

VQA News and Tips — February 2017

TIME TO RENEW YOUR VQA ONTARIO MEMBERSHIP

Please renew your winery's VQA membership by March 31 by logging into VQA Services <https://office.vqaontario.ca/vqaservices>. Once logged in, you will see a notification indicating VQA Membership registration renewals are now being accepted for 2017/2018. Click on the specified link to navigate to the "Renewal" tab under the Organization Profile section for your winery and follow the renewal instructions. Please make sure you follow up with a copy of your current manufacturer's licence and a cheque dated April 1, 2017 for the fee payment.

Special note for those that operate more than one manufacturer's licence issued by AGCO:

Effective January 1, 2016, each manufacturer that uses VQA-regulated terms must have an individual membership in VQA Ontario. If you are a winery operating with more than one AGCO manufacturer's license and you only have one VQA membership, please contact us.

NEW CATEGORY FOR SKIN-FERMENTED WHITE WINES RECOMMENDED TO GOVERNMENT FOR APPROVAL

A proposal to create a new category for skin-fermented white wine has been approved by the VQA Board of Directors and recommended to the Minister of Government and Consumer Services for inclusion in the VQA regulations. If approved by the Minister, VQA Ontario will be one of the first appellation authorities in the world to adopt a standard for this style of wine. The decision on enactment of the regulation is expected later in 2017. Stay tuned...

SEMINAR SERIES – ALL ABOUT VQA, AGCO AND LCBO RULES

The January seminar series bringing together VQA Ontario, the Alcohol and Gaming Commission and the LCBO to talk about licensing, regulation and audit were well attended. We hope we were able to answer all of your questions – even some you didn't know you had – and thank you to everyone who gave us feedback on how we can make our processes as efficient as possible.

Another seminar has been scheduled in response to demand and will be held in Norfolk County at Burning Kiln Winery on Monday, February 13, 2017. Register by Wednesday, February 8 by replying to this email or by contacting Barbara Dodds at barbara.dodds@vqaontario.ca (416-367-2002).

Topics include:

- 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

If you missed the seminar in your region, you are welcome to attend in Norfolk or browse through the presentations posted on both the secure VQA Services website and our public site. If there is enough interest, we will consider scheduling more of these seminars. Please let us know.

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.

TIPS OF THE MONTH

There continues to be some confusion about "Varietal" wine versus "Proprietary Name" (non-varietal wine)

If no grape varieties are on the label, it is not a varietal wine. In the VQA regulations, this is designated as a "Proprietary Name".

If grape variety names appear anywhere on the label, including within the romance text on the back label, this is designated as a varietal wine and the label will be assessed in accordance with the varietal labelling rules:

Single varietal:

- One grape variety appears on the label
- At least 85% of the wine must be made from the stated variety

Dual varietal:

- Two grape varieties appear on the label
- At least 90% of the wine must be made from the two stated varieties
- At least 15% must be made from the second variety

Triple varietal:

- Three grape varieties appear on the label
- At least 95% of the wine must be made from the three stated varieties
- At least 15% must be made from the second variety
- At least 10% must be made from the third variety

Multi varietal:

- Four or more grape varieties appear on the label
- At least 95% of the wine must be made from the four or more stated varieties
- No further restrictions

What does this mean in practice?

A wine made from 90% Cabernet Franc and 10% Merlot does not qualify as a dual varietal so you can't label it as a Cabernet Merlot.

A wine made from 90% Riesling, 5% Pinot Gris and 5% Chardonnay does not qualify as a dual or triple varietal and can only be labelled as a single varietal Riesling.

A wine made from 50% Gamay, 45% Pinot Noir and 5% Cabernet Franc does not qualify as a triple varietal and can only be labelled Gamay – Pinot Noir.

Extra attention must be given when blending hybrid grape varieties with vinifera since the hybrid must be declared on the label so the blend must qualify as a varietal wine where the hybrid component is part of the varietal.

While the rules are intended to give consumers some reasonable expectation that the label fairly represents what is in the bottle, we do not want to unduly restrict the blends you can make. So if you wish to make a blend that does not fit into the varietal rules, but still tell your customer what grape varieties are used, you may list the varietal content if you include the actual percentage of each and every variety. For the purpose of your wine approval application, please select the category that the wine actually qualifies for. Submit that 90% Riesling as a single varietal and include the both variety names with their percent content on your label and we will make the exception. If you have questions about how these rules are applied, give us a call.