



Good to Know



**GREEN IS THE NEW BLACK**

## Ultra Eco-Stylish

This gem in Niagara wine country strikes the all important balance between style and sustainability, with the greenest winery in Canada, great wines and a chic space that sets an elite and eco-conscious tone for high-end groups.

*by Bridget Fabi*

One of the more recent additions to the Canadian wine industry is not only garnering international accolades for progressive practices in viticulture and sustainability, it's also proving to be an incredibly chic spot to hob-knob.

Established in 2000, Niagara-on-the-Lake's Stratus Wines made history as North America's first LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified winery, and strives to use as many environmentally sustainable materials and processes as →



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possible. Opting against the use of herbicides, hand-picking grapes and employing a gravity-flow system rather than traditional electric pumps are examples of their green modus operandi. A compost, staff bike lockers and a company Prius round out this winery's commitment to treading lightly on the earth.

Stratus was recently in good company when green website Treehugger.com named it one of five greenest wineries in the world, sharing the accolades with California heavyweights such as Parducci Wine Cellars in Mendocino; Navarro Vineyards in Philo; Rodney Strong Vineyards in Healdsburg; and Chateau Val Joanis in Provence, France.

Officially opening its doors to the public in June 2005, the boutique-ish interiors celebrate all that is contemporary and natural, obvious from the countless regional and international design awards accumulating on the walls. Constructed of wood, marble, terrazzo and glass, the hip neutral backdrop is the ideal setting to host any upscale meeting or soiree. Three stylish tasting rooms accommodate 10 to 40 seated guests, while the largest space can host mingling parties of up to 100 plus additional outdoor options on the terrace and vineyard for up to 150.

And, ah, the wines. This VQA designated vintner believes strongly in the art of blending, referred to as assemblage. Meticulously crafted by award-winning winemaker, J.L. Groux, the critically acclaimed signature wines, Stratus Red and Straus White, are diverse blends of multiple grape varieties with distinctive, complex palettes that are highly versatile and food-friendly,

perfect for pairing with any dish. Stratus' gastronomic offerings include several comprehensive food and wine tasting seminars such as *Cheese @ Stratus* complete with personal Fromager, to developing delectable multi-course menus with world-class culinarians such as chef, Stephen Treadwell of Farm to Table Cuisine.

Also on the menu are their highly regarded ice wines, Cabernet Franc, Rieslings and Gewürztraminer.

For corporate gifts that are high-end and eco-conscious, select from the Stratus gift card available in any denomination; stylishly packaged collections of one, two, three and six wines starting at \$39; two and six bottle wooden-box collections embossed with a personalized or corporate logo from \$107; limited edition magnums of Stratus signature wines in a hand-crafted presentation box; and for serious wine enthusiasts—bottles autographed by the winemaker himself. \* [stratuswinery.com](http://stratuswinery.com)



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