

VQA News and Tips — June 2016

WINE AND GRAPE INDUSTRY PERFORMANCE STUDY

The Ontario Wine and Grape Strategy was renewed by the Ontario Government for five years commencing in 2015/16.

In support of the strategy, VQA Ontario was asked to develop and implement the first annual Ontario Wine and Grape Industry Performance Study. The survey and report were developed by VQA Ontario and Deloitte in consultation with representatives of the wine and grape industry and the Government of Ontario.

The study is aimed at providing benchmarking and performance data to support the reporting commitments of the Wine and Grape Strategy and to improve the industry's access to sector performance information.

The first wave of the study collected comprehensive information from 106 wineries and 42 non-winery grape growers. The report provides an overview of the financial state of the industry, including the impact of tourism and hospitality.

View the report at the following link: <http://www.vqaontario.ca/AboutVQA/News#News>

VQA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING JULY 20, 2016, at Brock University

You should have received your notice of the VQA Ontario Annual General Meeting. We hope you can join us. Please register to attend by July 13. Elections for the VQA Ontario Board of Directors will be held at the Annual General Meeting to fill three positions for winery members (small, medium and large). If you want to be more involved in leading VQA and shaping our future, we encourage you to consider putting your name forward for one of these positions. Nominations are due not later than July 6. Please see the notice of meeting for details or contact us.

CHANGES ARE COMING SOON TO VQA SERVICES!

We are implementing a new "Wine Lookup" feature on our public website that will allow consumers to search our database for approved VQA wines. Wines will be searchable by winery name, brand name, varietal and vintage as well as an extra "descriptor" field where wineries can enter optional information such as 'reserve' or a vineyard designation.

Stage one – where you enter your brand information into VQA Services – will be implemented next week. If you sell wines under a "brand" that is different from your winery name, you will need to add these to each wine approval. These brands will be used to help consumers find wines when using the Wine Lookup feature. This new feature will not change the Wine Approval System, except to provide specific additional detail for the public database. If you do not add any "brands" the brand will default to your winery name. The public look up feature (stage 2) will be activated within the next month.

More detailed information about the new feature and how to use it will be sent to you soon.

RULE CHANGES - VQA REGULATION

Effective July 1, amendments to the VQA Regulation remove the prohibition on placing the VQA logo or letters on wine closures (e.g., corks), and lower the minimum brix level of all vitis vinifera Muscat grape varieties from more specific appellations than Ontario from 18.0° to 17.0° brix.

VQA RACK CARDS – AVAILABLE NOW

The rack card is designed to support you in starting the VQA conversation with your customers in the winery or tasting room.

- It explains what VQA stands for: Origin; Quality; and Authenticity.
- It simplifies the appellation hierarchy.
- And it decodes the label of a VQA wine.

These cards are available now. For the cost of shipping, we'll send you up to 500 to help you share the VQA story, the value of our appellation system and your place in it, with your staff and customers.

Contact Katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca for more details or access the print-ready file on our [website](#).

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP: VQA MEMBERSHIP SUPPORTS A BETTER PRODUCT

Research shows that engaged wine consumers are willing to pay more wines of origin. In fact, in a 2014 Ontario-based study, nearly half of all recent wine buyers surveyed (48%) said country of origin was either an extremely or very important consideration in their wine purchasing decisions. VQA membership is the foundation for Ontario wineries to use appellation and sub-appellation labelling to build value by promoting this sense of place.

“The VQA designation sparks a wine conversation that is nearest and dearest to wine lovers and winemakers alike; ‘provenance’. Nobody else has our appellation story and it is a story worth telling.”
Mark Torrance, National Director of Estate Wineries, Andrew Peller Limited.

TIPS FOR THE MONTH – WINE APPROVALS

Transfers of finished wines

Wine approvals are issued to an individual winery member. If you are buying finished wine that has been approved at the selling winery as a tank sample, you still need to obtain a VQA approval for the wine under your own winery label. This is a Supplementary Approval and can be done at no cost and without additional testing under the following conditions:

- No changes are made to the composition of the wine (no blending, aging only in stainless steel)
- A VQA wine transfer is entered by the seller
- An application is submitted under the purchaser's VQA account
- The purchaser's label is provided with the application
- The wine is bottled within 12 months of the original approval testing

Please contact Barbara Dodds if you wish to request a supplementary approval. Keep in mind that other rules under the Alcohol and Gaming Commission apply requiring a winery to perform at least one significant winemaking step in order to sell a wine.

Varietal wines versus Proprietary Name

When submitting an application, you must indicate whether the wine will be labelled as a varietal wine or with a Proprietary Name. If the grape variety or varieties appear anywhere on the label, it is a varietal wine and must meet varietal labelling rules. You may choose to use a Proprietary Name on the front label and include the varietal content on the back, but this is still a varietal wine for VQA classification. Only when no grape varieties are mentioned on the label should the Proprietary Name box be checked.