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MARK DeWOLF: Fox Harb'r showcases a taste of Canada

Fox Harb'r Resort is Showcasing the Best of Nova Scotia and Canadian Wine

Mark DeWolf - Food critic | Posted: 21 hours ago | Updated: 7 hours ago | 4 Min Read



Bram Bolwijn, is the head sommelier of Iconic Wineries of British Columbia, a group of prestigious estates located in prime positions in British Columbia wine country. - Contributed

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Nestled along the shores of the Northumberland Strait, Fox Harb'r Resort sprawls across a picturesque landscape, boasting an award-winning championship golf course, a private marina, and a spa.

Visitors can choose from a range of accommodations, from executive suites to townhomes with views overlooking the strait.

Yet for all the attention the golf course receives, one element of the experience that should not get overlooked is the food, drink, and hospitality.



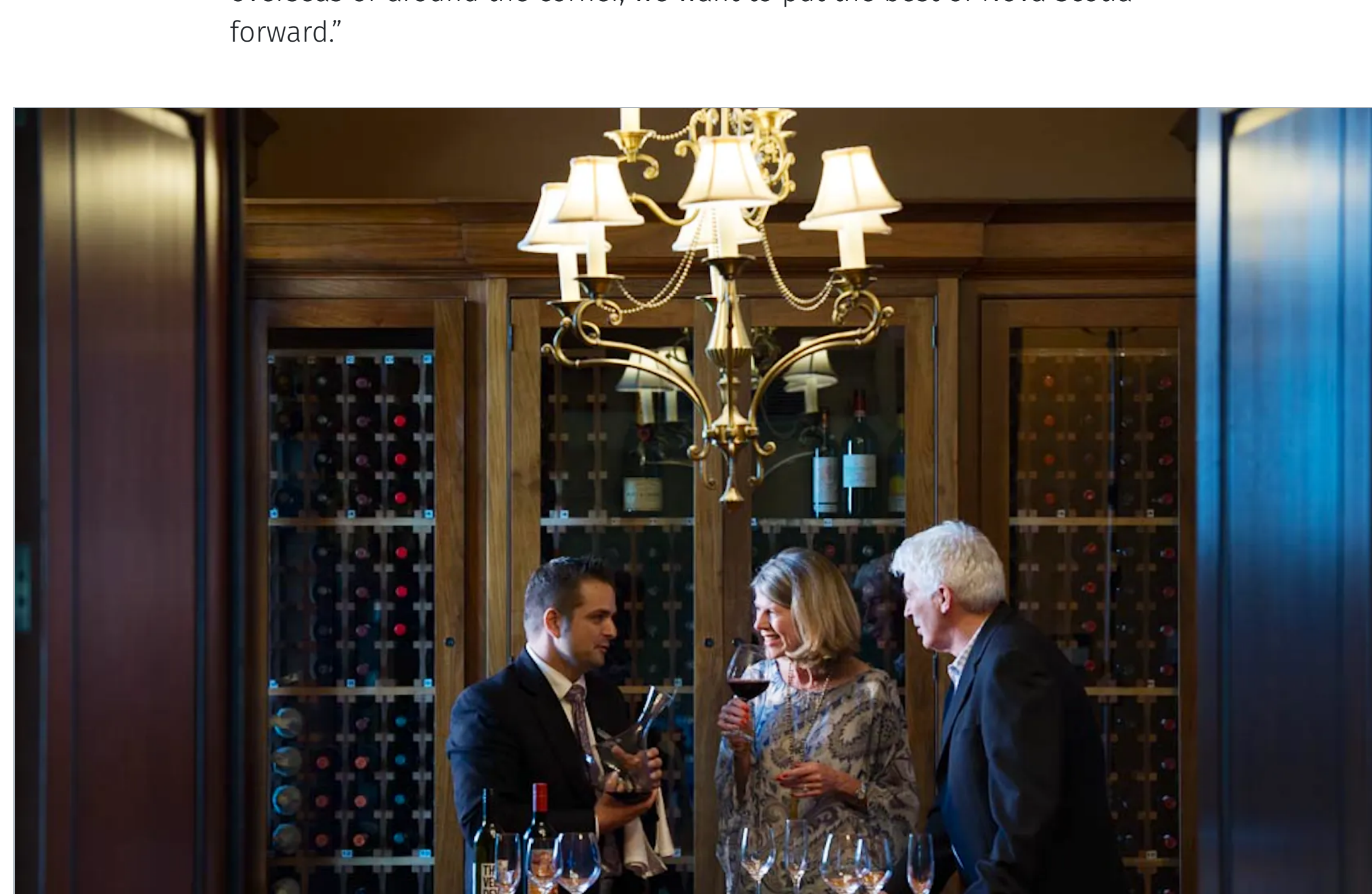
Overlooking the Northumberland Strait, Fox Harb'r Resort offers breathtaking views and a world class golf course. - Photo contributed

