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ON THE COVER: The Okanagan Valley in B.C.'s Interior offers endless opportunities for touring wineries and vineyards this summer. iStock photo

TEST ON HOME TURF

CANADIAN RUGBY FANS are in for a treat this June when Canada's Men's Fifteens team faces off against Japan and Scotland on home soil. Both fixtures are sure to prove valuable as Canada's preparation for the 2015 Rugby World Cup in England begins gathering steam.

The Canadian Rugby Centre of Excellence in Langford, B.C., serves as home base for Rugby Canada, and the top Canadian male and female athletes who train here. This world-class facility allows Rugby Canada to develop and prepare Canada's best for international events, both at home and abroad.

The first big test of the summer comes on June 7 at Burnaby's Swangard Stadium where Canada will renew its fierce rivalry with Japan's national team.

Canada and Japan have played to narrow results in recent years, fighting to draws at both the 2007 and 2011 Rugby World Cup. More recently, Japan handed Canada its only defeat at last year's Pacific Nations Cup campaign in a hotly contested 16 – 13 match in Nagoya.

When Canada takes the field in Burnaby this summer the memory of last year's defeat in Asia will be top of mind. Canada and London-Irish forward Jebb Sinclair is one player who knows well the challenge Japan is able to produce:

"Japan has had our number over the last four or five tests. We've tied them twice at the last two World Cups. Sadly, though, they've beaten us twice as well." Sinclair adds, "I'm looking forward to a long-awaited return fixture."

Likewise, fans on the West Coast are eagerly awaiting the return of international rugby and a rematch against Japan. Indeed, this test is an opportunity for all of B.C. to show its support for Canada's national team and paint Swangard Stadium red on June 7.

The following week, Canada will play Scotland at BMO field in Toronto for what promises to be one of their stiffest contests of the year.

Scotland is a team in transition, with New Zealander Vern Cotter recently taking over as head coach. As the



Canada's Men's Fifeen rugby team will benefit from international tests on home turf this summer as it prepares for the 2015 Rugby World Cup in England. Rugby Canada photo

10th ranked team in world rugby, Scotland will be a mighty challenge for Canada, but one back-row Tyler Ardron is looking forward to:

"The Scotland game is a great opportunity for us; it's always going to be a tough game when we play a fully professional team, and Scotland will be no different. They have a lot of great players and will bring a well-structured game.

"I think physically and athletically we are very well matched, and having them in Toronto will make for a very exciting game."

Important international tests against the likes of Japan and Scotland are crucial for Canada, especially in the lead up to the 2015 Rugby World Cup. We have much to do before then, but a strong coaching staff, a first-rate training facility, and support from sponsors like Helijet provides the necessary foundation for our National Men's and Women's teams to compete and win at the international level. 🏉

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NEW & NOTABLE

BY SUE KERNAGHAN



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seatoskygondola.com



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NEW & NOTABLE

BY SUE KERNAGHAN



BARD TURNS 25

Winter may be the season of our discontent on the West Coast, but summer means Shakespeare in Vanier Park. This year Vancouver's annual Bard on the Beach Shakespeare Festival celebrates its 25th seaside season with two mainstage theatre performances of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*, as well as a host of special events. Few things can compare to such a summer's day.

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HELIJET CREW

BY GARTH EICHEL



FROM THE GROUND UP

Troy MacDonald turned a job into a career

IN SEPTEMBER OF 1994 Troy MacDonald was focussed on one thing — Rugby. Specifically, he wanted to play at the international level, which meant moving to Victoria to train and play with Canada's national team.

But as most Canadian athletes know, amateur sport doesn't provide a living wage so MacDonald needed to find a job that would pay the bills, but also provide the necessary flexibility to train, travel and play.

