



# Nova Scotia ...and Quality Wine Standards

Presented to the Minister's Grape & Wine Networking Conference  
May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019

**“THE NOVA SCOTIA WINE INDUSTRY”**

**??**

...in the big scheme of things,  
where do we stand?

In this changed world climate,  
can Nova Scotia grow grapes  
reliably?

And can we grow them competitively?



Can we grow - - *well* - - the type of  
wines that the market wants?

*(Ah... the climate again)*

*WELL, WHAT ARE THE FASTEST  
GROWING CATEGORIES OF WINE  
SALES IN THE WORLD RIGHT  
NOW?*

**SPARKLING WINES**  
**LIGHTLY SPARKLING WINES**  
**ROSÉS**  
**CRISP, AROMATIC WHITES**  
**ELEGANT, LOWER ALCOHOL REDS**



Exactly Nova Scotia's areas of strength

**VICTORIES AGAINST \$200+ PRESTIGE CHAMPAGNES IN BLIND TASTINGS WITH THE WINE WRITERS' CIRCLE, THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL SOMMELIERS AND WITH WINE EXPERTS IN THE U.K.**

**VINOUS - "THE BEST NEW WORLD PINOT NOIR WE'VE TASTED IN SOME TIME"**

**COUNTLESS VICTORIES AT INTERNATIONAL WINE COMPETITONS**

**THE 'HOTTEST' STAND AT THE 20,000+ ATTENDEE VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL WINE FESTIVAL LAST YEAR**

**SO NOVA SCOTIA WINES ARE IN A  
REALLY ENVIABLE POSITION AND, AS A  
PROVINCE AND AN INDUSTRY, IT IS  
PRUDENT TO TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE  
OUR LONG-TERM FUTURE AS A SERIOUS  
COMPETITOR IN THE WORLD OF  
QUALITY WINE**

And how's this accomplished throughout the world?

By creating...

**“APPELLATIONS”**

**“QUALITY WINE STANDARDS”**

# APPELLATIONS

WINE-PRODUCING REGIONS PROTECTED AND DELINEATED BY THEIR  
GOVERNMENTS

UNDER **QUALITY WINE STANDARD** SYSTEMS THAT DEFINE THEM...

APPELLATION D'ORIGINE CONTRÔLÉE (OR PROTÉGÉE)

**A.V.A. - D.O.C. - V.Q.A.**

Examples of appellations...

*...NAPA, NIAGARA, MENDOZA...*

*BURGUNDY ...BORDEAUX*

*THE OKANAGAN ...THE GOLDEN MILE*

*CHABLIS ...CHAMPAGNE*

*CHIANTI ...BAROLO*

*TOKAY ...PORT ...SHERRY*

*...*

# TIDAL BAY



**THE TIME HAS COME FOR NOVA SCOTIA TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT  
PROTECTING ITS BRANDS IN RELATION TO WINE.**

**"NOVA SCOTIA"**

**"ANNAPOLIS VALLEY"**

**"BEAR RIVER"**

**"GASPEREAU VALLEY"**

**"TIDAL BAY"**

**...AND OTHERS**

**“THE LAND IS THE BRAND”**

## Direct ramifications of establishing an Appellation and Quality Wine Standard infrastructure for a wine region:

- Economic and commercial growth far beyond the wine industry itself:
  - Restaurants, catering, foodservice
  - Accommodations (hotels, inns, B&Bs, general hospitality services)
  - Agri-tourism activities
  - Broad commercial retail growth (stores, markets, crafts, roadside businesses)
  - Arts, theatre, entertainment

Numerous international studies have estimated 'complementary' commercial growth at values, and with revenue generation, well exceeding the wine industry core

Another wealth generator - - and indicator  
- - within developed wine regions  
internationally is the significant increase in  
land values.

**\$600** U.S./HECTARE... **\$30,000** U.S./HECTARE

**MENDOZA**  
**UCO**  
**VISTA FLORES**  
**ALTAMIRA**

**\$100,000** U.S./ ACRE... **\$250,000** U.S./ ACRE

**NAPA / SONOMA**  
**OAKVILLE**  
**ST. HELENA**  
**RUTHERFORD BENCH**

*...the Wall St. view*

**\$320,000 U.S. / ACRE**



But we can't all be Napa

**\$35,000/ACRE... \$75,000/ACRE**

**BEAMSVILLE BENCH**

**ST. DAVIDS BENCH**

**FOUR MILE CREEK**

**NIAGARA LAKESHORE**

*...AND BASIC UNPLANTED, BOTTOM-LAND IN NIAGARA*

**\$10,000 / ACRE...**    **\$29,800 / ACRE**

*...AND IN NIAGARA, ABOVE THE ESCARPMENT, WHERE YOU CAN'T  
GROW GRAPES*

*...STILL* **\$10,000** / ACRE

*...AND GASPEREAU VALLEY LAND PRICES...*

*PRE-GASPEREAU VINEYARDS, BENJAMIN  
BRIDGE, LUCKETT AND L'ACADIE*

*...AND POST-*

**SO, HAVING TAKEN A LOOK AT THE  
DEVELOPMENTAL POTENTIAL OF THE NOVA  
SCOTIA WINE INDUSTRY...**

**AND A CURSORY GLIMPSE AT THE ROLE OF  
'APPELLATION AND STANDARDS  
INFRASTRUCTURE' IN THAT PROCESS...**

**WHAT'S BEEN DONE ABOUT ADVANCING THAT?**

# NOVA SCOTIA QUALITY WINE STANDARDS

- ▶ For over a year now, under the auspices of the Nova Scotia Wine Quality Standards Committee of the Minister's Wine Development Board, I've been heading up a project group to analyze national and international quality wine standard systems and provide recommendations for a wine quality standard system best suited for Nova Scotia.



