for the first time.

"Our first group of students told us they were looking for this type of feedback on their

wines, including analysis for pH and free SO<sub>2</sub>, and this is a valuable learning benefit that CCOVI is in the unique position to provide," said course instructor Steven Trussler.

Continuing Education Manager Barb Tatarnic said that thanks to its systematic approach, the course is applicable to a wide range of students looking for a foundation in the scientific concepts and practical applications of winemaking.

"The course has been popular with people looking for a stepping-stone to enter the wine industry in cellar, winemaking, retail or marketing positions, as well as with home winemakers and members of the general public looking to learn more about the winemaking process."

Stephen Valente, a sommelier from Montreal, said the flexibility of online learning combined with live weekly review sessions and course-tailored video content "created the sense of a small classroom" for him while taking the course remotely. The online interactions with other students, instructors and guest speakers also quickly became the "highlight of his week," he said.

Providing that sense of community in an online environment was critical to the success of the "purpose-built" course, Trussler said.

"You can't ignore the social aspect of learning when providing virtual education," he said. "We worked very hard to ensure it still had the feel of an in-person course and that our

community of learners were able to connect and learn together in a meaningful way each week."

Guest speakers, such as Dave Sheppard, retired winemaker at Flat Rock Cellars and former winemaker at Coyote's Run and Inniskillin wineries, also provided students with the opportunity to learn from top winemakers in the industry.

"It is very inspiring to see first-hand not only the passionate interest of students in the Foundations in Winemaking course, but also the quality of industry-relevant course material and instruction given by CCOVI experts," said Sheppard, who has 40 vintages under his belt. "The program continues to deliver the right tools for the next generation of wine producers to meet the needs of the industry today and well into the future."

Brock alumna Vanessa Agbonwaneten (BSc '15), who is the Assistant Winemaker at Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery, said she "jumped on the opportunity" to be a guest speaker in the course and share some of her practical experience in the industry.

Her advice to students who are now ready to practically apply their knowledge from the course to the winemaking process was to not get discouraged or overwhelmed with how much there is to know.

There will always be more to learn and improve upon, she said, but what's most important is to simply "enjoy the process."

## Continuing Education Courses

**Cider & Perry Production- Foundation (online)**  
January 12 – March 30 (12-week option)

**WSET Level 1 Award in Wine (online)**  
December 13 - January 9  
December 27 - January 23

**WSET Level 2 Award in Wine (online)**  
December 13 - January 16  
December 27 - January 30

**WSET Level 1 Award in Spirits (online)**  
January 10 – February 6

**WSET Level 2 Award in Spirits (online)**  
November 29 - January 2

Register at <https://brocku.ca/ccovi/continuing-education>

# Wine education took OEVC grad from Bordeaux to Brock

Niklas Christensen, who graduated alongside 10 other oenology and viticulture students this fall, first became interested in wine while studying horticulture and working in the industry in his hometown in Denmark.

After partnering with a group of likeminded wine-lovers to crowdsource the purchase of a Bordeaux vineyard a few years ago, he decided it was time to officially “chase the winemaking dream.”

He then returned home to Denmark, intending to come back to Niagara the following fall to complete his Certificate in Grape and Wine Technology at Brock.

Then the pandemic hit — rendering him unable to come to Niagara to study in-person.

“Although completing the program remotely isn’t a traditional route for our students, nor is it one that we plan to offer in the future, we were glad to find a creative solution that allowed Niklas to meet his academic goals during an unprecedented time,” said then-OEVI Academic Advisor Steven Trussler, who helped facilitate a remote-learning approach to the certificate.

Although he would have preferred to complete the program in person, Christensen said he gained a well-rounded education that will be of great benefit to him in his winemaking journey going forward.

“We got all the scientific background, all the microbiology and the chemistry, and then built it all into the winemaking process,” he said of his course learnings. “Wine process and equipment was the course where it



*Niklas Christensen*

really came together, and the teacher, Mark Pistor, was really a joy to listen to.”

With his first winery vintage under his belt and a new breadth of experience, Christensen looks forward to the future as he continues his winemaking career.

## PUBLICATIONS & BRIEFS

- Pickering, G.J.; Willwerth, J.; Botezatu, A.; Thibodeau, M. Prevalence and Management of Alkyl-Methoxypyrazines in a Changing Climate: Viticultural and Oenological Considerations. *Biomolecules* 2021, 11, 1521. <https://doi.org/10.3390/biom11101521>
- Belinda Kemp, Emma Snyder, Wendy McFadden-Smith, and Debbie Inglis. (2021). OUTREACH BRIEF: Tips for Managing Sour Rot in the Winery. <https://www.cgcn-rccv.ca/site/blog/2021/09/23/managing-sour-rot-in-the-winery>
- Belinda Kemp, Andreea Botezatu, Hannah Charnock, Debra Inglis, Richard Marchal, Gary Pickering, Fei Yang and James Willwerth. (2021). White winemaking in Cold Climates. In *White Wine Technology*. Chapter 26. Pp 339-350. 1st Edition. Editor Antonio Morata. Elsevier Publishing.
- Belinda Kemp, Matteo Marangon, Andrea Curioni, Elizabeth Waters and Richard Marchal. (2021). New Directions in Stabilization, Clarification, and Fining. In *Managing Wine Quality* 2nd Edition. Chapter 8. Editor Andrew Reynolds. Elsevier Publishing.
- Kahl, D., Lowery, D. T., Hart, M., Nyirfa, A., and Úrbez-Torres, J. R., 2021. Seasonal dynamics and optimal diagnostics of Grapevine red blotch virus in a British Columbian vineyard. *Canadian Journal of Plant Pathology* (In Press). <https://doi.org/10.1080/07060661.2021.1993346>

## PRESENTATIONS

- Úrbez-Torres, J.R. 2021. (In Spanish) Impacto y manejo de las virosis de la vid, la importancia de empezar sano y mantenerse sano, lecciones aprendidas desde Canadá. Oral presentation as invited Key note speaker at the XXIII International Congress and XLVIII Meeting of the Mexican Phytopathological Society. 10-12, 2021. Chihuahua, Mexico. Videoconference.

## SCIENCE COMMUNICATIONS

- November 2021: Podcast: Episode 02 - Annette Nassuth & Wine Grape Stomata. Gryphon CAST. <https://www.podbean.com/media/share/pb-xsjag-1113660>
- July 2021: Podcast: The Science of Sparkling Wine. The Big Vin Theory. UK. <https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/the-big-vin-theory/belinda-kemp-senior-staff-k5CQUpuXbga/>