

## Wine writer? Ice work if you can get it

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Illustration: Color Photo: Bob Fila, Chicago Tribune / If not cloyingly sweet, an ice wine or cider is a "thimbleful of paradise."

I was recently on a junket to the annual wine festival in Kelowna, B.C. (a lifestyle writer's life is a hard one). Over the course of a weekend that included vinotherapy spa treatments (which use the pips and skins from organic grapes used in the local wine industry), visits to high-end restaurants, wine tastings, art-gallery tours and ordering in the most delish room service at the Hotel Eldorado (coastal waters shellfish hotpot or fruitwood-smoked Angus striploin carpaccio, anyone?), I started to think: What if my life were like this all the time?

It's natural to wonder how the other half lives. After all, Kelowna, situated in the "Silicon Vineyard" or interior B.C.'s Okanagan Valley, is among the country's most affluent regions. You want fine living? You've come to the right place.

But if you don't have the dough to relocate, there's an easy way to taste the high life, and at a perfectly petit bourgeois price point: Raven Ridge Cidery's iced apple cider. At 30 clams a bottle, these dessert elixirs are affordable little sips of luxury. As with ice wine, fruit (in this case apples rather than grapes) is allowed to freeze on the branch. It's then crushed, pressed and fermented to produce an alcoholic beverage. Unlike other hard ciders, the result is still rather than bubbly, though Raven Ridge also makes a sparkling cider that some liken to a Brut Champagne. The iced apple cider is incredibly yummy. But not cloyingly sweet like some ice wines. Pour some iced cider onto ice cream, or drink it neat. It's a thimbleful of paradise.

- Fuji, Braeburn or Granny Smith Iced Ciders, \$30 per 375-ml bottle (Ambrosia, \$36), \$20 per 200-ml bottle (Ambrosia, \$26). True Sparkling Cider, \$20 per 750-ml bottle. For ordering go to [k-l-o.com](http://k-l-o.com) and click on Raven Ridge Cidery. Hotel Eldorado, [eldoradokelowna.com](http://eldoradokelowna.com).