



From LEED to Certified Organic Southbrook Demonstrates its Commitment to the Environment

Niagara-on-the-Lake (Sunday, September 7, 2008): Canadian winemaker Ann Sperling announced today that Southbrook Vineyards in Niagara-on-the-Lake has been granted OC/PRO Canada organic certification and will be using its certified organic grapes in the 2008 vintage.

"Getting certification from OC/PRO Canada is an exciting milestone for us," said Sperling, director of Winemaking and Viticulture at Southbrook Vineyards. "OC/PRO is Canada's foremost national certifier of organic food products. Southbrook Vineyards has an enduring commitment to producing great wines with a sense of place, and we believe that organic and biodynamic grape-growing are essential to that goal." Sperling continued, "This certification demonstrates our commitment in a provable, measurable way. We are serious about this, and we've submitted ourselves to an outside evaluation as one way to prove it."

Sperling, a critically-acclaimed winemaker for over two decades, made the announcement at the annual Feast of Fields celebration, taking place this year at the Everdale Organic Farm and Environmental Learning Centre near Hillsburgh, Ontario. Feast of Fields brings together chefs, farmers and consumers to raise awareness about organic food and sustainable agriculture. Sperling was invited as a guest speaker, along with noted Chef Michael Stadtländer of Eigensinn Farm, who provided the keynote address as hundreds of participants enjoyed an organic feast prepared by local chefs, vintners and brewers.

Bill and Marilyn Redelmeier, co-owners of Southbrook Vineyards, were also on hand for Sunday's announcement. "Our love of wine, commitment to the earth and to sustainable business practices govern all our decision making," said Bill Redelmeier. "We strive to sit lightly on the land. It is fitting to celebrate our organic certification at Feast of Fields, an event we have long supported and even hosted 15 years ago at our former Richmond Hill location."

From Bovines to Grape Vines

From a roadside picnic table in Richmond Hill, the Redelmeiers built a family cattle farm into a thriving market and then winery through the 1980s and 1990s. To evolve their business, they purchased 74 acres in Niagara-on-the-Lake in December 2005, making a commitment to the Green Belt and to becoming organic grape growers. They expanded their holdings to 150 acres in the spring of 2008. Southbrook Vineyards opened in Niagara-on-the-Lake on the Summer Solstice, in June 2008.

LEED-ership

Southbrook's harmonious relationship to the land is passionately expressed in every part of its operation, and extends to its hospitality pavilion, designed by world-renowned Canadian architect Jack Diamond to celebrate the vineyard that surrounds it. Southbrook's prime location at the gateway to Niagara-on-the-Lake wine country provides a spectacular showcase for the eye-catching pavilion that was designed to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards. The building's defining element is a striking 200-meter-long wall that runs parallel to the rows of vines and structurally makes possible floor-to-ceiling glass on three sides of the building. The glass also enhances the effect that the roof "floats," visually communicating Southbrook's desire to minimize its impact on the land.

Pursuing Demeter Certification

To continue the pursuit of wine excellence, Southbrook is practicing biodynamic techniques in the vineyard, and is currently under review for Demeter, the certifying organization for biodynamic farming. Biodynamic agriculture holds that soil, plants and animals form a self-nourishing system in tandem with lunar movement patterns. Southbrook's team was drawn to these methods as a way to more fully express the vineyard's character in their flagship wines - Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Chardonnay. "We are confident that this holistic path is worth pursuing," said Sperling on Sunday. "We look forward to producing our most extraordinary wine this year -- and in the years ahead."

Southbrook Vineyards is located at 581 Niagara Stone Road, Niagara-on-the-Lake. Tel: 905.641.2548. www.southbrook.com. The Tasting Room is open daily from 10 am to 5 pm.

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Photography available: vineyard – aerial, vines, harvest; pavilion – day/night, exteriors, interiors; winemaker and owners; product shots.

To request jpeg photos and additional information, such as vineyard practices, the Diamond + Schmitt Architects' project review, and a complete list of wines, contact:

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