

Field Stone

FRUIT WINES



MEDIA KIT

1.0 FIELD STONE FRUIT WINES

The Quick Summary

In 2005 Field Stone Fruit Wines was the first business to be granted a license under the Government of Alberta's new estate winery regulations, allowing fruit growers to manufacture and sell fruit wines. Since July 1st, 2005, the Field Stone winery has been a popular destination drawing visitors and customers from around Alberta, Canada, and beyond.

All Field Stone fruit wines are vinified from 100-percent Alberta-grown fruit, at least 75- percent of which is grown on Marvin and Elaine Gill's farm, Bumbleberry Orchards, south of Strathmore, Alberta, using strict biological farming principles. Field Stone's original winemaker and consultant was Dominic Rivard, a noted world expert in fruit wines. Since 2006, the winery has been distinguished with over sixty national and international awards across all 10 varieties of fruit and dessert wines. Today, it is Alberta's first, largest, and most award-winning fruit winery.

Field Stone wines are available year round at the Calgary Farmers Market, provincial seasonal farmers markets, at more than 100 retailers across Alberta, and on the company's website www.fieldstonefruitwines.com.

The wines are available exclusively in Alberta at this time.

2.0 THE BACKSTORY: A LABOUR OF LOVE

Berries, Backaches, and the Birth of a Winery.



They say farming is bred in the bone. It's in the genetic soil underneath the fingernails. It's in the DNA. While crops may change, and processes evolve, a love of the land is passed down from generation to generation.

Farming in the Blood, Music in the Soul

That's certainly been the case with husband and wife team Marvin and Elaine Gill of Field Stone Fruit Wines and Bumbleberry Orchards. All four sets of grandparents homesteaded the Saskatchewan prairies over 100 years ago. Marvin grew up in Medicine Hat, and once a teenager, he actively participated in the farming operations on his grandfather's land in Saskatchewan. Meanwhile, Elaine invested countless hours with her parents and grandparents as

a girl picking the abundant berries of Northern Saskatchewan, processing them, and spending as much time as possible on her aunts' and uncles' farms.

It was a love of music, however, that brought them together. In 1977, Elaine was singing in a choir in Edmonton and Marvin was playing in the orchestra. They met at the break, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Despite having a sheet music business in downtown Calgary for 24 years, they both yearned for the country life. In 1998 they sold their acreage in Priddis and purchased a 1/4 section 10km outside of Strathmore, Alberta with the intention of starting a "hobby farm." They decided on berries. It soon took over their lives.

The Beginning of Bumbleberry Orchards

Marvin and Elaine, Marvin's brother Lynden, Elaine's sister Lorraine and her husband Glen Ellingson became partners in the business Bumbleberry Orchards Ltd.

The first spring, they planted the entire orchard from scratch. Over 20,000 raspberry canes (12 acres), an acre of strawberries, three acres of wild black cherries (chokecherries) and 30,000 saskatoon trees over 30 acres.

It took about four weeks, with Marvin's elderly parents driving tractor and truck, countless friends and family from as far away as Ontario arriving to prepare the plants and walk for miles behind the planter to ensure every little seedling was planted correctly.

They thought that was the hardest summer. It wasn't. The following year, in an effort to farm without chemicals, the five partners hand weeded the entire orchard. A 30 acre saskatoon field. Twice. It was backbreaking.

Bumbleberry Orchards quickly became a popular U-pick, as the fruit was high quality and organically grown. Customers returned every year, and the fresh berries were also sold at farmers markets.

A New Dream: Winemaking

By 2004, it became evident the Gill's yields had grown too large to sell the entire crop as fresh fruit. Fortunately, the Alberta Fruit Growers Association was trying to get an estate wine industry started in Alberta. Working with Alberta Agriculture and the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission, strict regulations passed in 2005 for an Alberta estate wine industry. These rules included fruit growers have a minimum of five acres of orchard land, needed to grow at least 75% of the fruit themselves for their wines, and only sell via farm-gate or on-site.

