

## VQA NEWS – JANUARY 2018

### CALLING ALL PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY WINEMAKERS – WINEMAKERS’ FORUM

VQA Ontario is sponsoring a Winemakers’ Forum at Closson Chase Winery on Friday January 19<sup>th</sup>. This is a great opportunity to share your experiences/challenges with the 2017 vintage. Please contact Katherina Radcliffe, [katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca](mailto:katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca) to reserve your spot or for more information. Pre-registration is required and attendance will be capped at 15 participants. Winemakers from other regions are welcome to attend, subject to the limit of 15. The event will be moderated by Keith Tyers.

January 19, 2018

10:00 AM

609 Chase Road, The Ridge Production Facility  
Hillier, Ontario

Next winemakers’ forum coming soon to Norfolk County.

If you would like to host a winemakers’ forum in the Niagara Region and are just waiting for VQA Ontario to help you organize it, please contact Katherina Radcliffe at [katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca](mailto:katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca)

### 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.

### UPDATES TO VQA ONTARIO’S ONLINE SYSTEMS

VQA Ontario continues to review and update the VQA Services online platform. In support of the public wine search feature, you are now able to tag wines submitted for approval with a brand in addition to your winery name. This feature allows you to identify virtual brands made under your licence and VQA membership. A *Guide to Using the Branding Feature* is posted on the VQA Services secure site on the home page side panel.

Changes to accommodate the new skin-fermented white wine category have been implemented on both the application wizard and with a new pre-registration system to declare your intent to make these wines at the time of harvest (similar to the Icewine system but much simpler).

You will also notice that a numerical score is no longer reported as part of the sensory test result. Although the assessment of the wine for VQA purposes is determined based on a majority vote for acceptability, and not based on a score, a numerical score has been reported in the past. Its meaning

long been a source of confusion and often misinterpreted in comparison to scores generated in wine competitions or reviews. As a result, scoring has been removed from the reporting results since it is not directly relevant to the outcome of the evaluation but specific descriptions of deficiencies will continue to be provided in the case that a wine fails the sensory evaluation.

Coming soon... structural changes to the *Invoices* feature to support future online payments.

## 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-2018.

## 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. 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 Katherina Radcliffe at [katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca](mailto:katherina.radcliffe@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!**