# Approach to Project Deliverables

- ▶ We've reviewed Ontario and BC VQA standards systems for suitability for adoption, and identified any potential difficulties for 'harmonization' with Nova Scotia.
- ▶ And we've reviewed international 'requirements' for quality wine standards systems, along with those already in place in Nova Scotia.

# Approach to Project Deliverables

- ▶ Pros and cons have been weighed, considering effectiveness, governance, regulation, cost, autonomy, marketability and credibility.

# The International Regulatory Landscape

- ▶ Different countries take **VASTLY** different approaches:
- ▶ European systems are the strictest regimes worldwide:

## **Example: Champagne**

- ▶ Some New World countries have much less detailed systems:

## **Example: the United States**

- ▶ Ontario and British Columbia's top tier (the VQA) is arguably closest to a classic European system in New World (stricter in some areas, less strict in others)

## Should we care about harmonizing with anyone else?

Having reviewed the different approaches taken in various wine producing regions around the world, we recommended that we should **not** set about immediately to model VQA or any other international system.

The decision is entirely Nova Scotia's.

## Matters of size and cost...

*Sizes of Ontario and BC wine industries at time of VQA implementation:*

- ▶ **Ontario, 1989:** ~47,000 tonnes
- ▶ **British Columbia, 1988:** ~18,000 tonnes
  
- ▶ ***...and Nova Scotia today:***
- ▶ **Nova Scotia, 2017:** ~2,200 tonnes

# Authorized Grape Varieties

## Other factors come into play, too:

- ▶ Nova Scotia currently accepts a number of interspecific hybrid grape varieties, for example, L'Acadie and New York Muscat
- VQA Ontario has only a fairly tight list of vitis vinifera, and some French hybrids
- BC VQA, though, has a long list now including dozens of interspecific crosses, as well as several labrusca lineage varieties (Cayuga, for example).
- ***In neither case is New York Muscat, as an example, on the list***

# Authorized Grape Varieties

- ▶ And while EU regulations state that a top tier wine must be “*obtained from vine varieties belonging to Vitis vinifera*,” even there, exceptions exist (PDO English Wine)
- ▶ And a ground-up approach for addition of varieties to PDO lists (Switzerland) ...accepted freely in the EU
- ▶ **So we established that Nova Scotia could be confident to select a fairly extensive list of grape varieties.**



# Minimum Brix

## Assessment:

Current Nova Scotia standards for minimum Brix are lower than requirements for VQA Ontario and BC in certain categories

	VQA	Nova Scotia
Table Wine	17+	15+
Fortified, Nouveau	18+	16+
All other categories	Identical	

## Minimum Brix

However, our research revealed that the minimum Brix for world-class regions including Chablis, Burgundy and the Mosel are **lower** than the currently required 17+ for VQA.

Wine	Minimum Density	Equivalent Brix
QbA Mosel	55°Öchsle	~13.5
AOP Chablis	161 g/l	~15.2
Premier Cru Chablis	170 g/l	~15.96
AOP Rosé, Burgundy	165 g/l	~15.52
White Burgundy	170g/l	~15.96
Red Burgundy	175 g/l	~16.4

# Where is harmonization with international standards easily accommodated?

In many other areas, our research indicated that harmonization with international standards would not be a difficult matter for Nova Scotia producers.

# Summary

Based on the results of our research, we established that a Quality Wine Standard, tailored to the realities of grape growing in Nova Scotia, could be created in a way that would make sense for the province.

# Nova Scotia need NOT accept:

- ▶ A one-size-fits-all Canadian Quality Wine Standards system
- ▶ Grape varieties selected for someone else's climate, soils
- ▶ Heavily bureaucratic testing, monitoring, surveillance, tasting systems, designed for:
  - ▶ more commercial wine regions
  - ▶ vaster economies
  - ▶ different mindsets

## Progress Over the Past Year

So... after establishing precedents from the world's top regions, our project team and industry, with the approval of the Nova Scotia Wine Quality Standards committee, and working with Perennia and the NSDA, defined what would be required to achieve full-scale development and execution of the Standards.

# 1: Standards Development Committee (SDC)

- ▶ As with the creation of Tidal Bay, a Standards Development Committee was established with experienced Nova Scotia winemakers as well as representatives from WANS, GGANS, and other contributors on an “as needed” basis.

## 2: Standards System Implementation Committee (SSIC)

- ▶ A second committee, for Quality Wine Standards System Implementation, was also established, comprised of six sector and government representatives best positioned to formalize various implementational elements of the NSQW system:  
Laboratory analyses, the tasting panel, governance, regulation, compliance, etc.



The objective of these committees, with the assistance of several working groups, was not a *report*, but rather a fully articulated Nova Scotia Quality Wine Standard, with prescribed elements for the standards system's implementation.

With strong support from both government and industry, the standards have now been drafted and discussions with various industry, government and Academic/Scientific partners is ongoing.

Our project team is delighted with the progress that has been made to date. The timing is perfect for Nova Scotia's industry to chart its own next course - - to redefine the top tier of Nova Scotia winemaking while securing international recognition, opening up external markets, and generating increased prosperity in rural, agricultural Nova Scotia.