

## WINE AND GRAPE PRODUCTION

Grape production in BC occurs in the Okanagan Valley, the Similkameen Valley, the Fraser Valley, and on the coastal islands. The majority of grape acreage is planted in the Okanagan/Similkameen region. The Okanagan/Similkameen Valleys are located in the rain shadow of the Coast and Cascade Mountain Ranges; the region is an ideal site for grape production. Long, hot summers are followed by cool nights and warm days in the fall which provide perfect conditions for ripening wine grapes. Winter temperatures are usually mild with little snow cover. However, some winters can be cold and winter injury of the vines is probable from time to time.

Ice wine is the product that distinguishes BC from most other wine growing areas of the world. BC is famous for its ice wine and while not a major portion of the crop is harvested as ice wine, it brings excellent publicity to the industry. Approximately 1.5% of the crop is harvested as ice wine. Temperatures must be at least -8°C for a period of several hours before harvest can begin. The berries must be frozen solidly and often the crop is picked during the night under lights and with frozen fingers. Some years, the crop is not harvested as ice wine as the winter is too mild.<sup>1</sup>

## BRITISH COLUMBIA WINE INSTITUTE<sup>2</sup>

The British Columbia Wine Institute (BCWI) was created by an act of the provincial legislature, the BC Wine Act, in 1990. It was conceived as a component of a strategic plan of industry and government to create an internationally competitive wine industry. The strategy included the removal of labrusca and hybrid grape varieties and replanting vineyards to vinifera varieties, establishing an industry based on premium wine production.

The BCWI plays a key role in the growth of BC's wine industry. Their 66 winery members and 15 grape grower partners represent 95% of BC VQA sales, 95% of the province's total wine production and produce 88% of 100% BC grape wine production.

BC VQA wines are now the second-largest category (behind only non-VQA Canadian wine) in BC sales and these sales continue to grow. BC VQA wines now dominate the quality wine market in BC – meaning British Columbians choose BC VQA wines over imported wines from any other region or country.

The BCWI works to build and market the Wines of British Columbia (BC VQA) wine brand, creates the business climate that allows members to prosper, liaises with government and stakeholders on key business and regulatory issues and promotes the industry to key wine, food and travel media.

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, *An Overview of the British Columbia Grape Industry, 2004*, [http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/grape/publications/documents/overview\\_grapes\\_dec2004.pdf](http://www.agf.gov.bc.ca/grape/publications/documents/overview_grapes_dec2004.pdf) (Accessed April 15, 2009)

<sup>2</sup> British Columbia Wine Institute Website, *About Us*, <http://www.winebc.com/aboutus.php> (Accessed April 15, 2009)

### WINERIES<sup>3</sup>

According to the BC Wine Institute, there are currently 144 licensed grape wineries in B.C. and 20 more proposed grape wineries with licenses pending. 66 are members of the BCWI. BCWI membership represents 95% of BC VQA sales, 95% of the total wine production in the province and produce 88% of 100% BC grape wine production. 63.1 % of wine grape acreage is winery owned or controlled. There are 710 vineyards in B.C. (both winery and independently owned), with acreage distributed as follows:

- 84.3 % in the Okanagan Valley
- 6.4 % in the Similkameen Valley
- 7.3 % in the Coastal Areas
- 2.0 % in Other areas of B.C.

### GRAPE PRODUCTION

Most of the BC grape acreage is planted to wine grapes (approximately 9,100 acres in 2008.)<sup>4</sup>

#### Harvest and Estimated Production (Historical)<sup>5</sup>

Year	Harvest (short tons – 2,000 lbs)	Production (litres, est.)
2008	22,200	14,996,100
2007	19,777	13,394,757
2006	20,369	13,802,563
2005	14,084	8,450,400
2004	16,642	9,985,200
2003	16,897	10,138,200
2002	15,523	9,313,800
2001	14,137	8,482,200
2000	10,022	6,013,200
1999	10,957	6,574,200
1998	10,188	6,112,800
1997	6,603	2,961,800
1996	6,102	3,661,200
1995	8,108	4,864,800

<sup>3</sup> BC Wine Institute, B.C. GRAPE ACREAGE REPORT, August 2008,

[http://www.winebc.com/library/reports/2008\\_Grape\\_Acreage\\_Report.pdf](http://www.winebc.com/library/reports/2008_Grape_Acreage_Report.pdf) (Accessed April 15, 2009)

<sup>4</sup> British Columbia Wine Institute Website, Quick Facts, <http://www.winebc.com/quickfacts.php> (Accessed April 15, 2009)

<sup>5</sup> IBID