

ONTARIO WINE  
APPELLATION AUTHORITY



*A Handbook for*  
**VQA WINERIES**

Revised November 2024

Ontario Wine Appellation Authority

A Handbook for VQA Wineries



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## Overview

The Ontario Wine Appellation Authority (Appellation Authority) is a regulatory agency responsible for maintaining the integrity of local wine appellations and enforcing winemaking and labelling standards. The Appellation Authority establishes and administers composition and labelling standards for wine origin, quality and authenticity. Our mission is to build and sustain a strong and credible appellation system, supported by relevant standards for quality and label integrity, and to raise the awareness and knowledge of each of Ontario's wine appellations and their unique features.

The Appellation Authority does not represent the commercial interests of the wine industry in Ontario and is not a marketing agency. However, participating in the appellation system by having your wines certified and labelling them using VQA terms can add value to your business by offering consumers an independent certification of origin and quality assurance. Research suggests that consumers associate a higher value with VQA wines that offer a distinct sense of place.

The VQA Act and regulations set standards for the composition and labelling of wines made from Ontario grown grapes and outline the regulatory processes to enforce these standards. The regulations establish a list of regulated terms that may be used only in association with wines that meet specified standards and are tested and approved by the Appellation Authority. Membership does not confer approval to use VQA regulated terms but allows a winery to apply for approval for each individual wine.

Participating wineries are subject to regulatory obligations and should be familiar with requirements for the origin, production and labelling of wines in Ontario. Every wine that is described using regulated terms must first be submitted for testing and receive an official approval. Approvals must be obtained for each wine and the accompanying label and are not transferable or sharable amongst different wines produced by a winery.

## How to contact us

For general inquiries, membership, wine approvals, and all items related to wine testing: Helen Ly [helen.ly@vqaontario.ca](mailto:helen.ly@vqaontario.ca)

For wine standards and approvals, wine transfers, communications, media, member relations and appellation resources: Katherina Radcliffe [katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca](mailto:katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca)

For audit, inspection and compliance: Peter Harris [peter.harris@vqaontario.ca](mailto:peter.harris@vqaontario.ca)

For Icewine monitoring, IT systems, website support and statistics: Susan Piovesan [susan.piovesan@vqaontario.ca](mailto:susan.piovesan@vqaontario.ca)

For accounting and finance: Stan Loree [stan.loree@vqaontario.ca](mailto:stan.loree@vqaontario.ca)

For policy, governance, complaints, dispute resolution, government relations:

Laurie Macdonald [laurie.macdonald@vqaontario.ca](mailto:laurie.macdonald@vqaontario.ca)

General email: [info@vqaontario.ca](mailto:info@vqaontario.ca)

Main telephone: 416-367-2002

Fax: 416-367-4044

Public website [www.vqaontario.ca](http://www.vqaontario.ca)

VQA Services member site <https://office.vqaontario.ca/VqaServices/Default.aspx>

Please mail correspondence and/or cheques to our office, located at:

5775 Yonge Street, Suite 1220

Toronto ON

M2M 4J1

Please send all wine samples for testing to:

Ontario Wine Appellation Authority

1220-5775 Yonge Street

Toronto, ON M2M 4J1

## Regulatory obligations

It is the producer's responsibility to ensure compliance. Be familiar with the rules that apply to the wine you are making and selling.

### WINES

- Does the content and composition of the wine meet the standard?
- Check percentage varietal, vintage, origin
- Check any limitations on labelling (such as declassification to Ontario, no prohibited additions or processes)
- Check brix, alcohol limits, other chemical limits
- Check category specific rules (such as aging minimums for Sparkling, Icewine registration, varietal restrictions for Meritage)

### SALES

- Do not offer any wine for sale using VQA terms unless it is approved (and you see four green check marks in the online wine approvals database)
- Do not advertise wine using VQA terms before it is approved unless you include a disclaimer that it is not yet approved and not yet available for sale
- Have internal controls to prevent your staff from shipping or stocking VQA wine before the approval is confirmed

### REPORTING

- You must complete and file a monthly VQA sales reports with the Appellation Authority, even if VQA sales are nil
- Monthly sales reports must be uploaded electronically to our website (please see "Sales Reports" for further details)

#### DOCUMENTATION

- You must obtain and keep specified documents for inspection including
  - GGO records of harvest, including specific location where the grapes were grown, grape variety, tonnes, brix and date of harvest for all grapes used in VQA wines
  - Records pertaining to all purchases and sales or other disposals of grapes and wine
  - Records of blending, packaging and labelling and the composition of all wines

#### Membership

- You must keep your company and contact information up to date on the VQA Member Services website
- A winery must continue to actively produce VQA wines to continue membership
- Membership will lapse after a period of 18 months where no approvals are issued
- Membership will be terminated if applicable fees are not paid in full or the annual renewal process is not completed
- Once a membership is terminated, wineries may continue to sell previously approved wines, subject to reporting and fee requirements for up to one year, after which, all use of VQA terms must be discontinued
- Membership may be reinstated through application and payment of fees for the lapse period
- An Affiliate Membership may be granted for a winery member that holds multiple Manufacturers License, at a reduced rate



## What is Regulated?

Regulations set out basic standards for grapes and wines. They cover:

- Grape varieties and ripeness (brix)
- Winemaking techniques
- Labelling requirements
- Sensory and chemical criteria for the finished wine

## What is not Regulated?

The regulatory framework is designed to protect consumers with truth-in-labelling while providing a flexible framework for wineries to innovate and continue to develop winemaking techniques best suited for Ontario. The VQA standards provide the foundation for wineries to make a wide variety of wines of origin, ensuring fundamental quality standards and label integrity. Within the VQA regulations, wineries may:

- Grow grapes anywhere in Ontario
- Grow all permitted grape varieties in all appellations
- Make a wide variety of wine types and styles (typicity or styles are not limited within appellations)
- Use a wide range of generally accepted vineyard and winemaking practices within the parameters of fermenting 100% fresh grapes

Ontario wineries are free to make wines outside the VQA program but may not use protected terms on or associated with these wines.

## Where to find things

Most things you need to know about VQA requirements can be found in the regulations, in this handbook or on our secure VQA Services member website, accessed by logging in to your account at <https://office.vqaontario.ca/VqaServices> or click on member login at top right of the Authority's public website.

VQA Act <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/99v03>

Winemaking Regulations <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000406>

Rules for Approvals at [www.vqaontario.ca](http://www.vqaontario.ca) under VQA Program/Wine Standards

See our public website at [vqaontario.ca](http://vqaontario.ca) for information on:

- Appellations, including maps, characteristics, statistics and other resources
- An overview of the VQA program and wine categories
- Governance and corporate information
- News, reports and resources for VQA wineries and industry
- Current VQA wineries and the VQA wine database

## Other regulators

Alcohol and Gaming Commission (AGCO) [www.agco.ca](http://www.agco.ca)

- Rules related to manufacturing license, wine content Act, agents, retail store authorization and sales (including online and farmers markets), licensee sales, grocery sales, tied house sales

Liquor Control Board of Ontario (LCBO) [www.lcbo.com](http://www.lcbo.com)  
[www.doingbusinesswithlcbo.com](http://www.doingbusinesswithlcbo.com)

- Reporting template
- Requirements that apply to doing business with LCBO

Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) <http://www.inspection.gc.ca>

- Federal labelling rules, including allergens <https://www.inspection.gc.ca/food-label-requirements/labelling/industry/list-of-ingredients-and-allergens/eng/1383612857522/1383612932341?chap=0#s8c2s>
- Health Canada (HC) [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/legislation/acts-lois/act-loi\\_reg-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/legislation/acts-lois/act-loi_reg-eng.php)
- Wine additives
- Canada Trademarks Act – Geographical Indications for Wine <http://www.ic.gc.ca/cipo/listgiws.nsf/gimenu-eng?readForm>

## Membership with the Appellation Authority

### Submitting a membership application

Membership with the Appellation Authority is required to apply to use VQA regulated terms. Membership is granted to wineries that hold a valid Manufacturer's License (Winery) from the Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario. The owner or an officer of the incorporated winery must make the application for membership and complete the renewal on an annual basis.

Prospective members can obtain a secure login code from the Authority office to complete the application. In advance of receiving a Manufacturer's License, wineries are encouraged to contact the Appellation Authority as early as possible to discuss eligibility requirements for grapes and wines intended for VQA approval.

### Renewing your membership

Membership expires on March 31 of each year and the online renewal must be completed before April 1. Payment is due no later than 90 days after the renewal deadline. A renewal prompt will be displayed when you login to your account beginning February 1 of each year.

## Maintaining your membership account in the online system

The Appellation Authority provides comprehensive online services to its member wineries through its secure “VQA Services” website. Detailed information on procedures and requirements are in this handbook and on the VQA Services member website.

### Online account management

Login at <https://office.vqaontario.ca/VqaServices>

The Appellation Authority administers most regulatory processes with its winery members through its secure website. Each winery is provided with an administrative login and is responsible for managing access and security for its own account. The account administrator should be familiar with the basic tools required for adding and deleting individual users, updating member information and accessing documents on the site. Technical guidance for users of the VQA Services website is provided in this Handbook.

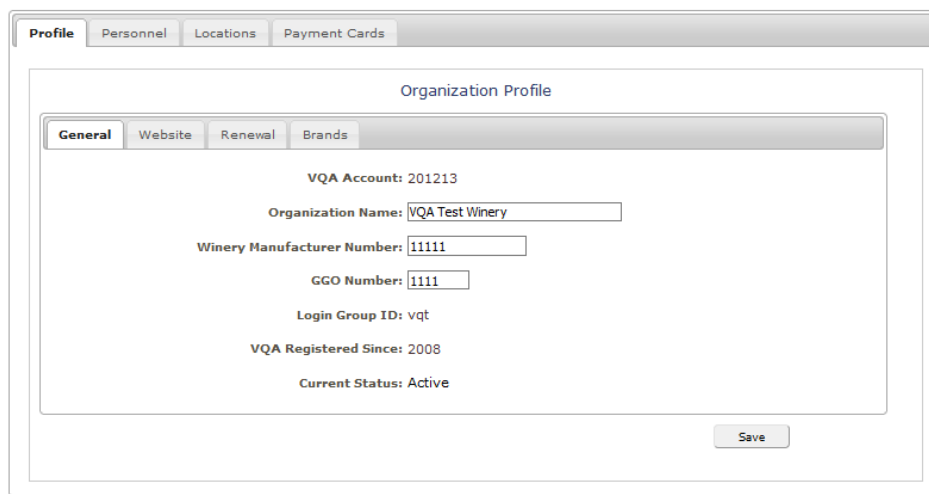
The VQA Services website is a portal for the following services:

- Membership application and renewal
- Creating and managing user account access to services
- Wine approval applications and status of results
- Certificates of Analysis and Certificates of Origin for approved wines
- Registering bulk wine and juice transfers between VQA wineries
- Generating APEC export certificates (for Asia)
- Ordering VI-1 export certificates (required for European Union exports only)
- Registering Icewine grapes by November 15 and Icewine harvest reporting
- Skin Fermented White harvest registration
- Uploading monthly sales reports
- Accessing, managing and paying invoices

VQA Services also provides quick access to reports, news, schedules and reference documents.