In April 2005, Bumbleberry Orchards applied for, and received, the first "Class E Manufacturer" license ever issued in Alberta for the estate wine industry. Field Stone Fruit Wines was born.

Expert Advice, Opening Day, and Awards Begin to Flow

Canadian fruit wine expert Dominic Rivard from Quebec was hired to help develop the first round of individual wines, and he has since become known around the world for his expertise. Dominic enjoyed working with Field Stone's high quality fruit but had never worked with chokecherries before, which presented a new challenge. A challenge that was rewarded, as the Field Stone Wild Black Cherry Wine (aka Chokecherry) won a silver medal its very first year at the North West Wine Summit and has since won gold at other major competitions.

Determined to open July 1st, 2005, another herculean effort from friends and family made it happen, especially during the final week. Frantically labeling the night before, Field Stone Fruit Wines opened with one fruit wine and four dessert wines for its official Opening Day, to eager customers and local media attention.

The wines won medals at international competitions starting in Field Stone's first year. The winery has added a new wine every year until reaching a total offering of ten: five fruit wines and five dessert wines. Every single of the ten wines have been national or international award-winners.

Expansion Boom: Regulation Changes Bring Field Stone to Market

In 2009, regulations were amended to allow estate wineries to sell at approved Farmers Markets, which saw Field Stone quickly move into the year-round Calgary Farmers' Market. By the summer of 2010, a handful of regional summer Farmers Markets as well as Calgary's new year-round Kingsland Farmers Market were added to the mix. Then in 2013, a breakthrough in regulation allowed Field Stone to approach private wine and liquor stores and sell to them directly from the winery.

Today, Field Stone Fruit Wines are available in over 100 wine and liquor stores across the province, including Co-Op Liquor Stores, Sobey's and Safeway, major Calgary independents like Willow Park Wines, as well as stores as far flung as Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Banff, Medicine Hat, and Jasper.

3.0 THE WINES

Five Fruits. Five Desserts. Pairings and Notes.

Field Stone offers five distinctive Fruit Wines ranging from off-dry to semi-sweet:

Black Currant Fruit Wine

This dry fruit wine is moderately oaked, creating an earthy but refined flavour, with a delightful berry finish. A drier wine-lover's delight.
(750 ml) Alcohol: 12.5% Serve chilled.

Cherry Fruit Wine

This off-dry fruit wine, vinted from Alberta's finest red cherry varieties, offers a tangy, but fruity flavour. Marries well with pork and game.
(750 ml) Alcohol: 12.5% Serve chilled.

Bumbleberry Fruit Wine

This medium-dry fruit wine boasts a subtle berry mix, capturing the prairie's best flavours – saskatoon berries, raspberries, strawberries and rhubarb - into a flavour all its own. Pairs well with festive meals, grilled burgers, pizza and ethnic foods.
(750 ml) Alcohol: 12.5% Serve chilled.

Raspberry Fruit Wine

This medium-dry fruit wine, with its slightly tart edge, provides a crisp, clean burst of summer all year around. Vinted from our finest raspberries, it makes an exceptional aperitif and is great with grilled chicken too.
(750 ml) Alcohol: 12.5% Serve chilled.

Strawberry-Rhubarb Fruit Wine

This slightly-sweeter fruit wine marries succulent strawberries with tangy rhubarb, offering a pleasing, fruity aroma with a drier finish. The perfect social wine.
(750 ml) Alcohol: 12.5% Serve chilled.

Less sweet than Ice Wine, our five luscious Dessert Wines are unique and flavourful:

Strawberry Dessert Wine

A clean and smooth, semi-sweet dessert wine, pairs well with creamy desserts and superb over French vanilla ice cream. Excellent for sipping “on the rocks” as an aperitif.
(375 ml) Alcohol: 14% Serve chilled.

