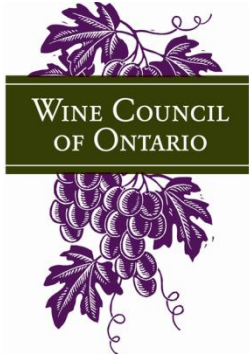


## Wine Council of Ontario

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4890 Victoria Avenue North, P.O. Box 4000, Vineland Station, Ontario L0R 2E0



# 2014-2015 Marketing Plan for VQA Wines

*Marketing Plan Performance*

*Report #2 – Sept. 30, 2014*

*For the period April 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2014*

*Submission to Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure*



Wine  
Country  
Ontario™

## VQA Table Wine Performance

### Overall Sales Performance of VQA Table Wines

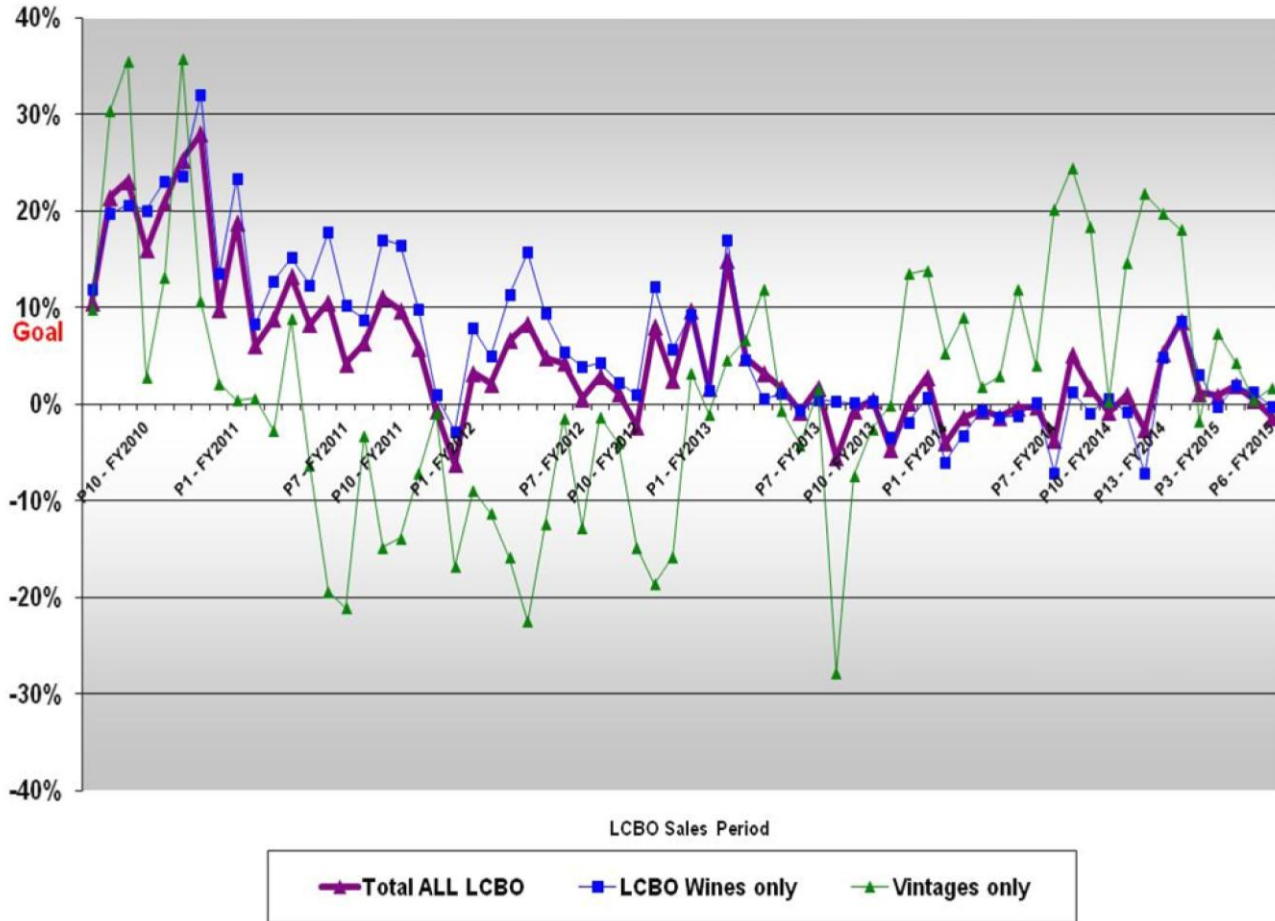
Sales continue to be positive for VQA table wines in both LCBO sales channels, as the percentage increase in VQA sales as measured in both volume and value have outpaced imports over the rolling one-year period. The percentage increase in sales is most significant in the Vintages channel (14.0% in value for the year for VQA, vs. 3.4% for imports).

TOTAL LCBO Sales (including LCBO Wines and Vintages)				
			VQA	Import
Rolling Year (to the end of FY2015 Period 6)				
Net Dollars	This Year		\$ 116,501,635	\$ 1,251,509,744
	Last Year		\$ 113,103,542	\$ 1,229,436,709
	% change		3.0%	1.8%
Volume (litres)	This Year		7,467,506	84,446,437
	Last Year		7,352,801	84,235,865
	% change		1.6%	0.2%

### Growth Spread Percentage of VQA Table Wines versus Imports

The original goal for VQA sales at the LCBO at the beginning of the 5 year strategy was to achieve a growth percentage that was 10% higher than imports. Although that was initially achieved with the introduction of additional shelf space (for VQA wines), the goal has not been achieved consistently since then. The spread in the Vintages channel has generally been excellent, although that gap too has narrowed recently. As we move in to our single promotion period at the LCBO (P7), we hope to achieve the spread goal in this upcoming period (see chart next page).

**SPREAD in Percentage Change in LCBO Sales Performance**  
 (vs. Same Period Previous Year)  
**ALL LCBO SALES**



## Sales Performance of VQA Table Wines by Price Band, and Average Bottle Price

We continue to be encouraged by the shifting upwards of products into higher price bands – the figures in the chart below clearly show a movement upward in both the LCBO Wines and Vintages categories. We expect this trend to continue as the LCBO does have a deliberate strategy to elevate pricing across the portfolio.

VQA Component Sales by Price Band (Total, General List and Vintages) (for the ROLLING year through FY2015, period 6)				
		Prior Year		This Year
Wines Category - (general list)				
	< \$12	32.9%		30.8%
	\$12 - \$15	58.6%		60.1%
	>\$15	8.5%		9.1%
		100%		100%
Vintages				
	< \$15	13.8%		9.1%
	\$15 - \$20	59.3%		60.4%
	\$20 - \$25	14.7%		16.9%
	>\$25	12.1%		13.6%
		100%		100%

As in previous reports the current average price of VQA wines in the entire LCBO channel continues to grow (as it does for imports as well, and by approximately the same amount). This is a good indicator that the premiumization trend is on track.

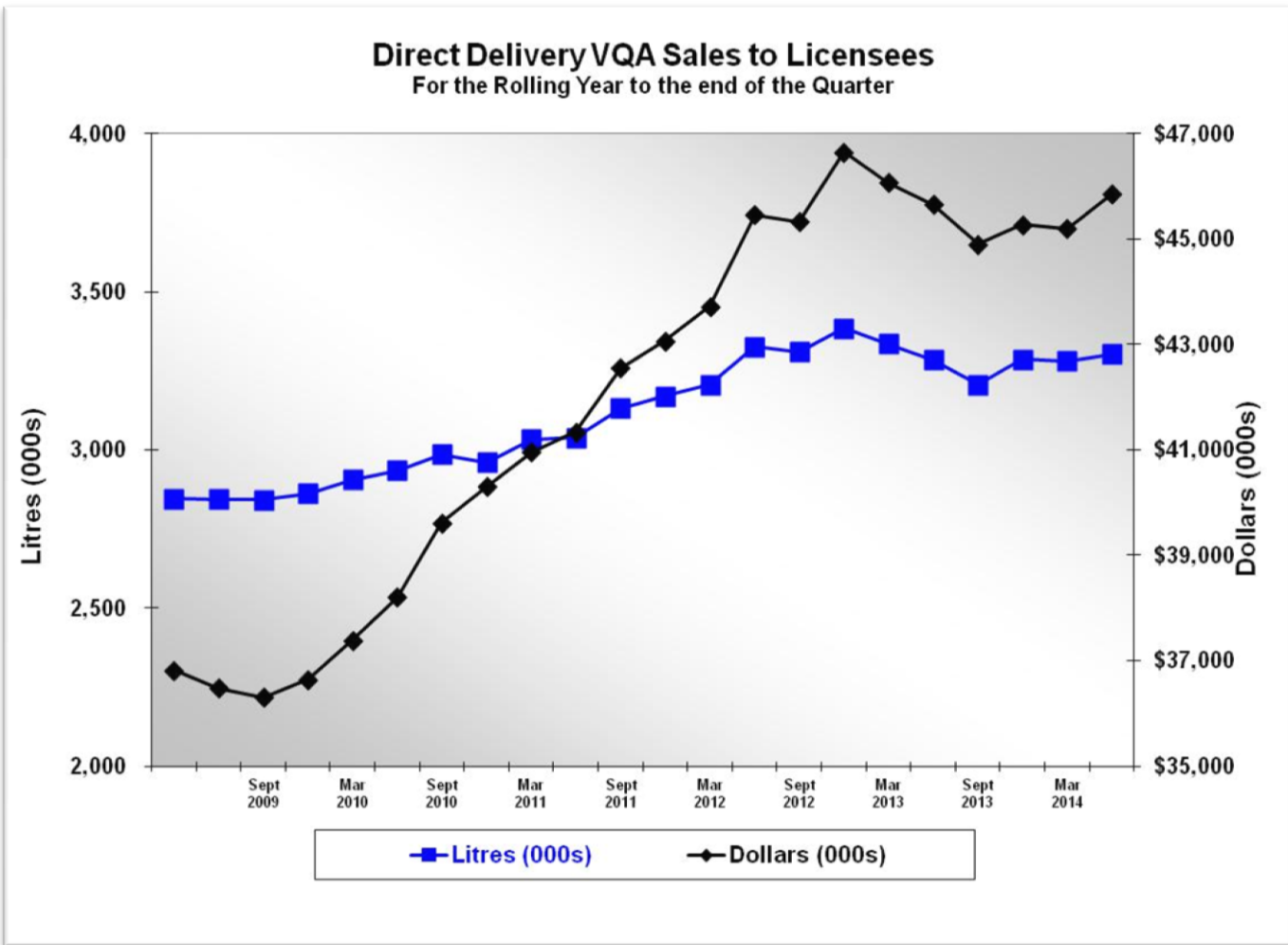
Average Bottle Price on LCBO Sales (Total, General List and Vintages) (for the rolling year through FY2015, period 6)				
		Prior Year		This Year
		(average price per 750 ml. bottle, before HST)		
	VQA	\$ 11.54		\$ 11.70
	Import	\$ 10.95		\$ 11.12

### Quarterly Trends

Performance to the end of the first quarter (June 30, 2014) is reflected in this report below.