## Managing your corporate information and access

Accessed by clicking on “Edit Profile” after logging in (top right on main menu):



The screenshot shows a web interface for managing an organization's profile. At the top, there are tabs for "Profile", "Personnel", "Locations", and "Payment Cards". The "Profile" tab is selected. Below this, there is a sub-section titled "Organization Profile" with tabs for "General", "Website", "Renewal", and "Brands". The "General" tab is active. The form contains the following information:

- VQA Account: 201213
- Organization Name:
- Winery Manufacturer Number:
- GGO Number:
- Login Group ID: vqt
- VQA Registered Since: 2008
- Current Status: Active

A "Save" button is located at the bottom right of the form.

Members must maintain their own profile data, the Appellation Authority does not edit this information; this includes organization profile, personnel accounts, location and credit card information.

## Organization Profile

### GENERAL ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

- The information located on the “General” tab is originally loaded with the information obtained by the member winery when they fill in their registration information. The *Organization Name* field on this tab should be the official registered winery name. (Note that wineries that begin with the word “The” should use the following format “*Member Winery, The*”).

### Winery website information

- The *Winery Name* entered here is the name that will be listed on the VQA Public website
- The *Winery Website* is the url link to the winery’s website. Users of our public website will be redirected to the specified website when they click on the winery’s website url or the winery logo image
- The *Appellation* selected from the dropdown list should be the location of the winery’s main retail store; this is also the page the winery will be located on under “The Wineries” link on the VQA Public website.

### Registration and ongoing membership

- Click “Renew Now” when the renewal period is active (begins the first week of February). Renewal must be completed by March 31. If you miss the deadline your account will automatically be set to “Inactive”, and you will not be allowed to submit any wines for testing until you have completed the renewal process. After 30 days, your account will expire, and you will be notified by the Appellation Authority of the rules and requirements for “resigned” memberships.

### Brands

- Brands are created when a winery wishes to use an “operating” or “virtual” name (instead of, or in addition to your legal winery name). Add all wine brands here before you begin filling out a wine approval application since the brand must be selected during the application process. Click on “Add Brand,” enter the brand name and click “Save”. Brand names can only be removed by Authority staff if entered in error.

## Personnel

### General guideline

- Create a user ID and login for each user – DO NOT share user accounts
- DO NOT allow two users to sign on simultaneously using the same ID and password – when a user logs in, session data is stored locally on their computer. If two people are working on the same account at the same time your data may become corrupted.
- Your online access is secure and provides access to confidential information for your winery, including wine approval information and corporate information. It is important that you keep your login information secure and control access appropriately.
- Winery users can be accessed by clicking on the “Edit Profile” link at the top right of the page when you are logged in.
- The “Personnel” tab contains a list of all users that have been created on VQA Services for your winery. Contact information entered here is used to distribute notice of wine approval completion, compliance notices, bulletins and newsletters. Please make sure you keep it up to date. It is your responsibility to keep this information up to date and ensure that the Authority has the correct address(es) to contact you.

You can allocate specific roles and access to individual users as follows:

- Decide who will have “administrative authority” for your winery (who will be allowed to make changes to the account). This can be assigned to any (or all) users.
- Have an administrator set up additional personnel accounts to provide separate and secure access for all employees who will use the system. Do this by clicking on “New Personnel” and filling in the information. Each account will begin with the 3-letter winery identifier followed by a period and the user extension you create. We suggest using the name of the user for the extension (e.g. abc.john).
- For your security, it is important that a single ID and password is not shared among many individuals. Besides the risk of data corruption, you will want to control access to confidential data and easily manage individual users should employees or contractors leave the winery. Make sure that all users keep their passwords secure and change them periodically.

VQA Services has preset types of personnel based on roles:

**Owner** – super user, has all privileges, can authorize membership renewal

**Admin** – can modify company profile, manage all users

**Compliance** – receives legal notices related to compliance orders, suspension or revocation

**Finance** – can manage sales reports, invoices, make payment using credit card on file

**Operation** – can submit and manage wine approvals, transfers, Icewine and Skin Ferment registrations

### Special account settings

**Primary Contact** - Only one account for the winery can be designated as the Primary contact (receives all core notices, is default for compliance and regulatory notices).

This account will receive all important notifications like compliance orders, enforcement actions and audit reports.

**Administrative Authority (Admin)** – Any account can be granted administrative authority. Administrators can add new personnel or edit and delete existing personnel. They can also make changes to winery info. If an employee leaves your company, Admin can delete the account or reset the password.

### Online payment

Register credit cards under “Edit Profile” – “Payment Cards” tab.

The VQA Services application uses a third-party service called Stripe to process payment by credit card. Before using the “Pay by Credit Card” option on the Invoices page, the winery must first set up a credit card with Stripe (the Authority does not have POS credit capability and does not store your credit card information). To set up a credit card, click on “New Payment Card” under the Payment cards tab. Make sure to check off on the “Enabled” box for all cards you want to be active on the system. Card entries that are no longer valid should be removed from the system by either



unchecking the “Enable” box or clicking on the “Delete” button. All enabled cards will then be available to pay any invoice selected on the “Invoices & Payments” page.

### Multi-Factor Authentication

The VQA Services site employs Multi-Factor Authentication. Please ensure that all personnel who will be accessing the site have an up-to-date cell phone number listed.

## The wine approval process

All VQA wines must receive approval before using VQA-regulated terms. The VQA wine approval process consists of evaluating wine samples (tasting and chemical analysis) and reviewing the composition and proposed label to verify it meets VQA standards. It normally takes 2 to 3 weeks to complete.

### Understand the composition and labelling rules – before you submit a wine for approval

#### Label Approvals

The Appellation Authority conducts a label review as part of the approval process. Labels can only be approved in conjunction with the testing and approval of a specific wine. A wine approval will not be issued unless a compliant label is supplied. Wineries are responsible for ensuring the labels applied to all wines are compliant.

If changes are made to a label after approval, the winery must ensure the label remains compliant or may face corrective orders or other enforcement actions. It is strongly recommended that final printing and labelling be done after the approval is received.

A review of additional or replacement labels for wine that is already approved may also be requested.

#### Labelling guidelines

These are general guidelines to help you and your suppliers with the design of labels for VQA wines. They provide only a summary of detailed and comprehensive rules and

are not intended to be relied upon for compliance purposes. If you have any questions regarding VQA label requirements, please contact us.

For specific VQA requirements, please refer to the appropriate wine category in VQA Regulation 406 <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/000406>. For federal requirements, refer to the Guide to Food Labelling published by the [Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(https://inspection.canada.ca/food-label-requirements/labelling/industry/labelling-requirements-for-alcoholic-beverages/eng/1392909001375/1392909133296\)](https://inspection.canada.ca/food-label-requirements/labelling/industry/labelling-requirements-for-alcoholic-beverages/eng/1392909001375/1392909133296).

Please note that these guidelines are for Ontario only, other jurisdictions will have different requirements.

### General Requirements

All information on the label must be legible and of sufficient size and contrast to be readily identified by the consumer.

The front label or "principal display panel" is defined as the side which would normally be displayed to the consumer. In cases where there is a question about what surface constitutes the principal display panel, a determination will be made by the Appellation Authority based on common practices and perceptions (for example how the wine would be displayed in a retail setting or presented to a consumer in a restaurant). The label where artwork is prominent is normally the principal display panel as opposed to the label that contains a lot of written text. The winery cannot arbitrarily designate which surface is the principal display.

VQA regulated terms must be used in only accordance with an approval issued by the Appellation Authority. These terms are not permitted for use in any form on the label of non-VQA wines or on a label or packaging of a VQA wine - including the back label - that is not entitled to the specific term. In addition, unauthorized use is not permitted on the bottle tags, outer containers or boxes, shelf signage, or descriptions related to a specific wine that may appear in any media including websites, printed materials, or promotional materials.

## Prohibited items

- Any word, phrase, number or symbol that may mislead the consumer
- Registered or semi-generic terms used without permission
- Phrases including VQA and other words implying superiority such as "VQA guaranteed" or "VQA reserve"
- Any use of the words "viticultural area", "appellation" or "sub-appellation" except to describe a regulated VQA viticultural area
- Geographical indications or traditional expressions that the wine is not entitled to in law. Any use of foreign appellations of origin is prohibited. For example: Descriptions such as "Bordeaux style", "made from Bordeaux varieties", "similar to Australia in character" are not allowed. This prohibition includes all wine region names that are not regulated in Ontario and applies to any description of a particular wine (labels, packaging, signage, electronic and print media). Any and all use of foreign appellations is discouraged in accordance with international agreements. Check the [Trademarks database](http://www.ic.gc.ca/cipo/listgiws.nsf/gimenu-eng?readForm) for geographical indications and other registered marks that should be avoided.  
<http://www.ic.gc.ca/cipo/listgiws.nsf/gimenu-eng?readForm>

## Variations of regulated terms

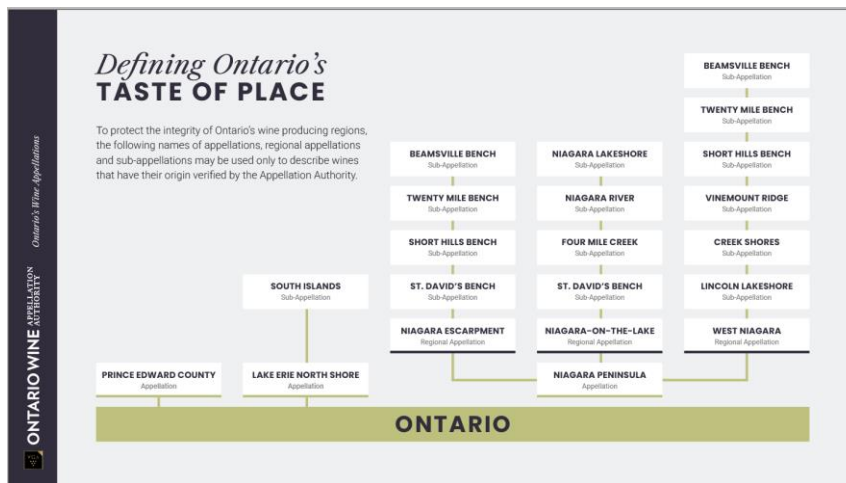
The use of close variations, abbreviations, or graphical representations of VQA regulated terms is not permitted without approval. For example:

- Icewine (no variations such as Ice Wine, Icevine, etc. are permitted for VQA or non-VQA wines)
- Late Harvest, Meritage, Blanc de Noirs (no variations permitted)
- Estate Bottled (variations such as "Estate Grown" or "grown, produced and bottled by" are permitted if the wine qualifies for the estate bottled designation, close variations are not permitted for non-VQA wines)
- Niagara Peninsula (any terms containing "Niagara" are not permitted for non-qualifying VQA wines or non-VQA wines)
- Vineyard (any named vineyard indicating origin is not permitted for non-qualifying VQA wines or non-VQA wines, two or more vineyards may be named if the percentage composition from each is stated and comprises 100% of the content)
- General references to unnamed "vineyards" are permitted (plural is required)

- Appellation names (no variations of appellation names are permitted for wines that do not qualify for the stated appellation - see limited exceptions below related to the legal address of the winery)

## APPELLATION OF ORIGIN

Wine origin and label integrity is at the core of the Appellation Authority's mandate. Using regulated appellation terms is closely regulated.



### APPELLATION OF ORIGIN EXAMPLES

For a wine qualifying ONLY for "Niagara Peninsula"

#### PERMITTED

"123 Lakeshore Rd., Niagara on the Lake, ON."

#### NOT PERMITTED

"Our vineyards benefit from the unique soils and sheltering effects of the Niagara escarpment" or "123 King Rd., Niagara Escarpment, Vineland, or "visit our winery in Niagara on the Lake" or "located on the beautiful Beamsville Bench".

