



Vintage **REPORT 2024**

The 2024 vintage for Ontario's wine regions—Niagara Peninsula, Prince Edward County, and Lake Erie North Shore— delivered excellent growing conditions and remarkable weather into the fall. By all accounts, grape quality is excellent.

CONDITIONS

The year began with warmer-than-usual temperatures, particularly during the first and second weeks. However, a significant winter storm impacted Southern and Southwestern Ontario from January 12–13, bringing snow, rain, freezing rain, and gusty winds. Ice coverage on the Great Lakes was below normal.

The summer in Ontario was warmer than average, particularly in Niagara, with many regions experiencing intense heat. While rain often came in large bursts, it typically fell at night, allowing for rapid drying during the day. Long dry spells balanced isolated storm events, and the region saw relatively few weather disruptions compared to other parts of the world.

September, particularly, was warm and humid, which posed some challenges, especially for white varieties like Riesling and Chardonnay, among others, which are more sensitive to disease pressure. However, these conditions also resulted in highly concentrated flavours and vibrant colour development in red varieties. Harvest conditions were largely ideal, with dry, warm weather during the final push in October.

NIAGARA PENINSULA

The growing season in Niagara started with a mild winter and no spring frost events, with no significant vine damage reported. Spring was warmer than usual, prompting some growers to report an early start to the season, up to a week ahead of normal.

Niagara's summer was marked by above-average temperatures, with warm days and warmer-than-usual evenings. The region experienced a reduced diurnal temperature range, but this resulted in intense flavours and colour development in the grapes. Veraison occurred up to five days earlier than usual for some varieties.

The harvest season was favorable, with warm September temperatures and some humidity linked to extreme weather events. Despite some disease risk, especially for white varieties, growers who waited for their red varieties saw exceptional ripeness and good acid balance, reminiscent of the excellent 2020 vintage.

October brought three days of rain, but overall, the season was dry. Storms were rare, and many growers reported that rain events forecasted by weather networks did not materialize in Wine Country.

LAKE ERIE NORTH SHORE

Located in the southernmost part of Ontario, Lake Erie North Shore experienced warmer conditions throughout the growing season, promoting earlier ripening. Harvest began in late August, slightly ahead of other regions.

The season saw some rainfall and humidity spikes, particularly early in the season. In May, a humid week introduced mildew pressure, which growers had to manage carefully. At the end of the summer, the residual effects of Hurricane Milton in the Gulf of Mexico brought several days of warm rain to the region. Quick action was required to prevent rot, especially in white varieties like Chardonnay and Riesling.

The warm and dry weather that followed the rain helped improve the quality of the fruit. Chardonnay and red varieties, including Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, reached excellent ripeness, with brix readings of 25 and 26 degrees, prompting some growers to hand-pick for optimal quality.

The region experienced another warm rain event just before harvest. Growers either harvested in advance of the rain, with slightly reduced ripeness, or immediately after, leading to some fruit loss, especially among whites.



PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY

Prince Edward County's season was defined by contrasts, with cooler spring temperatures giving way to intense summer heat. The cooler start to the season delayed budbreak, but once it occurred, the survival rate of the buds was good.

The growing season progressed typically, with the usual challenges of rain, occasional humidity, and disease pressure. Summer rain may have slightly delayed maturation in some vineyards, but overall, growers reported a healthy crop with yields ranging from 2 to 2.5 tonnes per acre.

The harvest in Prince Edward County was characterized by dry, warm weather in September and October, which accelerated sugar accumulation and allowed for full ripening. The sunny, bright days were ideal for the development of high-quality fruit.

Chardonnay and Pinot Noir were standout varieties, showing excellent ripening and character. Some wineries reported completing harvest as late as mid-November, taking advantage of the extended growing season.

ICEWINE

Pre-registrations for grapes set aside for Icewine total 1,976 tonnes, down significantly from last year's 4,095 tonnes.

WINE OUTLOOK

The 2024 vintage is expected to produce exceptional reds across the regions, with excellent ripeness, balance, and structure. Niagara's reds, in particular, are looking promising, while the whites will be marked by vibrant acidity and intense fruit character. Quality is high across the board, though some regions had to manage weather-related challenges carefully.