Wild Black Cherry Dessert Wine (Fortified)

A unique-tasting dessert wine in a port style, aged in oak. The chokecherry’s rich flavour lends itself to most desserts and cheeses. Excellent on its own, or in a martini.
(375 ml) Alcohol: 16% Serve chilled.

Saskatoon Berry Dessert Wine (Fortified)

An intense and complex flavour, this slightly heavier dessert wine is for port-lovers everywhere. Pairs well with pastries, pates and stronger cheeses.
(375 ml) Alcohol: 16% Serve chilled.

Raspberry Dessert Wine (Fortified)

A premium dessert wine, luscious and velvety, pairs well with all things chocolate as well as cheesecakes and creamy desserts. The perfect companion to chocolate fondue.
(375 ml) Alcohol: 16% Serve chilled.

Black Currant Dessert Wine (Fortified)

A rich and fruity nectar with an aromatic bouquet and long-lasting finish. The world-loved flavour of cassis makes the perfect ending to special meals. Also excellent in champagne cocktails, Italian sodas and lemonades.
(375 ml) Alcohol: 16% Serve chilled.

4.0 FRUIT WINE FAQs

What is the history of fruit wine?

The history of cultivated grape wine is entwined with the history of fruit wine, as early as the Bronze Age and certainly by 3000 BC in Egypt, where it was well documented. Fruit wines have remained popular in Northern Europe, England, Normandy and now in many parts of Asia. Fruit wine production in Canada dates back to the 1800s, with commercial production commencing with the first winery license issued in the early 1900s. The Canadian fruit wine industry as we know it today is very new, yet there are now fruit wineries in ten Canadian provinces.

How is fruit wine made?

Fruit wines can be made from an array of different fruits – berries, plums, apples, even pineapple – and into a variety of wine styles, from table wines to dessert wines to sparkling. At Field Stone Fruit Wines, the fruit wines are made from 100% natural berries grown in Alberta. Typically, fruit wines are made from the crushed fruit. Flavours and aroma are extracted through special maceration and enzyme extraction, then the wine is adjusted to the right sweetness and acid level and naturally fermented with specific yeast strains to accentuate the true expression of the fruit.

The maturation period of fruit wine is much shorter than grape wine (one to six month, as opposed to eight to 24+ months.) Fruit wine producers also have the added benefit of multiple harvest periods (cherries ripening in July and apples in September,) and can also often use frozen product without sacrificing quality. The extended harvest and short fermentation period allows producers to maximize equipment and facilities.

At what temperature should fruit wine be served?

Fruit wines should be served cool, similar to a white grape wine. The ideal serving temperature would be between 7oC and 9oC. This helps to bring out the fresh fruit qualities of the wine. Keep them refrigerated.

How long do fruit wines last once opened?

Similar to regular grape wines, our fruit wines will last about three to four days once opened. Keep them refrigerated to increase that time. Fortified wines, due to their higher alcohol content, will last several weeks after opening if kept in your fridge. But they are so delicious, we'd be surprised if they lasted that long!

What is fortified wine?

A fortified wine is a dessert wine that is partially fermented (to about 5%) and then alcohol is added. This stops the fermentation and preserves the strong aromatic and fruit characteristics of the wine. It also keeps the wine on the sweet side and makes a wonderful wine to serve after dinner or to drink as an aperitif. Field Stone obtains its spirits from Alberta's Highwood Distillers.

Are fruit wines good for your health?

Fruit wines may be considered "healthier" than grape wines for your health because of their higher antioxidant levels. According to the National Institute on Aging in Maryland, wines made from Chokecherries (Wild Black Cherries) have approximately 4x the antioxidant levels than that of red wine. Black currants, saskatoons, blackberries, and raspberries all out perform the humble grape.

5.0 FARM FACTS

- Field Stone currently produces about 25,000 bottles of fruit wine and about 6000 bottles of dessert wine each year.
- There is almost a pound of fruit in each bottle of wine.
- Field Stone grows saskatoon berries, raspberries, chokecherries and strawberries on its own orchard. It buys additional cherries and rhubarb from neighbouring Strathmore farms and black currants from a Red Deer grower. Regulations allow for wineries to purchase no more than 25% of their fruit from third party growers.