Enter Helijet. The company hired the scrappy scrum-half to work in the Cargo Department where he did tough physical work on the ramp loading, unloading, and fuelling helicopters

Opposite page: Troy MacDonald, Helijet's Director of Sales, got his start on the ramp while playing for Canada's national rugby team. Heath Moffatt photo

in all types of weather — just the sort of environment an aspiring rugby player might thrive in. More importantly, the company offered much needed flexibility:

"Helijet was a great fit. They were flexible with hours so I could train with the national team and travel to games," says MacDonald. "I played on the Canadian Under 19 and Under 21 teams, and eventually got a cap with the Senior Men's team against Hong Kong in 1998."

MacDonald hung up his kileats in 2005, but the character, toughness and discipline the game instilled served him well in his day job with Helijet. Progressing from the ramp, he moved into cargo sales and soon became the company's sales manager in Victoria, before ultimately taking over as corporate Director of Sales in 2009.

Along the way MacDonald maintained and developed business relationships with Helijet's clients in business and government, and played an instrumental role in establishing helicopter service to sport fishing lodges in Haida Gwaii and charter work for the company's Learjet31A in YVR.

"I really enjoy the diversity and new challenges that come with working for Helijet," he says. "That is part of the draw for many who choose to make careers here. The opportunities are tremendous." But to that, he adds, "the remarkable thing about Helijet is the people you get to work with. The comraderie, goodwill and appreciation you feel every day — from the top down — is rare a thing in the ultra-competitive world of aviation.

"But that's part of Helijet's business model: Just like a competitive sports team, it doesn't matter how good individual players are; what counts is their ability to gel and work together towards a common goal. Certainly, success depends on the cohesion and collective efforts of your co-workers — and your coaches." 🐾

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*Grapes ripen under late day sun at Blue Mountain
Vineyards in Okanagan Falls, B.C. iStock photo*

BY ADEM TEPEDELEN

TERROIR TOURING

Six summer itineraries for exploring B.C.'s wine regions

In terms of wine grape production, British Columbia's 4,000 hectares (ha) under vine doesn't loom large on the world stage, especially when compared to Washington State next door (18,000 ha), or international titans like Spain (1,100,000 ha). Nevertheless, B.C. punches above its weight class in terms of diversity and quality — from the hot, arid Okanagan to the cool-climate consistency of Vancouver Island.

And certainly, in a province as vast and picturesque as B.C., wine touring isn't just about the wine. Nor should it be. It's as much about the destination, and enjoying the beautiful places in which grapes are grown. Indeed, one of the great pleasures of tasting various B.C. wines is doing so with the very vines that produced them just steps away.

The following are six sample itineraries for experiencing the impressive variety of B.C.'s wine growing regions.

COWICHAN VALLEY (VANCOUVER ISLAND)

Three decades ago, when the first commercial vines were being planted on Vancouver Island, there was a lot of skepticism as to the wisdom of such an endeavor. A handful of early adopters not only proved the naysayers wrong, they laid the groundwork — discovering what grapes did well in the area's cool climate — for the subsequent start-ups that followed.

The Cowichan Valley is only about a 45-minute drive from Victoria and one of the first stops to make is at **Venturi-Schulze Vineyards** where winemaker Giordano Venturi offers a unique range of wines — from delightful bubbly to incredible Pinot Noir — that changes from year to year, depending on what the vintage gives him. Giordano also crafts the only traditionally made balsamic vinegar outside of Italy.

Vigneti Zanatta Winery is another of the old guard and it wisely specializes in bubbly, a style that could make the island famous if more tried their hand at it. The effervescent Damasco white blend is a perfect summer sipper when enjoying an antipasto plate for two on the patio of the winery's Vinoteca restaurant.

Further north is **Averill Creek Vineyard**, one of the largest wineries in the Cowichan Valley. Situated on the south-facing slope of Mt. Prevost, just northwest of Duncan, this winery is notable for both its gorgeous facility and its excellent Reserve Pinot Noir.

