

Terroir Overview

Climate

This appellation has a favourable southern exposure allowing the sun to bring warmth early in the spring and maintain high daytime temperatures throughout the season. Because of its distance from Lake Ontario and exposure to the prevailing southwesterly winds, the area experiences lower nighttime temperatures than areas below the Escarpment and a moderately high diurnal temperature range. While microclimates of particular vineyards vary across this appellation due to relative elevation and exposure to winds, this appellation overall has a shorter growing season relative to other appellations within the Niagara Peninsula.

Soil Characteristics

The Vinemount Ridge soils have developed on a rich layer of clay loam till and are composed of a large amount of silt and shale derived from the Escarpment. These soils have high water-holding capacities due to their considerable thickness and silty, clay loam texture. Vines enjoy a consistent and reliable water supply throughout the summer but are able to avoid soggy roots with the natural drainage of the underlying Vinemount Moraine.

Topography

The Vinemount Moraine dominates the topography in the northern and western portions of this appellation. This long, narrow, hummocky ridge, less than one kilometre wide, reaches an elevation of 213 metres on its western side and then descends gradually in long rolling slopes southward before grading onto the gentle relief of the Haldimand Clay Plain.

Many small streams and their tributaries cross through the appellation, providing some relief to the landscape and ensuring good surface and ground water drainage. Vineyards on the Moraine's gentle south-facing slopes are well oriented to receive maximum sunlight throughout the growing season and well into the fall.





Sub-Appellation Overview

South and east-facing slopes, early spring warming, hot summers

Vinemount Ridge lies just above and south of the brow of the Niagara Escarpment. This appellation covers two prominent geological features - the Fonthill Kame to the east and the Vinemount Moraine on its western edge.

The youngest moraine in the Niagara Peninsula, the Vinemount Moraine is a long narrow ridge of material that was deposited by the glacier that occupied the Lake Ontario basin approximately 13,000 years ago.

Erosion from the several streams that cross this appellation has produced a gentle undulating landscape with many shallow east- and south-facing slopes, unique within the Niagara Peninsula. These slopes provide sun exposure and early spring warming to its deep clay soils resulting in early bud burst for the vines.

NOTABLE FEATURES

Early spring warming and subsequent early bud burst are features of this appellation.

Further set back from Lake Ontario than other Niagara appellations, and with a slightly shorter growing season, the hot summers ensure that grapes are fully mature at harvest.

Winter cooling also comes a few days sooner and this appellation, often reaches the required temperature for Icewine before those appellations that are closer to the Lake.

STATISTICS

GROWING DEGREE DAYS (AVG.): **1469**
 FROST FREE DAYS: **178 (-2°)**
 JULY MEAN TEMPERATURE: **21.7°**
 GROWING SEASON: **April to October**
 PRECIPITATION: **578mm (grow season)**
 COMMON VARIETALS: **Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Gamay Noir**
 PRODUCTION (2019 REPORTING YEAR): **14,713 (9L cases)**
 NUMBER OF APPROVED WINES: **45**
 NUMBER OF WINERIES: **6**

