

CKBD Radio 600AM

Jurgen Gothe's "Vancouver Flavours"

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Sitting here, on the eve of the annual Sun Peaks Ice Wine Festival (it's on this weekend, up the hill from Kamloops by about an hour), I'm thinking ice and sweet and all those good things and as I look around I see that just about every winery in the Okanagan Valley is doing one – ice wine – and why not? If you've got grapes that are ripe and frost in the forecast, and a gambler's instinct – go ahead and shoot for the moon. Get that stuff in a bottle; sell it for fifty bucks a half, the market is booming.

Others are doing "icy" things – Elephant Island, the fabulous fruit winery near Naramata, has a Fuji apple iced wine; made differently from the grape kind but still concentrating natural sweetness into a nectar. And the newly formed Raven Ridge Cidery, in Kelowna, has a vintage-dated Fuji Iced Cider on the go. It's the work of visionary winemaker Roger Wong, he of the fantastic Focus Riesling I've been raving about, here and anywhere I can talk or write in public, so we know it's gotta be good.

It's better than good; it's sensational. Raven Ridge puts it up in a 375 ml dark bottle, so it even looks like an ice wine, and finishes it with a cork, not a crown cap (Roger reserves beer caps for his wine!). New one on me, this: a dessert cider. Actually, cider is a bit of a misnomer, since it's really more like an apple-wine: sweet, rich, lovely, but no cider carbonation. You can pour it over ice cream. You can sip it cool and neat as a dessert, even an aperitif. It's the slow fermentation that gives it its wonderful taste.

How do you get some? You could ask your neighbourhood private wine store, or your friends in Kelowna to pop out to the Cidery and get you some. Or, get in touch with Raven Ridge direct, via the web: www.k-l-o.com. Expect to pay \$29.95 for a 375 ml bottle. Expect to love it. Raven Ridge Fuji (apple) Iced Cider, they've got Braeburn and Granny Smith, too. Great new treat and you know what? You deserve it. With all the best of Vancouver Flavours for 600 AM, I'm Jurgen Gothe. Cheers.