Then there is **Enrico Winery**, one of a new generation of Vancouver Island wineries realizing success with Cabernet hybrid varieties (Cabernet Foch, Cabernet Libre), producing big, bold reds previously thought impossible for this region. The rustic chic tasting room features pleasant views of the surrounding vineyards while sipping through a tasting flight of estate wines.



GULF ISLANDS

Three of this region's most notable wineries are on Salt Spring Island, the biggest and most populous of the Gulf Islands between the B.C. mainland and Vancouver Island. The Gulf Islands can be easily accessed via regular BC Ferries sailings from either Victoria or Vancouver, or through inter-island ferry travel, which requires a little extra planning.

Many of the same cool-climate grape varieties grown on Vancouver Island perform well on the Gulf Islands, too. You'll drive by two of the island's three wineries on the trip from the ferry terminal in Fulford Harbour to the town of Ganges. Located side by side, Garry Oaks Winery and Salt Spring Vineyards are just a half-mile apart on Fulford-Ganges Road.

Garry Oaks Winery is a farm-gate winery on a 10-acre vineyard stretching into the sunny Burgoyne Valley. The wines Elaine Kozak crafts here play to the strengths of the long temperate growing season. Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir do well here, as does Zweigelt, a spicy medium-bodied red predominantly grown in Austria.

Salt Spring Vineyards next door captures the laid back funky feel of Island life, and also features bed and breakfast-style lodging, making it an ideal place to stay for wine tourists. A welcoming barn set amidst beautiful gardens and nicely landscaped property houses the tasting room, where a broad selection of wines — both sparkling and still — are made from traditional varietals such as Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir, as well as curious hybrids and orchard fruits. For a decadent treat try their delicious Apple Pie Dessert Wine, made with organic apples.

Mistaken Identity Vineyards is the newest winery on Salt Spring and it's located just northwest of downtown Ganges. Owned by three couples, it has distinguished itself by the

Above left: Mission Hill Winery near Kelowna is one of the most impressive landmark wineries in B.C. iStock photo

Above right: Many small B.C. wineries stay close to their roots as farm-gate operations. iStock photo

grapes it grows and the unusual blends winemaker Ian Baker assembles, such as Abbondante Rosso (Leon Millot and Zweigelt) and Charmela dessert wine (Chardonnay and organic apples). Sip a glass of any of their offerings on the tasting room patio for a true Salt Spring Island experience.

Gulf Island wine touring is not limited to Salt Spring, though. Another notable is **Saturna Island Family Estate Winery**, located on a sprawling 78-acre waterfront parcel of land on the southwestern tip of Saturna Island. Most visitors drive, but if you're feeling adventurous you can arrive via kayak or boat at their private dock and walk up to the winery for a glass of Riesling or Pinot Gris, and enjoy a bite to eat at the Vineyard Bistro from where you can take in expansive views of the vineyard, the ocean and nearby Pender Island.

FRASER VALLEY

One of B.C.'s lesser known wine regions is the Fraser Valley. Visiting wineries here is more of a bucolic, drive-in-the-country wine touring experience compared to the upscale wineries found in the Okanagan.

Nevertheless, a day spent wine-touring in the Fraser Valley offers a pleasant respite from Vancouver's traffic and hubbub. While there are several fruit wineries spread out across the valley, the most notable grape wineries are conveniently located on or near 16th Avenue in south Langley and Abbotsford, and can be easily accessed from Highway 99 from the west or the Trans-Canada Highway from the north.

Township 7 Vineyards & Winery is established in both the Fraser Valley and the Okanagan. This offers Vancouver visitors a chance to sample the full array of their wines, from hefty Okanagan offerings to their light and lively Langley estate wines.