For a wine qualifying ONLY for "Ontario"

#### **PERMITTED**

"We grow all of our grapes" or "The winery is located near Picton, ON."

#### **NOT PERMITTED**

"Come see us at our Prince Edward County winery" or "123 Loyalist Pkwy, Prince Edward County, ON"

#### Appellation on LABEL

- Appellation names (claims of origin) on the label are restricted to designated geographical indications and viticultural areas set out in the regulations.
- References to the appellation name in addition to the mandatory declaration on the principal display panel with the VQA letters are permitted in accordance with the regulations.
- A label may refer to multiple appellations under certain conditions: 1) if one is a sub-appellation of the other and the wine qualifies for both or 2) to list the components of the wine in addition to the broader appellation that the wine qualifies for (in this case all content must be listed including accurate percentages for each component).
- No references of any kind are permitted to an appellation for which the wine does not qualify except as permitted under the multi-appellation component rule. Appellations for which the wine does not qualify are not permitted even if they are used in a context not related to grapes or wine.
- The use of Ontario or city and town names recognized by Canada Post as part of a legal address is permitted in all cases but must appear as an address (at least as "name", "city, province") and not as a stand-alone declaration.
- The words "local", "domestic" and the like can be used without restriction.

#### Grape Varieties

- Grape varieties that can be named on the label are restricted to authorized grape varieties and must appear as listed in the regulations. Synonyms, short forms or modified forms of grape variety names may be allowed in addition to the correct name specified in the Regulation as long as the use is not misleading.

- Nothing may be appended to a variety name that may be misleading or confusing. The following descriptors may be used: *Old Vines Foch*, *Fumé Blanc*, *Gamay Nouveau* or *Chardonnay musqué*. Conventional descriptors that are not likely to confuse the consumer such as unoaked, barrel aged, and reserve may be used with a variety name subject to VQA approval. Numbers are not permitted to be used on the same line as the grape variety name unless with a descriptor that is widely accepted and not confusing such as bin, lot or clone number references.
- Using all or part of a grape variety name in a proprietary name may be permitted if the name is clearly not misleading and if the wine qualifies for the varietal claim and if the grape variety appears in accordance with the rules in another location on the label. Caution should be exercised with shortened terms such as Pinot, Sauvignon or Blanc as they are associated with more than one variety and any abbreviated use may be confusing.
- Vinifera/hybrid blends are only permitted when the hybrid is declared on the label following rules and other requirements for varietal wine. Wines containing hybrid grapes must qualify as a single, dual, triple or multi varietal wine. Hybrid blends that do not meet these requirements may be permitted if all grape content is declared including percentages or each component.
- Declared varieties must be listed in descending order of content, in identical type and size.
- Rules for listing grape varieties apply to any declaration of the variety name, including within the back label text and in "off-label" descriptions. For example, if two varieties are named in the back label text description, the wine must qualify as a dual varietal wine.
- Wines that do not qualify as dual or triple varietals may list two or three varieties respectively only if actual percentages of the varietal content are declared.



- Examples:  
A blend of 95% Shiraz, 5% Viognier does not qualify as a dual varietal because the second variety is less than 15%. This wine may not be labelled Shiraz-Viognier but may be labelled "95% Shiraz 5% Viognier". A blend of 50% Riesling, 42% Gewurztraminer, 8% Chardonnay qualifies as a dual varietal but does not qualify as a triple varietal. It may be labelled Riesling-Gewurztraminer or with all three varieties with percentage content declared.

### Varietal Content Requirements

VARIETAL	REQUIREMENTS
Single Varietal	The wine must be made from at least 85% of the grape variety named.
Dual Varietal	<p>The wine must be made from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 90% of the two grape varieties named.</li> <li>• At least 15% from the second variety named.</li> </ul> <p>The varieties must be listed on the label in descending order of content.</p>
Triple Varietal	<p>The wine must be made from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 95% of the three grape varieties named</li> <li>• At least 15% from the second variety named</li> <li>• At least 10% from the third variety named</li> </ul> <p>The varieties must be listed on the label in descending order of content.</p>
Multi Varietal	<p>The wine must be made from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 95% of the four or more grape varieties named</li> </ul> <p>The varieties must be listed on the label in descending order of content.</p>
Non-Varietal (No varieties are referenced anywhere on the label)	The wine must be made entirely from Vitis vinifera grape varieties if it is not labelled as a varietal wine.

## Rules for Hybrid Grapes

Wines made with authorized [hybrid grapes](#) must carry the geographical indication "Ontario" and cannot use more specific appellations. Wines declaring a [viticultural area](#) name, a [sub-appellation](#) name, a vineyard name, and/or the designations: estate bottled, traditional method or Icewine, must be made from 100% [vitis vinifera](#) grapes. An exception is made for Vidal Icewine.

Blends of hybrid grapes and vinifera grapes are allowed only if:

- the geographical indication declared is Ontario.
- the wine is made as a varietal wine and the name of the hybrid grape variety is declared on the label.
- all other applicable VQA requirements are met.

## ORGANIC LABELLING

Organic or "green" label claims fall under federal labelling guidelines and regulations and are not regulated by the Appellation Authority.

## OTHER LABEL CONTENT

Federal wine labelling requirements are reviewed as part of the wine approval process and non-compliance will be noted if observed, but these requirements are enforced by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency. Other label content that is not regulated by the Appellation Authority includes brand names, generic descriptors such as "reserved", "oaked", "first press" and descriptive back label text that describes wine character (unless it uses regulated terms or it is clearly misleading as to the physical content of the wine).



## UNFILTERED AND BOTTLED WITH LEES WINES

Wines may be designated "Unfiltered" and "Bottled with its Lees". The following rules apply for these categories:

A wine that is submitted and labelled "Bottled with its Lees" are exempt from the maximum turbidity limits established under the rules;

- A wine that is submitted labelled "Unfiltered" may not exceed turbidity limits of 20 N.T.U. for white wines and 40 N.T.U. for red wines;
- Wines that show any signs of refermentation or significant microbiological instability may be denied approval, even if they meet the turbidity limits;
- Only the terms "Unfiltered" and "Bottled with its lees" are permitted to be displayed on the label and must be declared on the application for approval.

## SKIN-FERMENTED WHITE

Skin Fermented White wines (SFW) are subject to the following unique rules.

- Intention to produce this category must be registered at the time of harvest and pressing (approx. mid-November)
- 100% of the grapes must be fermented on their skins for a minimum of 10 days with fermentation occurring when the skins are present
- Skin Fermented White must be declared on the principal display panel in a type size not less than 2 mm and at least as large as the varietal declaration
- Nothing can be written between the grape variety name(s) and Skin Fermented White.
- If no grape varieties are declared on the principal display panel, the term Skin Fermented White must appear in a type size not less than 3.2 mm
- The terms Amber Wine, Orange Wine or Vin Orange can be used, but only in a type size no larger than Skin Fermented White
- If the wine is bottled with its lees, the label must declare "Bottled with Lees"

## EFFERVESCENT WINES

Effervescent wines are slightly fizzy and have a pressure in the bottle between 200 and 300 kPa (2-3 bar). The effervescence must be exclusively from a primary or secondary fermentation in a closed vessel. "Pet-Nat" wines may fit in this category if they meet the pressure requirements.

Effervescent wines are not Sparkling wines and the term “Sparkling Wine” or the methods of production associated with sparkling wines in the VQA regulation cannot be used on the label.

## SPARKLING WINES

There are 3 levels of Sparkling wines.

Sparkling Wine (Minimum standard to declare “Sparkling” on the label)

- Minimum pressure in the bottle at least 300 kPa (3 bar)
- The effervescence must be exclusively from a primary or secondary fermentation in a closed vessel (no external carbonation)
- No aging requirements apply
- Labelled with the Ontario appellation only
- Prohibited from declaring methods of production including Cuve Close, Charmat, Traditional or Classic

Cuve Close or Charmat Sparkling Wine

- Minimum pressure in the bottle at least 300 kPa (3 bar)
- The effervescence must be exclusively from a primary or secondary fermentation in a closed vessel larger than 5 litres (no external carbonation)
- Minimum time on lees 80 days or 30 days using a mixer
- Minimum total production cycle 6 months
- Labelled with an appellation or sub-appellation only
- Must declare applicable method of production, either Cuve Close or Charmat
- Charmat method wines are Cuve Close wines that have undergone a secondary fermentation

Commented [HL1]: updated

Traditional Method Sparkling Wine

- Minimum pressure in the bottle at least 300 kPa (3 bar)
- The effervescence must be exclusively from a secondary fermentation in the glass bottle that will be sold to the consumer (no external carbonation)
- Minimum time on lees 9 months, 12 months if vintage dated
- Labelled with an appellation or sub-appellation only
- Must declare method of production in accordance with regulation



## VQA LOGO

A new VQA logo was adopted on September 5, 2019. Going forward, all new applications of the logo should be compliant with the new graphics standards. Existing inventory of labels and packaging using the older version of the logo will be accepted for a transition period up to July 31, 2024.

If used, the VQA logo must appear on the container of a VQA wine in accordance with the VQA Ontario Graphics Standards Manual, March 24, 2023. The manual provides for minimum and maximum sizes, approved colours and presentations. In brief, the logo must appear gold on black, between 15- and 25-mm square.

A winery may choose to omit the logo from the wine label if the appellation declaration, including the VQA letters, appears on the principal display panel in a font size of at least 3.2 mm, based on the smallest letter in the declaration. An example of the appellation declaration is "VQA Ontario VQA" or "VQA Four Mile Creek VQA".

The use of the VQA logo in association with wine is regulated by law in Ontario. The VQA logo is also protected under federal trademark and intellectual property law in Canada and other countries. It may be used only with the express and written agreement of VQA Ontario and Wine Growers Canada, who is the owner of the mark.

## CONTAINERS AND CLOSURES

**VQA wines must be packaged in accordance with the regulations. Glass bottles sealed with suitable closures along with non-glass packaging set out below are permitted.**

Sizes for retail sale are regulated by federal legislation and are restricted to: 50, 100, 200, 250, 375, 500, or 750 millilitres, or 1, 1.5, 3 or 4 litres in size.

### NON-GLASS CONTAINERS

VQA wines may be packaged in containers other than glass bottles.

Permitted alternative containers include stainless steel kegs and containers made of aluminum, plastic (PET), or multi layer containers such as TetraPak or bag-in-box. These containers may be used under the following conditions:

- The date on which the container was filled must appear on the container in plain language format. Examples of acceptable formats: July 1, 2012, 01-07-2012, 01-JL-12. Formats such as 365-day codes are not sufficient.
- The packaging must comply with the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act (Canada).
- The wine shall be packaged in accordance with good manufacturing practices appropriate to the container used. Good manufacturing practices include such things as following the container manufacturers guidelines, setting up equipment properly and using accepted practices related to hygiene and quality control. Where reusable containers are used such as stainless-steel kegs, appropriate attention must be paid to cleaning and hygiene of the containers, feed lines and taps.
- The container must be closed with a tamper evident seal that preserves the quality of the wine. Closures could include screwcaps, crown caps, spigots or other closures that have demonstrated suitability for use with wine and that effectively limit the migration of gases at a rate appropriate to the container.
- Reasonable efforts must be made to monitor the shelf life of the wine and manage inventory to ensure that quality is maintained up to the point of sale. Many containers have a finite shelf life that can vary based on the characteristics of the wine, closures used and storage conditions. Wineries are expected to take these factors into consideration and monitor and manage inventory accordingly so that wine spoilage is avoided. The Appellation Authority carries out a random monitoring program and may suspend or revoke wine approvals for non-compliant packaging.

