

VQA ONTARIO
Ontario's Wine Appellation Authority
NEWS & TIPS February 2019

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL DUE APRIL 1, 2019

 **NEW! REDUCED FEE - \$500**

VQA Ontario is pleased to announce a reduction in annual membership fees from \$1000 to \$500. The lower fee is aimed at making VQA participation more affordable and accessible for small producers.

WINEMAKER'S FORUM – PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

Please join us for a Winemakers' Forum on Thursday Feb. 7, 2019!

When: 10:30 AM

Where: The Grange of Prince Edward Vineyards and Estate Winery, 990 Closson Rd., Hillier, ON

NEW! Come and meet members of the VQA Ontario Standards Development Committee!

All winemakers welcome – VQA or not!

Space is limited to the first 15 reservations – and lunch will be provided!

For more information or to register, please contact Katherina Radcliffe at VQA Ontario,
katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca

PROPOSED REGULATION CHANGES - MARQUETTE AND NON-VINTAGE TABLE WINES

Following a review and stakeholder consultation, the VQA Ontario Board has recommended to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services that VQA Regulation 406 be amended as follows:

- Add Marquette to the list of permitted hybrid grape varieties (Appendix B 2. (i))
- Permit still Table Wines carrying the geographical indication "Ontario" to the list of wines to omit the vintage date from labels

It is important to note that these are still recommendations only and must be approved by the Minister before taking effect. These changes are not currently in effect and will not be

implemented until the Ministry conducts its own consultation and review process and decides whether to accept or reject the changes.

VQA Ontario brings forward these amendments after a lengthy evaluation process including a technical assessment by its Standards Development Committee, the review of many written submissions and informal comments, including suggestions to review the regulatory framework. The changes support VQA Ontario's strategic goal to be a progressive and inclusive regulator.

Here is some further background on the process.

Marquette:

VQAO received a request from a winery to amend the VQA regulation to add Marquette to the list of permitted grape varieties. VQAO has long-standing policy guidelines that govern the evaluation of new varieties. In accordance with these guidelines the proponent provided:

- Detailed records of parentage and breeding history
- Confirmation that Marquette is the recognized horticultural name of the variety
- Wines resulting from at least 2 vintages of production in Ontario
- A detailed rationale on why this new variety is expected to produce high quality wines in Ontario, including wine style and quality, market experience and consumer reaction, disease resistance, cold hardiness and sustainability

VQAO's Standards Development Committee, comprised of 14 senior winemakers and representatives from Brock University, Niagara College and the LCBO, reviewed the request and found the submission to meet the technical requirements set out in the policy. A range of wine samples made from Marquette grown in Ontario were tasted and found to be of good quality. Based on its review, the Committee concluded the Marquette met the criteria and recommended it be added to the permitted list of hybrid varieties.

Wineries and stakeholders were consulted over a 3-month period and, although not unanimous, the change was supported by a large majority of those submitting comments. After reviewing feedback from the industry, the VQAO Board agreed that Marquette met all established policy guidelines and including it on the grape variety list was consistent with VQAO's strategic vision and mission.

Future requests to add new grape varieties will be evaluated according to the existing policy guidelines. <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Processes> (click on the "Regulation change tab")

Non-vintage dated table wines:

VQAO received a request from a winery to amend the VQA regulation to allow the option of non-vintage dated table wines, under the Ontario label designation only. The proposal was advanced to allow wineries to blend across vintages beyond the 15% limit to control

consistency and quality from year to year and to have more flexibility in managing inventory and labels.

Wineries and stakeholders were consulted over a 3-month period and the change was supported by a large majority of those submitting comments. After reviewing feedback from the industry, the VQAO found the proposed amendment to be consistent with VQAO's strategic objectives and mission, allowing wineries more flexibility to choose what products to market. Wines with any mention of a vintage date on the label will continue to require 85% content from the stated vintage.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us! We always love to hear from you!

[Laurie Macdonald](#)

[Katherina Radcliffe](#)