

Gold Digger Cellars

ABOUT US

Gold Digger Cellars is a hidden treasure located in Oroville, Washington, a turn of the century gold mining town in Washington State's Okanogan Valley, just five miles south of the Canadian Border on U.S. Highway #97 and minutes from British Columbia's renowned Okanogan Valley wine region. Due to the northern location, the winery is truly unique to the State of Washington. The wines are similar in style to the wines found in the Canadian Okanogan Valley versus the wine styles in other parts of Washington State. Presently, Gold Digger Cellars is the only winery on the U.S. side of the Okanogan Valley, however over fifty British Columbia wineries operate within 100 miles of Oroville, and many of those are within a half hour drive.

The origin of the winery name stems from the town of Oroville. "Oro" is the Spanish word for gold and was the original name of the town. In 1938 a local fruit company, United Growers, needed a name for their fruit label. Because of the town's gold mining history, "Gold Digger" was an appropriate name for the apple label, and the company adopted this name. Staying with the gold mining theme of the town, the name was carried over to the winery. Gold Digger Cellars owns 18 acres of estate vineyards in the Okanogan Valley and purchases grapes from five or six select growers in the area. Oroville's current day treasures are the vineyards tucked away on the hillsides of the fruitful valley and the handcrafted wines with unique flavors and characteristics of the Okanogan Valley.

Pinning down the characteristics of the Okanogan Valley wine region involves taking a look at the history of the landscape. Hints of sage are apparent in the wine, as it was the native species of this valley for centuries. In the last century, pear, apple, cherry, and peach orchards have taken over the landscape and flavors of these clean crisp fruits come forth in our wines. Mineral and steely characteristics mirror the trademark soil profile, and exhibit an old-world style.

Gold Digger Cellars is a growing winery dedicated to producing handcrafted quality wines. From years of experience in producing premium fruit in the Okanogan Valley, the growers take pride in their local vineyards where 100% of the grapes are grown. The grower and the winemaker carefully monitor each vineyard to ensure the quality of the grapes, and all of the grapes are hand picked, adding to the premium quality of the wine. Gold Digger Cellars is committed to producing exceptional wines distinctive to the premier Okanogan Valley grape growing region.

WINEMAKER

Gold Digger Cellars Winemaker, Michael P. Buckmiller wears many hats as he oversees the vineyards from the initial plantings to crush, production, and bottling. Mike has worked in the horticulture industry since 1975 and has been a Commercial Agricultural Consultant since 1996. Born and raised in the Okanogan Valley, he has extensive knowledge of the growing region and terroir. Mike's introduction to the wine business started with a concept that grew little by little. His enthusiasm and commitment in developing vineyards with varieties well suited for the region and a premier winery deepened with every piece of research. The concept became a reality in the fall of 2000, as the grapes ripened and barrels rolled through the door. To further his knowledge of viticulture and enology, Mike attended courses at University of California, Davis. Mike describes his mission for the wines; "I want to produce white wines that are light, crisp, and food friendly whether you are drinking them on the patio with friends or having them with dinner. The goal for our red wines is to make them enjoyable today but also make a wine that will age well into the future if one has the notion to cellar." His passion comes forth

in the unique expression of the grape varietals grown in the region and the delicate structure of fruit and racy acidity that defines Okanogan Valley wines.

VINEYARDS AND CLIMATE

The Okanogan Valley lends itself to ideal growing conditions for the vineyards due to the hot, arid, desert-like climate. The soil and climate in Oroville are similar to those in the Southern BC wine region. The vineyards, Canadian and American, are planted a half-mile apart and are both at the edges of Lake Osoyoos. The mountains that border the narrow valley and lakes have a significant influence, as they trap warmer temperatures from the lake in the winter and spring and provide cooler nighttime temperatures in the summer and fall. The Okanogan Valley's winter climate is substantially different from many regions in the state and escapes losing vines due to devastating winter temperatures. This past winter (2004), the Okanogan Valley saw lows of -1°F to -5°F , unlike some of the other regions in Washington State, which endured lows of -15°F to -20°F .

The vineyards are exclusively located in Washington State's Northern Okanogan Valley. They are planted on the sandy benches that were covered with desert sagebrush and on the sunny southeast facing slopes amongst the fruit orchards where miles of lake water run, and the vineyards sit at the edges of beautiful Lake Osoyoos. Rocky desert sage mountains border the narrow valley, and the sides rise rapidly in a series of terraces with steep ridges and uplands bordering both sides.

The proximity of the lake with the mountains has a significant influence on the unique climate of warm summer days and cool fall nights. The combination of dry air, clear skies and cool breezes contribute to the valley's high light intensity, resulting in high annual heat units and good day to night temperature variations. All of these elements along with well drained, gravelly, sandy loam soil give way to ideal growing conditions for the grapes to develop complex flavors, acidity, and exceptional character. These distinct regional growing conditions add to the quality of wines produced by Gold Digger Cellars.