As noted above, federal container size restrictions apply to all wine sold directly to consumers. Wine may be packaged for sale to wholesalers (licensees) in any type of container up to a maximum volume of 20 litres if the purpose of the container is for resale in smaller servings. No VQA wine shall be sold in a container greater than 20 litres except for bulk wine sales between licensed VQA wineries. Any bulk sale or transfer to a non-VQA member will immediately invalidate the wine's VQA status.

For stainless steel kegs supplied to wholesale customers, all the mandatory VQA labelling information must accompany the container – either on a label, stencil or attached to the individual keg.

The use of alternative packages must be declared as part of the VQA application process and all labels for these packages are subject to approval. If you are using multiple container formats for the same wine, please check off as many container types as apply when applying for a wine approval. All labels must be submitted if different labels are to be used.

### Submitting an application for wine approval

A request for VQA wine approval may be made by a VQA member winery through the secure VQA Services website. See detailed steps in the procedure under in Once logged in, access the application process under "Wine Approvals" by selecting "New Approval". Have the following information ready: wine description, varietal content with litres and brix for all components, declarations that you intend to make on the label, and a pdf or jpeg version of your proposed label to upload, including a scale.

Once you have completed the application, prepare samples of the wine that are stable, finished and ready to bottle.

Please send:

- Completely finished, stable wines in clean containers, at least 500 mL in volume
- Screw capped sample bottles whenever possible
- Accurately labelled samples with the VQA application ID number on each bottle (so that it cannot rub or rip off)

Do NOT send:

- Wines that are still fermenting
- Barrel samples that will continue aging in oak after sampling
- Anything that is not completely finished and ready to bottle up to final sulphur adjustment or filtering that occurs on the bottling line
- Wines that are not exactly representative of what you stated in the application and the exact blend you intend to bottle

If you alter the wine after submitting samples, especially if the alcohol, residual sugar, or blend changes, you must resubmit a new application and new samples. Random re-analysis is conducted on approved wines and, if it shows you have released a different wine than the one that was approved, the wine the approval may be revoked.

#### SAMPLE SUBMISSIONS

All samples for testing are sent to the OWAA office. Please send two, 750mL bottle samples per application with the VQA ID number from the application clearly marked on both bottles and a printed copy of the shipping form, printed from VQA Services to:

Ontario Wine Appellation Authority  
5775 Yonge Street, Suite 1220  
Toronto, Ontario M2M 4J1

#### SENSORY EVALUATION

Taste tests are conducted on Wednesdays by a panel of qualified tasters. All tasting is conducted blind at the Appellation Authority office tasting facilities. Time and space are limited, especially in busy periods. Winery members can check the VQA Services website sidebar for any changes to the procedure. Please plan accordingly.

#### LABORATORY ANALYSIS

Laboratory analysis is conducted weekly over a period of days. Results are typically available on Fridays.

##### BASIC LAB

##### FULL LAB

Effective May 30, OWAA will offer an option in the wine approval application to select a Basic lab analysis instead of the Full LCBO analysis. The Basic analysis will be completed by the CCOVI laboratory at Brock University, will include only 4 tests and verify VQA compliance only.

If selected, the Basic option will replace the current Full LCBO analysis. The option to choose a Full LCBO analysis will remain available. The approval fee with Basic analysis will be \$235 and with Full analysis, \$310 - expected to increase to \$335 to cost recover recently increased pricing.

Be aware that a Full LCBO Certificate of Analysis is required to sell in most channels except your Winery Retail Store, so the Basic option may not be appropriate for some or all of your VQA wine applications.

Within the wine approval application, wineries will now have 3 choices for analytical testing:

1. Basic analysis for VQA compliance (NEW)
2. Full LCBO analysis
3. Full LCBO analysis with EU export certificate

Basic analysis is the minimum analysis required to evaluate your wine for VQA approval. It includes alcohol content, volatile acidity, turbidity and total reducing sugars.

Full analysis is the standard package set by LCBO, including the 4 Basic analytes plus sulphites, heavy metals, pesticide residues, etc.

Your choice will impact the channels where the wine can be sold without further testing. CHOOSE CAREFULLY!

IN MOST CASES, CHOOSE basic testing if these conditions apply:

- A Full LCBO analysis will be obtained at a later date before release in any other channel except Winery Retail Store (WRS)
- Wine will be sold exclusively through WRS, outside of Ontario or channels not considered to be an "LCBO sale"

- Wine will NOT be sold to licensees, tied house or By the Glass
- EU export certificate is NOT required
- Full Certificate of Analysis is NOT required for any other purpose such as customs, importer, distributor or buyer
- Winery is prepared to obtain the Full LCBO analysis from LCBO at a later date if needed, at the full price

#### IMPORTANT

This choice cannot be changed once the application is submitted, and no refunds can be provided once the sample is accepted for testing. This is due to constraints within the automated systems in use.

If further analysis is required after the application is submitted, this can be requested only after the approval is completed, including payment and label review. It will require a new sample for the LCBO at an additional cost of \$275 for the full analysis.

If an EU export certificate is required after receiving an approval based on Basic testing, a Full analysis plus Total Acidity test will be required to generate the EU forms.

OWAA cannot take any responsibility for the requirements of any other regulator, agency, retailer, purchaser or entity for specific analyses not included in the OWAA VQA wine approval process, or for any additional fees or charges that may result from choosing not to obtain a Full LCBO Certificate of Analysis. Please make your decisions accordingly.

LCBO has advised that a Full LCBO Certificate of Analysis is required for wines sold in these channels in Ontario:

- LCBO, including listings for grocery and LCBO online sale
- Direct to licensees



All wines listed for sale by the LCBO normally undergo a full analysis (in addition to the VQA testing, at additional cost to the winery). Wineries should confirm with LCBO whether they can skip the Full analysis embedded in the VQA application process if the wine is listed with the LCBO and will be tested again when shipped.

### LABEL AND PACKAGING REVIEWS

Label reviews are normally conducted within a few days of completion of the tasting and chemical analysis, or after the fee payment is received. Labels should be consistent with declarations on the application and the results of the chemical testing. See "Understanding the Results of the Label Review" later in this document.

**It is strongly recommended you wait to print your labels until after receiving approval.**

### RUSH SERVICE FOR LCBO LABORATORY TESTING

A "rush" laboratory service is available from the LCBO for an additional fee. A rush request can be made online or by calling our office and we will coordinate with the LCBO lab. These requests are at the discretion of the LCBO and we cannot guarantee they will be accepted. If extenuating circumstances require that you need your result urgently, please call the Authority's office and best efforts will be made to accommodate your needs. Please plan ahead to leave some contingency time to complete the approval process and minimize emergencies.

If a RUSH lab request is accepted, the wine must be received at the LCBO before the end of business day on the Friday before the laboratory testing cycle requested. An additional fee of \$167.50 + HST is charged for this service. If the rush request can be accommodated by LCBO, you will be advised and invoiced for this service. RUSH lab is only available for the FULL LCBO Analysis or FULL LCBO Analysis with EU export certificate.

## INTERIM RESULTS

You may check the status of testing anytime by logging into your VQA Services account. Keep in mind that passing one part of the process, such as tasting, does not guarantee that the wine will be approved – bottle and label at your own risk.

LCBO reports the results of all lab testing to the Appellation Authority – they will not release information directly to the winery. Analysis results are posted as soon as they are received.

Approval applications must be completed within 12 months of the initial submission. Applications that remain active beyond 12 months because of missing samples, labels or payment will be closed and finalized as not approved.

Approved wines that were evaluated based on ready to bottle tank samples must be bottled within 12 months of the date the samples were received for evaluation.

## Using the VQA services application to submit and track your approvals

### APPROVAL STATUS - Wine Approvals main page

This page lists all of your approval applications and results. It can be configured to your personal preferences.

“Filter by Application Status” – check boxes to choose what applications you wish to see (in progress, approved, not approved or any combination);

Find a specific Wine by entering the Wine ID in the text box (enter with format 9999.9999 and click Select button);

“Reset all Filters” to revert back to the system default settings which shows all applications except for those that have been withdrawn or revoked.

See the “Legend for Activities” to decode the symbols and find out the status of each element of the application.

Click on an individual Wine ID number to view application details. Note that all grid columns are sortable by clicking on the column title name.

“Wine Approval Search” – this link displays a new page with advanced search capability which enables you to search and filter through all your VQA applications by details such as vintage, 1<sup>st</sup> variety, wine category, brand names and appellation. For example, if you are looking for all sparkling wines you have submitted, this is available on the search page.

Information on main grid:

- **Wine ID** – the unique number assigned to the wine submission and subsequent approval.
- **Reference, brands, vintage, category** – basic descriptive information on the wine. Note that the wine category shows the most basic category (ex. Table, Sparkling, Icewine)
- **Overall status** – current status of application (Waiting on Shipment, In Progress, Approved, Not Approved, Withdrawn Cancelled or Revoked).
- **Request Date** – date of the last request submitted by the winery. Initially this is the date of first application. The date will change each time a wine is “Re-Submitted”
- **Shipment Date** – date the bottles were received by LCBO.
- **Label Review** – status of label review. Normally completed only after all other tests are complete and payment received.
- **Lab Test** – status of lab testing
- **Taste Test** – status of taste testing
- **Taste Test Date** – scheduled upcoming tasting date
- **EU Export (VI-1)** – status of the certificate for export certification to Europe, if requested
- Number of rows to display per page at the bottom of page
- Submit a “New Approval” button at the bottom of page

#### INFORMATION ON INDIVIDUAL APPROVAL APPLICATIONS

When you click on a wine approval ID# from the main approvals grid, you will access the following detail via links on the top navigation bar:

**General** – information from the application

**History** – a history of steps/processes that have been completed for this application

**Shipments** – status of sample shipment at LCBO

**Taste tests** – results of the sensory evaluation when complete, including reasons for failure if applicable

**Lab tests** – analytical results when complete for alcohol, Free SO<sub>2</sub> and reducing sugars, and any analyte that exceeds limits

**Label reviews** – results of the label review with comments (both advisory and requiring correction if the label is not compliant)

**Edit Application** – to edit the application (available only before your samples are received). For changes post-sample receipt, please contact the office.

**EU Export (VI-1)** – to request a VI-1 certificate after a wine has been approved or to request additional original copies. The initial request for the VI-1 certificate requires a test for Total Acidity (fee applies).

**Re-Submit Application** – this link will only appear only if a wine has failed a test and has the status of “Not Approved”.

**Add-ons** – several options can be added to your initial application, including EU Export VI-1 certification or a “Rush” service. “Rush” service requests must be accepted by the LCBO and cannot be guaranteed. We will contact you to advise if the request is accepted.

**Forms and Reports** – Documentation for the wine including Shipping Form, Certificate of Origin, APEC Export Certificate, and Certificate of Analysis. The C of A is not available until the wine is Approved, please contact the office if you wish to see analytical data for wines that are Not Approved.

**Withdraw Application** – request to stop the processing of a VQA application at any stage of the approval process. Any expenses associated with partially completed testing will be invoiced.

## APPROVAL DOCUMENTATION

The Appellation Authority reviews the tasting, testing and label results to verify QA rules have been met and issues a “Notice of Completion” by email. Notice of Completion is not an approval, you must login to your account to see the results of the application. The wine is not approved until the results are finalized as “Approved” on the Wine Approvals page on the VQA Services website. Approved wines are indicated by a green checkmark under status in the listing of your applications. Please look over the label review page for every wine – approved or not – to see comments on label compliance.