#### Direct Delivery

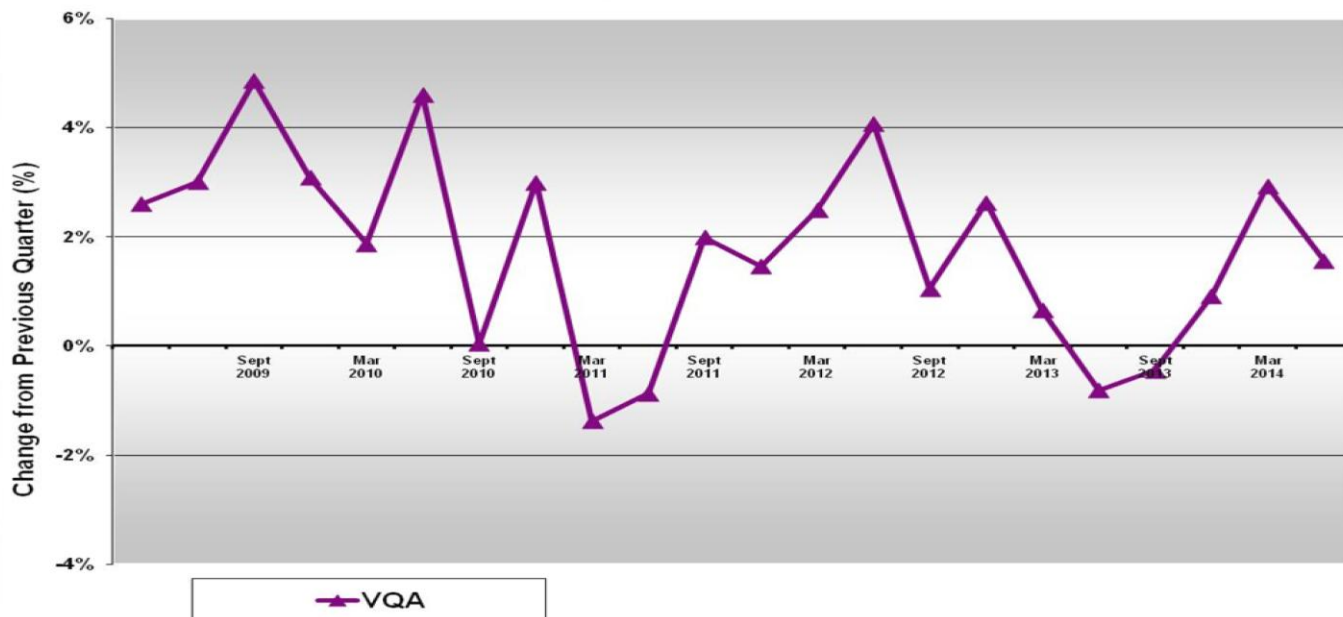
Direct Delivery sales continue to grow, with marginal growth in volume but better growth in value. Value growth is a good proxy for how our trade/licencee partners feel about our price value proposition, and they seem prepared to commit to buying up in value. Volume growth is in line with the overall restaurant business which has been trending flat for some time.



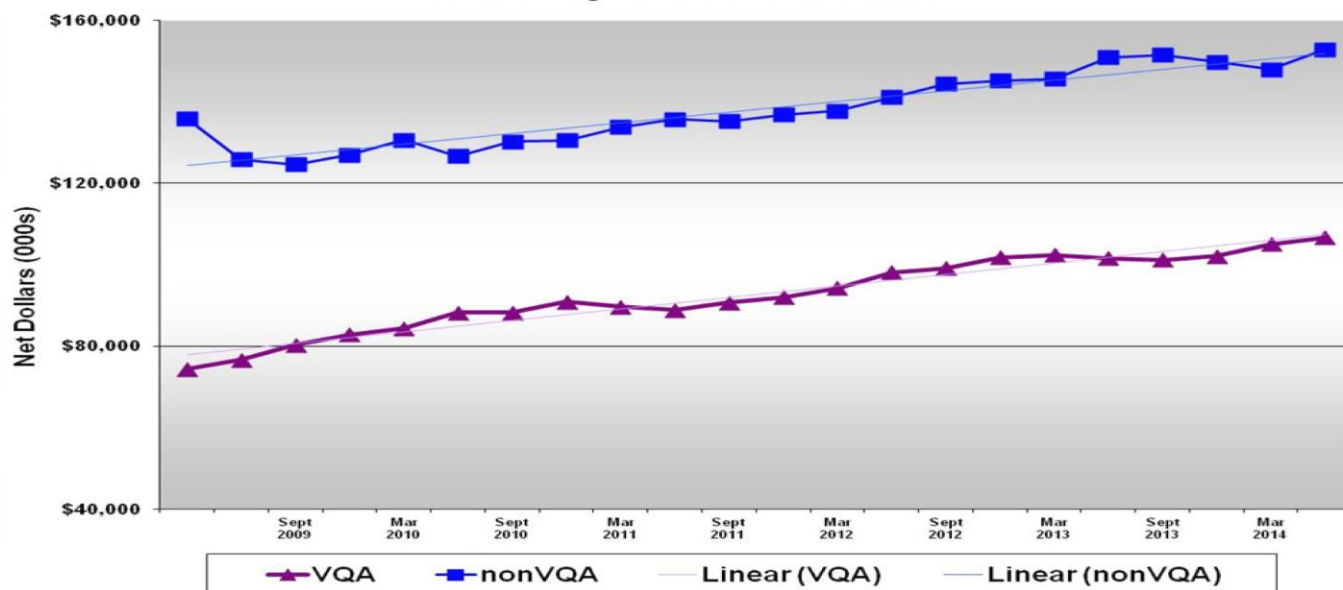
## Winery Retail Store Sales

WRS sales remain somewhat flat, although both VQA and non-VQA wine sales are generally growing (slowly). It is uncertain whether this is reflective of lower tourism or low performance at off-site retail store, since these numbers are not required to be reported separately. As such, these sales cannot be used as a proxy for tourism performance.

**Winery Retail Store Net Dollar Sales**  
For the Rolling Year to the end of the Quarter



**Winery Retail Store Sales**  
For the Rolling Year to the end of the Quarter



## Our Marketing Strategy

### – 4 Strategic Pillars



## Workplan – Tactics, Achievements and Progress Points

Per the approved Marketing Plan, it is important to report on the progress to date against this plan and its objectives. As a reminder to the reader, this strategy in its simplest terms was to do the following:

- Integration at every touch point
- Work to drive more opportunities to integrate our efforts with retailing wine at LCBO and Cellar Door
- Retool programs that are not going to drive optimal results and try a new approach
- Partnerships considered for all programming where possible
- Use the final year of this marketing cycle to reflect on performance and approach

Workplans and objectives were developed around key objectives and approaches that influence the growth of VQA wines. These were:

- Consumers First
- Tourism Leadership
- Educational Leadership
- Retail Growth

In this report and in each report subsequent to this report, the Wine Council will report on each of these areas, updating the reader with respect to our work to date, progress points since the last report and performance tracking if appropriate. This report will also report on work in progress that may have no direct relationship at this time to the financial claim report being made to the government. Instead this continues to act as a broader report to stakeholders than might have been contemplated by the funding agreement.



## Consumers First

### Deliverables

The key deliverables in the plan for achieving our objectives this year are:

- ❖ Engaging consumer tasting events:
  - ❖ Taste Ontario.
  - ❖ Experiential tasting program.
  - ❖ PR support to leverage and build awareness for key sponsorships - i4c.
- ❖ Restaurant recognition program build.
- ❖ Social Media channel evolution.
- ❖ Regional and Export funded sponsorships aligned to strategy.
- ❖ Research to support our market intelligence and objectivity.
  - U&A Study
  - Wine country travel visitor study.
  - Ad Tracking study.

### Consumers First

Consumers will be at the heart of all events, tastings, sponsorships, social media. We will deliver the best consumer brand experiences to build loyalty.

Deliver consumer experiences with engaging content

Build Loyalty

## Research

### Strategy:

- ❖ **Conduct an annual Usage and Attitude study to measure change in consumer perception, attitude, behavior, purchase intent and VQA comprehension and understanding**
- ❖ **Annual ad tracking study to track and rank program effectiveness, specifically awareness, recall, comprehension and impact.**
- ❖ **Conduct a deep dive research into tourism visitation to better define trends & behaviours**
- ❖ **Further refine the VQAO messaging with development of consumer facing collateral**

## Ad Tracking Study

This year's marketing plan shifted advertising from an outdoor advertising with a tourism focus, to a 6 month campaign shifted to print and digital with messaging on quality and value. Due to the shift in this year's campaign to digital and print, and the less frequent placement of advertisements, the Ad tracking study is being explored in a minor capacity. The idea of a pre and post is not relevant due to timing as well we are only looking at completing one-wave in November/December. IMC is in process of consulting on how best to utilize this study.

## **Tourism Deep Dive**

As mentioned in the last report, there is a lack of recent in-depth tourism research focused directly on the wine tourism in Ontario; past studies were conducted 5+ years ago. To assist the Wine Country Ontario brand understand the trends and behaviors of the wine tourist and to place the consumer at the heart of everything that we do, this research will enable us to make informed and objective marketing decisions as we plan the next 5-year strategy.

To help leverage budgets, we have reached out to the 5 regional organizations to partner with this research. By contributing dollars to the project, we are able to increase the number of hours for interviews within each region. This also allows region-specific questions to be added to the survey to help each DMO with insight into their customer.

Through on-site exit interviews at various Ontario Wineries we hope to gather close to 5,000 responses. Surveys are taking place end of August, September and into October.

## **Social Media**

Each quarter, the efforts around the social media plan continue to drive results working towards achieving the overarching goals laid out within the year-long social media initiative within the marketing plan. We continue to see growth in all channels (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) along with seeing positive engagement levels in all streams of communication. Our approach of keeping integration a top priority continues to prove successful as it allows us to leverage efforts from other components of the marketing plan along with the efforts of our stakeholders (especially wineries).

## **Topline Q2 Overview**

- In Q2, the Wine Country Ontario Twitter handle experienced considerable growth, gaining **3,038 (+31%)** new followers.
- Engagement levels on Twitter spiked in Q2 once again with **1,006 (+28)** retweets from fans and supporters – our most ever! This increase reflects the success of our continued strategic focus on Twitter in 2014.
- Wine Country Ontario's Facebook page attracted **278 (+0.6%)** new "likes" (Fans) in Q2, derived all from organic growth.
- Our newest channel, Instagram, continues to exhibit significant organic growth and fan engagement with just under **2,000** photo likes in Q2 alone, making it our most engaged social media platform.
- Wine Country Ontario's Facebook page experienced a moderate drop in fan engagement and post reach in Q2 due the limited organic reach potential caused by the Facebook algorithm adjustments in late 2013, which impacted all brand pages.

- Highly visual content continues to appeal most to Wine Country Ontario fans. Event photography, landscape imagery and original creative content performed particularly well on all our channels. This demonstrates that WCO fans enjoy both visually stunning content and light-hearted lifestyle imagery, which they can share with their friends and family on social media.
- Overall sentiment in Q2 was once again overwhelmingly favourable, with **100%** percent of fan sentiment being neutral or positive.
- Highlights of efforts made around key Wine Country Ontario marketing initiatives include the Travel Guide (#GotTheGuide), Wine Country Ontario Sampling Truck (#FollowTheTruck), the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (#i4c14) and Period 7 LCBO Promotion (#LCBOTasteLocal)
- Key initiatives driven by Wine Country Ontario were successful including Monthly Appellation Highlights (in line with VQA messaging deliverables), Sommelier Recipes, Holiday Celebrations to name a few.

### Q2 Metrics at a Glance:

Measurement Period	Total Social Impressions	Overview
April 1 <sup>st</sup> – Sept. 29 <sup>th</sup> , 2014	<b>28,016,000</b> estimated social media impressions to date! (Twitter generated 27.9 million estimated impressions)	This metric includes total social reach for all engagements and mentions of @WineCountryONT on Twitter, combined with the total reach of all Facebook content posted during this measurement period.

