

**REIBC & AIC-BC**  
**Valuing Diversity Conference**  
**- Mission Hill Family Estate Tour –**  
**May 12, 2018**



I was fortunate to attend the Mission Hill Family Wine tour on the morning of Saturday May 12. The event was described as an educational tour on “how to value a winery”, but it became so much more. The bus picked 12 of us up from the Delta Grand Marriott in Kelowna, BC at 9 am. Sean Hughes of Kent MacPherson Appraisals began the tour en-route by giving us a background of wine country in the Okanagan. Sean explained the history of how wine came to the Okanagan, and how it has transformed the landscape between the 49<sup>th</sup> to 50<sup>th</sup> parallel. Our bus had a wide range of attendees including commercial and residential appraisers, managers and consultants, each of us eager to enjoy the venue, the wine and learn about this burgeoning industry.

When we arrived at Mission Hill, a full 30 minutes before it opened to the public, we were greeted by Graham Nordin, Director of Wine Experience. Graham welcomed us with a chilled glass of their new Rosé Reserve. While we enjoyed this light fruity summer treat, he explained the history of how the Mission Hill Family Estate was established in 1966 but achieved it’s prime Okanagan location in 1981. The winery itself was rebuilt in 1996 and is now a beautiful landscape of open vineyards, lawns, majestic views, restaurants along with an amphitheatre and a 12-storey bell tower! Sean spoke of the challenges of growing grapes in the region, with varied terrain astride the chain of lakes throughout the Okanagan and high freeze risk at higher elevations. As a consultant in the valuation of winery estates and vineyards, Sean explained there are many unique aspects to this type of valuation. These include unique terroir throughout the Okanagan, varied suitability for different grape varieties, dramatically varied agricultural capability, and varying winery models. The winery and vineyard industry compete with a growing soft fruit industry and historic ranching uses, some of which require remediation before conversion to vineyard, especially with an increasing commitment to organic farming.





We ventured into volcanic caves beneath the winery, the “cellar”, where over 800 barrels are stored in cool temperatures while the wine ages. Graham explained the cellar is carved into the lava rock and each barrel is carefully monitored and filled to ensure proper aging. We were fortunate to experience a barrel tasting from a new single varietal wine that has yet to be released by Mission Hill.

After this, we ventured to the main tasting room where Graham and Sean explained the history of the Mission Hill Family Estate, the scope of their real estate holdings

and the impact to their winery model, as well as emerging trends in the market. We discussed recent winery transactions that demonstrated the uniqueness of the market and the influence of varying winery models.

In the retail tasting room, Graham granted us two additional treats. We were given pours of both the 2016 Sauvignon Blanc Reserve as well as the 2014 Crosswinds Syrah. Both were lovely wines with rich flavours and finish. While enjoying these, Sean and Graham explained the impact of farming practices, harvest, and wine making in the production of premium wines.

After purchasing a few bottles of our favorite wine, we boarded the bus for our trip back to the Conference. On the ride back, Sean pointed out a number of new projects underway in the Okanagan, some of which are pushing the limits of historic boundaries. Only time will tell whether these are new benchmarks, or short-lived ventures.



Each of the twelve members on this tour were entertained and educated by the presenters. We all came away with knowledge of the wine industry, the history of the wine community, the Mission Hill Family Estate, as well as an education on the process to value agricultural lands used in the wine industry. The wine we brought home was icing on the cake!



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