

Quails' Gate 2006 Harvest Report

The 2006 vintage at Quails' Gate will be remembered as being ideal. A mild winter with an early wet spring, combined with consistent good heat and dry settled weather throughout the summer, finished off with warm fall weather, made the quality of fruit from Vintage 2006, rich in colour, exotic in flavour and plentiful.

Overall, Vintage 2006 reflected a number of different characteristics of the growing season. Bud break occurred four to five days ahead of plan. Premature bud break is good evidence that earlier prescribed viticulture practices were effective. Weather conditions during flowering were favourable leading to a return to normal yield levels after the small crop in 2005. The ripening months of June, July and August were very warm and dry providing an extended period of ripening. This provided idyllic conditions for flavour and colour development. The combination of good weather during the growing season and dedicated vineyard management, which included aggressive crop thinning in many varieties and the employment of deficit irrigation, produced grapes that were in excellent condition at harvest.

First day of harvest was September 23 with completion by November 1. This year's harvest was our second largest bringing in approximately 800 tonnes. Average yields for white wines was 4 to 5 tonnes/acre while red wines were 3 to 4 tonnes/acre, both averaging 23 brix. Approximately 25 farm crew hand harvested the entire 150 Quails' Gate acres.

Surprisingly, an early cold snap that plunged temperatures below -20°C swung the Icewine harvest into an early vintage, picking on November 27. Average Icewine harvest temperatures fluctuated around -13°C .

Wines are now tucked away in barrel or in the cellar and Vintage 2006 has already begun to show great promise. Vintage white varieties show well-balanced lively fruit forward characteristic. The achievement of lower alcohol levels in this vintage is a result of precise viticulture practices. Again, the red vintage shows good colour and depth, indicative of an ideal growing season.

*(Temperatures Taken from Environment Canada's weather station at Quails' Gate
Latitude: $49^{\circ} 50'N$, Longitude $119^{\circ} 34'W$, Elevation 417.00m)*