Metric	Q2 (June 15 – Sept 15, 2014)	Q1 (April 1 – June 15, 2014)	Q4 (Dec. 15, 2013 – March 15, 2014)	Q3 (Sept. 16– Dec. 15, 2013)
<b>Facebook</b>	34,219 (+249)	33,970 (+137)	33,833 (+2,517)*	31,316 (+65)
<b>Twitter</b>	12,705 (+3,038)*	9,667 (+792)	8,875 (+696)	8,179 (+544)
<b>Instagram</b>	1,370 (+278)	1092 (+329)	763 (+412)	351* *Launched in September, 2013
<b>Klout</b>	67	67	67	67

*\*Paid fan-acquisition program in market*

**Insight:** Between Twitter, Facebook and Instagram followers we currently have over **48,000** engaged fans!

## Q2 Wine Country Ontario versus Competitor Metrics at a Glance:

Metrics as of September 2014	Wine Country Ontario	Napa Valley Vintners	Wines of BC	Oregon Wines
Facebook	34,219	34,671	1,744	4,588
Twitter	12,705	16,908	7,045	9,742
Instagram	1,370	1,551	875	N/A

### Insight:

Wine Country Ontario has very strong share of voice within our social media channels (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) relative to our size.

## Consumer Engagement and Sampling

### Strategy:

- ❖ Create program to showcase and sample Ontario VQA wines across key markets with sampling opportunities least where consumers expect us.
- ❖ Aggressively leverage the use of the Wine Truck to create a visually appealing setting for sampling Ontario VQA wines
- ❖ Provide sponsorship and co-ordination of events that align with our strategy and add value for the Wine Country Ontario brand, drive tourism, and add value for Ontario wineries in key regions such as i4C, Niagara Wine Festival, Ontario Wine Awards, Cuvee etc.
- Integration of engagement with consumers to drive traffic to wineries in Ontario through follow up emails, and online activations

### Experiential Sampling Program – Dare to Compare Tasting Truck - #FollowTheTruck

The Taste Ontario VQA Wine Truck Summer Tour is in the final days of the 20 week tour. Since the launch in May the truck has been set up at the following places/events:

The Toronto Premium Outlets / Queen Street East / Dundas Buskerfest / Field Trip, Fort York, Toronto / The Sound of Music Festival, Burlington / The Toronto Wine & Spirit Festival, Sugar Beach, Toronto / Ottawa Jazz Festival / Spark Street BIA, Canada Day, Ottawa / TD Sunfest in London / Nuit Blanche, Toronto / Huntsville / Whole Foods, Oakville / Beaches International Jazz Festival / Elora Festival / Woodstock Summer Street Fest / Dockside Gravenhurst / Brookfield Place, Toronto / Village of Blue Mountain / Bowmanville Nascar Canadian Tire Series Race / Taste of the Kingsway, Toronto / selected LCBO stores for Period 7 – LCBO promotion.

To create excitement and awareness for the truck, we arranged for Live RADIO Broadcasts in a few locations:

- Live 88.5 Radio Broadcast, Ottawa with Caroline Granger of the Grange of Prince Edward
- Magic 104.1 Radio Broadcast, Woodstock with Paul Speck of Henry of Pelham
- Beat 91.5 Radio Broadcast, Elora Festival with Roselyn Dyck of Cattail Creek

The benefit and cost value is great, to allow for one week of 30 second spots leading up to the live broadcast as well as on air spots during. At each we ensured an Ontario wine personality was on hand to create the connection with consumers. Great feedback!



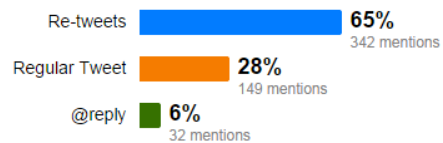
## Progress Report (cumulative, Week 1 - 16)

Sample - Goal	Sample - Actual	% of Goal	Registration - Goal	Registration - Actual	% of Goal
70, 000	76,050	109%	25, 000	21,186	85%

### Twitter Reach

**2.4 million** estimated impressions  
from 523 Twitter mentions by 242 users

### Mention Type



### Popular Tweets

Some of the most retweeted Tweets

Drop by our tasting truck at Queen & Jarvis until 7PM for delicious Ontario VQA wine!  
#Toronto #FollowTheTruck  
<http://t.co/uOTesLJg3X>

5 Jun 2014 by Wine Country Ontario



First day at the #Toronto @winefestival! We'll be here until 11 tonight serving delish Ontario VQA!  
#FollowTheTruck

<http://t.co/B14FBpBlcC>

19 Jun 2014 by Wine Country Ontario



Cool off this summer with our Taste Ontario VQA Wine Truck, coming to a city near you! Full schedule:

<http://t.co/f94xlpTrxi>

#FollowTheTruck

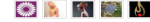
16 Jul 2014 by Wine Country Ontario



Hey #Ottawa! Visit our Taste Ontario VQA Wine Truck tomorrow 10-2PM on Sparks St. & Elgin!  
#FollowTheTruck @Live885fm

<http://t.co/Vr7S0DBbiR>

24 Jun 2014 by Wine Country Ontario



## Taste Ontario

In the plan, we included a Taste Ontario event for Toronto for execution during Period 7. This popular event does have good attendance in the Toronto market. The decision though was to not host an event in Ottawa as in the past ticket sales were very low. Again this year, the event will be at the ROM in Toronto, it will showcase 50+ Ontario wineries. A Sparkling wine lounge area will be a feature this year, highlight Ontario Sparkling Wines paired with every day foods and scenarios; i.e. Sparkling and popcorn for movie night; Sparkling and quiche for a casual dinner. More details in the next report.

### Tourism Leadership

Strive for world class execution and consumer engagement that inspires, drives pride and builds loyalty.

Build Consumer Loyalty and Pride

Economic Sustainability for wineries

## Tourism Leadership

### Deliverables

The key deliverables in the plan for achieving our objectives this year are:

- ❖ Refreshed Travel Guide.
- ❖ Advertising Campaign evolution and expansion.
  - ❖ Ad tracking study to measure success.
- ❖ Consumer website on-going enhancement.
- ❖ Build imagery library to depict the experiences/feel the emotions.
- ❖ Manage and maintain wine route signage.
- ❖ Strengthen the Visitors First program and align training to address performance gaps.
- ❖ Gain greater access to tourism research.
- ❖ Build strong tourism industry relations.
- ❖ Public Relations activities (traditional & social media) to drive awareness and support key activities – Niagara Wine Festival and Icewine Festival.
- ❖ Engagement with RTOs, other tourism partners and the private sector that align to our core strategic goals and consumer.



**Strategy:**

- **Shift to raising the Quality image as the key overall objective for the advertising campaign.**
- **Test campaign effectiveness with Pre and Post campaign studies (see Research)**
- **Extend breadth of advertising campaign, if possible, to extend reach of the quality/place messaging with consumers throughout the year**
- **Leverage opportunities to extend reach of campaign through partnership with Regional Tourism Organizations or other appropriate partners**
- **Build regional stories, drive tourism and support advertising opportunities that align with Wine Country strategic goals.**

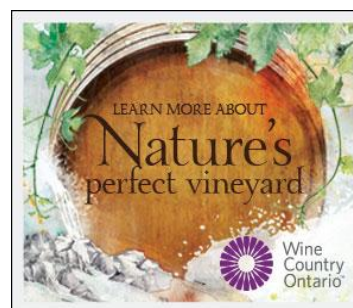
**Advertising to Support the Wine Quality Message**

The plan this year stated a shift to the advertising focus from tourism to quality image and value for money. This decision was based on the U&A study findings, and softening of sales in the LCBO and other retail channels of Ontario VQA wines. Tourism, sales and awareness don't necessarily work independently of each other and the committee agreed that a broader message would be able to boost both sales and tourism.

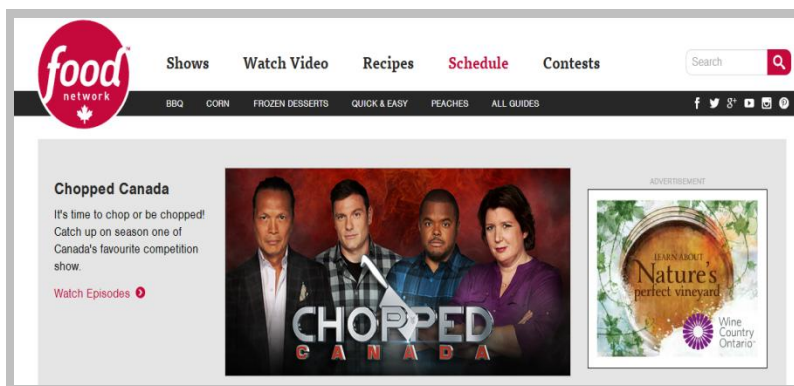
The strategy focused on targeting the segments defined by the consumer segmentation study done May 2013 which identified Spontaneous Shoppers; Aficionados; and Predictable Purchasers as the most receptive to our message. The media buy focused on publications such as: Food & Drink, Toronto Life, Cottage Life, Ottawa Life, CAA and Zoomer. But also equally on digital sites, such as Yahoo, MSN, Food Network and utilizing SEM to drive folks back to WineCountryOntario.ca.

At the last filing, we were reviewing the creative with the IMC but had a few concerns with the artwork. To see if we were on the right path, we conducted an ad testing and focus group session in early July to ensure the ads were resonating with the consumers. Time allowed for a one-evening session held in Toronto with the results stating the current creative was the most popular with all 3 target markets. While the focus group was a small collection, and did offer us a mildly positive feedback it was not a 'home-run' result. Due to this, the decision was to run the currently committed placements and cancel the fall inserts.

Print campaign is in market and digital will run from Aug 5-December. Digital results are positive so far with CTR (click-through-rate) of 4.86% which is higher than the average search CTR of 1.00% - 3.00%. CTR are highest on Food Network, which makes sense due to the relevancy of those consumers and wine.







Monitoring will continue on a weekly basis for the digital campaign and adjustments will be made to optimize the SEM and display opportunities based the individual users past search history to lower the CPC (cost-per-click). Goal is to reach a \$1.00-\$1.50 CPC.

### **VQA Messaging**

Part of this year's activities was to integrate the VQA messaging and Taste the Place into all activities within the plan. More work is being done on this including tools for retail staff and trade as well as consumer education. Messaging is fully integrated into all PR communication tools and efforts. More details in the next report.

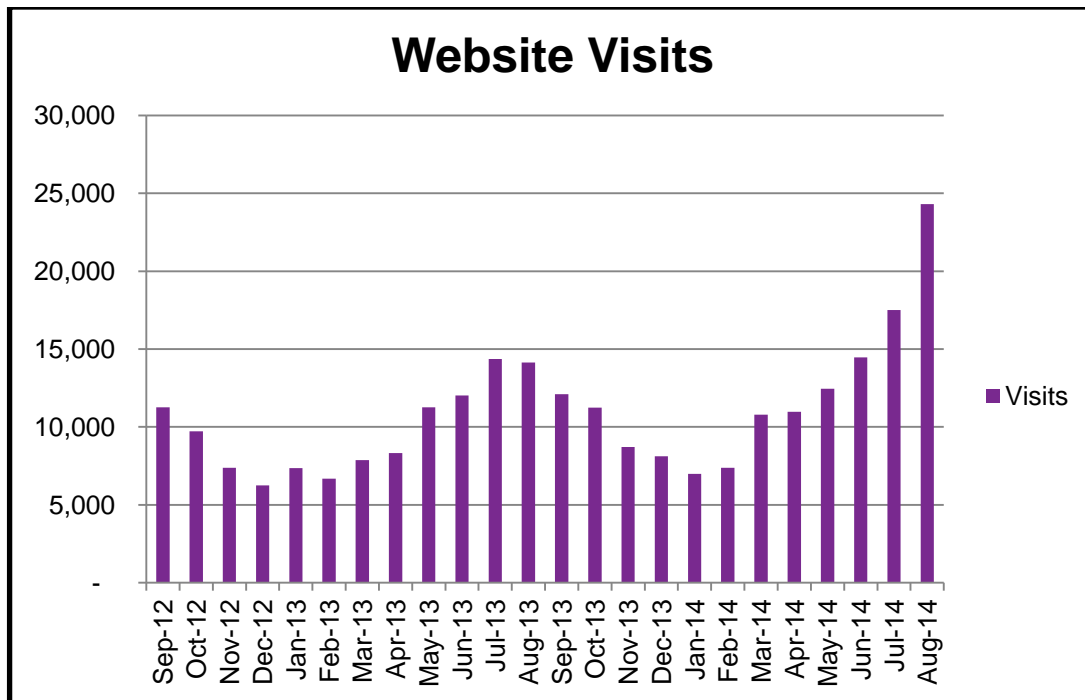
### **Wine Country Ontario Travel Guide**

The guide continues to be requested by wineries and tourism information outlets for distribution to consumers as the go-to source of information on Winery visitation.

