



Canadian Trade Successes 01-06

QUEBEC COMPANY REACHES THE PINNACLE OF SUCCESS

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Key Quotation:

But don't think that means Charles Crawford has stopped dreaming up even bigger plans. "We're continuing to develop our international business," he says. "We're in almost 20 countries now and we're continuing to add countries as we go."

Story details:

Charles Crawford and the rest of the team at Domaine Pinnacle know the value of dreaming big. A family-owned orchard and cidery, Domaine Pinnacle is the world's leading producer of ice cider (or ice apple wine, as it is known internationally). It's hard to believe that this thriving business comes from humble roots.

The cidery started out in 2000 as a part-time project in Montreal, Quebec. But Crawford, the company's president, had high hopes for the fledgling business. Just a couple of years after opening the cidery that he'd built with his family, he moved Domaine Pinnacle to greener pastures in Quebec's Eastern Townships. "It started off very small," Crawford says, "but in 2002... we decided to take the jump and move to the country, lock, stock and barrel." That "move to the country" entailed upgrading from a small lot in Montreal to a 430-acre orchard, including a cidery, a retail boutique, and several thousand apple trees.

Once Crawford was settled into his new home, he started building on plans to expand the business outside of Canada. "From the beginning, it was part of the original business plan," he

explains. “We thought the ice apple wine had international potential so we decided to launch it.” Crawford knew that ice apple wine was largely a local phenomenon, produced mainly in Quebec; the product hadn’t yet made a mark on the foreign market. “We wanted to be the first to break into the international scene,” he says.

Domaine Pinnacle found success in the international market almost immediately. Crawford attributes the company’s success in large part to the groundwork he and his team laid before launching their product worldwide. “Doing your homework first and finding the right people to work with is key,” he says.

Part of Crawford’s research included meeting with Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada representatives to learn from their market knowledge and gain insight into the international business world. “We had met different people from the department at conferences,” he recalls. “I then contacted a few people who had given me suggestions on a one-to-one basis.”

Crawford also spent time researching potential partners—to great success. In 2003, Domaine Pinnacle partnered with Camus La Grande Marque, the world’s largest family-owned maker of fine cognacs. Camus added Domaine Pinnacle Ice Apple Wine to its list of products that sell around the world.

Now, three years later, it’s clear that Crawford’s hard work has paid off. Since partnering with Camus, Domaine Pinnacle’s international business has grown fivefold and the Pinnacle brand has become something of a household name. In 2005, Korean Air began selling Domaine Pinnacle Ice Apple Wine through its Sky Shopping Channel.

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