

VINTAGE REPORT 2003

Conditions

Winter conditions in early 2003 determined the state of the 2003 harvest. Prolonged cold through January and February and unexpected low temperatures near - 20 degrees Celsius in some areas in early March damaged emerging plant buds. Pruning regimes were adjusted where possible but it was evident early in the growing season that the crop would be significantly reduced in many areas. Bud damage on tender varieties such as Merlot and Sauvignon Blanc was generally severe and crop yields reduced dramatically.

In 2003 winter conditions damaged some varieties. Other varieties such as Chardonnay, Riesling and Gamay fared better with crop yield more dependent on local conditions and viticultural practices.

While the spring of 2003 was cool, summer growing conditions and the natural yield restrictions helped grapes mature and good quality was achieved in most varieties. Shortly after harvest began in September, a warm spell caused the reappearance of the multi-coloured asian ladybeetle, a

vineyard pest. With past experience in dealing with this pest, wineries were able to mitigate its effect by delaying harvest, hand-harvesting and sorting, and taking other preventative measures. Fortunately, the warm weather gave way to cool and relatively dry conditions and the ladybeetles continued on their path to hibernation away from vineyards from mid-harvest onward.

The overall availability of grapes for VQA wines was down an estimated 45% in the 2003 vintage

Late Harvest and Icewine

Vidal grapes used for Icewine were not as badly affected by the crop shortage and suffered only a minor decrease in availability. Volumes of Icewine juice from vinifera varieties were down substantially. Harvest conditions for Icewine were excellent with a gradual but early decline in temperatures and a consistent cold in January allowed completion of the harvest in a short period in January.



Total tonnage netted for Late Harvest and Icewine was estimated at 3372 tonnes and

total volume of Icewine juice registered was 437,671 litres.

Icewine harvest began on January 6, 2004 and steady cold weather resulted in the harvest being completed on January 16, 2004. Yields were slightly above average and sugar levels excellent for both the Late Harvest and Icewine categories and quality is expected to be excellent.