### **Website**

Traffic to [www.winecountryontario.ca](http://www.winecountryontario.ca) remains strong and continues to increase monthly versus last year with upwards of 20% average increase each month. August this year has shown a 71% increase over August 2013. We will continue to monitor and expect to see the increase hold steady due to the SEM campaign underway from August – December 2014.

Refreshing of the site continues with new imagery and content being added. To support our partnership/involvement with local events, we offer the opportunity to place banner creative on the carousel on the home page – this is offered as an in-kind sponsor for many events such as VINTAGES Taste Ontario, i4C and Niagara Wine Festival.



August 2014 has seen a large spike due to the Advertising SEM campaign – more details in upcoming report.

### **Vujit – Digital Magazine**

The WCO was approached by Vujit to create a digital magazine for Ontario Wineries. This iPad magazine would allow users to engage with Ontario wineries and gather, browse information in a new way than a traditional website experience. All wineries that participate in Wine country Ontario are featured on the downloadable magazine. It is designed to continuously pull events from the main site and we will encourage wineries to continuously submit 'stories' and 'articles' to be uploaded to the site. Users will be able to tailor their magazine to articles, wineries they are interested in. We expect to launch mid – October and will update in the next report.



## **Mobile APP**

In the past, our website was mobile enabled to act similar to an app when accessed from a smartphone. While this was the recommended path by our supplier at the time, it was not a realistic function for the site. This year, the idea of a stand-alone app as a directional tool would better serve users and those that are tech savvy when travelling. After reviewing the options of a custom built app versus 3<sup>rd</sup> party tested format, we sourced VisitMobile to create the Wine Country Ontario app. Expected to launch this Fall, it will highlight all wineries from the main website, events, accommodations, restaurants and other tourism components to assist the wine traveller. Will be available on iOs, android and .mobi for blackberry users.

## **Retail Training and Mystery Shops**

Retail Training sessions were held in the spring and early summer for both front line staff and manager/supervisor audiences. This year, we introduced new topics and more courses so participants could continue to participate and benefit from the sessions. Topics were: *Working the Crowd and Building Lasting Relationships; Raising the Bar and Dealing with Difficult Situations; How to Train and Energize your Team; Hiring Onboarding and Engaging New Employees.* Registration for sessions was good for Niagara and Prince Edward County sessions with Front Line programming having 111 participants and Manager/Supervisors programs having 63 participants.

Mystery shops continue monthly at 114 wineries with 10 shops planned for the year. Winter months will only see a shop every 6 weeks. The scores continue to remain steady with fluctuations in all regions and categories.

**Average Total Score by Region (out of 100)**

Region	Mar-14	Apr-14	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Average
Emerging	77	77	79	76	69	76	76
LENS	70	77	81	78	78	75	76
NETV	85	85	85	83	82	82	84
NOTL	83	82	81	78	79	78	80
PEC	70	80	82	79	82	78	79
<b>All</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>80</b>

## Educational Leadership

Provide knowledge and meaningful information on a broad level to build image, affinity and brand ambassadorship

Build VQA  
Understanding of  
origin

Tell our Story

Build  
Ambassadorship

## Educational Excellence

### Deliverables

The key deliverables in the plan for achieving our objectives this year are:

- ❖ Trade, media and consumer Ontario wine education to drive ambassadorship.
- ❖ Appellation education through brand communication and PR activities to drive VQAO objectives and consumer understanding.
- ❖ Deliver VQAO objectives by integrating the message of origin and quality into our marketing programs.
- ❖ Grow understanding of key messages by industry and influencers.
- ❖ Trade communication to give them reasons to support VQA wines.

## Educational Excellence

### Wine Education

#### Strategy:

- **Finalize online course with updated VQA messaging and approach for consistency**
- **Revise 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of printed course book to align with revised VQA appellations and messaging to create 4<sup>th</sup> edition**
- **Promote online course module to students, instructors, trade and winery staff as the go-to site for information and education on Ontario wine, appellations and VQA**
- **Make sub appellations map available and accessible to consumers and trade**

### Online Course

Focus for this year is to build and expand the VQA message, Taste the Place and educate on appellations and sub appellations. Discussions with VQA are taking place to ensure we are delivering on the suggestions from their board on how to communicate and creation of tools for staff, wineries, licensees, tour operators and consumers.

More on this as the work continues.

## Retail Growth

### Deliverables

- ❖ LCBO programming:
  - P7 Go Local campaign improvements integrate PR.
  - Continue to encourage the LCBO to create new signage for VQA shelf.
  - Enhanced in-store tastings.
  - Engaging more WOW leaders and PC's in Wine Country Ontario experience.
  - Collaboration and alignment with RDs, DMs and Store Managers.
  - Additional programming to support quality, leadership credentials.
  - Alignment of strategies.
- ❖ Vintages:
  - PC expanded engagement and training.
  - Leverage success elements from Front Line releases.
  - Logistical improvements and accountability
  - Taste Ontario events.
- ❖ Inter-provincial market strategies and program implementation.
- ❖ Export activities aligned with National Export Strategy.

### Retail Growth

Maximize opportunities for distribution, promotions, staff engagement and brand communication through 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to drive industry growth

Image & Quality

Purchase Intent

Build Equity in Go Local

### LCBO & Vintages

#### Strategy – In Store:

- ❖ Invest in promotional programming at LCBO to help differentiate the category and tell our story. Note that Period 7 will not significantly change for Fall 2014
- ❖ Any incremental programming or opportunities to invest on an industry basis will require a re-allocation of funds within the LCBO envelope
- ❖ Work with LCBO category leadership team to ensure strategic presence for core varietals, established brands, and other core elements that define our products.
- ❖ Make positive changes to improve Period 7 in alignment with industry recommendations and messaging
- ❖ Ensure LCBO is engaged in development of broader advertising strategy so that messaging and approach to build quality credentials are aligned
- ❖ Revisit the local messaging as a trigger for purchase based on U&A results

## **LCBO Period 7 Promotion – LOCAL Messaging**

### Financial Goals –

- LCBO VQA 5.4%
- VINTAGES VQA 11.1%
- **Total VQA 6.3%**

Wider assortment, more LTOS, one-week super sales, \$12-15 price band

End Aisles - #1-12 VQA and Local;  
#12-20 – Ontario Craft Beer and local distillers.

### **Highlights:**

- VQA Instore tastings – 1260+
- Event kitchen special tastings
- Wine truck at 4 stores on Saturdays
- Licensee program – 157+ restaurants
- Taste Ontario – October 2<sup>nd</sup> at ROM
- Ontario Wine and Pie Pop-up event –Sept 19
- Media Tasting previews – July and August
- Support of PR initiatives
- Leveraging of social media channels and efforts



### **WOW tours**

A total of 20 tours visited Wine Country Ontario this summer focusing on the educational learning of wine making in Ontario. We had 433 tour participants in the Summer program. 53 host wineries filled the 80 visits. We created opportunity for 98 spots at the trade fair showcasing Ontario VQA wines to the WOW Leaders. New for 2014 was the Train the Trainer session for the 59 bus leads being held in Wine country and exposing them to the actual tour logistics and content – this was well received and made for an easier execution of the tours. Response rate is being measured by the LCBO through the LCBO retail training division.

### **NEW – Product Consultants in Wine Country**

LCBO reached out to WCO to coordinate one-day educational tours in Wine Country for 272 Product Consultants in September. Last time all PCs were in Wine Country for a tour was 2008.



The focus of the tour is to show the best of the best of Ontario wines. Focusing on core varietals, we had a 3<sup>rd</sup> party tasting panel choose 16 wines that will be tasted with all groups lead by 3<sup>rd</sup> party moderators. Lunch will include international key note speaker to help us raise confidence with the Product Consultants.

- September 9 – Michael Madrigale
- September 16- Stephen Brook
- September 17 – Stephen Brook
- September 24 – Ian D'Agata

Initial feedback from the first sessions has been very good from Product Consultants. More details in the upcoming report.

### **Period 7 In-Store Tastings**

As in the past, we have allocated subsidy to wineries conducting VQA tastings in the LCBO during Period 7. This allows wineries to extend their reach and ensure we have as many VQA tastings with consumers. The LCBO will also be outfitting 30 stores with enhanced tasting booth; these will only taste Ontario wines and be a priority for bookings. Any stores that have vacancies after all Ontario wineries have signed up will be filled with Ontario Craft Beer and Craft distillers to tie into the thematic.

### **Sponsorships & Partnerships**

#### **International Cool Climate Chardonnay Event -July 18-20, 2014**

Wine Country Ontario was the Presenting Sponsor of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (i4c), an event which is designed as an international wine event that continues to attract international winemakers and excellent media attention. Wine Country Ontario supported this event as it aligns with the strategic goals of increasing awareness for Wine Country Ontario as a top travel destination, increasing opportunities for consumer engagement in wine country with Ontario wines, adding educational opportunities for LCBO staff.

Additionally, this internationally positioned event provided Wine Country Ontario with excellent opportunity to achieve many of this year's PR goals and objectives. We continue to see amazing editorial coverage throughout the year. It also helps support brand awareness with key international influencers.

This year's event took place in Niagara from July 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014. At this event:

- 5 signature events and 8 Explore Niagara events (winery-managed events)
- 1613 total attendees at signature events (consistent with 2013; all events sold out)
- Tim Atkin, MW (UK) was keynote speaker
- 30 additional media guests attended
- 30 sommeliers from GTA and Montreal attended events throughout the weekend
- 57 wineries participated:
  - 24 Ontario
  - 33 International (France, Spain, South Africa, New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Argentina, USA-Oregon, USA – California, British Columbia)
- 119 Chardonnays poured, including 10 sparkling wines
- 74% were guests who have attended in the past 3 years (26% new)
  - 80% from Ontario, 7% USA, 2% Quebec, 6% International, 3% Other parts of Canada
  - Ontario demographic (30% from GTA, 34% from Niagara, 36% Burl/Ham/SWO, 3% other Ontario)

A large part of this sponsorship was provided as in-kind strategic PR support to i4c for many months leading up to and during the event.

