



Short Hills Bench

Sub-Appellation Overview

Warm sunny days, cool nights, complex soils, intense grape flavours

Short Hills Bench is the most easterly of the sub-appellations located within the Niagara Escarpment. It encompasses the land rising up from the plain of the peninsula (south of the Regional Road 81) to the Escarpment Brow and situated between Twelve Mile Creek and Fifteen Mile Creek.

The undulating hills and valleys of the Short Hills, which rest on an ancient buried valley that once cut through the Niagara Escarpment and connected the basins of Lake Ontario and Lake Erie, provide long gentle slopes with excellent drainage and sun exposure.

The warm sunny days and cool nights characteristic of this area are perfect for developing the intense grape flavours derived from its complex soils.

NOTABLE FEATURES

Relatively far from Lake Ontario, Short Hills Bench enjoys hot summers with warm days and cool nights. A unique and complex combination of bench-land and hilly topography contributes to the special character of the wines from this appellation.

STATISTICS

GROWING DEGREE DAYS (AVG.): **1561**
 FROST FREE DAYS: **187 (-2°C)**
 JULY MEAN TEMPERATURE: **22.5°**
 GROWING SEASON: **April to October**
 PRECIPITATION: **544mm (grow season)**
 COMMON VARIETALS: **Chardonnay, Riesling**
 PRODUCTION (2019 REPORTING YEAR): **4,464 (9L cases)**
 NUMBER OF APPROVED WINES: **11**
 NUMBER OF WINERIES: **2**



Terroir Overview

Climate

Sheltered from strong prevailing southwesterly winds by the Niagara Escarpment and combined with a high amount of unobstructed sunlight, this appellation warms early in the spring and maintains high daytime temperatures throughout the growing season.

Breezes from Lake Ontario provide only a small moderating influence and temperatures during the growing season are often very warm during the day and cool at night with peak diurnal ranges of over 13°C. Winter temperatures typically come relatively early in this appellation, creating an opportunity for the early harvest of Icewine.

Topography

The Short Hills Bench appellation features numerous north-flowing streams that branch out and cut through the gently rolling flat-topped hills that give this area its name. These streams, originating from the base of the Niagara Escarpment and those flowing through the escarpment, such as Fifteen Mile, Sixteen Mile and Twenty Mile Creeks, form slopes in multiple directions and provide excellent water drainage for the vineyards. With the exception of vineyards planted directly adjacent to the Niagara Escarpment, vines in this appellation receive unobstructed sunlight throughout the year.

Soil Characteristics

The deep soils of the Short Hills, made up of water-stratified clay and brown silty clays deposited on clay loam, vary widely over short distances.

Since clay and silt dominate the upper layers throughout the area, the soil has a relatively high water-holding capacity, which in the spring tends to offset the strong spring sun and moderate the warming of the soils, notably in vineyards located in flatter areas.

The sub-soil layers however, are primarily sand and gravels and ensure good drainage and aeration to the roots of mature vines.

