

THE STORY OF THE i4C

Summer 2009: A handful of winemakers lounged in lawn chairs around a summer fire celebrating the success of one of their own. They gathered to raise a toast to the Ontario wine that had just triumphed at the 2009 Cellier Wine Awards in Montreal. In Canada's own version of Bottle Shock – a Niagara wine won the prestigious award, surpassing Burgundian and California Chardonnays in a blind taste test. (The wine: Claystone Terrace Chardonnay 2005 from Le Clos Jordanne.)

The significance of this win wasn't lost on those celebrating, and the wheels were turning as the glasses were swirling. These winemakers have long believed that Chardonnay - one of the most widely cultivated varieties in Ontario – is deserving of a revival... It's resilient and refined. It can be steely or floral, complex or focused. It expresses terroir better than any other grape we grow. And when Chardonnay is complemented with a bit of cool - cool by altitude, by latitude, by marine influence or by climatic conditions – it can create magical wines that can easily refute the already waning "ABC – Anything but Chardonnay" movement.

The outcome of that impromptu backyard celebration is a much bigger one – the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (the "i4C"). Twenty-eight Ontario wineries started the not-for-profit group in April 2010, devoted to reinstating the dignity of Chardonnay. Over the past eight years, this group has invited premium cool climate Chardonnay producers from across the globe to join the cause, presenting some of the finest examples of cool climate Chardonnay in the world at the annual event. In this short time, the i4C has created a home for excellence in Chardonnay – a casual but in-depth weekend celebration of wine, food and learning, with an eye to reinvigorating a seriously cool wine.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE i4C

After five years of celebrating the coolest grape on earth, the Chardonnistas decided it was time to invite some other "cool characters" to share the spotlight...

In 2016, the i4C launched its "i4C+" Campaign. Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc and Gamay - varieties selected for their shared "coolness" - are now poured at select events throughout the weekend.



QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE i4C:

- 2019 marks the 9th Anniversary of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration
- 50 Ontario wineries are members of the i4C Association
- Over 210 wineries from 38 cool climate wine regions have participated including some of the world's most eminent producers: Louis Jadot, Drouhin, Taittinger, Champy, Laroche, Torres, Kistler, Ramey, Kumeu River, La Crema and Hamilton Russell
- Over 14,500 consumers have celebrated in the heart of Ontario's wine country
- 885 different cool climate Chardonnays and Blanc de Blancs have been poured
- Industry support from all key stakeholder groups in the industry: LCBO VINTAGES, VQA Wines of Ontario and Wine Country Ontario, Wine Marketing Association of Ontario, Grape Growers of Ontario, CCOVI at Brock University, Niagara College, and numerous industry suppliers
- The i4C is not a competition; rather it is a celebration of exceptional cool climate wines
- The i4C mandate states that a minimum of 50% of the annual participants are from outside of Ontario to ensure a true exploration of the nuances of cool climate Chardonnay

* The "i4C" is:

i – International

4 C's – Cool, Climate, Chardonnay, and Celebration

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MARKETING IMPACT

Julia Harding, author, journalist and Master of Wine will present the keynote address, Friday July 19th, 2019

Previous internationally known keynote speakers of the:

- I4C 2018 Jon Bonné, Writer, Author & Journalist
 - I4C 2017 Karen MacNeil (The Wine Bible)
 - I4C 2016 - Ian D'Agata (Decanter, vinous.com)
 - I4C 2015 - Matt Kramer (Wine Spectator)
 - I4C 2014 - Tim Atkin (Master of Wine and journalist from London)
 - I4C 2013 - Steven Spurrier (Decanter)
 - I4C 2012- Stephen Brook (Decanter)
 - I4C 2011 - Matt Kramer (Wine Spectator)
- **Special guests Christy Canterbury (MW), Jamie Goode, and Chef Vikram Vij joined us in 2013.**
- **Past School of Cool seminar moderators include:**
 - **John Szabo**, Master Sommelier, Principal Critic at WineAlign.com and Author of *Volcanic Wines: Salt, Grit and Power (2016)*
 - **Jamie Goode**, Wineanorak.com, Author of *I Taste Red: The Science of Tasting Wine (2016)*
 - **Peter Rod**, Program Coordinator Canadian Food and Wine Institute, Niagara College.
 - This event garnered over 150 million traditional media impressions in seven years including coverage in Decanter, Wine Spectator, La Revue du Vins de France, The Boston Globe, Dallas Fort-Worth Star-Telegram, Food & Drink and Cellier Magazine, The Globe & Mail, Toronto Star, National Post, Montreal Gazette, Vancouver Sun, Ottawa Citizen and key market dailies. In addition, over 50 million social media impressions have been earned.

