

VQA Ontario – News & Tips — January 2017

SEMINAR SERIES – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT VQA, AGCO AND LCBO RULES

VQA Ontario, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission and LCBO have joined together to offer a comprehensive seminar on regulations that apply to wineries. The seminars will cover:

- Your responsibilities as the holder of a Manufacturer's Licence
- Rules for selling in winery retail, tied-house, farmer's markets and grocery
- The VQA checklist – is it eligible, what goes on the label?
- Tips on using VQA Ontario's online systems for wine approvals, export certificates, wine transfers
- How to prepare for your audit
- Paperwork – completing the monthly sales reports

A seminar will be held in each primary appellation from 9 am until 3 pm (lunch provided):

- **Lake Erie North Shore** - Wednesday, January 18, 2017 (Sprucewood Shores)
- **Prince Edward County** - Friday, January 20, 2017 (Casa Dea)
- **Niagara Peninsula** - Monday, January 23, 2017 (Chateau des Charmes)

These seminars are open to all winery employees, including non-VQA wineries (start-ups, virtual wineries, fruit wineries). We encourage you to send the appropriate administrative and operational staff to attend all or any part of the seminar that is relevant to their duties.

Register by Friday, January 13 by replying to this email or by contacting Barbara Dodds at barbara.dodds@vqaontario.ca (416-367-2002).

TIPS OF THE MONTH

TRANSFERS OF FINISHED WINES BETWEEN WINERIES

If you purchase finished wine from another winery you must ensure that the seller completes the online wine transfer form. In addition, if this wine is approved under the seller's VQA membership – you must obtain a VQA approval under your own VQA membership before you can bottle and sell this wine. If the wine is not altered in any way (stored in stainless steel with SO2 adjustments only), you may request a Supplementary Approval without further testing or cost. NOTE the 12-month to bottle requirement below!

To obtain a supplementary approval, ensure the transfer form identifies the original VQA approval ID number from the selling winery then contact the VQA office to let us know you require a supplementary approval. You will need to create a wine approval application using the normal process and upload your label. Once the application is

made, VQA Ontario will add the lab and tasting results from the original testing and issue the approval in the name of the purchasing winery.

If the purchased wine is altered – blended, aged in oak, sweetened, etc. – it is not eligible for a supplementary approval. Also, make note of AGCO requirements that you must contribute a “significant winemaking step” in order to sell wine and that you may not resell wine that was purchased as finished bottled product.

VQA WINE APPROVALS EXPIRE AFTER 12 MONTHS IF THE WINE IS NOT BOTTLED

VQA rules require that, if the taste test and laboratory analysis was conducted on a ready to bottle tank sample, the entire volume of approved wine must be packaged in the container intended for final sale not later than 12 months from the completion of the laboratory and sensory analysis, at the earlier date of the two.

If you still have approved wine in bulk 12 months after the approval testing, the wine will have to be resubmitted for a new approval. Please plan accordingly – and call us if you need a few weeks extension.

LATE HARVEST AND ICEWINE GRAPE REGISTRATION – ENTER YOUR HARVEST INFORMATION

Don't forget to record all your harvest data when you harvest grapes for Icewine and late harvest and enter this information into VQA Ontario's online Icewine monitoring registry at <https://office.vqaontario.ca/vqaservices>. For each harvest batch, you will need to record the date, time, ambient temperature at harvest, actual (weighed) tonnes and the volume of the juice. You will also need the brix reading as tested by McKibbin and Associates. More information can be found at <http://www.vqaontario.ca/Regulations/Processes> under the Late Harvest/Icewine tab.

ONTARIO WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE STUDY

Data collection for the 2017 Ontario Wine and Grape Performance Study is now complete. Thank you to all wineries and grape growers who took part in this survey. Look for the report to be released in mid-2017.

VQA WINE RESEARCH PROJECT – CAN YOU HELP US BY PROVIDING SAMPLES?

VQA Ontario is continuing its long-term research project to increase our knowledge about VQA wines. The research will collect information on vineyard conditions and practices, winemaking techniques and the chemical and sensory attributes of the wines we make. The aim of the project is to better understand all the variables that affect VQA wines, how they relate to the wine in the glass and perhaps identify similarities and differences across our appellations.

We are looking for volunteer winemakers who would be willing to provide samples of specific wines (finished or almost finished) and answer some questions about the viticultural and winemaking practices that produced the wine. Specifically, the wine would be part of your normal commercial production, a single variety, single vintage from a specific appellation (perhaps pre-blending), and you would be able to donate one case bottled or one 19.5 L stainless keg for future testing.

Over a multi-year period we hope to find out if there are common practices that have developed in each appellation and see if there is any correlation to the physical conditions (soil, climate etc.) and/or the character of the wine. Please rest assured that there is no desire or plan to restrict your winemaking decisions or practices. Winemakers participating in the study will be encouraged to make the wines following their usual winemaking and commercial objectives. The samples should be reflective of what would be available to a consumer.

We have started with the core varieties of Riesling, Chardonnay, Cabernet Franc and Pinot Noir and hope to cover as many appellations as possible. Where wines are not available from the 2016 vintage, we will add them next year. If you are interested, you could provide any number of samples – e.g. the same varietal made by you from different appellations, or different varietals from a single appellation.

Please contact Laurie Macdonald at laurie.macdonald@vqaontario.ca if you are willing to participate with a list of what you might be able to provide, including the variety and vineyard location. We understand that the list might change with circumstances so we are just looking for possibilities at this point. We will follow up and confirm later in the year.

We hope that the data collected from this project will help you continue to make world class wines from Ontario's appellations – and help us explain the special value that comes from their origin.

Our best wishes for a happy and prosperous new year!