- Field Stone's orchards are comprised of 30 acres of saskatoon berries, 15 acres of raspberries, and about 5 acres each of strawberries and chokecherries.
- Varieties include Northline and Smoky saskatoon berries, Chief and Double Delight raspberries, Western Red chokecherries, Kent and Seascaple strawberries.
- Field Stone's Bumbleberry Orchards follows biological farming principles, including:
 - Test and balance the soil.
 - Use fertilizers which are life-promoting and non-harmful.
 - Use herbicides in minimum amounts and only when absolutely necessary; do not use pesticides or fungicides.
 - Use organic matter to improve soil structure.
 - Use tillage to control weeds, as well as for aeration and drainage of the soil.
 - Feed the soil life-giving amendments of bacteria and nutrients.
- In a good year, Field Stone can harvest 30,000 pounds of saskatoon berries and 5,000 lbs of raspberries.
- Field Stone picks its entire yield each year and freezes it in a commercial freezer in Calgary. It is brought back over the winter, a few thousand pounds at a time, to start a new batch of wine. This allows Field Stone to harvest different berries at different months of the season, preserve them, and enhance the juiciness by freezing them first.
- Once a batch of wine is ready for bottling, a crew can process about 400-500 cases of 12 in a day. A bottling crew washes the bottles, fills the bottles (the machine will do 6 at a time), corks the bottles, and puts on a shrink cap. Labeling is done manually and requires great attention to detail.

6.0 THE CONSULTING WINEMAKER

Dominic Rivard

Field Stone Fruit Wines' premium products have been developed by Dominic Rivard, internationally-renowned and award-winning wine master, a recognized specialist in fruit wine, dessert wine, and ice wine production.

With over 20 years experience, for Dominic, wine is in the blood. Hailing from the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec, Canada, he is descended from a long lineage of farmers and winemakers whose ancestry can be traced to the cider-making Burgundy Region of France. By age 17, he was already passionate about experimenting with making wines from fruits, dandelions, concord grapes and rhubarb.

Dominic, a qualified sommelier with additional accreditation in winemaking and oenology, is a founding director of the Fruit Wines of Canada Association, which promotes fruit wines and the industry throughout Canada.

He has won hundreds of awards and medals in national and international wine competitions, including gold, silver, and bronze medals and "Best of Category" honours for Field Stone's own Alberta-based Winery.

Over the last decade, Dominic has been busy running numerous wine production and exportation projects for wineries in Canada, USA, Italy, Spain, Chile, Taiwan, Korea, Japan as well as China and India. He has been a speaker on the subject of winemaking and wine marketing at various symposiums throughout the world.

In the burgeoning Chinese wine industry, he has become a winemaker and shareholder of a fruit winery in Tianjin, wine judge with the China Fruit Wine Association, as well as Chief Winemaker and R&D Manager for Tonghua Winery, the fourth largest winery in Asia. Recently, Dominic has also been involved in running the wine production for a high quality tropical fruit winery in Thailand.

Based out of Nova Scotia, Dominic has taken up sustainable and organic fruit growing as well as his own winery and cidery, and continues to assist many wineries in their wine production on a consultancy basis.

Dominic is the author of “The Ultimate Fruit Winemaker’s Guide” and the dailyfruitwine.com blog. More details on Dominic are available at www.wineplanet.ca.

7.0 SELECTED RECENT AWARDS

Of the more than eighty awards won, the following are a selected sampling.