Billy Kawaja is a Newfoundland native who gave up a career as a professional skier for a life of food and drink. Following years on the slopes he worked in the back of the house at notable Banff, Alberta properties before migrating for a decade long stint in China, originally work as chef at the embassy in Beijing.

A return to Canada brought him back to the West Coast before the pandemic hit. It was at this time the thought of being closer to family resonated with Kawaja. When the opportunity to lead the team at Fox Harb'r as food and beverage director presented itself, Kawaja packed his ski boots and returned to Atlantic Canada.



Under Kawaja, Fox Harb'r has reaffirmed its commitment to local, as Kawaja says "we really want to be a celebration of the region. We work with a lot of local seafood purveyors and fishmongers, farmers, and our local wineries. The bounty of Nova Scotia food and drink was an eye opener when I came here. Whether you are guest coming from overseas or around the corner, we want to put the best of Nova Scotia forward."



Fox Harb'r Resort has developed a series of wine tasting events that showcase the best of Canadian wine paired with dishes featuring local ingredients. - Photo contributed

Not surprisingly, Kawaja also wants to celebrate the best of Canada. Kawaja says "I've been fortunate enough over the years to work with some great British Columbia wineries, while I was living there. I think hosting an event with the Iconic Wineries of British Columbia is a great way to educate our guests about Canadian wine and showcase the great local seafood, produce and meats, including game, we are sourcing."

Food is fundamental to the experience according to Kawaja, who almost gushes during our interview about the thrill of serving local ingredients such as fresh halibut, less than 24 hours out of the water, or a wine made by a winery from down the road.

The love of local seafood is shared by sommelier Bram Bolwijn, head sommelier of the Iconic Wineries of British Columbia, who recently hosted a dinner that paired the wines from the Iconic Wineries of British Columbia, including wines from Check Mate and Martin's Lane, paired with dishes prominently displaying local ingredients.

Bolwijn is a true wine professional, who love welcoming guests to the wineries in the British Columbia's Okanagan Valley. However, as the wineries in Okanagan, he likes to "bring the wineries to us" in the form of wine dinners like the one hosted by the resort last week.

The Netherlands-raised and European-trained sommelier, is a promoter of the wines he presents but British Columbia as a whole, noting that unlike many wine regions that specialize in a small number of varietals and styles, British Columbia, and specifically the Okanagan Valley, is "all about diversity."

Bolwijn says the incredible diversity of terroir within a relatively small region, "allows us to produce both outstanding Pinot Noir but at same time we can talk about Syrah, Cabernet Franc and even Petit Verdot. The quality of Canadian wine has never been higher than it is now."

As for why Canadian wine is so good right now. Bolwijn says "we in the Candyland of winemaking right now." Without the rules and regulations that dictate how many European wines are made, Bolwijn alludes to a freedom of choice that has given Canadian winemakers the opportunity to be creative and forge their own path forward.

As for local wines, Bolwijn points to Nova Scotia sparkling wines, L'Acadie Blanc and Chardonnay, the latter he suggests is a perfect pairing for a bowl of chowder.