

Sue-Ann E. Staff

From a long Staff family background in viticulture spanning five generations in the Niagara Region encompassing two Grape King titles (1967 - grandfather Lavelle Staff; 1996 - father Howard Staff), a strong influence in the field of viticulture was present. Hence, at the age of 16, Sue-Ann became interested in *oenology*, the study of wine.

A personal and career highlight was awarded May 10, 2002 at the Ontario Wine Awards when she was proclaimed “**Winemaker of the Year**” due to her success at national and international wine competitions, breath and consistency of winemaking and contribution to the wine industry. Sue-Ann was the first female, and youngest ever, to receive such distinction.

To add to this, the International Wine and Spirits Awards of London, England has two times short-listed Sue-Ann as one of the top “**Women in Wine**” in the world.

Sue-Ann has captured the interest of the media. Significant articles include:

- “It’s A Living” *CBC Television* February 2000;
- “Cool Career” *Flare Magazine* December 1999; and
- “People and Passion” *Canadian Living Magazine* June 1999.

You also may have seen her on the cover of *Canadian Fruitgrower* (February 1994), *Wine Regions of Ontario* (Summer Edition 2004) or *Niagara Life Magazine* (January 2007).

The global wine community has been part of Miss Staff’s vision as well by not only seeking international experience and training, she has visited and worked in France, Germany, Andorra, Australia and South Africa. She represented Canada through the Canadian Trade Organization in Taipei, Taiwan training the Taiwanese press with regards to fraudulent Icewine.

However, it is the awards for the wines she has crafted that speak volumes to her winemaking passion and talent. In 12 short years of winemaking, 450 awards have been won at national and international wine competitions, more than most winemakers receive throughout a lifetime career. And for wines of every style too. Highlights are included on the following pages within the CV.

Only a strong educational background can lay the foundation for such achievements. During her Honors Horticulture and Biotechnology studies at the University of Guelph OAC ’94 (B.Sc.(Agr.)), she became the first Canadian to achieve the “**Top Undergraduate Research Paper**” awarded by the American Society for Horticultural Science for a paper titled “FRUIT ZONE LEAF REMOVAL INFLUENCES VEGETATIVE, YIELD, DISEASE, FRUIT COMPOSITION AND WINE SENSORY ATTRIBUTES OF VITIS VINIFERA L. “OPTIMA” AND “CABERNET FRANC”” published by the *Canadian Journal of Plant Science* (Jan. 1997). In addition, she became the first Canadian elected President of the Association of Collegiate Branches for the American Society for Horticultural Science involving all university horticulture clubs across North America.

A Graduate Degree in Oenology (1996) attained from the University of Adelaide, South Australia capped the formal instruction in winemaking. With experience from several other wineries including a trainee winemaking position with Simon Gilbert Wine Services in the Upper Hunter Valley, Australia, Miss Staff commenced making wine in Niagara, Canada.

Having grown up on Canada's largest privately owned vineyard, it is the relationship between the land and the wine that is the most intriguing and therefore influencing Sue-Ann winemaking style. Every parcel within a vineyard has its' own personality that can be potentially expressed in the wine if proper care and attention is taken to the winemaking and operations that occur. The result of such detail is award-winning wines with great varietal character and high consumer appeal.

It is this dedication she brings to grape growing and winemaking today. Sue-Ann opened her own winery, Sue-Ann Staff Estate Winery, on her family's 200 year old estate in Jordan in September 2009. Additionally, she is employed as Consulting Winemaker to John Howard's "Megalomaniac" winery located in Vineland, ON and liaison to its sister property Chateau la Confession in St.Emilion Bordeaux. Additionally, she teaches two courses at Niagara College to the Post Graduate Wine Business Management Program in her spare time ... if any.

Sue-Ann's interests do not only extend to winemaking as she has started several wineries, been involved with their design, concepts and markets but also finds time for flying, figure skating, community events, golf and family. Sue-Ann is available for public speaking with appropriate advance notice and enjoys great food, lovely friends and outstanding wine – the best parts of life.