#### **NEW initiatives for i4C in 2014**

- NEW format for educational session – School of Cool
- NEW trade tasting following educational session
- NEW format for Friday night event – Barrels & Bonfires
- NEW French language program launched - Vive Le Chardonnay
- NEW family-style dining format and table service introduced at World Tour Dinner
- NEW Sommelier Program – Magic Bus, AOC service team Sat night
- LCBO meetings facilitated for guest wineries

#### **New Vintage Festival (Tailgate Party) June 2014**

The Wine Council of Ontario is a founding sponsor of the Niagara Wine Festival and with this works to collaborate on working to promote the Wine Country Ontario throughout the three main events that take place each year. The New Vintage Festival now called the Tailgate party took place in June and with that it also has a Discovery Pass Program that takes place over two weekends. This past June, 38 wineries from Niagara participated in this and there were 924 tickets to the June main event and over 600 Discover Passes were sold.



## PECWA

Wine Country Ontario continues to work closely with wine and tourism associations in all three of the primary wine regions in Ontario. We worked with PECWA this year as they took over the annual culinary event called TASTE that took place in September. We worked in collaboration with the PECWA team to help support communications on social media and provide PR advice. Additionally, we sponsored branded glassware at this event in order to increase brand awareness along with being profiled as a sponsor throughout their communication materials. Over 20 wineries from Prince Edward County participate with an expected audience of over 1,000 consumers in attendance at this September event.

## Visa Infinite Dining and Wine Country Dinners

Wine Country Ontario partnered with the Visa Infinite Dining program for the 2014 season, being the third season we have worked together. Four wine country dinners were executed and the wine country weekend getaway took place in September where we substantial sales take place from a group of 40 highly engaged consumers (primarily from Toronto). Awareness for the program continues to increase each year and a more detailed report will be ready for the next report once the season finishes this fall.

## Interprovincial Sales Development

### Strategy:

- ❖ **Drive awareness of the Ontario VQA category and spark interest and improve knowledge for our wines with market tours for inter-provincial liquor board executives.**
- ❖ **Break down the barriers and increase access for Ontario wineries in target provinces through proven strategies.**
- ❖ **Market Ready sessions for wineries to enter interprovincial markets.**
- ❖ **Initiate opportunities to provide education and training in market for liquor board staff.**
- ❖ **Engage all Liquor boards for strategic opportunities through CALJ.**

### PR Initiatives in support of Interprovincial sales

Interprovincial presence continues to be important for many wineries in key markets across Canada. Overarching goal is to enhance and create new opportunities for VQA wine sales in other provinces. These efforts are integrated with PR efforts in order to increase Wine Country Ontario brand awareness in those markets along with ensuring key and consistent messaging about Ontario wine is being used by educators, influencers and trade across Canada.

- ❖ Currently in the process of providing recently updated education/communications materials to all provinces for consistent messaging within markets including Our Story (white booklet), Canadian Wine Regions postcard along with other tools upon request.
- ❖ Created a new list in the media centre of the Wine Country Ontario website that shows where Ontario wine is available outside Ontario – live now
- ❖ Supported inbound Quebec influencer trips in collaboration with i4c – July 2014
- ❖ Hosted key influencers from Quebec at i4c (SAQ, trade, media)
- ❖ Hosted Bill Zacharkiw for Riesling focused trip (Montreal Gazette)
- ❖ Media/trade tasting in Montreal – planned for February 2015
- ❖ Hosting SAQ educators group of 12 - October 2014
- ❖ Presenting Masterclass at Northern Lands: The Great Canadian Wine & Craft Beer Adventure festival, Edmonton - March 2015
- ❖ Continue to engage consistently with key media from across Canada by integrating the efforts within our PR plan. Hosted Ben McPhee-Segurdson (columnist Manitoba) at i4c
- ❖ Hosted Craig Pinhey (east coast) FAM
- ❖ Hosted Ben McPhee-Segurdson (columnist Manitoba) at i4c
- ❖ Hosted out of province media at Wine Align event in August which included Treve Ring, DJ Kearny, Anthony Gismondi, Rhys Pender (B.C.) and Brad Royal (Alberta) and Bill Zacharkiw, Remy Charest (Quebec) plus other local media

## Export Initiatives

### Strategy:

- **Invest and participate in select inbound media and buyer missions – from UK, US and Asia**
- **Assist in preparing Ontario wineries to succeed in export markets through educational seminars to ready them for specific markets**
- **Drive awareness and image for Wine Country Ontario and VQA wines in key international markets through Public Relations efforts**
- **Build educational assets as appropriate for key market audiences**
- **Aligning strategic efforts with OMAFRA, CVA and DFAIT, and working in collaboration where possible to stretch and leverage funding**

Leading key inbound media and buyer missions from the U.K., U.S. and Asia; working to leverage federal funding to enhance the program.

- ❖ Sommelier/media inbound group - January 2015
- ❖ Hosted Tim Atkin (U.K. media), Christy Canterbury (U.S. media), Blake Gray (U.S. media) at i4c 2014 (July) which resulted in immediate editorial coverage along with social media conversations. Additional stories from Tim and Christy are in the works with coverage anticipated within the next 6 months.
- ❖ Supported visit from Geoff Kruth (MS from California) in July 2014. He is the Director of Operations, Guild of Sommeliers and Wine Director, Farmhouse Inn and Restaurant.

Leading ProWein 2015 initiative for the Canadian Wine Regions booth. We have a full booth with 9 pods – 15 wineries (12 from Ontario). We will be collaborating with OMAFRA as we established this initiative/booth in 2014. This provides export opportunities for Ontario wineries and builds brand awareness in key markets with media and trade influencers.

Updated and in the process of distributing enhanced communication tools internationally for consistent messaging about the quality of Ontario wine

- ❖ White Book updated, translated & shared (French, Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
- ❖ Canadian Wine Regions postcard updated, translated & shared (French, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, German, Spanish)
- ❖ New website page (media centre) with list of wineries in export markets

Continue to support the Canadian Wine Initiative by offsetting shipping costs for wines to be shipped to Canadian posts/embassies abroad. Solidifies presence of Ontario wine in international markets and ensures consulate offices use local wine within their initiatives in those markets. Coordinating winery education and export readiness seminars in collaboration with government partners (DFAIT and OMAFRA) as required.

Continue to support consolidations for key international wine competitions that align with our strategy.

## Licensee Initiatives

### Strategy:

- ❖ **Build on established success of Taste Ontario trade tastings in Toronto and Ottawa in partnership with Vintages.**
- ❖ **Activate partnership with Foodservice & Hospitality Magazine to reach and engage more licensee's in the recognition program.**
- ❖ **Promote recognition program during the Taste Ontario trade events and any other occasions when we are in contact with the trade.**
- ❖ **Outreach to trade associations to find opportunities to put Ontario wineries in front of the licensee trade at association events. Seek out events that provide added exposure for Ontario wineries and wines.**
- ❖ **OCTA regional chapters, Ontario Restaurant Hotel Motel Association awards in Toronto and Ottawa, Ontario Hospitality Institute Top 30 Under 30 Awards, Food Service and Hospitality magazine awards and other events that align with strategy where Wine Country Ontario can add value and engage licensees.**

## VQA Trade Engagement and VQA Restaurant Recognition Program

Overarching goal is to raise image and quality perceptions within the licensee channel to spark pride, ambassadorship and trigger purchase. Maintain strong relationships with key trade/sommeliers and keep engagement level high.

### Highlights:

- ❖ Taste Ontario trade & media tastings - Toronto and Ottawa.
- ❖ October 2<sup>nd</sup>, Toronto & February 2015, Ottawa
- ❖ Leveraged strong trade/sommelier relationships to engage with key sommeliers to help host LCBO product consultants in wine country and assist in leading tasting sessions (Bruce Wallner, Will Predhomme, John Szabo, Jamie Drummond, April Kilpatrick, Lindsay Groves)
- ❖ Aligned licensee recognition program with VQA messaging, FeastON, P7
- ❖ Enhanced communications
- ❖ Secured & launched partnership with FeastON program (led by the Ontario Culinary Tourism Alliance, OCTA)
- ❖ P7 support for their restaurant program – Fall 2014
- ❖ Further animated partnership with Foodservice & Hospitality Magazine



- ❖ Partnership secured and working through plans (ads, editorial, Pinnacle awards)
- ❖ Promote recognition program during all relevant touch points with trade and increasing benefits to licensees participating in the program.
- ❖ Sponsored CAPS: Best Ontario Somm event with Ontario as the theme region this year - June
- ❖ CCOVI Expert's Tasting Magic Bus. Building on the success of February 2014 with plans for February 2015. Focus on key trade (sommeliers) from Toronto market
- ❖ I4C Magic Bus 2014 – hosted 20 key trade from Toronto market (sommeliers)
- ❖ Enhanced website restaurant listing



## Public Relations

### Tracking and Media Highlights

- ✓ **Reach – 47,266,410 contacts for the year to date**
- ✓ **MRP Quality Score: 71.02% (anything over 50% is positive)**
- ✓ **Clippings collected - 157**

Overall objective is to focus PR activities to support in a fully integrated way the goals of the Wine Country Ontario programs. Target audiences include media from the GTA, national and international (wine, lifestyle and travel) including bloggers. Work to touch all media types with multi-pronged approach. PR efforts include outreach to key influencers including industry, stakeholders, government, trade and wine educators in order to keep connected and update them with consistent communications in order to help share the Wine Country Ontario story.

### Strategy – Overall Approach

- ❖ Raise awareness and image of Ontario VQA wine and Wine Country Ontario as a top travel destination with media, bloggers and influencers (wine, travel and lifestyle) primarily in Ontario and elsewhere (key international influencers).
- ❖ Strengthen understanding by media and key influencers of Wine Country Ontario's appellation story and unique terroir.
- ❖ Continue to grow the understanding and use of consistent key messaging about Ontario VQA wines and Wine Country Ontario by industry and stakeholders.
- ❖ Maintaining strong relationships with all of the above.

### Strategic Highlights

- ❖ Hosted key international media at I4C2014 including Tim Atkin (MW, U.K.), Christy Canterbury (MW, U.S.), Blake Gray (U.S.) – July 2014. Also hosted over 30 media in total at i4c from local, national and international locations. Media included wine, travel and lifestyle media.
- ❖ Received immediate editorial coverage with upcoming stories in various outlets expected within the next 6 months.
- ❖ Supported editorial for story within Wine & Spirits Magazine Chardonnay focused article written by John Szabo. Result of long term PR efforts with this publication

- ❖ World of Fine Wine Magazine Pinot Noir article was published September 2014 – result of efforts in fall of 2013
- ❖ Stuart Pigott Riesling Book was launched in June 2014 with noteworthy Ontario section due to supporting his visit in fall 2013. Planning further tasting at his book launch in Toronto in November 2014.
- ❖ Provided PR support to bring media attention to the Truck sampling initiative by outreaching to local media across Ontario
- ❖ Hosted WineAlign judges at winemaker's dinner in August 2014. Maintains strong relationships with key wine media from across Canada including Anthony Gismondi,
- ❖ Decanter via Andrew Jefford, May article
- ❖ Southcoast FAM and coverage
- ❖ CCOVI Sparkling Symposium
- ❖ Terroir Toronto
- ❖ Product Consultant Sessions – Keynotes (Stephen Brook, Michael Madrigale, Ian D'Agata) – FAMS
- ❖ Royal Winter Fair competition. We provided in-kind advice on this competition as they are committed to executing this again, with renewed seriousness. We look forward to having them implement better opportunities for Ontario wines and how the winners will benefit from these awards. Judging took place in early September.
- ❖ UPDATED & ENHANCED COMMUNICATION MATERIALS -White Book, Canada Postcard, created new Appellation Placemat. Shared enhanced tools with wineries to ensure consistent use of updated information throughout the industry.
- ❖ LG awards – PR support

