

VQA News and Tips — August 2016

COMING SOON: CHANGES TO THE APPROVAL APPLICATION FORM TO TRACK VIRTUAL BRANDS

Many wineries produce and label wines using operating as names or virtual brands instead of their legal winery name. VQA Ontario requires notification of these names when used on VQA wines but we are now updating our web services to include this information within the wine approvals system. If you use a winery brand other than the name on your VQA membership and your legal name does NOT appear on the label, you will need to set up these brands and assign them to individual wines on the approval application.

VQA Ontario is in the process of adding a publically accessible, searchable database of all VQA approved wines to its website. This will allow consumers to look up VQA wines by winery or by brand. This will include only new wines approvals submitted following this system update. If you use an operating name or multiple winery names, it will be important to keep these up to date to ensure your VQA wines appear when searched.

Note: The VQA System will be down on Sunday, August 14 (6pm – 10pm) in order to make the required system changes.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP: VQA SUPPORTS BETTER PRODUCT PROMOTION

VQA works closely with the Wine Marketing Association of Ontario (WMAO) and LCBO to support VQA promotions and marketing campaigns that support all VQA wineries' marketing efforts. For example, VQA Ontario:

- Provides vintage reports, statistical data, appellation information and other support to the Wine Country Ontario media and PR campaigns;
- Provides content to wine educators;
- Provides input related to LCBO merchandising on VQA issues;
- Directly supports the VQA marketing program with a \$250,000 contribution to support a focus on appellation.

"As a small winery, I know that my message has been heard by many more consumers as a result of VQA marketing efforts than I could have reached on my own." Caroline Granger, The Grange of Prince Edward Vineyards & Estate Winery.

VQA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: RECAP

The annual general meeting was held Wed. July 20, 2016 at Brock University.

The VQA Ontario Board for the coming year is:

- Brian Schmidt (Vineland Estates) – Chair
- Louise Engel (Featherstone Estate Winery) – Vice-Chair
- Paul Kasselbaum (Constellation Brands) – Treasurer
- Martin Werner (Ravine Vineyard) – Secretary
- G. Berti (Andrew Peller)
- J. Clark (Colio Wines)
- K. Douglas (13th Street Winery)
- T. Elenis (Ontario Restaurant, Hotel and Motel Association)
- L. Huff (Huff Estates)
- B. Redelmeier (Southbrook Vineyards)
- M. Shenstone (Government of Ontario)
- P. Speck (Henry of Pelham)
- K. Watson (Grape Growers Ontario)

The VQA Ontario 2016 Annual Report is available online at:

www.vqaontario.ca/AboutVQA/AnnualReports/2016/Overview

TIPS FOR THE MONTH

Wine approvals are issued based on the information that you provide on the application. Please make sure it is accurate! If there is any material difference in what is declared and what is bottled, it will invalidate the approval and you may find yourself the subject of enforcement actions. Also, don't forget to send us copies of new labels if you decide to revise them after receiving an approval.

The VQA logo is not required to appear on your label. However, if you choose not to use the logo, the appellation declaration must be at least 3.2 mm in size. If you are submitting label mock-ups without a scale, they will pass but the winery must still ensure the size requirements are met on the actual label applied to the container.

TIMING THE APPROVAL PROCESS

Our service standard for processing wine approvals is 3 weeks. If you want to increase your chances of faster processing, plan for the following:

- Make sure the application is accurate and complete (labels uploaded, payment and paperwork submitted)
- Have your samples arrive at the LCBO no later than noon on Wednesday so they can be scheduled for lab intake the following Monday
- Make sure the wine is finished and stable, and containers are intact and not leaking

If everything is in order, you can expect your results in approximately 2 weeks. Check the status online and if you believe there is an unexplained delay, please call to inquire. Application results are most commonly delayed because payment has not been received or labels were uploaded separately from the initial application.

Also note that the application must be complete before you can resubmit a wine. For example, if it fails the tasting, the other components (lab and label review) must be processed and the file closed before you can resubmit. If you have time constraints, please call us.

If you have any questions about an application, a specific result, or the process in general, please do not hesitate to call or email us. We are here to help you navigate the system.