Chaberton Estate Winery (previously Domaine de Chaberton), is just two kilometres down the road on 216th Street. Started in 1991 by Claude and Inge Violet, Chaberton was the Fraser Valley's first farm-gate winery. Sold to businessmen Eugene Kwan and Anthony Cheng in 2005, many of the estate-grown whites, such as Siegerrebe and Bacchus, first put the winery on the map and are still being made and winning acclaim. Under new ownership, the winery now also produces wines made with Okanagan grapes, providing visitors with a wider range of wines to suit any palate — from robust Bordeaux-style blends to oaked Chardonnay — at the tasting room or in the elegant Bacchus Bistro.

Like its Langley neighbours, **Backyard Vineyards** (previously Neck of the Woods) makes wine largely from Okanagan-grown grapes. That said, it produces an excellent Blanc de Noir sparkling wine that employs 100 per cent Fraser Valley-grown Pinot Noir.

Further east in Abbotsford you'll find the quirky **Lotusland Vineyard**, which boasts an interesting array of organic estate-grown wines. All are small production releases, so the best way to get your hands on them is to visit the Lotusland Boutique tasting room at the winery where you can sample unique blends comprised of Zweigelt and Cab Franc, or Gamay and Pinot Meunier.

KELOWNA (NORTH OKANAGAN)

Kelowna-area wineries are primarily clustered on either side of Okanagan Lake, just south of Kelowna on the east side, and in the West Kelowna District on the west side of the Lake.

West Kelowna is home to **Mission Hill Family Estate**, the largest and perhaps most awe-inspiring winery in B.C. Perched atop a hill with a magnificent view of the lake and surrounding vineyards, it is a remarkable facility that includes a tasting room, outdoor amphitheatre, and Terrace restaurant, among other things. More importantly, Mission Hill produces a wide range of award winning wines sourced from its vineyard properties throughout the B.C. Interior.

Down the hill on Boucherie Road is a more modest facility at **Quails' Gate**, but the quality of wine is no less impressive. Some of Quails' Gate vines are more than 50 years old, and the wines they produce have great character. One of their

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newer offerings — a Vouvray-style Chenin Blanc — is just one of several must-try wines here.

Another destination on any Okanagan wine tour itinerary is **Mt. Boucherie Family Estate Winery**, which sits between its namesake (a former volcano) and the shores of Okanagan Lake. This longtime family operation has its roots in a grape-growing business operated by the Gidda family since the late 1960s. With 20-plus wines, from delicate aromatic whites to full-bodied reds, there is something to please every palate.

Across the lake on the Kelowna side lie two very different properties and approaches to winemaking. Perhaps it would be easy to dismiss **Summerhill Pyramid Winery** as gimmicky — they age wine in a giant white pyramid next to the winery — if they weren't consistent for producing high quality wine. They do sparkling wine well, but full-bodied Cabernets show

Above: The Naramata Bench near Penticton is blessed with some of the finest terroir in B.C. iStock photo

off the power and finesse this region's reds are capable of. The lake view from the tasting room and Sunset Organic Bistro is certainly a draw, too.

Nearby **CedarCreek Estate Winery** is more traditional in its architecture and approach, and it too boasts a restaurant, the Vineyard Terrace, with magnificent views of the lake and surrounding vineyards. Started by Senator Ross Fitzpatrick nearly 30 year ago, it was one of the original eight wineries in the Okanagan Valley. In early 2014, CedarCreek was purchased by Mission Hill owner Anthony von Mandl, but it continues to operate separately making its own brilliant wines from its vineyards on both sides of the lake.

NARAMATA BENCH (OKANAGAN)

Located between Penticton and the tiny town of Naramata, this 15-km-long plateau on the southeast side of Okanagan Lake enjoys some of the finest terroir in B.C. Grape vines were first introduced here in the early 1970s and have steadily displaced fruit orchards (and driven up land prices) ever since. That's because this small area has several viticultural blessings, including diverse soils, west-facing aspect to late day sun, and moderating lake effect in summer and winter.

Interestingly, no one grape dominates the Naramata Bench. Several major varieties are planted here, from Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer, to Pinot Noir, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, to name a few.