## Key Upcoming

- ❖ UPDATED PP presentation for industry (Our Story)
- ❖ Tim Atkin article – Gourmet Traveller Wine
- ❖ Christy Canterbury – new publication launch 2015
- ❖ Decanter – Chardonnay tasting upcoming
- ❖ Blissdom Blogger Event – October 2014
- ❖ PECWA wine event in PEC
- ❖ Epic FAM – fall 2014
- ❖ Icewine Festival Media support and collaboration with stakeholders to provide overarching information to media – January 2015
- ❖ Cuvee & Experts Tasting – media and trade – February 2015
- ❖ International trade and media FAMS – January 2014
- ❖ Bruce Schoenfeld – Travel & Leisure Magazine – Ontario piece
- ❖ Zoomer Magazine– Icewine article December 2014
- ❖ Amy Rosen – cookbook launch – October 2014
- ❖ VinItaly and Ian D'Agata Tasting, Toronto – January 2014
- ❖ Media and influencers at key events
- ❖ Taste Ontario Media and Trade Tasting Ottawa – February 2015

- ❖ Taste Ontario Media and Trade Tasting Toronto – October 2014
- ❖ Stuart Pigott – Riesling tasting – fall 2014
- ❖ VinItaly and Ian D'Agata Tasting, Toronto – January 2014
- ❖ Montreal Media and Trade Tasting February 2015
- ❖ Edmonton event Masterclass 2015
- ❖ Prowein 2015
- ❖ VinItaly 2015 Masterclass on Ontario wines

## **Ongoing**

- ❖ Nurturing and maintaining strong media relationships and pitching stories.
- ❖ Enhancing media centre on website (images, story ideas etc.).
- ❖ Enhancing PR tools and updates to be included on intranet member site for member access (enhanced media lists, media FAM tips and more)
- ❖ Weekly support for content of social media activities (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Consumer Newsletter content).
- ❖ Field media calls and support media with accurate facts to update their publications (provincial, national and international).
- ❖ Updating media lists and maintaining media tracking and reporting methods.



## Media Clipping HIGHLIGHTS

Chris Waters Cool Chard 24.07.2014

### Wines of the Week:

★★★

#### Maison Louis Jadot 2012 Bourgogne Chardonnay

Burgundy, France

MB \$25.39 (867077) | ON \$21.95 (933077)

This complex white is knit together from portions that were fermented in stainless steel and others that were fermented and aged in oak barrels. The result is a rich expression, with pleasing amounts of freshness and fruit flavours. Enjoyable on its own, this also would be a nice match for poached salmon or simply grilled pork or chicken.



★★★

#### Vina Santa Rita 2012 Reserva Chardonnay

Casablanca Valley, Chile

ON \$12.95 (348359)

This good quality, good value Chardonnay comes from vineyards located on the coast of Chile. The mix of tropical, apricot and ruby grapefruit flavours make for an appealing sweet and sour profile that would be a nice match for grilled scallops or shrimp.



**WINE:** A weekend-long celebration of the greatest white wine variety

# Cool Chardonnay



British wine expert Tim Atkin kicked off the fourth annual International Cool Climate Chardonnay celebration in Niagara by showering praise on the guest of honour.

Noting that Chardonnay plantings are increasing around the world, the London-based author and co-chairman of the International Wine Challenge suggested the world's greatest white wine isn't likely to lose its lustre.

"Chardonnay, I believe, will continue to be the white wine success story. Consumers love to drink it and growers love to grow it," Atkin said during his keynote address at Brock University on July 18.

The International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration assembled winemakers from 58 estates in nine countries to showcase the diversity and adaptability of the grape variety. Over the course of three days, its unique attributes and crowd-pleasing appeal were on display to a collection of trade, media and consumers who attended various luncheons, dinners and tastings staged along the Niagara wine route.

Producers in attendance came from Burgundy and the South of France, British Columbia, California and elsewhere to share their winos and tricks of the trade with guests. The hometown industry was well represented by vintners, such as Hidden Bench Vineyards & Winery, Lailey Vineyard and Norman Hardie Winery.

"I do believe that fantastic Chardonnay can come from almost anywhere," Atkin explained. "I think that while other regions might not have Burgundy's exact

soils, climate or heritage, more and more producers are making wines every bit as good.

"I think that the quality gap has narrowed to where it is almost non-existent. The gap that hasn't narrowed is the price gap.

I think that Niagara winemakers have a huge advantage over Burgundy in the sense that your world-class wines are considerably cheaper than Burgundy's."

The reason for Chardonnay's enduring success is easy to explain, according to Atkin. "I think it's partly the diversity of style. It can be dry, it can be off-dry, it can occasionally be sweet or very sweet. Sparkling, still, naked, or unaked. Throughout all of these different manifestations, I think it is an immediate grape variety," he said. "Chardonnay is about pleasure."

Chris Waters@sunmedia.ca  
@waters\_wine



## Hamilton Spectator Bits and Bites- Follow the truck Aug 2014



### Bits & Bites: Wine truck brings Ontario sips to Supercrawl

Hamilton Spectator

Supercrawl , James Street North

Food trucks will be on the street for the annual arts festival beginning Sept. 12 at 6 p.m., including the Taste Ontario VQA Wine Truck Summer Tour . The roaming bar is on a 16-week tour of the province and will serve free one-ounce servings of Ontario wines all weekend.

Pop-up Harvest Scissors

A fall pop-up on Oct. 4 is a collaboration between Vines Magazine and Pop Up Hamilton . The event at a to-be-disclosed location is at 5:30 p.m. Four courses will be paired with wine. Cocktails and live entertainment are also offered. Tickets are available at [popuphamilton.com](http://popuphamilton.com) or call 289-788-3283 to arrange ticket delivery. Venue and chef will be announced online 48 hours before the event.

Auntie Booms Retro Café , 224 Ottawa St. N.

Burlesque and beef go together like peanut butter and jam at the new Ottawa Street restaurant. The diner hosts a burlesque matinee on Sept. 21. Tickets available at the café are \$35 in advance or \$40 at the door for a 4:30 p.m. show that includes roast beef or chicken on a bun, roasted potatoes, coleslaw or garden salad and dessert. While you eat, two burlesque acts entertain. A cash bar will offer beer (Canadian, Bud, Blue) and red and white wine. Seating is limited to 38.

Caledonia Fall Fair, 151 Calthness St. E., Caledonia

Meet a local farmer on Sept. 27 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., and talk produce. Featured farms include Snyder's Sweet Corn , Pearl's Strawberry Farm , Dairy Farmers of Haldimand, Fisherville Greenhouses and Richardson's Maple Syrup . The Caledonia Fall Fair runs Sept. 25 to 28. Visit [caledoniafair.ca](http://caledoniafair.ca) for more information.

Springridge Farm, 7256 Bell School Line, Milton

Get ready for harvest season with celebrity chef Stefano Faita. The host of CBC TV's "In The Kitchen" will sign new cookbook at Springridge Farm on Sept. 20 at 2 p.m. Sign up by emailing [events@springridgefarm.com](mailto:events@springridgefarm.com).



The Wine Country Ontario VQA Mobile Wine Truck rolls into Supercrawl on Friday.

#### Localicious

Here's hoping you're good and hungry when Localicious kicks off Sept. 19 and runs through to Oct. 12. Participating restaurants, including Culantro , La Piazza Allegra and Chagall's at the Sheraton, will highlight locally grown ingredients in their offerings. The kick-off party is Sept. 16 from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Sheraton Hotel, 116 King St. W. Tickets for the launch are \$30 by calling the BIA office at 905-523-1646.

Hildreth Farm Market, 4885 Durham Rd., Beamsville

September means fall flavours. Hildreth Farm Market just finished picking squash — acon, butternut, buttercup, heart of gold and spaghetti squash — for its daily market.

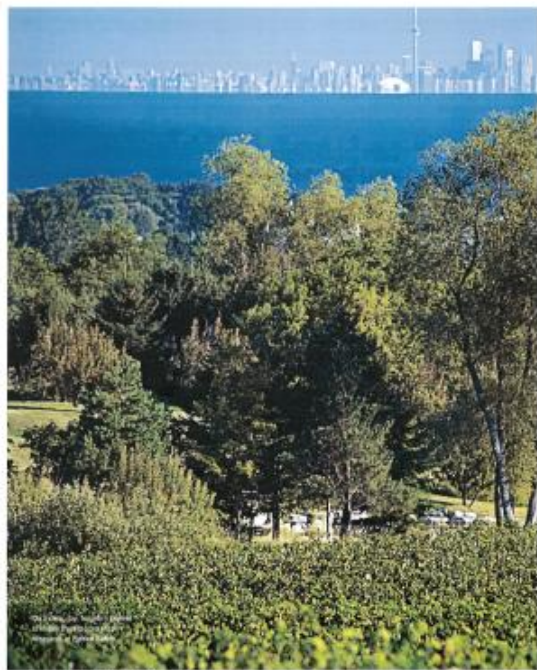
Send foodie news to Amy Kenny or tweet at #BitsAndBites.

[akenny@thespec.com](mailto:akenny@thespec.com)

905-526-2487 | @Amyatthespec



# Wine and Spirits - Oct 2014 - John Szabo Ontario's Cool Climate Chardonnay



## Ontario's Cool-Climate Chardonnay

By John Szabo, MS

Ontario may not yet resonate widely as a go-to name when seeking fine chardonnay, but the province is in the enviable driver's seat of this Canadian province and quickly gaining a reputation as a source of crisp and pure, serious-but-warm.

And it's been a long time coming. Chardonnay was the last vintage planted in Ontario in the late 1980s by Bill Lister, who defied the warnings by the local Horticultural Research Institute that European grapes wouldn't survive. Today, chardonnay is the region's most important variety by volume, and the impetus for an almost total renaissance of the Cool Climate Chardonnay.

This was after the "14c," I sat up for the Niagara Peninsula and Prince Edward County to get a closer look.

The drive west from downtown Toronto to the southern shore of Lake Ontario takes about an hour on a good OCTV traffic day. Near the town of Oakville you'll reach one of the glories of the Niagara Peninsula. The morning, slowly rising edge of the lake, stretches out up to 100 km, and though it's the beginning of the Niagara Peninsula.

It's another 10 miles or so to the other end of the peninsula, where the Niagara River flows down the US border and runs into Lake Erie southward.

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"The mineral character of our chardonnay is directly linked to the dolomite limestone in our soils."

—Harald Thiel

the vineyard in Lake Ontario at Niagara Falls. The nearly 15,000 acres of vineyards planted between the vineyard and the shore of Lake Ontario, and the Niagara River and Ontario, make this Canada's largest viticultural area.

Although Niagara's vineyards are relatively flat, the soil is not as simple as it seems. The soil is a mix of dolomite limestone and other minerals, which makes the difference, says Thiel. "The soil is a mix of dolomite limestone and other minerals, which makes the difference, says Thiel. "The soil is a mix of dolomite limestone and other minerals, which makes the difference, says Thiel."

For the first time in Ontario, the vineyard is now a mix of dolomite limestone and other minerals, which makes the difference, says Thiel. "The soil is a mix of dolomite limestone and other minerals, which makes the difference, says Thiel."

Thiel, who worked extensively with chardonnay in the 1980s, has been a pioneer in the industry. He has been a pioneer in the industry, and he has been a pioneer in the industry. He has been a pioneer in the industry, and he has been a pioneer in the industry.

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As we walk, Thid tells me that he established Thidlee Seeds in 1983 after raising a bevy of local chardonnay for the 1980 Tasting Panel. "I thought, 'This is as good as anything I have in my cellar,'" he says. "So chardonnay had been made by indigenous Deborah Paskin and wine writer Steve Tordella, who had agreed to run the quality limits of Ontario chardonnay in the early 1980s by making wine with low-alcohol yields, hard fermentation, without added yeast and extensive malolactic fermentation."

