

## VINTAGE REPORT 2014

### Conditions

Weather conditions in Southern Ontario were unusually cold and snowy in the first few months of 2014 and cool prevailed well into spring. January through April brought mean temperatures consistently below normal and several regions saw their coldest spring in the past four decades. Finally, May brought a return to normal temperatures. The sustained winter cold and late spring led to a cautious outlook for the vintage, with grape growers concerned about the potential for winter damage

and the relatively late start to the growing season.

May saw slightly more rain than normal for Prince Edward County and Lake Erie North Shore but otherwise normal conditions and gave the vines a chance to settle into the season. Slightly wetter and cooler weather prevailed across most of Ontario for June and July, making for a dreary summer but allowing for a slow, steady maturation of the vines and grapes. By early August, it was apparent that harvest dates would be about

10 days later than normal in all regions. It was also clear by this time that the cold winter would result in some crop reductions for tender varieties but in quite a sporadic pattern. The wide range of outcomes this year underscores the basic principle of appellation – that different combinations of specific locations and specific grape varieties matter.

August was relatively normal, and September finally brought enough sun and warm temperatures to push the grapes to maturity.

### Harvest

Harvest began a bit late, but was helped along by a good long stretch of dry and sunny September weather. Prince Edward County was drier than normal, and the other regions about normal for the month. The favourable

weather continued into October allowing most of the grapes to ripen and come in before the rather quick onset of colder fall temperatures.

Preliminary registrations for Icewine and Late Harvest grapes show that production

is likely to be just over half of that in 2013, with an estimated total of 3850 tonnes of 11 different grape varieties left on the vine after November 15.

### Wine Expectations

This year highlighted the craft involved in growing good grapes and making quality wine. Technique and experience play a very important role in getting the best wine to the consumer. Viticulturalists and winemakers are faced with continuous decisions about the care of vines, when and

how to prune or pick, grape sorting, time on lees, stainless or oak, varietal or blend, and many, many other things. These are all tailored into a unique combination to yield the best grapes and wine from the vintage.

As is often the case, nature eventually found a balance by

the end of the season. Early reports suggest a solid vintage, but perhaps with limited availability for some varietals from some producers. This year was quite variable so each wine is likely to reflect the care and attention of its coach.