TESTIMONIALS

"i4C is the best thing that's happened to the Canadian wine industry since the introduction of the VQA appellation system in 1988" *Tony Aspler, Quench Magazine*

"Events like i4C (International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration) prove we have what it takes to make serious wines that can compete on a world scale." *Wes Wiens, Grape Growers of Ontario*

"To return to the International Cool Climate Conference is a great privilege. Ontario wines are the epitome of cool climate, which puts them right on the cutting edge. I'm anxious to taste the latest, as quality keeps surging, seemingly with every new vintage." *Matt Kramer, Wine Spectator Magazine*

"Over the course of 3 days, I tasted a slew of chardonnays and sparkling wines that blew me away. Our neighbors to the north are making some of the most vibrant wines in the New World. For the most part the chardonnays are wines with lift and elegance; wines with a vibrational core of crispness; wines that are mouthwatering and fresh." *Karen MacNeil, Author of "The Wine Bible"*

"Chardonnay is one of the most popular and famous varieties around the globe, and I think it's crucial to understand its state of the art. So, I'm excited to come and discuss one of my favorite grapes, and to learn more about the exceptional work being done in Ontario to produce some world-class examples," *Jon Bonné, internationally acclaimed author and senior contributing editor of PUNCH.*

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WHY CHARDONNAY?

Chardonnay is one of the most widely produced white wines in Canada and the world; yet, there are a number of stereotypes about Chardonnay within the wine world and amongst consumers. For some, it is an over-planted grape and one that is most familiar because it has reached the status of having its own acronym amongst its detractors – ABC, or “Anything But Chardonnay”. Among its fans, there are a large number of wine drinkers that love it for its ability to inexpensively deliver ‘easy’ white wine; wine not requiring much thought on the part of the wine drinker. The descriptors for this easy Chardonnay are: ‘fat but bland fruit, low acid, an alcoholic and a slightly sweet finish.’

The i4C event is designed to celebrate the appreciation of and appeal of Chardonnay as a wine that comes from the noblest of white grapes. The clear distinction between the characteristics of cool and warm climate Chardonnay is not necessarily understood by most wine drinkers. Warm climate Chardonnay represents much of the wine sold of this variety; however, it does not always present an elegant and complex product. Cool climate Chardonnay, on the other hand, is celebrated for its myriad characteristics and notable versatility. The i4C event is designed to educate consumers so that they might distinguish between cool and warm climate Chardonnay.

The event will feature Chardonnays that are:

- From warmer climates, yet ‘Cool by Coastal Effect’ (including inland fresh water)
- From some hotter climates – areas that make Chardonnays that are ‘Cool by Continental Effect’ – really the flip-side to Coastal
- Some Chardonnays that are ‘Cool by Altitude’
- Chardonnays that, like Burgundy, are ‘Cool by Latitude’

What will unite all these wines at i4C is the fact that they are all ‘Cool by Attitude’. No matter where one grows Chardonnay, the attitude of the wine grower affects the grape. The management of the vineyards’ soils and the grapevine canopy, the picking date, the handling in the winery and cellar can all contribute to the retention of freshness of acidity, and that minerality and dense yet silky texture that mark all of the world’s truly great Chardonnay wines.

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3. Adamo Estate Winery
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6. Bachelder Wines
7. Big Head Winery
8. Cave Spring Cellars
9. Château des Charmes
10. Closson Chase Vineyards
11. Cloudsley Cellars
12. Coyote's Run Winery
13. Creekside Estate Winery
14. Domaine Queylus
15. Flat Rock Cellars
16. Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery
17. Hidden Bench Estate Winery
18. Huff Estate Winery
19. Icellars Estate Winery
20. Inniskillin Wines
21. Jackson Triggs
22. Lailey Vineyard Wines
23. Leaning Post Wines
24. Le Clos Jordanne
25. Lighthall Vineyards
26. Malivoire Wine Company
27. Niagara College Teaching Winery
28. Palatine Hills Estate Winery
29. Pearl Morissette Estate Winery
30. Peller Estates Winery
31. Pillitteri Estates Winery
32. Pondview Estate Winery
33. Queenston Mile Vineyard
34. Ravine Vineyards
35. Redstone Winery
36. Reif Estates Winery
37. Rosehall Run Vineyards
38. Rosewood Estate Winery
39. Southbrook Organic Vineyards
40. Stoney Ridge Winery
41. Stratus Vineyards
42. Strewn Winery
43. Tawse Winery
44. The Farm
45. Thirty Bench Winemakers
46. Trail Estate Winery
47. Trius Winery at Hillebrand
48. Two Sisters Vineyards
49. Vineland Estates Winery
50. Westcott Vineyards

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE COOL

The i4C is fuelled by a dedicated Board of Directors:

- Co-Chair /Marketing Committee member, Mark Torrance (Andrew Peller Ltd.)
- Co-Chair/ Winery Relations – Anne Weis-Pennachetti (Cave Spring Cellars)
- Vice-Chair/Treasurer, Carolyn Hurst (Westcott Vineyards)
- Past Chair/Director, Marketing Committee – Suzanne Janke (Stratus Vineyards)
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- Media Relations & Educational Session Director - Magdalena Kaiser (Wine Marketing Association of Ontario)
- Director & Educational Committee member – Scott Wilkins (Grape Growers of Ontario, Dancing Swallows Vineyard)

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- ❖ Ontario Pork

FRIENDS OF THE i4C

- ❖ A1 Label, A Resource Label Group
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- ❖ Canadian Vintners Association
- ❖ CCOVI at Brock University
- ❖ Cellar-Tek
- ❖ Coventry Transportation
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