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Canada Canada's most important vineyard regions are situated in the provinces of Ontario and British Columbia. Its wine regions experience a harsh continental climate but with moderating influences from large bodies of water. Canada produces some world-renowned Icwines, along with steadily growing volumes of dry wines, both white and red.

WINE REGIONS

The climate is continental throughout Canada's wine regions, so although average annual temperatures are low, average daytime temperatures in July and August are often very high. Large lakes go some way to moderate temperature extremes, but the winters are cold and temperatures may drop far below zero for long periods, creating suitable conditions for Icwine production.

Ontario

Ontario has three DVAs of which the most important is the **Niagara Peninsula** on the south-western corner of Lake Ontario. The lake cools down and heats up more

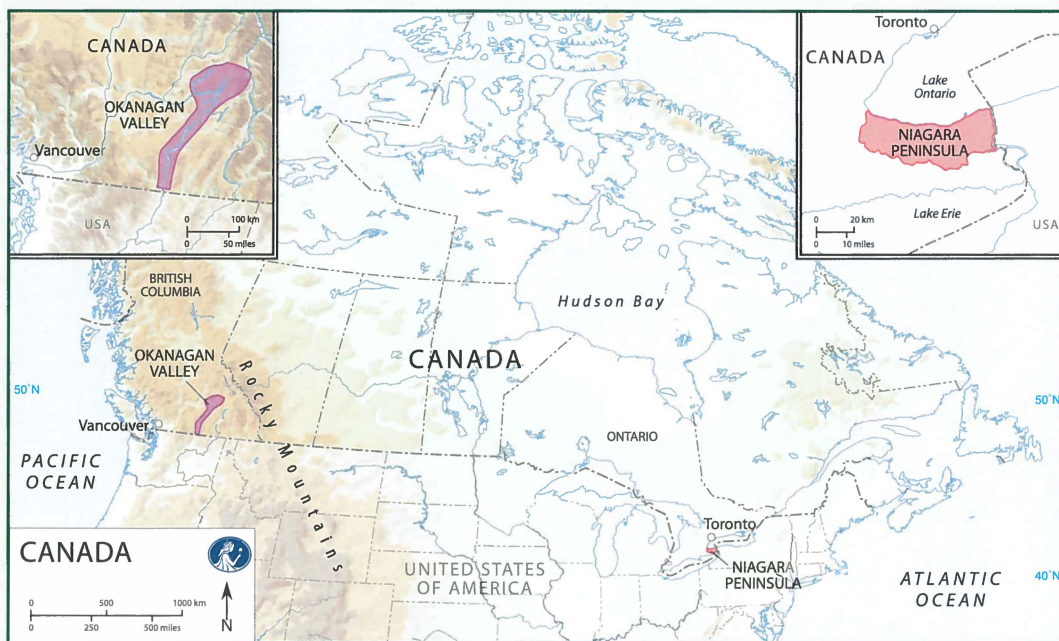
slowly than the surrounding land. This extends the growing season in the autumn allowing grapes to ripen fully and delays budburst in the spring, helping to minimise frost damage. Air flow helps to reduce fungal disease.

Riesling does well here, making fresh, fruity dry and off-dry whites, and the finest Icwines. Another grape variety commonly used for Icwine is **Vidal**. This hybrid is hardy, and while it has little character when made into a dry white, it can make high-quality Icwines, although without the acid structure and aromatic complexity of those made from Riesling. Good quality dry Chardonnays are also made, generally with pure fruit and restrained oak. Among black grape varieties, some producers are

CANADIAN WINE LAWS

Canada's appellation system is the **Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA)**. Two provinces currently use the VQA scheme: Ontario and British Columbia. Each province is broken down into smaller Designated Viticultural Areas (DVAs), which are divided into regional appellations and then sub-appellations. Every VQA wine must use 100 per cent grapes that are grown in that province. They must be made 100 per cent from *V. vinifera* varieties or selected hybrids.

KEY



making very high-quality wines from Pinot Noir, but plantings of Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are increasing.

British Columbia

British Columbia has five DVAs, the most important of which is the **Okanagan Valley**. This huge DVA lies in a rain shadow between two mountain ranges, which results in very low annual average rainfall and a semi-desert environment. Day lengths throughout the growing season are extremely long due to the northern latitude, and this prolongs the time in which photosynthesis can take place, aiding grape ripening. Large glacial lakes help to moderate temperatures and extend the growing season, enabling successful ripening of white grapes in the north and black grapes in the south.

The most widely planted varieties are Merlot, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Icewine is also produced here, usually from Riesling or Vidal.



Grapes left on the vine over winter for the production of Icewine.