

VINTAGE REPORT 2009

Conditions

The 2009 vintage in Ontario's wine appellations began with a snowy winter and wet spring in most of the wine-growing areas. Except for some winter damage resulting from a cold snap in Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island, the vines came into the growing season in good health. April was rainy and May drier but with slightly cooler than normal temperatures bringing a slow steady start to flowering. The

summer saw normal temperatures and precipitation overall but the weather in July and August was starkly different. July was cold and rainy with high precipitation in Prince Edward County and Niagara Peninsula. Average temperatures were 2 to 3^o C lower than normal across Southern Ontario. August started out with rain and normal temperatures but by the end of the month the sun

and warmth returned. By the third week in August, it looked like the grapes would need a week or two of extra ripening time to fully mature. Warmer temperatures and sustained sunshine from late August through September made all the difference. Dry, warm and sunny conditions prevailed for almost a month, pushed ripening along, and harvest began just a few days later than normal.

Harvest

The warm dry conditions in September were ideal for harvest. White varieties and some earlier ripening red varieties were harvested throughout the month and winemakers were pleased with the quality of the grapes coming in. Concerns about the effects of the cool summer months seemed to dissipate quickly with the long stretch of sun in September.

October brought widely diverse circumstances within a normal average. Temperatures cooled off quickly in early October, with

isolated frost and precipitation interrupting harvest. Wetter conditions marked October in Lake Erie North Shore and Pelee Island. Warmer temperatures followed, and harvest picked up quickly, but large week to week variations in temperature occurred throughout the month. Many of the later ripening varieties remained on the vine at the end of October.

Harvest continued into November for later ripening reds. By mid-month, the weather became more

hospitable and the last of the harvest for table wines was completed by mid to late November.

It is too early to predict the quality of Late Harvest and Icewine grapes, but the cool October may help keep grapes left on the vine in good condition. Preliminary reports show that a significantly reduced tonnage of Icewine grapes – 1750 tonnes compared to 6500 tonnes in 2008 – has been registered for the 2009 vintage.

Wine Expectations

2009 should be a good vintage for all of the white varieties at which Ontario excels. Conditions were right for Ontario's signature Riesling with a clean balance of fruit and racy acidity. The vintage provided excellent potential for Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer - all should be capable of exhibiting the classic cool climate characteristics

associated with these varieties.



This vintage is also expected to produce excellent quality Pinot Noir and Gamay Noir, both varieties expressing themselves well in a cooler vintage. 2009 was a bit more challenging for the longer ripening reds - Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon. These varieties will have benefited from crop thinning and extra care in the vineyard to ensure the grapes were fully mature at harvest.