The Bench is also a gorgeous and laid back place to visit, providing scenic lake vistas from nearly every vineyard along the bench. The Bench is home to many wineries worth visiting, but the following standouts are worth circling on the map:

Poplar Grove Winery was once a small-production, boutique winery that sold cheese on the side. A new partner in 2007 changed all that: Poplar Grove now boasts a gorgeous, modern tasting room, greatly increased acreage under vine and a line of budget-priced offerings to complement its muscular, well-built estate-grown selections. Big reds, such as the Bordeaux-style Legacy, are the go-to wines here.

Continuing north along Naramata Road, **La Frenz Winery** is a more modest facility, but the view from the wall of windows in its bungalow-style tasting room is something to behold. Just don't let it distract you from tasting the wine, particularly their award-winning Reserve Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Sauvignon Blanc.

Lake Breeze Wine Farm certainly comes by its name honestly. A visit here requires a slight detour off Naramata Road, down closer to the edge of the lake. Getting off the beaten path has its rewards: The Patio Restaurant at Lake Breeze is an enchanting place to relax in the shade and enjoy their signature Pinot Blanc with something light while taking in the wonderful scenery and cooling breeze.

Another notable Bench winery is **Kettle Valley Winery**, not far from the charming town of Naramata. While the winery is relatively humble, the wines are anything but. Their small-production offerings range from complex, aromatic whites to full-bodied, mouth-filling reds. Be sure to taste their pinkish Pinot Gris and wonderfully perfumed Alsatian-style Gewürztraminer.

Finally, amidst all the wonderful bench vineyards, make a point of visiting **Elephant Island Orchard Wines**. Best known for its award-winning dessert wines, Elephant Island also makes



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SIMILKAMEEN & SOUTH OKANAGAN

The Similkameen only boasted two wineries in 1998, but that number has since grown to a dozen small vineyards with just over 600 acres under vine.

Located just north of the U.S. border, the Similkameen River Valley stretches 30 km along the Number 3 highway from Princeton almost to Osoyoos, with most wineries clustered around the small towns of Keremeos and Cawston. It is only a short drive from the carnival atmosphere of Kelowna, but worlds away in terms of terroir and temperament.

Rustic and thinly populated, the Similkameen is high and hot desert country, dotted with sprawling orchards and road-side fruit stands. Bracketed north and south by the steep stony walls of the Cascade Mountains, the valley gets approximately 2,000 hours of sunshine each year making it the driest climate in Canada. (Summer temperatures frequently swelter above 30 degrees Celcius.)

The wines here have unique character, remarkable for exceptional fruit character underpinned by stony minerality. And as one might expect from the self-described “Fruit Stand Capital of Canada”, the area also produces a number of exceptional fruit wines.

Lawrence Herder of **Herder Winery & Vineyards** was the first winemaker to really draw attention to what the valley was capable of, making huge wines with incredible

Owned and operated by the Osoyoos Indian Band, Nk’Mip Cellars transformed 1,200 acres of desert into one of the most renowned vineyards in B.C. iStock photo

complexity, like the much sought after Josephine red blend.

Next door to Herder is **Clos du Soleil**, which benefits from the same high-desert conditions and cool nights as their neighbours — conditions ideal for late ripening varieties, particularly those found in Bordeaux-style blends.

Just east of the Similkameen Valley is the town of Osoyoos, just north of the U.S. border. There’s a humble charm to this resort town that has seen its profile slowly rise along with the burgeoning South Okanagan wine industry.

One of the most renowned wineries here is **Nk’Mip Cellars**, which is owned and operated by the local Osoyoos Indian Band on 1,200 acres of reserve land converted from hilly sage-brush to green vineyard. Nk’Mip boasts a modern tasting room that is an open and inviting place to sample their many award-winning Qwam Qwmt wines.

