

VINTAGE REPORT 2017

Niagara Peninsula – Lake Erie North Shore – Prince Edward County

Conditions

The 2017 harvest kicked off with an exceptionally warm and sunny September, with ideal conditions for harvest persisting right through November.

The year started out unusually mild in January, and with above normal precipitation in all three regions. Rain, not snow, was the major story for the beginning of the year. February continued to be warm, with above average temperatures and single-day high records set in Vineland,

Hamilton, Trenton and Toronto and March temperatures were normal. Warm temperatures were accompanied by relatively high amounts of precipitation throughout the spring and summer. Significant rainfall in June caused flooding in Wellington, part of Prince Edward County, and a State of Emergency was declared. Both southern and south-eastern Ontario had heavy rainfall in July and August. Some severe weather was noted in Lake Erie North Shore at the end of the

August, but steady rain continued to be the most notable event of the month. Luckily, the rainy weather was punctuated by sunny days that allowed the grapes to keep maturing and kept disease pressure under control. Finally, September arrived, and Ontario welcomed steady warm, dry weather. Unseasonably warm, dry conditions continued through October and November. It was a timely departure from the wet summer season.

Harvest

The rainy summer had moderated expectations for harvest, but a hot, sunny and dry September gave the grapes in all three growing regions abundant opportunity to ripen and fully develop their flavours. Conditions during harvest were ideal across the province. October continued to be warm and dry allowing

for ripening of later maturing varieties and harvest proceeded into November, with processing as late as the third week. On the heels of the regular harvest, temperatures dipped below -8 degrees Celsius in mid-December, allowing the harvest of grapes destined for Icewine to begin.

Preliminary registrations for Icewine show just over 6,000 tonnes of grapes left netted for the 2017 season. This is a significant increase over last year (4,210 tonnes) and higher than 2015 as well (4,860 tonnes) which reflects the continued popularity of Ontario Icewine.

Wine Expectations

Overall, it was a good vintage. The weather patterns affected the growing cycle, with slowed development at the beginning of the season, but then caught up very quickly in the late summer and fall. With ripening moving rapidly,

wineries spent considerable effort keeping up with mother nature and picking at the right moment. The challenges of ripening long season varieties that often arise in this type of year were completely banished by the

very late onset of cooler weather. Ontario's VQA producers enjoyed a full crop and their wide range of grape varieties and styles should show well in 2017.