

Ohio Grape Industries Committee

Frequently Asked Questions

About Ohio's Growing Wine Industry

HOW BIG IS THE OHIO WINE INDUSTRY? There are 97 wineries currently licensed in the state of Ohio. In 2006, Ohio winemakers produced over 700,000 gallons of wine valued at \$75million.

WHERE ARE OHIO WINERIES? The largest number of wineries will be found in Lake, Geauga, and Ashtabula counties. Most of the wine made in Ohio is made in the Northeast corner of the state. Ohio's wineries are located all over the state.

ARE OHIO WINES SWEET? In 1830 Ohio's semi-sweet Catawba wine was the pinnacle of good taste and much sought after across the United States. When Eastern Europeans came to the Lake Erie shores they made the style of wine they were familiar with from native grapes and that wine was sweet to semi-sweet.

Today with Ohio winemakers produce more sophisticated European varietals from very dry to semi-sweet to meet higher expectations of modern consumers. These wines win awards all over the country including California competitions.

The good news is that no matter what your level of experience with wine, you should be able to find one just right for your palate in Ohio.

CAN YOU REALLY GROW GRAPES IN OHIO? Ohio and most Eastern Section wine states are known as "cool climate" wine producers. Ohio has five viticulture appellations determined by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms: the Lake Erie region, the Ohio River Valley region, Isle St. George (North Bass Island) in Lake Erie, Laramie Creek, and Grand River Valley.

Winegrowers have found many small sites where the microclimate and soil conditions are perfect for growing grapes. The last census of grape acreage showed about 2,200 acres of grapes in Ohio and that number is growing.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WARM AND COOL CLIMATE GRAPE REGIONS? Cool climate grapes regions include northern France, some of that countries finest wine producing regions, Germany, Austria, Washington and Oregon and much of the grape growing acres east of the Mississippi River. In cool climate regions grapes must come to full ripeness in a shorter growing season. The resultant wines tend to be crisper, fruitier, aromatic and extremely good matches with food.

WHERE CAN I BUY OHIO WINES? The best place to taste and buy Ohio wines is at the winery. Some Ohio wines are in distribution. Contact the winery for information about where their wines are sold. There is a partial listing of outlets on www.TasteOhioWine.com by county.

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Many of Ohio's fine restaurants are now featuring Ohio wine with locally grown food. Be sure to ask your waiter.

CAN I TAKE MY KIDS TO AN OHIO WINERY? Many Ohio wineries have activities for children. In Ohio most wineries are small family farms where visitors can see the fullness of production from the ground to the glass. It is a good lesson in Ohio agriculture and farming. If you are concerned, please contact the winery before going.

WINE TERMS:

Viticulture: The science and practice of grape growing. Grapes can be grown over a wide range of latitudes from very hot to cool climate. Ohio is a cool climate state.

Enology: The science and practice of making wine. Ohio winemakers have been producing wines for nearly 200 years.

Vitis Vinifera: A term used to describe the most familiar European wine varieties, i.e., Chardonnay Riesling, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Pinot Grigio and others. These and other viniferas are grown in Ohio and make excellent wine.

American hybrids: Vine hybrids developed in the 19th and 20th century by crossing European varieties (*vitis vinifera*) with American native grapes. The purpose was to combine the hardiness of native vines with the wine qualities of the European. Several well-known hybrids include: Vidal, Seyval, Chambourcin, all grown in Ohio.

Native grapes: American grapes like Concord, Catawba, Niagara and Delaware. Some Ohio wineries still make wines from these old favorites

Ice wine: Ice wine was developed in Europe when grapes would freeze on the vine. The freezing concentrated the flavors and sugars in the grapes but reduced the amount of juice significantly. The wine is considered a dessert wine with intense fruit flavor. The grape of choice for ice wines is Vidal. Ohio makes several outstanding ice wines.