A confirmation of approval and certificate of origin is available for all approved wines under the “Forms & Reports” tab for each wine. Here you can print a “Proof of VQA status” suitable for LCBO or other customers or a detailed report on the assessment process for your internal files.

Laboratory Certificates of Analysis are available for printing directly from your online account once the approval has been completed. Certificates are released only for approved wines and not for wines that have not been approved for any reason. Access your certificate of analysis is through the “Forms & Reports” tab. Please contact the office if you do not find your certificate posted to the online site.

If you have any questions during the approval process, contact us, we’re here to help.

No approvals will be issued if:

- Any one of the taste test, lab test or packaging review is either not passed or not completed
- All fees have not been paid
- There are discrepancies with declared information about the wine and audit findings

You may not sell your wine using any VQA terms before having received a formal approval.

After receiving a “Not Approved” result for any reason, the online re-submission process must be followed to re-activate the application. Do this by clicking on the wine ID and then clicking on “Re-Submit Application” and following the instructions. If there is more than one test that failed (i.e. tasting and label), please ensure both items are re-submitted. The wine will then be reset to “Submitted” status.

Do not assume that you can correct identified deficiencies, such as correcting the alcohol on the label, and then release the wine without resubmission and approval. Also note, that although a wine may have passed all three components of the evaluation, it may not be granted approval if the required fee is not paid. You cannot release any wine using VQA terms until the approval process has been formally completed and the wine’s status has been changed to “Approved”. Selling a VQA wine without a formal approval is an offence under the VQA Act, independent of whether the wine might be found compliant in future.

### Understanding the results of the label review

The label review page documents any comments or deficiencies found on the label submitted. Certain things may be flagged but will not result in a failure. The winery must ensure final packaging is compliant. They include:

- Failure to provide a scale so that font size requirements can be assessed. This will be noted but the approval will not be withheld unless it is obvious that the label does not meet the requirements.
- Missing VQA logo when it is indicated on the application that a standard capsule with the official VQA logos will be used. A statement indicating the logo was not submitted for review will be included but the approval will not be withheld on the basis of the commitment to apply the logo.
- Non-compliance with federal requirements such as font, format or placement of mandatory declarations for common name, net contents, alcohol, country of origin, dealers name or allergens.
- Typos or grammatical errors unless they are misleading or confusing.

If the label review is “failed”, the label is not compliant and must not be used. A failed label means the wine is not approved. The non-compliant item(s) that require corrections will be identified. Please review them and contact us if you need clarification.

Common reasons for label failure include:

- The appellation or varieties declared on the label do not match the application
- Unfiltered or Bottled with Lees was declared on the application but missing from the label
- Alcohol declared deviates by more than 1% from actual
- Vineyard designation appears on the label but not declared on application
- Various mandatory declarations are missing, such as Skin Fermented White, or method of production for traditional method wines

If the approval is denied because labels do not meet the standards, you can resubmit the application (online) upload the corrected labels. Once an approval is granted based on the corrected labels, make sure these correct labels are applied to the wine. If you apply a label that has previously failed, an order will be issued requiring removal from sale pending correction. Further penalties may apply.

### Second Labels or New Labels

Labels may be changed or added after approval if they remain in compliance with the VQA regulations. Contact us for review of all new labels to make sure they are compliant and to have them added to the approval file.

### Re-submissions

A wine that fails may be re-submitted for retesting and further evaluation for all or some components. The re-submitted wine must be identical in content to the original submission. Treatments such as clarification, filtering, copper treatments, aeration or other mechanical treatments are permitted but changes in the content are not.

If the creation of a new sample involves re-blending and any change in varietal or vintage content, any change in pH, residual sugar, or other chemical or flavour attributes, the wine must be submitted as a new request for approval. Adjustments to sulphur and sorbic acid are permitted. The approval process, including all re-submissions must be completed within 12 months.

**Re-tasting:** A wine that fails the sensory portion of the evaluation may be submitted for reconsideration twice. If the wine fails all three tastings, it may be submitted for a further evaluation by an independent taste panel. The decision of the independent panel is final.

**Re-testing:** A wine may be resubmitted for laboratory testing for one or more chemical attributes. For example, if a wine fails because of unacceptable levels of Free SO<sub>2</sub>, it may be retested for this attribute alone. The content of the wine must not be altered from the originally submitted sample.

**Re-submission of labels:** Revised labels may be resubmitted at any time during an active application. The label that appears on the final product must match the label that was submitted and approved. If additional labels are added after a wine is approved, contact the office and we will approve and upload them for you.

The Appellation Authority conducts regular sampling of approved wines after release and performs chemical analysis to confirm that the wines are the same as the samples submitted for approval. Regular label checks are also conducted. Discrepancies between samples and content of approved wines and verification samples will result in the suspension of the wine approval and removal from sale.

To resubmit a wine application for re-tasting, re-lab or an additional label review, the application must first be finalized as **NOT APPROVED**. This requires that all three elements – lab test, tasting, and label review, be completed with results reported AND payment received for the application.



Once an application is set to NOT APPROVED, a winery can login to VQA Member Services, select the wine application and then choose “re-submit” from the options. If a wine is re-submitted for lab testing only, the applicant will choose “lab” and the elements required to be re-tested. LCBO charges a fee for re-testing in the lab. Please see the fee schedule or VQA Member Services for details. If a wine has failed the tasting, it can be re-submitted for tasting only for a fee of \$116. If a wine application has failed the label review, it can be re-submitted for label review only. There is no fee for a label review. The winery will upload new files, only.

### SUPPLEMENTARY APPROVALS

A Supplementary Approval for a wine can be requested by the purchasing winery when the purchased wine is VQA-approved and bottled within the 12-month period. A reduced approval fee will apply. These requests will be reviewed by OWAA staff. If the request is approved, the purchasing winery will be required to provide a compliant label for the wine but the wine will not be subject to further lab testing or the tasting panel. The original Certificate of Analysis (COA) can be obtained from the winery that had the wine tested. If a new COA or EU export forms are required the wine must be lab tested at the expense of the purchasing winery.

## Use of VQA regulated terms before a wine is released

The use of VQA terms for pre-release advertising will be acceptable when the wine is not yet approved if it is clearly eligible for approval and the use of terms is accompanied by a disclaimer. The following standardized disclaimer must be used:

Disclaimer - This wine has not yet been approved by the Appellation Authority. The use of certain descriptive terms that are regulated under the VQA Act is subject to final testing and approval by the wine authority.

The disclaimer must appear in printed or electronic documents and media that describe a particular wine that is not yet approved. It must appear in a legible fashion in a location that is reasonably close to where the VQA terms are used. VQA terms may never be used on the labels or packaging of a wine that is not approved and, in the event that the wine has been submitted and not approved, all references to VQA terms must be immediately discontinued in promotional materials.

## Exporting VQA wines

Each country has its own product standards and customs procedures. It is highly recommended that you find out what they are before your shipment leaves Canada. Shipments without proper documentation or that do not comply with local requirements are often impounded, delayed or destroyed at significant expense to the producer.

### COUNTRIES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN UNION – EXPORT CERTIFICATE REQUIRED FOR ENTRY

An original, serial numbered, stamped and signed export certificate (known as a VI-1 form) is required to accompany each wine in each shipment. This form must be issued by the Appellation Authority.

Small shipments may be exempted if the total consolidated shipment is less than 100 litres (including all wines in the skid, container etc. even if from different producers). Therefore, if 12 wineries get together to each ship a single case of wine to a competition, each wine will need to be accompanied by a VI-1 form.

VI-1 forms require an additional laboratory test for Total Acidity and can be ordered as part of the wine approval application process or can be ordered after a wine is approved (online under Wine Approvals). An ingredient list must be provided to complete the form. A fee is charged for the initial order but unlimited extra copies may be ordered free of charge for additional shipments of the same wine.

VI-1 orders require access to the VQA Services website. If you do not have login credentials, please contact the person at your winery to access the system.

The Appellation Authority cannot issue a VI-1 form for any wines or grape products that are not VQA-approved.

## OTHER COUNTRIES

### Asia Pacific Economies (APEC)

For VQA-approved wines to be exported to APEC member economies, a “Model Export Certificate” is available from the Forms and Reports report page under each individual wine ID. Use this form to accompany your shipment. Other documents may also be required – consult customs or your importer. The Canadian government is currently negotiating formal acceptance of this form plus the Certificate of Analysis to replace the Certificate of Origin, Certificate of Hygiene and Certificate of Free Sale.

**For more information or assistance, please contact any of the Ontario Wine Appellation Authority team.**

## Wine transfers online

All inter-winery transfers must be registered so that the origin and composition of all wine can be verified through the audit process and the transferred wine remains eligible for VQA approval. The Seller must enter the transfer information before the wine leaves the Seller’s premises. This includes registered Icewine juice.

When the buyer is ready to submit a wine containing the transferred wine or juice for approval, this component will be available to select as part of the declared composition.

Enter or view wine and juice transfers to and from your winery on the Wine Transfer page on VQA Services.

- Select the Seller tab to enter new transfers to other wineries or view previously entered transfers
- Include “juice” in the optional comments if it is not wine
- Select the Buyer tab to view transfers to your winery from other wineries
- Transfer information can be exported to an Excel file for manipulation and viewing

## Skin-Fermented White wine tracking

Grapes intended for use in Skin-Fermented White wines must be registered by November 15 of the current vintage year or within 10 days of harvest. Failure to pre-register grapes for this purpose will disqualify the grapes or juice for use in VQA Skin Fermented White wines. We recommend you register these grapes if you think you might make this style of wine – you can repurpose them to table wines later if desired.

To register, select the Skin Fermented White page from the main menu in VQA Services.

## Icewine and Late Harvest grape registration and juice testing

Grapes intended to be used to produce Icewine must be registered with the Appellation Authority no later than November 15 of the vintage year. Grapes may be registered by VQA wineries or independent grape growers. Completing Grape Growers Ontario requirements is NOT sufficient.

Make sure you are familiar with the rules and procedures for Icewine and Late Harvest before the season starts. Failure to register grapes or provide the required information when due can mean the difference between your juice/wine being eligible to be labelled or sold in the specified category or not.

Protect yourself – make sure the VQA requirements are met and you have the documents you need before you take delivery of grapes or juice that you purchase. Wineries and growers: make sure one of you, but only one of you, registers the grapes!

**Please note: No registration is needed for "regular" harvest grapes if harvest is delayed past November 15 due to the vintage conditions. Registration is required only for grapes intended for Icewine, Late Harvest and Skin Fermented White wines.**

## GRAPE REGISTRATION

All Icewine and Late Harvest grapes must be registered in the GGO system by November 15 and a valid electronic weigh slip (as recorded in the GGO system) must be available for audit. All VQA Icewine and Late Harvest grape registrations are reconciled with GGO records as part of the verification process. All grapes processed for all VQA wines must be documented in the GGO system.

All registrations must be completed online and on time. There is no grace period and the online system automatically blocks access after specified deadlines.