After doing some research, Theodor had to place a straight rod where that wire was made, to what is now the Beattieville branch. This was enough to get the wire and the vine together, but he says the basket of birds, "Their grapes too had been taken from the table and the growing season is so short to ripen into similar a condition, and statistical is unimprovable." This man, explaining that Ouranos is the (grand) father of the "Beattieville and down" (Dance man in the basket) and, preventing to improve in reality straightly from dropping below the rising basket. To the top, in a cool state, after the basket and spring there is no longer a danger, while in the season, the summer season starts at the first fall frost, around the growing season long ago to ripen the grapes.

As for the same case, the mathematician is a crucial role as well. This says, it is not calculated in the same manner, but it is not to be confused (these points), but the result is therefore a more of more (up to Beattieville).

The will here also sets the Newville Bench apart from Nagata's other areas he says, adding Fischel's "The mineral character of our clastic rocks is directly linked to the diastrophic basement in



**Paul Pender** has turned to farming organically, and has taken the additional step of converting Twiss's estate vineyards to biodynamics.

our work, and particularly the series *Immense Scaupness*—live to six percent in one February (1997) for example. The strategies utilized by the birds' guards also allow birds to warm up more quickly in the spring and later in the growing season earlier.

Third, power is not all that 2011 February Unusual Coldness is demonstrating. It's highly unusual and more, and even here is palpably doing various things: it's killed bird associates and a scientist, sent his

[illegible]

"In Prince Edward County, phenolic ripeness comes before sugar ripeness. We can make richly textured wines at under 13 percent alcohol."  
—Norm Hardie



8 Nagsara is at the margin. Private Edward Counts is now almost opposite. The County, as usual, is to the left on the opposite side of Toronto from Nagsara, about two hours to the east on a virtual island, surrounded by the Bay of Quinte and Lake Ontario for a narrow stretch of land. With a growing season that's about a month shorter than Nagsara it is impossible to plant early-ripening such as 12 character, even so, since most be two-thirds

And yet, this is where Steve Hinkle set up shop in 2001, after having made waves in Georgia, South Africa, Burgundy, New Zealand and California. "I've always believed the best wines with a sense of place are grown on the edge," he says. "And FDC definitely is on the edge of the profession."

In addition to glauconite, Manganese nodules are characteristic of the Coarix's sands to its south, where geologists call the Tertiary *laminar* *placens*. Unlike the hard dolomitic limestone of Niagara, PBC's younger calcareous chalk is much softer and more fragmental, with a higher water component, and is most available in river cuts.

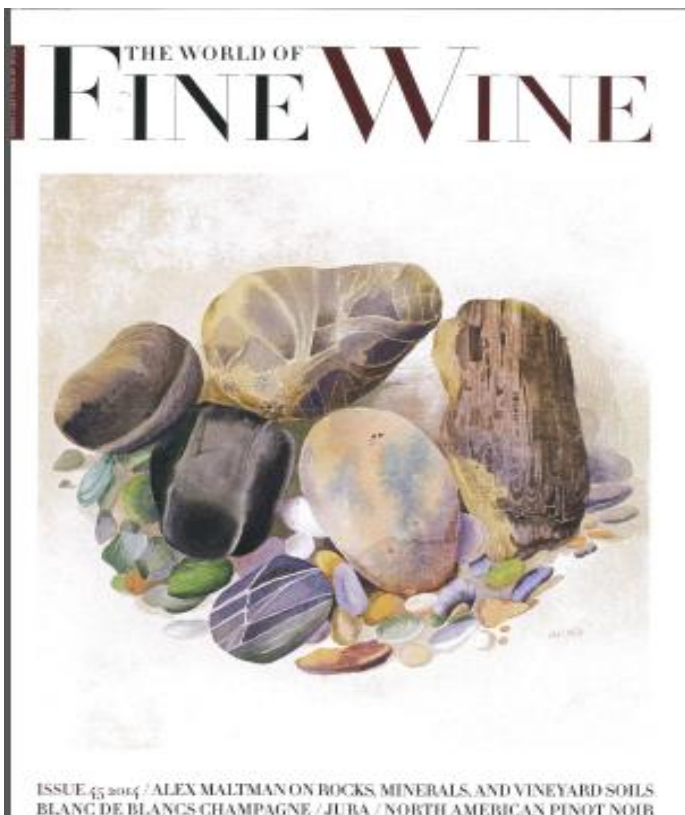
higher-lying corners of Mangrove with a distance of half a mile that the County doesn't have," he says. "The County is always poorer and more remote, with poor bus service." His views could not be non-divorcing with his love for nature in a high, low state of nature. "There, plenty of ripeness comes before ripe ripeness," Harbo explains. "It can make richly seasoned wine as under 10 percent alcohol."

The contractor hasn't demurred either. Inexpensive, Trivers Edward County is now Illinois's fastest growing region, with some 40-60 commercial sites currently in operation; more are less than a decade old. Champaign, both a rail and sparkling, is quickly putting the region on the world-class circuit map. ■



At Strozzi, in Niagara-on-the-Lake, J-L Groux has found a climate warm enough to reliably ripen cabernet sauvignon. His chardonnays are opulent and rich.

## Fine Wine Issue 45 2014- North American Pinot Noir Nature and Nurture



ISSUE 45 2014 / ALEX MALTMAN ON ROCKS, MINERALS, AND VINEYARD SOILS  
BLANC DE BLANCS CHAMPAGNE / JURA / NORTH AMERICAN PINOT NOIR











## Boston Globe

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/travel/2014/07/19/biking-ontario-wine-country/YQXLsty3U47yB29OlrxxMM/story.html>

### Biking Ontario's wine country

By Stephen Jermanok | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JULY 19, 2014



**The author and his friend Michael Berger, here sampling some wines at Hidden Bench Vineyards in Beamsville.**

JORDAN, Ontario — A mere hour outside of Toronto, just past Hamilton on the QEW, you spot a sign that reads, "Entering the Greenbelt." Vineyards pop up on either side of the road, and just beyond those vineyards on the left, is mighty Lake Ontario. This is the heart of Ontario's wine country, where close to 100 vineyards produce riesling, chardonnay, pinot noir, and arguably the province's best-known beverage, the sweet icewine.

My friend Michael and I turn off in the small village of Jordan, grab our bikes from atop the car, and start a 35-mile ride through this fertile breadbasket. Soon we're biking up the 300-foot Niagara Escarpment, a limestone cliff that I would later learn creates the perfect microclimate for producing wine. On relatively level backcountry roads, we pass vineyard after vineyard, lilacs and azaleas in full bloom, peach trees, and signs for rhubarb and asparagus for sale. Cars pull over and people get out to gather a bouquet of wildflowers.

When we tire, we simply bike into a winery and sample the wares. At Hidden Bench, we stop at the circa-1850 farmhouse that doubles as a tasting room to try the 2011 Roman's Block Riesling. The cool climate wine has a dry acidity, not nearly as cloying as many rieslings I've tried.

"Tastes like grapefruit on the finish," says Michael, a wine connoisseur from the suburbs of Detroit.

Biking on lightly traveled roads to vineyards all over the world — from Napa to Bordeaux to Tuscany — has proven to be a popular option for biking tour companies. So it comes as no surprise that they're starting to turn their attention to Ontario's wine country, especially as the region continues to earn international recognition for its distinctive wines. Toronto-based Butterfield & Robinson (best known for its lavish Loire Valley trips, where you spend the night at 14th-century castles and dine on seven-course feasts at private French vineyards), unveiled a new four-day itinerary last summer through Jordan and nearby Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Toronto is an easy flight for most of North America. Once here, we can quickly guide you to a bucolic section of Ontario, which offers excellent biking, wine tasting, theater at the Shaw Festival, even Niagara Falls," says Butterfield & Robinson's Kathy Stewart.

Jordan is smack dab between the escarpment and the lake, an area of the region better known as The Bench. Not nearly as flashy as the Niagara-on-the-Lake wineries I would tour later in the week, these boutique wineries create a feeling comparable with low-key Sonoma next to big brother Napa.

At Flat Rock Cellars, where the rolling vineyards rise from either side of a creek, owner Ed Madronich believes the soil and climate here is similar to Burgundy. "I firmly believe this is one of the great places to grow certain varietals like riesling, chardonnay, and pinot," says Madronich, looking out over a landscape that would inspire Hudson River School artists.



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Tom Pennachetti, co-owner of Cave Spring Cellars in Jordan, explains the unique microclimate of the region best: "Close to Lake Ontario, we have cool breezes in the summer. Yet, 300 feet above the lake, the escarpment creates a moderating effect,



where we remain frost-free well into November. There's great air circulation," he notes.

At dinner at Inn on the Twenty, where we spend the night, we try the Cave Spring Cellars Estate Riesling, perfectly paired with a just-picked fiddlehead and asparagus salad, and a main dish of scallops. The green apple and pear finish of the wine complements perfectly the rich, buttery scallops.

The next morning, we meet Paul Pender, the mild-mannered winemaker at Tawse Winery who has been winning accolades such as Winemaker of the Year at the Ontario Wine Awards since he stepped foot on the property in 2005. He also happens to be an avid biker, as Michael and I found out when Pender slipped into bike shorts. Climbing the first short steep hill, we had a hard time keeping up with him. We pedaled past a waterfall, Ball's Falls, next to an old grist mill, and rode alongside fields of corn waiting to be harvested and solitary century-old barns still standing.

Back at the vineyard, Pender brings us downstairs to taste the latest vintages. "We're all about making terroir wine," says Pender, as he hands me a glass of single-vineyard chardonnay. The acidity is perfect for my taste buds, not in the least bit oaky or buttery, with hints of apricot. I'm ready to buy a case on the spot, but unfortunately I'm flying back to Boston and can only sneak a bottle or two in my suitcase. Michael, who is driving back to Michigan, is more fortunate as he hands Pender a credit card.

A 40-minute drive east of Jordan and even closer to the thunderous roar of Niagara Falls, Niagara-on-the-Lake is one of the best preserved villages in Canada, a Loyalist outpost since the Revolutionary War. Destroyed in the War of 1812, the town rebuilt, and today the two-story Victorian buildings are home to boutique shops, the local favorite, Cow's Ice Cream, and wonderful restaurants, including the one at The Charles Inn. The 12-room inn was built in 1832 and still has its original chandeliers, fireplace, and doors. For wine lovers, it also features one of the best wine lists in town.

Long before people headed to Niagara-on-the-Lake to sample the world-class chardonnays and rieslings, there was the renowned Shaw Festival. Held from the beginning of April to early November, the theater festival celebrates the works of George Bernard Shaw and his contemporaries. More than a dozen productions are performed each year at four stages of works by Noel Coward, Arthur Miller, Oscar Wilde, Lillian Hellman, and a slew of other noteworthy playwrights.

At Royal George Theater, we took in "Our Betters," a rarely performed play by Somerset Maugham. Set in 1920s London, it is based on a story line familiar in the popular television show, "Downton Abbey," where a down-on-his-luck British aristocrat marries a well-to-do American for her money.

Niagara-on-the-Lake is also home to the start of the 56-kilometer Niagara River Recreation Trail, a bike path that runs parallel to the river all the way to Niagara Falls. On our final ride, we would bike on a guided tour with locally owned Zoom Leisure Bikes to two pioneers of the Ontario wine region, Chateau des Charmes and Peller Estates. Both wineries were instrumental in wisely ripping up the Concord grapes that were growing in the region for almost 200 years, better suited for jelly,

and replacing them with vinifera from Burgundy, Bordeaux, and the Mosel. More than 30 years later, these vineyards are producing not only world-class rieslings and chardonnays, but reds like cab francs with serious nose and body. Peller sells a delightful 2010 cab franc that seems reasonably priced at \$40 a bottle, with hints of plum and pepper. They also make an icewine from riesling that has the perfect balance of sweetness and acidity. I had it with my blue cheese appetizer for lunch at the vineyard.

