

## VINTAGE REPORT 2015

*Niagara Peninsula – Lake Erie North Shore – Prince Edward County*

### Conditions

Weather conditions in Southern Ontario were variable and often record-breaking in 2015. It was unusually cold and dry in January followed by a brutally cold February that brought more snow than normal and shattered low temperature records across the province. Mean temperatures were about 8 degrees below normal for February and most regions experienced below freezing temperatures

for the entire month. March continued to be colder than normal resulting in a lot of anxiety about potential crop damage. Although April and May were relatively normal, the bizarre weather swings resumed with an exceptionally wet June followed by a very dry July.

The summer growing season brought excellent conditions with few major storms and sunny warm weather in all

appellations. Niagara was slightly drier than Prince Edward County and Lake Erie North Shore. September weather settled nicely into warm beautiful conditions for the start of harvest and, except for some rainy periods in October, fall weather was favourable. Warmer than normal weather continued through November and into December.

### Harvest

Harvest conditions were excellent and good weather prevailed for much of the harvest period. There were a few rainy spells to work around in October but the extended warm fall provided flexibility to manage picking schedules.

Overall, grape production across the province was just moderately less than normal and is expected to be slightly more than 2014 when tonnes harvested was substantially

less than previous years. Cold temperatures in January and February 2015 resulted in markedly reduced crop yields in Lake Erie North Shore, and less than full production in Niagara Peninsula and Prince Edward County. Tender grape varieties in particular are expected to be in short supply.

Preliminary registrations for Icewine and Late Harvest grapes show that production is likely to increase slightly

over that in 2014, and remain close to the 10-year average of 4400 tonnes. An estimated 4860 tonnes have been registered compared to 3850 tonnes in 2014.



## Wine Expectations

2015 was a year of unusual and unpredictable weather that reminded us again of one of the significant features of wine of origin – its connection to the climate and grape growing conditions of the place where the grapes are grown. Natural conditions set

the stage for the wines produced in each vintage and each region looks to the right viticultural and winemaking practices based on the grapes they grow. The temperamental weather averaged out in the end and the wines of 2015 will benefit.

Expect Ontario's classic varieties to show well and also look for good concentration and flavours for the longer ripening varieties that profited from the warm, dry summer and fall.