



Vintage **REPORT 2023**

UNIQUE WEATHER MAKES UNIQUE WINE.

The 2023 vintage in Ontario has been a testament to the resilience of the region's vineyards and the craftsmanship of its winemakers. Despite some challenges posed by weather fluctuations, the overall quality of the wines from this vintage promises to be exceptional. This vintage has delivered wines that reflect the unique characteristics of the region.

Chardonnay and Riesling have once again demonstrated their suitability to the Ontario terroir. Red varieties, such as Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc, also fared well. The cooler nights during the growing season helped retain the acidity in these red grapes.

Winemakers in Ontario employed a combination of traditional and modern winemaking techniques to harness the potential of the 2023 vintage. Gentle handling of the grapes, minimal intervention, and extended maceration periods for red wines were common practices.



Vintage **REPORT 2023**

NIAGARA PENINSULA

The weather in 2023 played a crucial role in shaping the vintage in the Niagara Peninsula appellation. A mild winter followed by a warm spring led to an early bud break, raising hopes for an abundant harvest. However, the summer brought some unexpected challenges, including sporadic heatwaves and intermittent rainfall. Winemakers had to closely monitor their vineyards to mitigate potential issues such as disease and uneven ripening. The careful management of the vines, coupled with the utilization of advanced viticultural practices, ensured the grapes reached optimal maturity.

Conditions for harvest were quite favourable, with wineries reporting a broad window of opportunity to bring in grapes. September was dry and reasonably warm, compared to last year, and enthusiastic growers made quick work of the relatively light harvest. Crop size was the main story, but fruit quality was excellent and the grapes that were brought in had winemakers wishing for more!

LAKE ERIE NORTH SHORE

The climatic conditions during the 2023 growing season exhibited a mix of challenges and opportunities. The spring started with moderate temperatures, encouraging early bud break and a promising start to the growing cycle. However, this was followed by sporadic temperature fluctuations, presenting some concerns for frost damage. Vineyard managers and winemakers employed various protective measures, including frost fans to safeguard the delicate buds during critical stages.



Vintage **REPORT 2023**

Summer brought warm and sunny periods, promoting healthy vine growth and fruit development. Adequate rainfall throughout the season contributed to well-hydrated vines, ensuring a balanced ripening process. While some regions experienced occasional heavy rainfall, diligent vineyard management mitigated the risk of disease and ensured optimal grape quality.

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

The 2023 vintage in Prince Edward County, Ontario, has unfolded as a tale of resilience and excellence. Despite the challenges presented by weather fluctuations and climatic nuances, the region's winemakers have once again demonstrated their skill and commitment to producing exceptional wines.

The weather in Prince Edward County during the 2023 growing season was marked by a combination of factors that influenced grape development. Spring arrived with a slightly delayed bud break, attributed to a cooler-than-average start. However, a warm and dry summer, with consistent sunshine, facilitated optimal grape maturation. This was followed by a mild and extended fall, allowing for a gradual harvest and optimal ripening across different varieties.



Vintage **REPORT 2023**

HARVEST

Harvest in 2023 was prolonged and extended through the fall, with many still picking in late November. Luckily, the weather held and was relatively mild and dry across all Ontario wine appellations. By November 15, the customary deadline for Late Harvest and Icewine registration, many wineries were still actively harvesting grapes for table wine. Reflecting the unusually long and drawn-out harvest season, the Late Harvest and Icewine registration deadline was extended to November 30, 2023.

The harvest season was characterized by a series of careful decisions and precise timing. Winemakers had to be vigilant in choosing the optimal moment to pick each grape variety to preserve the balance of flavors and acidity. Vintners monitored sugar levels, acidity, and phenolic ripeness carefully to determine the optimal moment for harvest. Despite the earlier concerns during spring, the vintage benefited from extended hang time, allowing flavors and aromas to fully develop. The yields varied across sub-regions, with some areas experiencing slightly lower quantities across specific varieties due to weather-related stress on the vines, while other areas experienced yields above average. Despite these challenges, the grapes that were harvested displayed excellent phenolic development, promising wines with depth and complexity.

ICEWINE

At the time of publication, 4,095 tonnes of grapes were registered for Icewine from the 2023 vintage, reflecting a significant increase over last year's 765 tonnes.



Vintage **REPORT 2023**

WINE OUTLOOK

NIAGARA PENINSULA

Chardonnay grapes, a staple of the Niagara Peninsula, excelled in 2023. The moderate temperatures and extended growing season resulted in grapes with balanced acidity and vibrant fruit flavors. Expect well-structured Chardonnay wines with notes of green apple, citrus, and a subtle hint of minerality.

The 2023 vintage showcased the versatility of Riesling in the Niagara Peninsula. The cool nights and warm days allowed for the development of intense aromatics and bright acidity. Riesling wines from this vintage are expected to display a harmonious balance of sweetness and acidity, with flavours ranging from crisp green apple to luscious peach.

Red wine enthusiasts will appreciate the quality of Cabernet Franc in 2023. The extended growing season contributed to the development of ripe and concentrated fruit flavours. Expect Cabernet Franc wines with a beautiful combination of red and black fruit notes, well-integrated tannins, and a hint of the characteristic peppery spice.

Pinot Noir, a notoriously finicky grape, thrived in the favourable conditions of 2023. The slow ripening process allowed for the development of complex aromas and flavours. Pinot Noir wines from this vintage are anticipated to showcase red berry fruits, subtle earthiness, and a silky, refined texture.



Vintage **REPORT 2023**

LAKE ERIE NORTH SHORE

White wines from this vintage exhibit vibrant acidity, showcasing the bright fruit character and minerality inherent in the grapes. Riesling stands out with its crisp acidity and aromatic profile, reflecting the unique microclimates of the region.

Red wines from 2023 showcase rich fruit expression, well-integrated tannins, and a balanced structure. Cabernet Franc and Merlot have excelled in this vintage, presenting a harmonious blend of dark fruit flavours and subtle earthy notes.

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

The Chardonnay grapes from the 2023 vintage showcase a harmonious balance of acidity and ripe fruit flavours. Expect elegant notes of orchard fruits, citrus, and a subtle minerality, with a creamy texture indicative of the varietal's potential in the region.

Pinot Noir enthusiasts will be delighted by the 2023 vintage, which displays a beautiful spectrum of red fruit aromas, nuanced by hints of spice and earthiness. The extended ripening period has contributed to refined tannins and a velvety mouthfeel.

This vintage has been particularly kind to Cabernet Franc, with the grapes achieving full phenolic ripeness. Anticipate expressive aromas of red berries, herbs, and a distinct peppery character, supported by well-integrated tannins.