

**BROCK UNIVERSITY
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Cool Climate Oenology & Viticulture Institute
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Brock grad strikes winemaking gold - again

An alumnus from Brock University's Oenology and Viticulture program has struck winemaking gold - again.

Derek Kontkanen, who finished a masters degree through Brock's Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) in 2005, is taking home the best dessert wine trophy from the International Wine and Spirits Competition in London, England next week. He is white winemaker at Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate in British Columbia.

It is the second year in a row that Kontkanen's Icewine has won the award.

"It shows that we make world class wines in Canada," he said. "Icewine is one of Canada's known wine products. It's something we know we can do very well."

Kontkanen attended Brock as an undergraduate student in the Oenology and Viticulture program from 1997 to 2002. As a graduate student from 2002 to 2005, his supervisor was Debbie Inglis, director of CCOVI and an Ontario grape and wine ambassador when she was named the province's 2010 Grape King. (The 2011 Grape King, Ed Hughes, is also a CCOVI grad.)

Kontkanen displayed "great work ethic and remarkable problem-solving skills" as a Brock student, Inglis said. His success is an example of how Canadian research makes our country competitive on a global stage.

"As a graduate student, Derek developed a method to improve Icewine quality through controlling yeast metabolism during fermentation," she said. "He now applies this technology as a commercial winemaker, and has won best dessert wine for his Riesling Icewine two years in a row."

Kontkanen credits his Brock education for giving him a solid foundation when it came to learning key chemical reactions in wine processes. It allowed him to branch out into what he calls "the science and art" of winemaking.

Winning two awards in a row was "quite a nice surprise," said Kontkanen. "Just winning one was nice. But winning two is a lot nicer."

For more info:

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