



Southbrook Vineyards is First Canadian Winery to Achieve Biodynamic Certification

Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario (November 7, 2008): Southbrook Vineyards has become the first winery in Canada to have its vineyard certified by Demeter, the international body that oversees biodynamic agriculture.

“There’s one thing we know for sure,” said Ann Sperling, director of Winemaking and Viticulture, “amazing, vibrant wines come from grapes that are raised biodynamically. And the drive behind all our efforts at Southbrook is to make amazing wine.” Sperling added, “I’m proud that securing Demeter certification places Southbrook in the ranks of fine winemakers around the world who recognize the tremendous impact that biodynamic viticulture has on the creation of great wine. Just to be in the company of such outstanding wineries as Chapoutier, Domaine Leflaive, Zind-Humbrecht and Coulée de Serrant is an honour and a privilege.”

Biodynamics emphasizes the balance and interrelationship of a farm’s soil, plants and animals. It is based on a series of lectures presented by philosopher and educator Rudolph Steiner in 1924. “Steiner’s theories are still innovative, despite how long they have been around,” Sperling noted. “Biodynamics says the farm should be self-sustaining; an entire ‘living system’. The resulting practices are about quality – quality in the bottle *and* quality of life.”

Sperling credits Marilyn and Bill Redelmeier, owners of Southbrook Vineyards, for daring to follow a holistic path and for going to unprecedented lengths for a Canadian winery by committing to biodynamic agriculture. “We strive to sit lightly on the land,” said Bill Redelmeier. “Our team at Southbrook was drawn to biodynamics as a way to more fully express the vineyard’s character in our wines. And we underwent the certification process as a way to authenticate our commitment to sustainable practices.”

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Demeter certification for Southbrook Vineyards follows on the heels of its certification by Pro-Cert Canada, Canada's foremost certifier of organic food products. Obtaining organic certification for the vineyard is a prerequisite for Demeter certification. Southbrook's 2008 estate-grown wines contain certified organic and certified Demeter grapes, and the winery anticipates releasing the first of these wines in the early summer of next year.

FROM BOVINES TO GRAPE VINES

The Redelmeiers started their first winery in Richmond Hill in 1991, in century-old barns that had once been Bill's family's cattle farm. They took the step to vineyard stewardship in December 2005, with the purchase of 74 acres in the Green Belt in Niagara-on-the-Lake. They expanded their holdings to 150 acres in the spring of 2008. The vineyard is currently producing Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Chardonnay.

Southbrook's harmonious relationship to the land is passionately expressed in every part of its operation, including its hospitality pavilion designed by world-renowned Canadian architect Jack Diamond to meet LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Gold standards. This new Niagara landmark opened to the public in June 2008.

THE GOAL

Demeter certification is another step in a continuous process to produce the best wine in a sustainable manner. For Sperling, who has been exploring biodynamic practices for eight years, the certification is an important milestone, but it has never been an end in itself. "Our goal at Southbrook is to make outstanding wine," she said, "and from the outset, we've witnessed the wonderful results that biodynamics has had on our wines. It's startling – the vitality of these wines gives a whole new dimension!"

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