Before November 15, login to the VQA Services website and go to the Icewine page:

- Select “New Registration” to enter new Icewine and Late Harvest registrations.
- Complete one electronic form for each grape variety within a single contiguous vineyard. You do not have to complete multiple registrations for multiple blocks of grapes (same grape variety) that are in the same vineyard. You may however, choose to split one variety into several blocks if selling to different buyers.
- Please take care to fill in the form accurately and completely. All mandatory information must be provided - otherwise the submission will be rejected. Make every effort to accurately estimate tonnage.
- Look for your vineyard in the pulldown list. If you cannot find it, you will have to create a new vineyard profile using the “vineyard” button. We recommend you include the variety name in the name of the vineyard e.g. Smith Vineyard Cab Franc, since you will need to create a separate vineyard name for each variety. Once you have filled in all the information, click “save”. (If the save button is not clicked, all information will be lost when you leave the page).
- Once you have completed your grape registrations, return to the main grid listing to confirm all have been saved.
- You can re-enter the site at any time and review your entries to date but you cannot create or change any entries after November 15. Wineries that are contracting grapes from independent growers are encouraged to complete the registration forms. This works well if you are the sole purchaser of all grapes from the registered parcel. The same person (member ID) must complete all forms from grape registration through to harvest, pressing and transfer.
- Wineries – if your contracted grower registers the grapes, he/she will have to complete all of the harvest records and fill out a transfer record to you.

## HARVEST REPORTING

When you are ready to harvest:

- Text **EDM Associates (Errol McKibbin) at 289-219-3065** when picking begins and to test the brix for each batch and record volumes. Ensure proper registration ID numbers are recorded with the test results.
- Record the actual (frozen) tonnes harvested.
- A batch can be any amount of grapes harvested from a single vineyard registration and pressed in a continuous process. A batch could be from grapes harvested every day for several days but not on two separate days a week apart.
- Do not mix grapes from several different vineyards in the same batch.
- Ensure samples are documented, verified and tested retained.
- After harvest, record harvest and pressing details for each batch of grapes pressed. The juice reported in the harvest form must come from the grapes registered under that registration number. For each harvest, enter all icewine eligible juice under the "First Pressing" tab. If you do a second for Late Harvest, record this juice under the "Second Pressing" tab. If there are more than two pressings for any individual harvest, enter the total litres of Icewine under "First Pressing" tab and the total of litres of Late Harvest under the "Second Pressing" tab. Use the weighted average for these entries.
- After harvest and pressing information is entered, check the main grid to ensure that all the required information is saved and that all harvests have been entered. All columns should contain data unless the grapes were not harvested.
- If juice has been sold to a producer other than the registering grower/winery, the transfer should be entered online (see Inter-Winery Wine and Juice Transfers).

To transfer Late Harvest juice or Icewine to another winery or grower:

- Go to the transfers page – have the IMS registration number handy

## HELPFUL HINTS FOR ICEWINE

**Do not** blend tanks of juice originating from more than one lot of registered grapes before getting the Brix test results from EDM Associates.

Make sure the juice recorded on harvest forms comes only from grapes registered on the linked registration record. You may create as many harvest records as needed for each acreage/tonnage of grapes registered. Do not create a single "batch" from juice from two or more registration ID numbers – until after you have recorded and registered each harvest volume separately. Each grape registration ID must result in at least one batch of juice matching the tonnes and acres specified.

**All juice intended for icewine must be pressed within 7 days of harvest.** In the case of extended low temperatures that prevent timely pressing, please contact the VQA offices to discuss exceptions. No exceptions will be permitted without written permission.

**All frozen grapes must be weighed** – do not "guess" at the weight of your grapes – the number needs to be accurate. The Authority checks this data against reasonable yields and recovery and will disqualify juice if it does not make sense or conflicts with other information provided.



## FOR JUICE PURCHASERS

It is the purchaser's responsibility to ensure that the required information has been filed with the Authority, all VQA requirements are met and the juice has been transferred, if they are purchasing late harvest grapes or juice for VQA wines. If a transfer does not exist or does not match harvest data at the time the wine is submitted for approval, it will be rejected. Wineries may want to include a statement in the purchase agreement that the juice must be eligible for VQA Icewine and that a valid transfer to the purchaser is completed.

To get your icewine approved, you will need a valid registration ID or transfer ID for all components of the wine. The Authority will verify the submission against information recorded by EDM Associates and audit information. We will also verify that the reported yields are reasonable. Wine approvals will not be issued unless Icewine registration data supports the information supplied at the time of the approval application. A wine approval will not be issued based on a registration ID where all volume has been cited in a previous approval. Please make sure the correct registration ID(s) are entered with your approval applications!

## FOR INDEPENDENT (NON-VQA WINERY) GROWERS

Independent growers or non-VQA wineries must register with the Authority for an online account to register their grapes and complete the required forms and reports. Icewine juice that remains in the possession of a non-VQA member for more than 7 days after pressing will be subject to VQA audit if the owner wishes to maintain its VQA eligibility.

Growers – if you retain extra juice from a winery contract, you must make arrangements to transfer it to an audited winery facility or arrange for an audit by the Authority. Wineries – if you are buying such juice, please confirm that this has been done.

**Growers retaining juice beyond 7 days for speculation must notify the Authority**

and an audited letter of transfer will be required to verify and document the sale and transfer of juice after that time. No transfer form is needed for processors who are delivering juice pressed from grapes owned by the receiving winery.

**If you do not notify us the juice will lose its status as Icewine!**

Please make a note to remind yourself of this requirement at pressing time.

Wines will not be eligible for VQA status if the documentation is not available, not complete, not correctly filled in or does not match independent test results.

You will be invoiced for monitoring services on a cost-recovery basis, in direct proportion to the number of brix tests conducted for you. All invoices will be sent to the grower or winery who registered the grapes. The Authority will not re-invoice third party purchasers. Growers and wineries with outstanding accounts will not be permitted to register grapes the following season unless their account is paid in full. Interest charges will apply beginning 30 days after the **invoice is issued**.

**Plan ahead to ensure compliance!**

## Audit and inspection

The Appellation Authority is responsible for maintaining the integrity of Ontario's wines of origin by ensuring compliance with rules made under the VQA Act. Education, coaching for compliance and regular engagement during the production cycle support a high level of compliance. Verifying compliance is achieved through wine testing and the winery audit and inspection program.

### Audit

The VQA audit program involves an annual review of winery records and inventory to review compliance with VQA regulations. An auditor will contact you to request records and information in advance of the audit and schedule time for a site visit or to discuss any potential non-compliance.

The audit process reviews grape records registered with Grape Growers Ontario, incoming transfers of grapes, juice or wine, and the composition of all wines by origin, vintage, varietal. Detailed records are required to track the winemaking from harvest through to bottling and sales. Should the audit discover potential for missing records or non-compliant blends etc., these are often related to bulk inventories and can be corrected before a violation occurs.

Please ensure you keep your records up to date and provide them promptly when requested.

### Inspection and investigations

The Appellation Authority conducts regular unannounced inspections at winery retail stores and other retailers, and reviews online sales channels, advertising, social media and other platforms where wines are represented and to consumers. The most common forms of non-compliance are selling a wine using VQA terms before approval is received or using labels that have been changed from the approved version and are not compliant. Do not use any term or description in association with a wine that is not approved or does not qualify to use the specific term. The regulations extend to off label use, including tasting lists, shelf talkers, advertising and online sales.

## Enforcement and penalties

It is a provincial offense to violate provisions of the VQA Act and regulations and non-compliance is subject to enforcement action and penalties. The Appellation Authority is a law enforcement agency and exercises statutory powers to support its mandate.

Many potential violations of VQA regulations are discovered before a wine is approved or released and preventative corrections are often sufficient.

The Appellation Authority uses a risk-based and escalating approach to enforcing compliance. If a violation of VQA regulations is discovered, the first step is to assess the seriousness of the infraction and the potential for corrective actions. The majority of non-compliance is resolved through corrective actions or warnings. Failure to correct infractions or respond to warnings, major violations or chronic non-compliance may result in escalating enforcement actions including compliance orders, wine approval revocations and removal from sale, or charges under the Provincial Offenses Act with fines up to \$100,000.

### IMPORTANT TO NOTE

If you receive correspondence from the Appellation Authority advising you of a rule violation or requesting corrective action – do not ignore this. If you are not clear about the request, or you don't agree with what you are being asked to do, contact the office to discuss your options. Our goal is to find a path to compliance, and there may be ways to resolve the situation without escalating to an enforcement case.

## Appeals

Regulatory decisions, including the refusal, suspension or revocation or wine approvals and compliance orders may be appealed to an independent tribunal. Appeals must be filed with the Licence Appeals Tribunal (“LAT”). Please see their website for more information. <https://tribunalsontario.ca/lat/general-service/appeals-applications/>

## Monthly sales reporting

Submit mandatory monthly VQA Sales Reports

- Upload reports
- Review status of reports
- View adjusted reports

All wineries must complete and upload a monthly VQA sales report. This report is completed by filling out the “VQAO Sales Report” tab of the LCBO Winery Reporting Template (also called the “J-10”). The report is due on the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the month following the month of the reporting period.

The reporting package may be downloaded from the sidebar of the VQA Services website.

To upload the report, complete the sales report form and go to the Sales Reporting page. Acceptable formats are an Excel .xlsx (macros disabled) or a .pdf file. Have the electronic report file and total VQA litres sold (all channels) for the period ready when uploading.

Select New Sales Report, then select the applicable month, enter the total litres and upload the excel version of the Winery Reporting Template (J-10) or extracted pdf VQAO Sales Report page. The application will ask whether you are uploading a J10 form – please answer yes if you are uploading the xlsx version of the entire J10 package. This is our preferred format and will auto-generate your invoice. Other formats require manual validation, and you can expect to see an invoice within 24 hours.



A VQA sales report must be filed even if the winery has no VQA sales for the period. In this case, go to the upload feature, select the applicable period and check “no sales for this month”.

The invoice for sales levies owing will be generated and appear under the Invoices & Payments page. Please also remember to submit your Winery Reporting Template separately to the LCBO by email.

### **Adjustments to VQA sales reports**

Uploaded sales reports that report a different value for total VQA sales on the form than entered with the submission will be rejected. If a report is rejected, please recheck the litres entered against the litres reported on the form (Total VQA sales in all channels – top right on the “VQAO Sales Report” sheet in the excel package) and re-enter the report with the correct litres. If you have difficulty or require an adjustment after a report has been filed, please contact the office.

#### **IMPORTANT TO NOTE**

The Appellation Authority uses sales reports as part of the overall reconciliation of wine production, content and sales. It is important that these reports are accurate. Missing reports and overdue payments may lead to a suspension of your VQA membership.

Inaccurate reports may lead to discrepancies when audited and could ultimately lead to enforcement actions if declared production volumes or sales cannot be verified.

## Invoices & payments

Find all of your invoices online. This page displays invoices for all VQA services. You may pay by cheque or by a credit card registered with the Stripe provider (see edit profile on your account to set up a card).

- The page view can be filtered in various ways – by payment status, type, time range, etc. You can also search by invoice ID or wine ID. If you have difficulty finding an invoice, make sure you have set all filters to display all – especially the time range.
- Outstanding invoices will have a selectable box in the left column.
- To view or print invoices, click on the Adobe icon in the right column to bring up the pdf.
- To expand or collapse invoice details, click on the “+/-” symbol.

To pay a single invoice

- To pay an invoice by cheque, confirm the cheque is for the correct amount, write the invoice ID# on your cheque and send it to us, it will be recorded as paid when received.
- To pay an invoice by credit card, select the box adjacent to the invoice and then “Choose Payment Method”. Select credit card. The payment will be charged to the card set up with the Stripe payment service.

To pay multiple invoices with a single payment

- Select all the boxes adjacent to the invoices you wish to pay (or “Select All” to pay all outstanding invoices). The total will be displayed in the “Amount” box. Don’t forget to adjust the filters and page length to look for older invoices if necessary.
- Select “Choose Payment Method” to choose online or cheque payment. An aggregate invoice will be created with a list of all individual services and the total amount. These aggregate invoices can be found under the separate tab “Aggregate (Bulk) Invoices”.
- Please remember to note the “Invoice ID” of the Aggregate invoice on your cheque and please contact us if you notice a cheque has not been posted within a few weeks of mailing.

