



VINTAGE REPORT 2019

Niagara Peninsula - Lake Erie North Shore - Prince Edward County

Conditions

Weather conditions across Ontario for 2019 were generally cooler and wetter than normal but overall the season was good. The growing season in most areas was slightly delayed, but the season ended well thanks to a sunny fall.

January started off mild but was a month full of significant weather events including extreme cold and heavy snowfall. Snowfall continued throughout February, while the rapid thaw in March was the major weather story of the spring.

Temperature fluctuations throughout March allowed for significant snow melt and led to high spring water levels for the start of the growing

season. April and May continued with high moisture, but for the well-draining soils of Niagara Peninsula and Lake Erie North Shore, and the stony Prince Edward County soils, this was not a major concern for wine growers. The result was a slight delay to the start of the growing season across all three viticultural areas.

June brought summer weather with normal temperatures across Ontario and the growing season got under way. Flowering occurred quickly as the grapevines accelerated their growing to make up for the late start. Notably, some growers reported that in the Beamsville Bench and Lincoln Lakeshore sub-appellations,

flowering occurred across all grape varieties over a single four-day span.

July was warm and sunny, punctuated by three short but intense heat waves, complemented by high humidity across southeastern and southwestern Ontario. Two significant rainfalls occurred in the month, maintaining soil moisture and supporting developing vines.

August was warm and intermittently stormy, leading into a comparatively quiet September, cool with some rain – but bringing decent conditions to finish off the summer and begin the harvest season.

Harvest

Heading into harvest, the weather was generally cool and sunny. This cool weather, combined with low humidity and sunshine provided a boost for grapes in terms of

phenolic ripeness and prevented breakdown of fruit allowing an extended period for grapes to fully ripen.

October weather was mild but damp, followed by an unusually early cold snap in mid-November. Most white varieties were harvested early, with winemakers

reporting excellent quality. Yield reductions were common for many of the red varieties to ensure optimal ripeness, particularly for later maturing varieties. Harvest

extended into early December, sometimes taking place in the snow.

With the early cold, several wineries harvested Icewine

grapes on November 12 – the earliest date recorded by VQA Ontario. Preliminary registrations for Icewine are 5,972 tonnes.

Wine Expectations

Outlook is very good for wines from the 2019 vintage. We can expect a full range of exceptional white wines defined by crispness, acid and fruit. Early reports suggest

that 2019 may be a standout vintage for Pinot Noir and fuller bodied reds should also show well as a result of the carefully managed harvest, and with some red grapes

even having the benefit of the concentrating effect of freeze-thaw that comes with being harvested late in the season.