

VQA News and Tips — April 2017

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR VQA ONTARIO MEMBERSHIP

Many thanks to our members for renewing their VQA memberships on time.

For those of you who have not yet renewed, please note that your membership has expired (effective April 1, 2017) and your online account has been set to “inactive” status – access to online services has been discontinued and no wine approval applications will be accepted, or results issued. Please contact the VQA office if you wish to renew your membership.

For those of you who have renewed online but not yet paid, your membership has expired (April 1) but your account will remain active until April 30, at which time, if no payment has been received, your access will be deactivated and bylaw provisions related to resigned members will apply.

NEW REGULATIONS FOR VQA SPARKLING WINES NOW IN EFFECT

The changes to Sparkling Wine rules that were under consultation in 2016 have been approved by the Minister of Government and Consumer Services and are now in effect. These changes retain existing requirements for both Traditional Method and Cuve Close/Charmat wines and replace the Aromatic category with a more flexible category for basic Sparkling wines. In brief, the new Sparkling Wine category:

- Must be carbonated exclusively through fermentation (no artificial carbonation)
- Has no minimum time on lees or aging requirements
- Can be made from any grape variety on the VQA list of approved varieties, subject to the mandatory label declaration for hybrid grapes
- Can use the Ontario appellation only
- Cannot reference the method of production unless it meets all requirements for either Traditional Method or Cuve Close/Charmat Method

Please see the full regulation at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Standards> for details.

TIPS FOR THE MONTH

This is a very busy time for processing VQA wine approvals, here are some tips to avoid delays

- Plan for about 3 weeks to receive your results
- Make sure the samples you send are finished and stabilized
- Follow the instructions on the application form – send the right number of bottles to the right address and department
- Upload your labels at the time of application whenever possible (mock-ups are acceptable)
- Send a copy of the shipping form with both the samples (to LCBO) and the cheque (to VQAO)
- Ensure your samples arrive by noon on a Wednesday (this will result in the shortest cycle time)
- Don't forget that results could take longer if there is a need to retaste the second bottle sample or recheck any of the analytical results

- Tasting panels are currently operating at full capacity so it is likely that multiple submissions will be tasted over several sessions and may be spread over two weeks of tasting panels. If you wish to have certain wines within large submissions processed first, please let us know.
- If you genuinely need your samples processed quickly, a “rush” service is available for the laboratory portion of the testing (extra charge). The rush allows a late entry into the weekly lab schedule if you miss the Wednesday cut-off. However, keep in mind that this does not speed up the tasting which is allocated on a first come, first served basis and the approval cannot be issued until you upload the labels and remit the fee payment so those things should be considered before making a request. The rush process is handled manually through VQAO so please give us a call to discuss whether the rush will benefit you in your specific circumstance.
- If you have any questions about the wine approvals process or are worried about timing, please check the online system for status updates. If you don't find what you need or there appear to be unexplained delays, give us a call to find out what is happening.

DON'T LET YOUR WINE APPROVALS EXPIRE (BOTTLE WITHIN 12 MONTHS)

Don't forget that if you receive an approval based on a tank sample, you must bottle it within 12 months of the tasting/lab testing or the approval will expire and the wine is no longer approved. A full re-submission is required to reinstate the approval.

SAVE THE DATE – VQA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JULY 26 IN LAKE ERIE NORTH SHORE

VQA Ontario's 2017 Annual General Meeting will be held on July 26 at Viewpointe Estates in Harrow, Ontario. We invite all winery members to attend, and encourage those from other regions to make this an opportunity to visit with your colleagues in Lake Erie North Shore.