

# MILESTONES

## 1988-2005

VQA Ontario - Supporting  
15 years of Ontario wine  
industry growth



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**1988**

Inspired by Europe's great wine regions, a collection of **Ontario wineries create the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA)** to set out geographic appellations and introduce strict production standards.

**1998**

**VQA Ontario is incorporated** as a not-for-profit corporation to prepare for the implementation of the Vintners Quality Alliance Act.

**1999**

The **VQA Act** gains royal assent.

**2000**

VQA production standards are proclaimed into law, designating VQA Ontario as Ontario's wine authority responsible for administering the VQA Act.

**44 wineries register to produce VQA certified** wines under the legislated system.

**2002**

VQA Ontario begins publishing comprehensive statistics on VQA wines.

**2003**

VQA Ontario facilitates a number of **important regulatory changes** including:

- the allowance of screwcap closures on VQA wines.
- the allowance of organic labelling under specified conditions.
- raising the required average brix (ripeness) levels for grapes at harvest.

**2004**

VQA Ontario membership grows to 71 wineries.

Over **1000 wines receive VQA approval.**

VQA standards are recognized in a formal agreement between Canada and the European Union, opening European markets to VQA Icewine.

**2005**

After three years of study and consultation, Niagara-on-the-Lake and Niagara Escarpment are designated as **regional appellations and 10 sub-appellations** are identified within the Niagara Peninsula.

VQA Ontario issues the first "Winery Report Card" to help wineries evaluate their performance at the tasting panel.



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## 2007-2015

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### 2007

**Prince Edward County** is designated as a VQA appellation.

VQA Ontario secures its first two convictions under the VQA Act stemming from unauthorized use of regulated terms.

VQA Ontario launches a series of **"Winemakers Forums"** to encourage knowledge sharing and build expertise regarding Ontario's terroir.

An Agreement on labelling is signed by the World Wine Trade Group, recognizing VQA standards for international trade.

### 2014

**Farmers markets** open to sales of VQA wines, selling almost \$1.5 million worth of VQA wines from 78 wineries.

VQA Ontario starts **Appellation 2.0**, a long-term research project to collect comprehensive data on wines from all appellations.

The federal government adopts **national definition of Icewine** that supports the integrity of VQA Icewine across the country.

VQA fees are reduced for the fourth time, amounting to a 33% decrease in sales levies and a **50% decrease in membership fees** since 2000.

### 2008

VQA Ontario membership tops 100.

A new **VQA Ontario website** is launched with comprehensive information on each appellation and sub-appellation and data on VQA production and sales.

A major regulatory review leads to the **modernization of labelling rules** to increase the focus on appellation and offer wineries more flexibility.

### 2009

A major systems upgrade allows wineries to **apply for wine approval and monitor wines online**.

VQA Ontario hosts a media tour to promote the value that appellation adds for consumers.

### 2011

73% of wine consumers indicate that they are familiar with the term VQA and associate it with quality and origin.

VQA Ontario issues wine **approvals for over 1500 wines totaling 2.3 million cases**

### 2013

The **"Taste the Place"** tagline is developed to promote the essence of VQA and the appellations.

### 2015

VQA Ontario membership grows to **155 wineries**