## Quick reference guides

- Regulated terms
- Key labelling requirements
- Permitted grape varieties
- Brix
- Chemical analysis
- Preparing for your audit
- Fee schedule





## Quick reference guide – Regulated terms

The following terms are regulated and may be used only with authorization from the Appellation Authority and on wines that meet the associated standard. Variations such as alternative spellings, abbreviations or using any portion of these terms are not permitted without approval.

GENERAL	GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND TERMS INDICATING ORIGIN	TERMS RELATED TO PROCESS AND COMPOSITION
VQA logo	Ontario	Meritage
VQA	Niagara Peninsula	Icewine, Icewine Dosage, Dosage of Icewine, Sparkling Icewine
Vintners Quality Alliance	Niagara-on-the-Lake	Botrytized, Botrytis Affected, B.A., Totally Botrytized, Totally Botrytis Affected, T.B.A.
	Niagara River	Late Harvest, Select Late Harvest, Special Select Late Harvest
	Niagara Lakeshore	Vin du Curé, Appassimento
	Four Mile Creek	Blanc de Noirs
	West Niagara	
	St. David's Bench	
	Niagara Escarpment	
	Lincoln Lakeshore	
	Creek Shores	
	Beamsville Bench	
	Twenty Mile Bench	
	Short Hills Bench	
	Vinemount Ridge	
	Lake Erie North Shore	



GENERAL	GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATIONS AND TERMS INDICATING ORIGIN	TERMS RELATED TO PROCESS AND COMPOSITION
	South Islands	
	Prince Edward County	
	Estate Bottled	
	Vineyard (when used to denote a specific named location where the grapes were grown)	



## Quick reference guide - Key labelling requirements

FEDERAL MANDATORY	WHERE	RULES/CONTENT
Alcohol Net contents Product of Canada Common name (Wine)	In a single field of vision with each other (consumer can see all without turning the container)	Bilingual At least 1.6 mm font size, format correct Numerals in net contents at least 3.2 mm Alcohol within $\pm 1\%$ of actual tested Alcohol within min./max. limits for category (e.g., 7.0 – 14.9% for table wine) Example, 12.5% alc./vol., 750 mL Product of/Produit du Canada, Wine/Vin
Allergen warning	Anywhere	Contains sulphites/contient des sulfites Must be distinct and separate, see <a href="https://inspection.canada.ca/food-label-requirements/labelling/industry/list-of-ingredients-and-allergens/eng/1383612857522/1383612932341?chap=0#s8c2s">https://inspection.canada.ca/food-label-requirements/labelling/industry/list-of-ingredients-and-allergens/eng/1383612857522/1383612932341?chap=0#s8c2s</a>
Producer name and address	Anywhere	Name, city/town, province or Canada

VQA MANDATORY		
Appellation with VQA letters	Principal display panel (the "real" front label)	At least 2 mm, clearly legible with contrast At least 3.2 mm if no VQA logo on package Same typeface, colour and size, on same line At least 85% (100% for sub-apps) from stated appellation Consistent with application (label cannot make an origin claim more specific than what is stated on the application) Ontario only for hybrids, non-vintage table wine and Sparkling that does not meet Traditional Method requirements
VQA logo (not required if appellation is at least 3.2 mm in size)	Anywhere	Gold on black Size between 15-25 mm, square 10 mm for bottles less than 375 mL



Vintage date (optional for Fortified, Sparkling and Table wines)	Anywhere	Wine content at least 85% from year on label Displayed as four digits
For Sparkling wines: Method of production for Traditional and Charmat	Anywhere	Method declared for Traditional and Charmat/Cuve Close No reference to method of production for sparkling wines that do not meet the first two method requirements, optional for sparkling Icewine
Hybrid grape varieties	Anywhere	If any hybrid content, varieties are declared including the hybrid under varietal rules

**VQA OPTIONAL**

**If grape varieties appear anywhere on the label**

**Wine meets varietal labelling rules**

Single grape variety	Anywhere	At least 85% of named variety
Two grape varieties*	Anywhere, in descending order	At least 90% of named varieties, at least 15% of second
Three grape varieties*	Anywhere, in descending order	At least 95% of named varieties, at least 15% of second, 10% of third
More than three varieties	Anywhere, in descending order	At least 95% of named varieties

**VQA OPTIONAL (CONT'D)**

No varieties on label, back or front	Proprietary name anywhere	Must be 100% Vitis vinifera
Meritage	Anywhere	Contains only Cab Sauv, Cab Franc, Merlot, Petit Verdot, Malbec OR Sauv Blanc, Sémillon, Muscadelle
Skin Fermented White	Principal display panel	Skin Fermented White is at least 2 mm and adjacent to variety name if a varietal wine Skin Fermented White is at least 3.2 mm if no grape varieties declared If used "orange" wine in no bigger than skin fermented white

\*If the wine does not meet dual/triple requirements, 2 of 3 varieties can be named only if percentages are included.



VQA OPTIONAL	WHERE	RULES
Vineyard name	Anywhere	100% of wine is from named vineyard If naming more than one vineyard, exact percentages are included
Virtual wineries - a name other than the name of the VQA member winery	Anywhere	Name of VQA winery or registered brand/operating name is on the label
For Sparkling Wines: Sweetness Descriptors (optional)	Anywhere	Natural Brut, Brut, Extra Dry, Medium Dry, Sweet – check meets the required Total Residual Sugar Level for each descriptor
All labels		Wine content matches rules for terms used on labels, all claims, descriptions are true and accurate  No appellation names that their wine is not entitled to, such as Bordeaux, Burgundy, Port

ALTERNATE (NON-GLASS) PACKAGING	WHERE	RULES
Permitted containers: • Stainless steel • Aluminum • Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) • Multi-layer containers (such as TetraPak or bag-in-box) Maximum container size: 4 L For licensee (wholesale) sale only – maximum container size: 20 L	All mandatory/optional labelling rules apply.  Certain terms prohibited: • Estate bottled • Traditional method terms including Fermented in this Bottle • Icewine	Filling date appears in plain language (e.g., December 1, 2021, 28-Jan-22 etc.)

\*Foreign appellations – is the term I want to use prohibited? Look it up at <http://www.ic.gc.ca/cipo/listgiws.nsf/gimenu-eng?readForm>

Questions? Refer to Regulation 406 or contact us.



## Quick reference guide – Permitted grape varieties

Don't see your grape variety in this list? Find the policy and guideline on how to add a new variety to the list on our website at [www.vqaontario.ca](http://www.vqaontario.ca)

**TABLE: Varieties of *Vitis vinifera***

PRIME NAME	SYNONYMS
Aglianico	-
Aligoté	-
Auxerrois	Pinot Auxerrois
Bacchus	-
Blauburger	-
Cabernet Franc	Cabernet
Cabernet Sauvignon	Cabernet
Chardonnay	-
Chardonnay Musqué	-
Chasselas	Chasselas Doré
Chenin Blanc	-
Colombard	French Colombard
Corvina	-
Dornfelder	-
Ehrenfelser	-
Faberrebe	-
Furmint	-



PRIME NAME	SYNONYMS
Gamay Noir	Gamay
Gamay de Chaudenay	-
Gewürztraminer	Traminer
Glera	
Goldburger	-
Grüner Veltliner	Veltliner
Kerner	Trollinger x Riesling
Lemberger	Limberger, Blaufränkisch
Madeleine Angevine	-
Madeleine Sylvaner	-
Malbec	-
Malvasia	Malvasia Bianca
Marsanne	-
Matsvani	-
Melon de Bourgogne	Melon
Merlot	-
Molinara	-
Morio Muscat	Muscat
Mourvèdre	-
Muscat Ottonel	Muscat
Müller-Thurgau	Riesling x Sylvaner



PRIME NAME	SYNONYMS
Nebbiolo	-
Optima	-
Oraniensteiner	-
Ortega	-
Pecorino	-
Perle of Csaba	Pearl of Csaba
Petit Verdot	-
Petite Sirah	-
Pinotage	-
Pinot Blanc	Weissburgunder, Pinot Blanco
Pinot Gris	Pinot Grigio
Pinot Meunier	Meunier
Pinot Noir	Spätburgunder
Reichensteiner	-
Riesling	-
Riesling x Traminer*	-
Rkatsiteli	-
Rondinella	-
Rotberger	-
Samtrot	-
Sangiovese	-





PRIME NAME	SYNONYMS
Sauvignon Blanc	Fumé Blanc
Sauvignon Vert	-
Savagnin	-
Scheurebe	-
Schönburger	-
Sémillon	-
Sereksia Chornaya	-
Siegenerbe	-
St. Laurent	-
Sylvaner	Silvaner
Syrah	Shiraz
Tannat	-
Tempranillo	-
Traminer	-
Trebbiano	-
Viognier	-
Welschriesling	Riesling Italico
Zinfandel	-
Zweigelt	Zweigeltrebe, Rotburger

## Varieties Produced by Inter-Specific Crossbreeding

**TABLE:** *Hybrid varieties that may be used to produce provincially designated varietal wines.*

PRIME NAME	SYNONYMS
Baco Noir	Baco
Chambourcin	-
Chancellor	Chancellor Noir
Couderc Muscat	Muscat du Moulin, Couderc
Frontenac Noir	
Frontenac Gris	
Frontenac Blanc	
Hibernal	
Maréchal Foch	Foch
Marquette	-
Seyval Blanc	Seyval
Vidal Blanc	Vidal
Villard Noir	-

**TABLE:** *Hybrid varieties that may be used in hybrid varietal wines to a maximum volume of 15%, 10% or 5%, as the case requires (for use only with wines where a hybrid grape is part of the varietal declaration)*



PRIME NAME	SYNONYMS
Aurore	Aurora
Castel	-
Chelois	-
De Chaunac	-
Léon Millot	-
Millot	-
Pollux	-
Rosette	Seibel 1000
Siegfriedrebe	Siegfried Rebe, Siegfried
Verdelet	-
Vignoles	Ravat
GM 311-58	-
GM 318-57	-
JS23.416	-
SV23.512	-

Notes:

The term "Cabernet" may be used as a synonym for Cabernet Franc or Cabernet Sauvignon, or any blend of the two. "Cabernet" shall be considered as a single-varietal component when determining the minimum content for the other varieties in a dual-varietal or triple-varietal.

The term "Muscat" may be used as a synonym for all or any combination of Muscat grape varieties of the species Vitis vinifera. "Muscat" shall be considered as a single-varietal component when determining the minimum content for the other varieties in a dual-varietal or triple-varietal.

Shall be Riesling x Traminer 25/4.