There are dozens more wineries north of Osoyoos, but another must on any wine tour itinerary is **Burrowing Owl Estate**. Located on the famed Black Sage Bench, Burrowing Owl has developed a cult following for its hard-to-find, age-worthy reds. A visit to the winery offers an excellent opportunity to secure a bottle (or two) of their Syrah, Merlot or Cab Franc, as well as the opportunity to enjoy a meal on the Sonora Room Restaurant patio, where views of the surrounding vineyards and valley hills beyond provide a stunning backdrop that serves to remind one of the remarkable beauty and bounty of B.C. wine country. 🦉



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Vancouver's Night Markets

ASK A RESIDENT of Vancouver about summer night markets and you're likely to unleash a torrent of foodie passion.

"You have to try the hurricane potatoes!"

"No, the rotatos are better."

"Try the little pancakes and the octopus in a batter ball. And get the shrimp dumplings from the dim sum place."

All I wanted were directions, but the tasting tips came thick and fast.

Clearly, Vancouverites like their summer night markets. Enough, in fact, to support two of them: The Richmond Night Market, near the Bridgeport Skytrain station, and the International Summer Night Market on Vulcan Way.

Both run weekend evenings between May and September, and both are the kind of sprawling, crowded, fun outdoor markets you'd expect to find in exotic destinations like Kuala Lumpur or Seoul.

My plan: see both; taste everything.

THE RICHMOND NIGHT MARKET

At the Richmond Night Market, I wound my way through the throng, scanning the multilingual menus, and planning my snacks.

I ordered a stack of Vietnamese barbecued meat skewers and, while they were cooking, sampled the saucy pops (chicken in a deep-fried rice wrap) sold next door.

The market was delightfully noisy, with the call of vendors and the sizzle of barbecues against a soundtrack of Asian pop music. I passed clusters of teens, young families, and well-dressed ladies slurping tentacles from paper cups.

What next? Bubble tea, fried squid, fish balls, sushi, mango smoothies, octopus dumplings, taro balls, curry roti pockets, sugar coated yam, or maybe a dragon ball?

The food is largely pan-Asian, from Japanese crepes to Malaysian curries, Indian rissoles and everything in between. There are also a few items, notably the chocolate covered bacon, that have probably been invented right here.

Deep fryers loom large: besides chicken balls and spiral cut spuds, vendors proffer deep-fried lotus root, California rolls, cheese cake, mars bars, ice cream and milk.



Above: Eastern flavours delight Western palates at the Richmond Night Market on holiday and weekend evenings from May 16 to October 13. Richmond Night Market photo

Milk? Yes. "We cook it to make a custard and deep fry it," explained the vendor, who, like the others, seem happy to clarify things for market newbies.

And because I like a bargain as much as a nice fried squid ball, I swung by the less crowded merchandise section for some multi-hued phone chargers and a pair of socks, guaranteed, according to the label, to "fill your heart with satisfaction". www.richmondnightmarket.com

INTERNATIONAL SUMMER NIGHT MARKET

Over at the International Summer Night Market, bouncy castles and audience participation shows create more of a carnival vibe.

The food? Deep-fried radish cakes, tao balls, Vietnamese jellied desserts, chocolate-dipped waffles on a stick, halal barbecue, egg balls, tofu pudding, coconut sticky rice in bamboo, curry fish balls, durian pancakes and, because this is truly an international market: mini-donuts, lemonade, Hawaiian shaved ice, and pulled pork poutine.

I settled on a blueberry slushy bubble tea and picked up a Thai tea ice cream sandwich for the road.

