



## Derek Kontkanen

*Winemaker, Inniskillin Okanagan Estate*

Derek Kontkanen's love of science and his parents' penchant for fine wine combined to spark his interest in winemaking at an early age.

Born and raised in a small southern Ontario town called Wyebridge, Kontkanen always enjoyed spending time in the rolling countryside surrounding his rural home. This, combined with his fascination with biology and chemistry, fuelled his desire to learn the art of winemaking.

In 1997, Kontkanen moved to St. Catharines to complete an Honours Bachelor of Science degree at the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute (CCOVI) at Brock University, the only program of its kind in Canada. Spending his summers working as a vineyard assistant at Inniskillin's Niagara Winery, he became increasingly interested in viticulture as well as winemaking, which solidified his decision to undertake graduate studies in this field. During his university years, Kontkanen worked as a translator for an online French wine journal and also as a teaching assistant. With this strong educational background and well-honed research abilities, Kontkanen has gone on to publish in wine-related scientific journals and participate in various seminars.

In the midst of completing his graduate program, Kontkanen's dream of being a winemaker became reality when he was offered the assistant winemaker position at Jackson-Triggs Okanagan Estate in July 2004. He trained with the guidance of world-renowned winemaker Bruce Nicholson and was promoted to winemaker in 2007. In 2014, Kontkanen was promoted to Winemaker at Inniskillin where he manages winemaking for all varietals crafted for Inniskillin Okanagan Estate.

Kontkanen says his philosophy is to make the best wine possible, combining the latest technology and traditional methods while respecting the varietal characteristics of the fruit he is given to work with.

Kontkanen's relaxed personality and keen sense of humour is a welcome addition to the Inniskillin team. An avid outdoor enthusiast, Kontkanen enjoys the beautiful, sunny BC weather and in his downtime, enjoys skiing and golfing.

