

# In The Presence Of GRAPE-NESS

Ontario is considered Canada's most important wine province, and with good reason. Well over 125 wineries dot its landscape, many of which also produce Icewine, often referred to as Canada's liquid gold. We gave staff from three of those wineries the difficult task of selecting some of their favourite products this season.

**Beth Warner**, Vice-President of Marketing and Retail, **Kittling Ridge Estate Wines & Spirits** in Grimsby



#### Selection 1: Kingsgate Sherry

Aged in oak and fortified in brandy, Kingsgate is a medium-dry sherry with nutty characteristics and dried fruits, like prunes and figs. "There is a baked quality to it — the flavours are very rich," Warner says, adding it pairs well with hard cheeses, nuts and some desserts. "Fortified wines like this one are a great add-on sale to increase profitability, because they can be enjoyed before or after a meal with an appetizer or dessert."



#### Selection 2: Icewine & Brandy

Considered one of Kittling Ridge's signature products, the Icewine & Brandy has won numerous international medals and awards. Half as sweet as traditional Icewine, it is a blend of Vidal Icewine and barrel-aged brandy. Its primary taste is of citrus fruit, with notes of melon, pear and pineapple, to name a few, which are complemented by the warmth of the brandy in the finish. "It's nice to pair this with a dessert," says Warner.

**Adine Fabiani**, Brand Manager of VQA Wines, which includes **Peller Estates Winery** and **Hillebrand Winery**



#### Selection 1: Peller Estates Signature Series Cabernet Franc Icewine

This full-bodied Icewine is known not only for its bright, cherry-red colour and berry taste, but for its balanced flavour. "A lot of people think Icewine is too sweet, but this one is very well-balanced," says Fabiani. "It has a great, rich mouth feel." She suggests pairing it with cheeses, foie gras or dark chocolate. If your establishment is looking for a unique signature drink, try mixing it with vodka and a few frozen grapes to make an Icewine martini.



#### Selection 2: Hillebrand Artist Series Meritage

Fun fact: Each of the bottles in this series of wine features the work of an emerging Ontario artist on its label, hence the wine's unusual name. A luxurious, medium-bodied red, this wine blends three classic grape varieties: Cabernet Franc, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. It has flavours of plum and blueberry, with pomegranate, red fruit and spices lingering on the finish, and pairs well with meat, pasta dishes or aged cheddar. And bartenders, take note: This wine is under screw cap, making it easy to open.

**Doug Beatty**, Vice-President of Marketing, **Colio Estate Wines** in Mississauga

**Selection 1: Colio Estate Vineyards Vidal Icewine 2007**



An award-winning Icewine from the unique Lake Erie North Shore region, this wine has a medium-full mouth feel with lingering honeyed flavours and a honeyed raisin, apricot and tropical fruit finish. Beatty suggests pairing it with green salads with balsamic-based dressing, fruit flans, crème brûlées and stilton cheese. "It comes in a convenient 200ml size, making it an excellent value," he adds.

**Selection 2: Colio Estate Vineyards Pinot Grigio 2007**



From the same region comes a distinctive white wine with medium weight in the mouth and lingering fruit and toast flavours. More specifically, it has flavours of pear and fresh citrus fruit and a creamy, yeasty finish. "You can pair this with foods like brie cheese, poached sole, crab legs and chicken almandine," says Beatty. Other food matches include salads and cream-based pastas.

## KEEP THAT ONTARIO SPIRIT

If you are looking to serve an international wine in your establishment but still want to support an Ontario business, Edward's Wines & Spirits in Toronto can help. Owner Fay Barnes imports wines from 10 countries on five continents. One of her current favourites is Chateau Pesquie Terrasses.

"This is a wonderful bargain and a very fast seller," says Barnes of the French wine, a 2006 vintage. A medium- to full-bodied red, Terrasses's flavour comes from cherry, black currant and a little bit of spice. "It has a long, complex finish, especially for such an inexpensive wine," she says. "It's great for a post-holiday wine." Ideally, it should be served with poultry — namely, turkey, Cornish hens or goose.

1 (800) **625-9625**  
[www.morala.com](http://www.morala.com)  
[info@morala.com](mailto:info@morala.com)

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