

VINTAGE REPORT 2007

Conditions

The 2007 vintage was characterized by warm and dry conditions for most of the growing season.

Precipitation was lower than normal throughout southern Ontario, and rain came mostly with severe weather and thunderstorms. Near drought conditions prevailed through the late summer, particularly in the Niagara Peninsula where precipitation levels were less than half of normal in many areas for much of the season.

Prince Edward County experienced similar but not

quite as dry conditions while Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island enjoyed more normal rain levels once into the late summer and early fall.

Temperatures were also warmer than normal for much of June through October in all wine appellations, with record-breaking high temperatures recorded in September and October.

The summer saw a number of severe weather events, including thunderstorms, high winds, and hail but no significant damage was

inflicted on the wine grape crop. Several powerful tornadoes also occurred in southern Ontario but fortunately not in wine country.



Harvest

Harvest began early – in late August in Pelee Island and Lake Erie North Shore and for sparkling wine grapes across the province. September and October were warm and relatively drier than normal yielding excellent conditions for harvest. Many wineries took advantage the longer hang times during the warm fall weather to harvest their grapes later at increased sugar levels.

Vines are fully recovered from winter damage sustained in early 2003 and 2005 and are producing fruit at normal crop levels.

In addition to the regular season harvest, an additional estimated crop of 6500 tonnes was netted and left on the vine for Late Harvest Wines and Icewines. For the 2007 vintage, an abundance of different grape varieties were registered with VQA for late harvest, including Vidal, Riesling, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Gewurztraminer, Chardonnay and 10 other varieties. Look for continued experimentation with new varieties for Ontario's strong suit in sweet wines.

Into the early winter, a short and local burst of cold started the Icewine harvest on November 24. Very little volume was produced at this early date and the majority of the Icewine harvest occurred in January and February. With a few months on the vine, moderate losses were experienced due to birds feeding on the crop and continued dehydration. The overall yields were average with a total of 1,171,000 litres of juice produced that is eligible for Icewine.

Wine Expectations

Along with the character determined by the fixed factors of origin, such as soil, the most significant factor shaping 2007 vintage wines is the lack of precipitation. Although drought conditions are sometimes challenging when seeking optimum vine health, low moisture can have a positive impact on the crop. The dry conditions created stress on the vines, forcing them to push their roots deeper for water, reduce the vigour of their foliage and direct maximum energy to fruit production. This results in slightly less fruit overall

but more complex and flavourful fruit and excellent wine potential. With the long warm season, wines made from grapes that benefit from longer ripening times, should show particularly well. Look for full-bodied examples of red varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Syrah. Some whites, such as Chardonnay, also show good capacity for warmer climate styles of wine. With a moderate interval to harvest, Icewines will benefit from the dehydrating effects

and promise good concentration and complexity in the finished wines. Overall, the 2007 vintage has excellent prospects to produce high quality wine. As well, with the slightly more than usual variance in weather conditions between regions – even between adjacent sub-appellations when it comes to rain – wineries will be able to showcase the individual character of all of Ontario's appellations.