Black Currant Fruit Wine

Judge’s Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2015
Best in Class, Alberta Beverage Awards 2016
Judge’s Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2017
Gold Medal and Best of Category, North West Wine Summit 2017
Gold Medal, National Wine Awards of Canada 2017
Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2018

Cherry Fruit Wine

Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2012
Silver Medal, Canadian Wine Awards 2012
Judge’s Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2016
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2018
Best in Class, Alberta Beverage Awards 2018

Bumbleberry Fruit Wine:

Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2011
Judge’s Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2013
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2014
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2015
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2017

Raspberry Fruit Wine:

Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2012
Gold Medal (Mount Columbia Award), North West Wine Summit 2015
Judge's Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2016
Best in Class, Alberta Beverage Awards 2017
Judge's Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2018

Strawberry-Rhubarb Fruit Wine:

Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2011
Best Value Added Product, Alberta Food Awards 2013
Gold Medal and Best In Class, North West Wine Summit 2014
Best in Class, Alberta Beverage Awards 2014
Best in Class, Alberta Beverage Awards 2015
Gold Medal and Best in Class, North West Wine Summit 2018

Strawberry Dessert Wine:

Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2014
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2015
Silver Medal, All-Canadian Wine Competition 2015
Judge's Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2017

Saskatoon Berry Dessert Wine:

Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2009
Silver Medal, All-Canadian Wine Competition 2011
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2013
Gold Medal and Best of Category, North West Wine Summit 2017

Wild Black Cherry Dessert Wine:

Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2014
Gold Medal, All-Canadian Wine Competition 2014
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2015
Judge's Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2016
Judge's Selection, Alberta Beverage Awards 2017

Raspberry Dessert Wine:

Silver Medal, All-Canadian Wine Competition 2008
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2010
Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2014
Gold Medal and Best In Class, North West Wine Summit 2015
Silver Medal, North West Wine Summit 2017

Black Currant Dessert Wine:

Gold Medal (Mount Columbia Award, Best of Region and Best of Type)
North West Wine Summit 2010
Silver Medal, All-Canadian Wine Competition 2013
Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2013
Gold Medal, North West Wine Summit 2015

8.0 A COLOURFUL ANECDOTE OR TWO...

Hutterites and a Dog to the Rescue

Story #1

One favourite story is about the first summer there was too large a yield for the team to pick themselves. They thought they'd just hire some local teenagers and it would be a "piece of cake." It wasn't. In fact, it was a disaster.

No one wanted to do the difficult work. After a week of searching and soliciting, the partners stood in the middle of the driveway, forlorn, not knowing what to do. The beautiful berries, and their first great crop of raspberries, were falling on the ground.

As the partners stood there, practically in tears, a white truck turned off the Highway and into the drive, pulling up right beside them. A Hutterite man slowly rolled down the window and said, "We were just wondering if you people needed any help with your picking?"

The team almost fell to their knees in gratitude. The next day a crew of 20 arrived bright and early and picked all the raspberries, led by Sam Waldner and wife Rebecca from the Stahlville Colony.

Since that day, the Colony has been Field Stone's "go-to" Colony for anything they need -- helping with planting, weeding, picking, bottling and anything else that needs doing. Cited as being helpful, hard-working, and kind people, the Gills credit them as lifesavers. "We could never have continued in this business without the Stahlville Colony at our back."

Story #2

One sunny day in June, Global TV Calgary made the journey out to Strathmore to cover a story about Field Stone's Black Currant Dessert Wine winning Best of Class at the North West Wine Summit. While capturing the interviews and usual shots of the winery, owners, and crops, an unexpected ambassador upstaged everyone. Tessa, the petite sheltie and official 'winery dog' who had been a popular hit amongst visitors over the years, had chosen this day to shine.

Tessa was at her best, riding high on the tractor, getting bees out of the way for the cameraman, and in general, posing and presenting her best to camera. Global TV became enamored with Tessa, playing up her story more than the Field Stone wine awards. The Gills don't mind, saying that had inquiries for months afterward about Tessa. One offer was even to be Tessa's agent. Tessa graciously declined; she was far too busy.

9.0 MEDIA CONTACTS

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(interview, photos and video available upon request)

See Shaw's "Farm Fresh" video segment about Field Stone on www.fieldstonefruitwines.com.

For more information on wines, locations, and to purchase online, visit www.fieldstonefruitwines.com.

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