I knew I'd be back, if only to try the dragon balls.

www.summernightmarket.com

Getting there: Both night markets run weekend evenings from May to September. The Richmond Night Market is walking distance from Bridgeport Station. A free shuttle bus runs roughly every 20 minutes between Bridgeport Station and the International Summer Night Market. The Richmond Night Market charges \$2 admission; the International Night Market is free. 🐉



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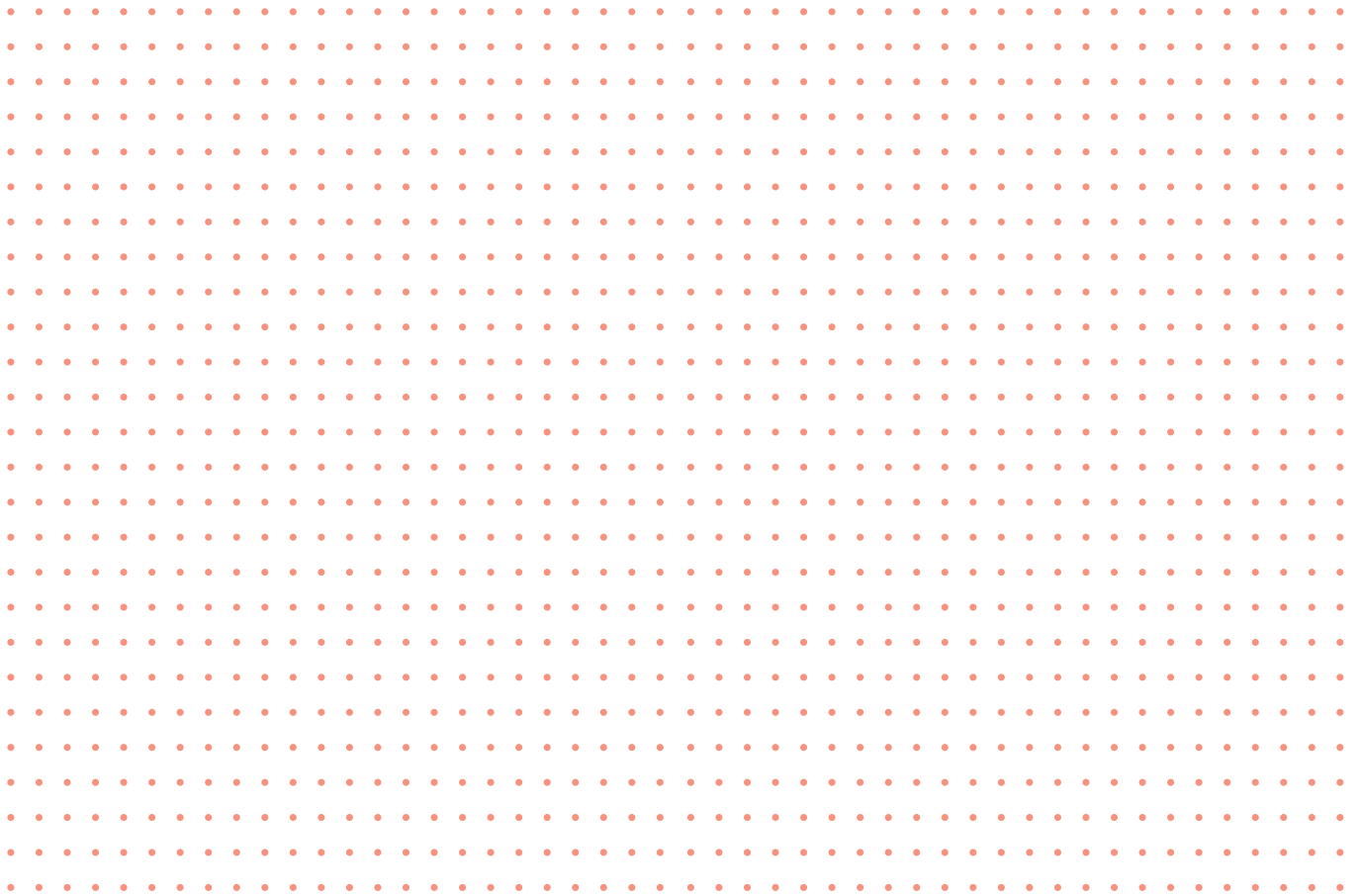


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