

VQA News and Tips — April 2018

THANK YOU FOR RENEWING YOUR VQA ONTARIO MEMBERSHIP

Many thanks to our members for renewing their VQA memberships on time.

For those of you who have not yet renewed, please note that your membership has expired (effective April 1, 2018) and your online account has been set to “inactive” status – access to online services has been discontinued and no wine approval applications will be accepted, or results issued. Please contact the VQA office if you wish to renew your membership.

For those of you who have renewed online but not yet paid, your online access to account information will remain active, however no approval results will be issued until your account is brought up to date. If payment is not received by June 30, your membership will be terminated and access to your online account will be deactivated. Bylaw provisions related to resigned members will apply.

KNOW YOUR 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!

Membership

- You must keep your company and contact information up to date on the VQA 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 time, all use of the VQA terms must be discontinued.
- Membership may be re-instated through application and payment of fees for the lapse period.

Wines

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

Download our checklist at

Have a question? Call or email Barbara Dodds, 416-367-2002 or Barbara.dodds@vqaontario.ca!

TIPS FOR THE MONTH

Label your samples

To ensure swift processing it's important to label all of your samples (VQA Wine ID number) and include the appropriate paperwork (the Shipping form) for each submission with the bottles.

Unlabelled bottles, and submissions made without paperwork will be refused by the LCBO. If you have any questions, you can contact Barbara Dodds at 416-367-2002.

This is a very busy time for processing VQA wine approvals, here are some tips to avoid delays

- *Plan for about 3 weeks to receive your results*
- *Make sure the samples you send are finished and stabilized*
- *Follow the instructions on the application form – send the right number of bottles to the right address and department*
- *Upload your labels at the time of application whenever possible (mock-ups are acceptable)*
- *Send a copy of the shipping form with both the samples (to LCBO) and the cheque (to VQAO)*
- *Ensure your samples arrive by noon on a Wednesday (this will result in the shortest cycle time)*
- *Don't forget that results could take longer if there is a need to retaste the second bottle sample or recheck any of the analytical results*
- *Tasting panels are currently operating at full capacity so it is likely that multiple submissions will be tasted over several sessions and may be spread over two weeks of tasting panels. If you wish to have certain wines within large submissions processed first, please let us know.*
- *If you genuinely need your samples processed quickly, a "rush" service is available for the laboratory portion of the testing (extra charge). The rush allows a late entry into the weekly lab schedule if you miss the Wednesday cut-off. However, keep in mind that this does not speed up the tasting which is allocated on a first come, first served basis and the approval cannot be issued until you upload the labels and remit the fee payment so those things should be considered before making a request. The rush process is handled manually through VQAO so please give us a call to discuss whether the rush will benefit you in your specific circumstance.*
- *If you have any questions about the wine approvals process or are worried about timing, please check the online system for status updates. If you don't find what you need or there appear to be unexplained delays, give us a call to find out what is happening.*

SET YOURSELF UP FOR SUCCESS AT THE TASTING PANEL

- Understand what is expected of you. Prepare your wines to a finished, bottled state. It should be stable, fined, clarified, and filtered (except for final filtering during bottling).
- Understand the process. Wines are tasted blind, at room temperature, fully decanted. Find out more and see the process first-hand by visiting the Tasting Panel. Contact katherina.radcliffe@vqaontario.ca to set this up!

- Do your homework. Read the 2017 Tasting Data Report and your customized winery report card. Find out the most common reasons for failure – and how to avoid them!

Have a question? Don't hesitate to contact us. We love to hear from you!

SAVE THE DATE

The Annual General Meeting will be held Thursday, July 19th at Niagara College. More information to come!