
VINTAGE REPORT 2018

Niagara Peninsula – Lake Erie North Shore – Prince Edward County

Conditions

Weather conditions for Ontario wine regions in 2018 were extremely variable through all four seasons. The year started off with cold temperatures and precipitation in January. This was followed by warm weather and a quick thaw in February that caused flooding in some of our Emerging Wine Regions. March was comparatively warm and dry and gave the impression that

spring had arrived early. Sadly, winter reappeared in April, bringing cold weather, snow and ice. Spring finally arrived for good in May and the weather was warm and windy across Ontario. The warm trend continued through the summer with some extreme heat through June and July and heatwaves at the end of August generating thunderstorms with heavy precipitation

across all regions. Heading into harvest, the weather stayed warm through most of September and into October, but winegrowers had to cope with precipitation and humidity throughout harvest. November was cool and dry, and cold temperatures came early, dipping below -8C on November 22, which allowed for an early start to the Icewine harvest.

Harvest

The warm and sunny growing season resulted in early ripening which allowed an early and speedy harvest. This was ideal given the challenges posed by the mid-harvest rain and the desire to avoid the risk of disease pressures resulting from humid conditions. Precision

agriculture, teamwork and expertise ensured grapes were harvested in peak condition. Grape quantity is expected to be typical overall, with some reduction in yields specific to longer ripening varieties. The overall quality of the fruit is good in all regions.

Preliminary registrations for Icewine and Late Harvest grapes show an estimated 3775 tonnes, slightly lower than average due to decisions made to harvest early. The Icewine harvest officially began on November 22.

Wine Expectations

A reduction in yield for 2018 can be attributed to two main factors: long dry spells which resulted in small berry size at veraison; and the necessary dropping of fruit, particularly for those varieties that

started to breakdown prematurely, due to humidity, at a time when the grapes had already softened. This was the case for Riesling and Pinot Gris, and to some extent, Chardonnay. However, above

average heat paired with a dry summer allowed a good level of ripeness and concentration to develop in remaining 2018 fruit. Outlook for wines from this vintage is positive.