I knew beforehand that the Niagara biking would be stellar and any performance at the Shaw Festival a treat, but to be honest, I had not been very excited to try the Ontario wines. My mistake. These wines have been hiding in obscurity for far too long. Unfortunately, few of these wineries have international distribution. So you're just going to have to follow in my footsteps and cross the border to sample them for yourself. With lake winds keeping mildew and mold off the vines and the Niagara Escarpment sheltering the vineyards from early frost, the unique microclimate has created a Burgundy of North America.

Stephen Jermanok can be reached at [www.activetravels.com](http://www.activetravels.com).  
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## Beyond THE Grape

On a leisurely tour of Niagara's wine country, tasting rooms are just the starting point

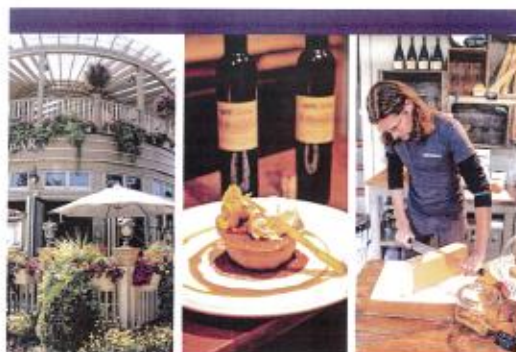
by Valerie Hawes

It's late October—the start of an autumn wine festival season in Niagara. The grape harvest is well under way, and the vines are beginning to turn a brilliant red. The air is crisp and the sun is shining. It's a perfect time to visit the Niagara wine country. The grape harvest is well under way, and the vines are beginning to turn a brilliant red. The air is crisp and the sun is shining. It's a perfect time to visit the Niagara wine country.

As we walk through the vineyard, we see rows of grapevines stretching into the distance. The leaves are a mix of green and red, creating a beautiful autumn scene. The air is crisp and the sun is shining. It's a perfect time to visit the Niagara wine country.

On a leisurely tour of Niagara's wine country, tasting rooms are just the starting point. The vineyard is beautiful, with rows of grapevines stretching into the distance. The leaves are a mix of green and red, creating a beautiful autumn scene. The air is crisp and the sun is shining. It's a perfect time to visit the Niagara wine country.

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Left: Niagara-on-the-Lake's historic downtown is a beautiful sight. Middle: A group of people enjoying a wine tasting session. Right: A close-up of a hand holding a small glass of red wine.

...and the historic downtown of Niagara-on-the-Lake is a beautiful sight. The town is a charming mix of historic and modern architecture. The streets are lined with shops and restaurants. The air is crisp and the sun is shining. It's a perfect time to visit the Niagara wine country.

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## Media Monitoring

### Media Coverage and Analysis Report

Date: September 29, 2014

Wine Council of Ontario Master 2014



Reporter	Clip Publish/ Air Date	Outlet/ Station Name	City/ Reach Boundary	Prov/ Region	Media Type	Reach	Edition/ Schedule	Tone			Quality Ratings					Notes
								Positive	Balanced	Negative	Bonus / Dement Point	Company / Brand Mention	Photo / Image / Logo	Key Message(s)	Tier 1 Media Outlets	
Linda Luong	30-Sep-14	<a href="#">WHERE Toronto</a>	Toronto	ON	Magazine			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	Story on Niagara's wine region
Linda Luong	30-Sep-14	<a href="#">WHERE Toronto</a>	Toronto	ON	Magazine				✓			✓			✓	Preview of story on Niagara's wine region
Valerie Howes Tiffany Mayer	22-Sep-14	<a href="#">Westworld Saskatchewan</a>	Burnaby	BC	Magazine			✓				✓	✓	✓	✓	
	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">The Standard</a>	St. Catharines	ON	Daily		M-F		✓			✓	✓		✓	Food for Thought hosted by the Shaw Festival
Steven Davey	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">howtoronto.com</a>	National	CDN	Website				✓				✓		✓	Allen's has an all- VQA wine cellar
Jeff Heuchert	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">Exeter Times-Advocate</a>	Exeter	ON	Community Paper		Weekly		✓				✓			Consuming Ontario wine has a 12:1 economic impact
John Law	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">The Standard</a>	St. Catharines	ON	Daily		M-F		✓			✓			✓	New book on Niagara foods and wine country cuisine
	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">Welland Tribune</a>	Welland	ON	Daily		M-F		✓			✓			✓	Come savour the food and wines of Niagara
Tiffany Mayer	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">Niagara Falls Review</a>	Niagara Falls	ON	Daily		M-F		✓			✓	✓		✓	Thought for Food speakers series hosted by the Shaw Festival
John Law	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">Niagara Falls Review</a>	Niagara Falls	ON	Daily		M-F					✓	✓		✓	New book on Niagara foods and wine country cuisine
John Law	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">Welland Tribune</a>	Welland	ON	Daily		M-F		✓			✓	✓		✓	New book on Niagara foods and wine country cuisine
	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">The Record (Kitchener/Wale</a>	Kitchener	ON	Daily		M-F		✓						✓	Henry of Pelham wines will be served during the Stratford Garlic Festival
	3-Sep-14	<a href="#">The Record (Kitchener/Wale</a>	Kitchener	ON	Daily		M-F								✓	Mention of Ontario Wine Festivals



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								Positive	Balanced	Negative	Bonus / Demeit Point	Company / Brand Mention	Photo / Image / Logo	Key Message(s)	Tier 1 Media Outlets	
	16-Apr-14	<a href="http://easy101.com">easy101.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	40,000										Easter Weekend
John Law	16-Apr-14	<a href="http://insider1.com">insider1.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	90,000										Easter Weekend
John Law	16-Apr-14	<a href="http://Thoroldedition.ca">Thoroldedition.ca</a>	National	CDN	Website	1,000										Easter Weekend
John Law	16-Apr-14	<a href="http://sicalharringtonstandard.ca">sicalharringtonstandard.ca</a>	National	CDN	Website	154,000										Easter Weekend
John Law	16-Apr-14	<a href="http://niagarafallsreview.ca">niagarafallsreview.ca</a>	National	CDN	Website	78,000										
John Law	16-Apr-14	<a href="http://wellandtribune.ca">wellandtribune.ca</a>	National	CDN	Website	72,000										
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://talwinnews.com">talwinnews.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	25,000										
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://viralnewschart.com">viralnewschart.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	50,000										
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://news.com.ca">news.com.ca</a>	National	CDN	Website	25,000										
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://gabriel.com">gabriel.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	0										
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://menafin.com">menafin.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	20,000										Easter Weekend
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://ca.finance.yahoo.com">ca.finance.yahoo.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	1,783,000										Easter Weekend
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://niagarathisweek.com">niagarathisweek.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	50,000										Easter Weekend
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://dialjournal.com">dialjournal.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	241,000										Easter Weekend
	15-Apr-14	<a href="http://investing.businessweek.com">investing.businessweek.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	50,000										
Christine	2-Apr-14	<a href="http://cliffhill.com">cliffhill.com</a>	National	CDN	Website	32,500										
Report Totals:						47,266,410		19%	81%	0%	1%	100%	45%	89%	50%	
Number of Stories:						157										
Budget:						\$0										
Total Reach:						47,266,410										
Cost Per Contact:						\$0.000										
MRP Quality Score:						71.02%										
* Category is an additional feature available for selected media only.																
MRP Data Provided Under the Authority of News Canada																
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## **Risks to Plan**

There are no risks to plan identified to date.

## Amendments to Plan

To date, the IMC has proposed one amendment to this year's budget. The Ministry has been advised of the proposal, but the IMC has not yet finalized where they propose the available funds be spent.

In the original budget, the 'Consumers First' section includes a line item 'Usage and Attitude Study / Other Research', with a total budget of \$75,000 (\$50,000 for U&A and \$25,000 for a new tourism-related study).

The IMC notes that U&A study has been done under this program for 4 consecutive years and has decided that there is little value in doing the same study this year, i.e. doing the study will not provide any new information this year (in fact, there is consideration for only doing this type of study every 2 or 3 years, going forward). Therefore, the IMC would like to re-allocate the \$50,000 budget amount.

This amendment to the budget has not yet been approved by the Ministry, pending the IMC's recommendation for the funds.

# ONTARIO WINE STRATEGY (MEDTE / WCO)

## REVENUES - CLAIM 2, FY2015

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Revenues:		Budget	Actual to date
MEDTE investment		\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,000,000
Supplementary MEDTE Investment per Amending Agreement		200,000	200,000
VQAO investment		250,000	125,000
Winery fees (by tier):			
Large and Medium (17)		106,500	106,500
Small (31)		154,000	154,000
Craft (27)		96,000	96,000
Micro-craft (23)		57,500	57,500
Winery additional properties (by tier):			
Large and Medium (6)		18,000	18,000
Craft (3)		3,750	3,750
Winery rebates from MEDTE (by tier):			
Large and Medium (17)		(38,500)	(38,500)
Small (31)		(30,000)	(30,000)
Craft (27)		(42,000)	(42,000)
Micro-craft (23)		(11,500)	(11,500)
		3,763,750	1,638,750
Wine Country Ontario Program including Guide, website, etc.			
Advertising from WCO member wineries		55,000	54,635
Advertising from WGAO member wineries		-	-
Advertising from 3rd parties		104,750	106,500
Course Books		15,000	6,050
		174,750	167,185
Agriculture Marketing Program (federal export program)		25,000	-
Total Revenue		\$ 3,963,500	\$ 1,805,935

Marketing Plan Performance for FY2015 – Report #2 – Sept. 30, 2014



# ONTARIO WINE STRATEGY (MEDTE / WCO)

## DETAILED SUMMARY OF ELIGIBLE EXPENDITURES - CLAIM 2, FY2015

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			Wine Country		Total
			Ontario		Claimed
			FY2015 Budget		To Date
<b>Tourism Leadership</b>					
	Official Guide (production)		467,000		321,959
	Official Guide (distribution)		115,000		104,931
	Media, including agency fees		655,000		363,645
	WCO Website		66,000		19,000
	Photography		20,000		-
	Wine Route Signage		10,000		10,120
	Mystery Shopper		91,000		56,422
	Retail Training		33,000		38,044
	RTO Engagement Programs		20,000		800
			1,477,000		914,921
			-		
<b>Consumers First</b>					
	Advertisement Tracking		40,000		24,500
	Agency Special Project		60,000		52,630
	Environmental Program		5,000		4,438
	Usage & Attitude Research		75,000		37,321
	Experiential Tastings		100,000		106,307
	i4C		25,000		25,000
	Trade Shows		120,000		83,740
	Social Media		142,000		69,794
	Consumer Shows / Sponsorships		35,000		28,965
			602,000		432,695
			-		
<b>Retail Growth</b>					
	Period 7 LCBO		400,000		400,000
	Taste Ontario		40,000		40,000
	LCBO Tasting Program		75,000		75,000
	WOW program		105,000		98,736
	Product Consultant Program		105,000		80,435
	Inter-Provincial Activities		15,000		3,773
	Export - Media and Buyer Missions		50,000		9,432
	Export - Canadian Wine Initiative		40,000		-
	Export - Pro-Wein		45,000		1,124
	Export - Media Communications		10,000		299
	Export - International Competitions		10,000		471
	Export - Canada Media Marketplace		10,000		1,480
	Licensee - VQA Trade Portfolio Tastings		55,000		6,732
	Licensee - VQA Awards Program		20,000		205
			980,000		717,685
			-		

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