Quick reference guide – Brix

**TABLE: MINIMUM AVERAGE BRIX FOR VQA – BY GRAPE VARIETY**

VINIFERA VARIETALS	VQA ONTARIO	VQA APPELLATION	WINE CATEGORY	LOT MIN.	MINIMUM AVERAGE
Cabernet Franc	18.0	20.0	Botrytis Affected	26.0	26.0
Cabernet Sauvignon	19.0	20.0	Icewine	32.0	35.0
Chardonnay	18.0	20.0	Late Harvest	22.0	22.0
Chardonnay Musqué	18.0	18.0	Nouveau, Fortified, Liqueur Wine	18.0	18.0
Gamay Noir	18.0	19.0	Sparkling Icewine	32.0	35.0
Gewurztraminer	18.0	19.0	Sparkling Wine	n/a	n/a
Merlot	19.0	20.5	Select Late Harvest	25.0	26.0
Muscats	17.0	17.0	Special Select Late Harvest	28.0	30.0
Pinot Blanc	17.5	18.0	Totally Botrytis Affected	34.0	34.0
Pinot Gris / Grigio	17.5	18.5	<b>HYBRID VARIETALS</b>	<b>VQA ONTARIO ONLY</b>	
Pinot Noir	18.5	19.5	Baco Noir	19.5	
Riesling	17.0	17.0	Chambourcin	18.0	
Sauvignon Blanc	17.0	18.0	Marechal Foch	19.0	
Sémillon	17.0	17.0	Marquette	19.5	
Syrah/Shiraz	18.0	19.5	Vidal Blanc	18.0	
Viognier	18.0	19.0	Frontenac	19.5	
All others	17.0	18.0	Others	17.0	

Notes:

Rosés and blanc de noirs (labelled as such) only need to meet the Ontario minimums even when they are labelled with a more specific appellation

Vin de Cuvée/Appassimento wines must meet the minimum for the grape variety at harvest and the minimum of 26 ° Brix required after drying

All component grapes used in VQA wines must be at least 17.0 ° Brix, except for Sparkling Wines

## Quick reference guide – Permissible limits for chemical analysis

**TABLE: CHEMICAL SUBSTANCE LIMITS**

SUBSTANCE	PERMISSIBLE LIMITS
Arsenic (ppb)	100
Cadmium (ppb)	20
Cobalt (ppb)	20
Copper (ppm)	1.0
Diethylene Glycol (ppm)	10
Dyes	Not Permitted
Lead (ppb)	200
Methyl Alcohol (ppm)	400
Potassium Ferrocyanide (ppb)	500
Ochratoxin A (ppb)	2
Sodium (ppm)	500
Sorbic Acid (ppm)	200 (500 if less than 9% alc., or if greater than 1% sugar)
Residual Sugar (g/L)	Icewine $\geq$ 100 g/L, otherwise no limits



**TABLE: ETHYL ALCOHOL LIMITS**

ETHYL ALCOHOL	PERMISSIBLE LIMITS
Actual versus Declared (% alcohol/volume)	1.1% maximum deviation
Ethyl Carbamate (ppb)	Table Wine 30 Fortified 100

**TABLE: SULPHUR DIOXIDE LIMITS**

SULPHUR DIOXIDE	PERMISSIBLE LIMITS	
	WINES WITH LESS THAN 35 g/L RESIDUAL SUGAR	WINES WITH MORE THAN 35 g/L RESIDUAL SUGAR
Free Sulphur Dioxide (ppm)	50	70
Combined Sulphur Dioxide (ppm)	250	330
Total Sulphur Dioxide (ppm)	300	400

**TABLE: TURBIDITY LIMITS**

TURBIDITY (N.T.U.)*	PERMISSIBLE LIMITS
Nephelometric Turbidity Units	White 5.0
	Rosé 8.0
	Red 10.0
	Unfiltered White 20.0 <sup>†</sup>
	Unfiltered Red 40.0 <sup>†</sup>
	Bottled with Lees – no limit <sup>†</sup>

\* Wines must be labelled Unfiltered and/or Bottled with Lees for stated limits to apply.

† High turbidity wines must be biologically stable (no active yeast).

**TABLE: ACIDITY LIMITS**

VOLATILE ACIDITY	PERMISSIBLE LIMITS
Acetic Acid (g/L)	Icewine and Totally Botrytis Affected 2.10
	Special Select Late Harvest and Botrytis Affected 1.80
	Late Harvest and Select Late Harvest 1.50
	Vin du Curé
	Brix at beginning of fermentation (27 – 28°) 1.50
Brix at beginning of fermentation (28 – 32°) 1.80	
Brix at beginning of fermentation (over 32°) 2.10	
All other Wines (g/L)	1.30
Sulphuric Acid (g/L)	1.057 (VA x 0.815)

**TABLE: AGRICULTURAL CHEMICAL LIMITS**

AGRICULTURAL CHEMICALS	PERMISSIBLE LIMITS
Carbaryl (ppb)	800
Iprodione (ppb)	2,000
Myclobutanil (ppb)	1,000
Procymidone (ppb)	1,000
Agricultural Chemicals not listed above (ppb)	100



## Quick reference guide – Preparing for your audit

AUDIT TASK	WHAT YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE	WHO NEEDS TO BE AVAILABLE TO EXPLAIN
<p>Grape records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify origin, variety, origin and reasonable recovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Icewine</li> <li>• E-grape records</li> <li>• Weigh bills, harvest date, variety, brix information, tonnes, grower location</li> <li>• Volume of juice resulting from all grapes harvested or purchased</li> </ul>	Winemaker/Production Staff
<p>Production records</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify claims made with respect to origin, variety vintage, VQA content rules are met</li> <li>• Verify production and wine content is reasonable with respect to documented grapes crushed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to date tank records                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Volume</li> <li>– Variety</li> <li>– Vintage</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Log books or day records showing blending details                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Full accounting of blend showing varietal and vintage content and origin</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Bottling records                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Detailed content</li> <li>– Volumes</li> <li>– Dates</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Winemaker/Production Staff
<p>VQA applications for approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify application claims match production records</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on VQA applications</li> <li>• Production records relevant to each application (see above)</li> </ul>	<p>Winemaker/Production Staff</p> <p>Possibly Admin Staff</p>
<p>Inventory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Account for all increases and decreases in inventory since last audit, verify no unaccounted inputs or outputs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bulk</li> <li>• Transfers</li> <li>• Cased goods</li> <li>• Sales and disposals</li> <li>• Explanation of losses/overages</li> </ul>	<p>Winemaker/Production Staff</p> <p>Possibly Admin Staff</p>





AUDIT TASK	WHAT YOU WILL BE EXPECTED TO PROVIDE	WHO NEEDS TO BE AVAILABLE TO EXPLAIN
<p>Sales and Disposals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verify sales reports are correct and fees paid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• J10s since last audit</li> <li>• VQA sales reports, detail by all channels                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Winery retail, online to consumers</li> <li>– LCBO</li> <li>– Direct Delivery</li> <li>– Out of Province</li> <li>– Export</li> <li>– Duty free</li> <li>– Other</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Promotional use</li> <li>• Disposals                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Date</li> <li>– Volume</li> <li>– Reason</li> <li>– Documentation as appropriate (e.g., sale to vinegar manufacturer, environmental disposal)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Transfers</li> </ul>	<p>Winemaker/Production Staff Bookkeeper/Office Manager Retail staff/manager</p>

## Sample production records

This is an example of how simple manual records may be kept. Any format is acceptable for production records as long as they are detailed and allow the origin and content of the wine to be determined at any given time during the production process. Other documentation such as e-grape records and sales information will also be required.

WINE NAME: 2013 CHARDONNAY PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY	DATE	DESCRIPTION/ COMMENTS	VOLUME (LITRES)
Harvest info: South Vineyard 5 tonnes, 22 brix, 3250L North Vineyard 3 tonnes, 20.5 brix, 2100L	Oct 2/13	Crush	5350
	Oct 3/13	Pressed and racked into tank 3, loss 100L	5250
	Nov 15/13	Transferred to barrels, loss 25L	5225
	May 2/14	Transferred to tank 4B, fined, SO2 added, loss 40L	5185
Added 1015L 2013 unoaked Chardonnay from Tank 4A (Smith Vineyard)	Jun 21/14		6200
Added 600L 2012 Riesling from tank 13 (Jones Vineyard – Niagara)	Jun 30/14	Check vintage and appellation still eligible (<15%)	6800
	Jun 30/14	Adjust residual sugar	
	July /14	Cold stabilize etc.	
	July 31/14	VQA approval 2014.1234	
	Aug 15/14	Bottled 3600L (400 cs)	3200
	Sep 3/14	Blended into "White Blend"	(3200)



WINE NAME: 2013 WIHTE BLEND ONTARIO	DATE	DESCRIPTION/COMMENTS	VOLUME (LITRES)
<b>BLEND COMPONENTS</b>			
1. 2013 Chardonnay (note contains 9% 2012, 9% Riesling)	Sep3/14	From tank 4B – 3200L	3200
2. 2013 Riesling (Niagara)	Sep3/14	From tank 1 – 1000L	4200
3. 2013 Pino Gris	Sep3/14	From tank 8 – 1500L	5700
4. 2013 Gewurztraminer	Sep4/14	Transfer from ABC Winery – 1000L	6700
5. 2012 Riesling	Sep3/14	From tank 13 – 1000L Check vintage still eligible (<15%) NO it is now 16.6%	7700
Added 100L 2013 Chardonnay	Sep30/14	Transfer from XYZ Winery Checked vintage still eligible (<15%) It is now 14.7%	8700
	Oct??/14	Cold stabilize etc.	
	July 31/14	VQA approval 2014.1235	
	Aug 15/14	Bottled 8700L	(8700)



**Quick reference guide – Fee schedule** (subject to change)

ITEM	PURPOSE	FEE
<b>Winery Membership Application and Annual Renewal</b>	To apply for or renew membership in the Appellation Authority. The membership year runs from April 1 to March 31. Applications made after October 1 of any given year will be subject to a fee of \$250.00 plus HST. Lapsed members must reapply and pay the full application fee. Wineries that resign and continue to sell VQA wines must pay all membership arrears if they join within 5 years of resignation.	\$500.00 plus HST
<b>Wine Approval Application (Basic Lab Option)</b>	To apply to have wine evaluated and approved to use VQA terms and descriptors. Includes tasting, packaging review and basic laboratory testing for VQA compliance only.	\$155 plus HST
<b>Wine Approval Application (Full Lab Option)</b>	To apply to have wine evaluated and approved to use VQA terms and descriptors. Includes tasting, packaging review and Full LCBO laboratory testing.	\$335 plus HST
<b>Tasting Panel Reconsideration</b>	For each product which is submitted for reconsideration having failed the initial taste panel evaluation.	\$116.00 plus HST
<b>Additional chemical analysis</b>	Re-testing for individual analytes	Per LCBO/CCOVI price list
<b>Label reviews</b>	Label resubmission or pre-submission advice	No Fee
<b>Supplementary Approval</b>	Label only	\$40 plus HST
<b>Affiliate Membership</b>		\$40 plus HST
<b>Icewine and Late Harvest Monitoring</b>	Wineries and growers will be invoiced for monitoring services on a cost-recovery basis, in direct proportion to the number of brix tests conducted. All invoices will be sent to the grower or winery who registered the grapes. The Appellation Authority will not re-invoice third party purchasers.	Cost Recovery



ITEM	PURPOSE	FEE
<b>Export Certificates</b>	To apply to have VQA wine certified for export to the European Union (including TA testing). Online processing is available for wines approved after April 1, 2009. For older wines, approved before April 1, 2009, contact the office.	\$ 50.00 plus HST
<b>Wine Transfers</b>	To report the transfer of wine from one VQA winery to another. This must be completed before the transfer to retain eligibility for VQA status. Also used to transfer registered Icewine juice.	No Fee
<b>Monthly Sales Report</b>	Report sales of VQA wines on a monthly basis. Mandatory, even if no sales have occurred Due 20 <sup>th</sup> of each month.	\$0.045 per liter sold
<b>Winery Inspection or Audit</b>	For any re-inspection, audit or additional site visit required due to winery staff absence or inability to provide information within a requested deadline or at the time of a scheduled inspection or audit.	\$250.00 plus HST