Niagara Lakeshore

Sub-Appellation Overview

Dominant influence of Lake Ontario, long consistent growing season for flavour development

Niagara Lakeshore follows the shoreline of Lake Ontario from the Welland Canal east to the Niagara River and inland for approximately 3 kilometres. The primary influence on this appellation is the proximity of the Lake and its year round moderation of temperatures. Cool lake breezes in the summer and a welcome hot water bottle effect in the winter even out the seasons.

Long, very gentle slopes attract abundant sunshine and light, sandy soils allow vines to put down deep roots. The growing season is long, extending to late October, and supports the production of mature, full bodied wines, with cool climate acidity and notably, some later ripening varieties.

NOTABLE FEATURES

Lake Ontario has a substantial and immediate effect in moderating temperatures along the Niagara Lakeshore. In the summer, cooler lake air replaces rising warm air above the land, reducing daytime temperatures, while at night the reverse effect, with relatively warmer lake air replacing low-lying cool air to keep the air temperatures from falling.

STATISTICS

GROWING DEGREE DAYS (AVG.): **1373**

FROST FREE DAYS: **213 (-2°)**

JULY MEAN TEMPERATURE: **22.2°**

GROWING SEASON: **April to October**

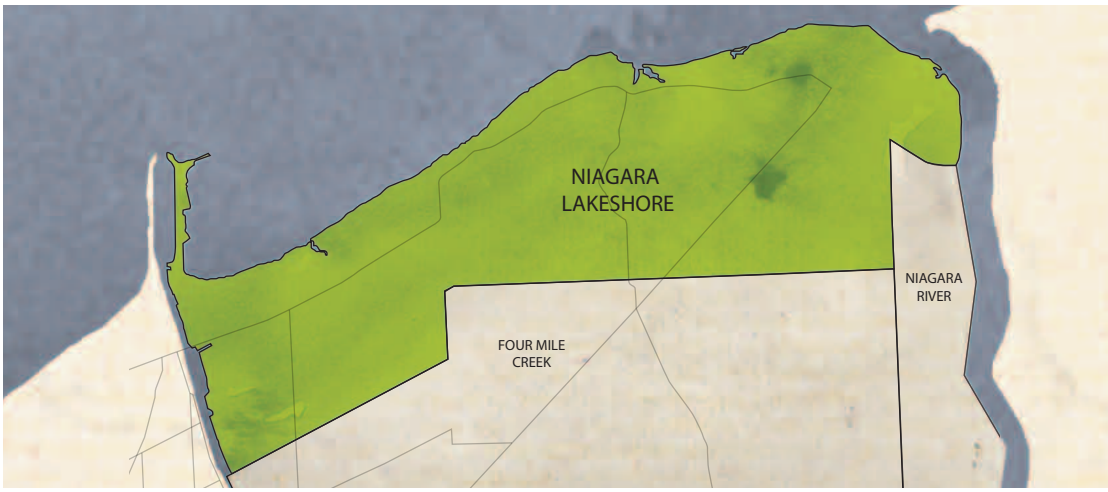
PRECIPITATION: **543mm (grow season)**

COMMON VARIETALS: **Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot**

PRODUCTION (2013 REPORTING YEAR): **46,793 (9L cases)**

NUMBER OF APPROVED WINES: **31**

NUMBER OF WINERIES: **10**



VQA Ontario

Terroir Overview

Topography

The topography is relatively flat, with a very gentle slope towards the shore of Lake Ontario. The appellation features one large creek – Four Mile Creek – and a few intermittent streams that usually disappear in the height of summer. This simple topography ensures uninterrupted sunlight exposure for grape vines throughout the growing season.

Soil Characteristics

Soils in Niagara Lakeshore consist primarily of glacial and lake deposited clay and silt, and deltaic sands and silts that were deposited on a thick layer of Halton Till that overlays the red Queenston shale bedrock.

Reddish-brown sandy soils in areas adjacent to the Lake Ontario shore promote deep root penetration and have very good drainage due to the porous and unconsolidated soil. Clay loam soils in the centre of this sub-appellation on the other hand, hold moisture for many months and retain their heat longer into the early fall.

Climate

Temperatures in this appellation remain relatively cool in April, rising gradually in May and decreasing gradually in October. In the summer and over the peak of the growing season, the topography ensures maximum sunlight exposure for the growing vines and their fruit. The temperature difference between the cool air over Lake Ontario and the warm air over the land create localized circulation systems that moderate the rate at which this appellation warms during the day and cools at night. Another common occurrence is the development of a band of cloud along the lakeshore in early fall, acting as insulation and keeping the days slightly cooler and nights warmer.