

TAKE A PEEK AT DENVER

Plenty of public art on display, T2

TRAVEL



> WINE LOVERS' ESCAPE

Pelee Island: Lake Erie's hidden gem

CAROLYN EVANS HAMMOND
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

There's something sexy about an emerging wine region filled with unsung wineries making stellar juice. This is exactly what Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island are about. But you need to know where to go.

Arrive late morning at Iron Kettle B&B and drop your overnight bags. This restored Victorian home from 1876 offers five private rooms with ensuites and an in-house chef with a Michelin-starred track record eager to cook a five-course dinner to suit your tastes. The risotto is excellent.

The dinner, overnight stay and breakfast is \$225 for you and a guest: not much more than dinner with wine at the Keg in Toronto.

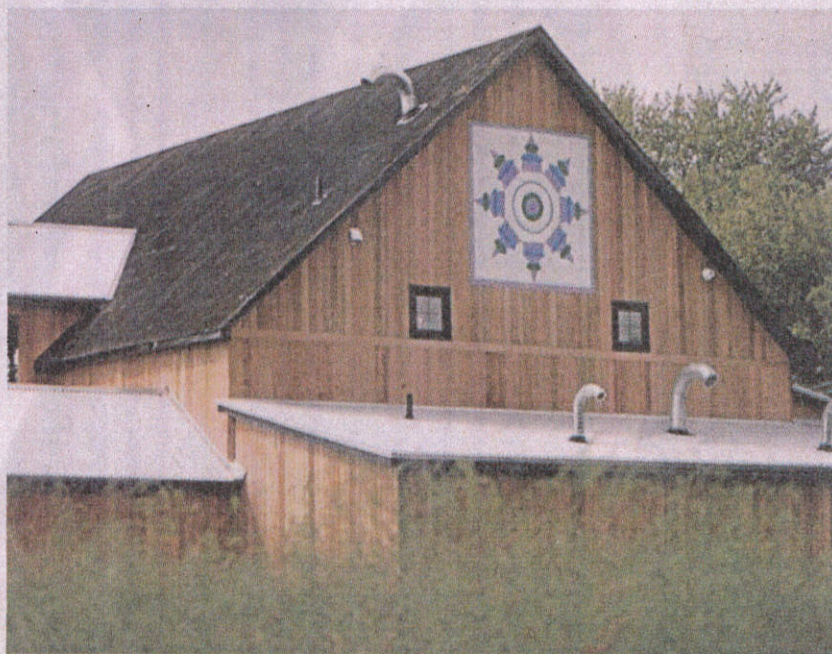
After freshening up, head south for lunch at Oxley Estate Winery. Order the freshwater yellow perch, a local specialty. The delicate fish is breaded, fried and

served with homemade tartar sauce, hand-cut fries and coleslaw. Perfect with a glass of 2014 Wowza White, which is racy and dry with a citric zip.

After lunch, sample a few other wines at the tasting bar. The electric 2013 Riesling and cherry-beetroot-scented 2013 Pinot Noir are both generously fruited, seamless and resonant. Buy a few bottles to take with you; local treasures make such great gifts.

Next, visit Muscedere Vineyards, pronounced moo-SHED-er-ray. Taste the dark and lovely 2012 Pinot Noir — all cranberry, chocolate, violet and herbs — which is almost certainly one of the best wines being produced in the region today.

WINERIES continued on T4



OXLEY ESTATE WINERY

Freshwater yellow perch is a specialty served at Oxley Estate Winery's wine garden.



IRON KETTLE B&B PHOTOS

Iron Kettle B&B is a restored 1876 Victorian home with five private rooms.

Taste your way through Ontario's new wine region

WINERIES from T1

Also sample the crushed velvet 2011 Cabernet Sauvignon, which is saturated and savory, as well as the 2011 Meritage, a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc with a mesmerizing effect. Buy a bottle; you'll want to uncork one with dinner that night.

Head back to Iron Kettle B&B. Have a dip in the outdoor pool and hot tub. Then, let Chef Ben Leblanc cook for you; you may recognize him from his appearance on the Food Network's *Chopped Canada*. Five courses, paired with a bottle from Muscedere Vineyards. Perfection.

After breakfast, pack up and drive to Pelee Island Winery, which feels both polished and welcoming. The charm of this winery is in the largest selection of delicious and consistent sub-\$15 bottles in Ontario. And happily, many of its labels are widely available at the LCBO. Discover some new go-to bottles. Don't miss the 2013 Pelee Island Unoaked Chardonnay VQA, with its lashings of citrus and stone fruit shot through with refreshing acidity. The expressive 2013 Lighthouse Cabernet Franc VQA and elegant 2012 Pelee Island Pinot Noir VQA are winners.



Iron Kettle has an in-house chef with Michelin-starred credentials.

The Pelee Island Winery's one-hour tour (\$5) includes a stroll through the barrel cellar and tank room, a look at the bottling line and a structured tasting and is worth your time. Consider taking that tour before driving back to Muscedere Vineyards for one of their riveting reds and a wood-fired pizza on their patio before heading home.

Carolyn Evans Hammond is a Toronto-based wine writer, a London-trained sommelier and author.

The cost of visits to wineries, restaurants and lodgings were covered by Wine Country Ontario.