

AN UNPARALLELED WINE WEEKEND

i4C+
International Cool Climate
Chardonnay Celebration

THE STORY OF THE i4C

In the summer of 2009, a handful of winemakers gathered around a summer fire to celebrate the triumph of the Ontario wine that had just won a very prestigious award at the Cellier Wine Awards in Montreal. The Claystone Terrace Chardonnay 2005 from Le Clos Jordanne now renamed Domaine du Clos Jordanne, in Niagara outshone Burgundian and California Chardonnays in a blind taste test, marking a significant win.

This victory reignited belief among these winemakers the potential of cool-climate Chardonnay in Ontario. Chardonnay, one of the most widely cultivated varieties in Ontario, is both 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 vanishing “ABC – Anything but Chardonnay” movement.

This belief led to the birth of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (i4C) in April 2010, with 28 Ontario wineries joining forces to elevate the status of Chardonnay. Over the past thirteen years, the i4C has become a global platform, inviting premium cool-climate Chardonnay producers worldwide to showcase their finest creations. This not-for-profit group has established a home for excellence in Chardonnay, hosting an annual weekend celebration of wine, food, and learning with a mission to invigorate this seriously cool wine.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT THE i4C:

- **2025** is the 15th Anniversary of the International Cool Climate Chardonnay Celebration (i4C)
- **70** Ontario wineries are members of the i4C Association
- **Since 2011**
 - **269** wineries have participated
 - From **85** cool climate wine regions
 - **1,863** different cool climate Chardonnays, Blanc de Blancs and as of 2016 guest cool climate reds (Pinot Noir, Cabernet Franc & Gamay) have been poured
 - **18,000 +** consumers have celebrated in the heart of Ontario’s wine country
- Past participating international wineries include:
Louis Jadot, Drouhin, Taittinger, Champy, Laroche, Torres, Kistler, Ramey, Kumeu River, La Crema and Hamilton Russell Vineyards
- Industry support from all key stakeholder groups in the industry: **VQA Wines of Ontario and Wine Country Ontario, Ontario, CCOVI at Brock University, and White Oaks Resort**, 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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THE EVOLUTION OF THE i4C

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

MARKETING IMPACT

Previous internationally known keynote speakers of the i4C:

- I4C 2025 – Keynote and Special Guest is TBD
 - I4C 2024 - Keynote and Special Guest is Stefan Neumann, MS
 - I4C 2023 welcomed Michelle Cherruti-Kowal MW as keynote speaker for the School of Cool this July 22, 2023
 - i4C 2022 - Andrew Jefford, Columnist at Decanter and World of Fine Wine Magazine and Academic Advisor to the Wine Scholar Guild
 - I4C 2021 – Virtual Edition – Michelle Cheruti-Kowal MW, François Chartier, Jamie Goode
 - I4C 2020 – Virtual Edition - Andrew Jefford, Columnist at Decanter and World of Fine Wine Magazine and Academic Advisor to the Wine Scholar Guild, with special guests, past keynote speakers:
 - Matt Kramer
 - Karen MacNeil
 - Ian D'Agata
 - I4C 2019 - Julia Harding, author, journalist and Master of Wine
 - 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 has garnered over 150 million traditional media impressions in 13 years and it is significant to note that an article by Decanter Magazine's Associate Editor, Tina Gellie was printed for the December 2023 issue that featured 20 VQA Ontario i4C participating producers, which has 1.4 Million monthly global page views, with 44,000 Canadian Monthly Users. Additional media coverage includes Decanter, Wine Spectator, La Revue du Vins de France, The Boston Globe, Dallas Fort-Worth Star-Telegram, Cellier Magazine, The Globe & Mail, Toronto Star, National Post, Montreal Gazette, Buffalo Spree, Vancouver Sun, Ottawa Citizen and key market dailies. In addition, over 50 million social media impressions have been earned.



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TESTIMONIALS

"The i4C 2024 was one of my personal highlights this year and as Keynote speaker I felt the energy, passion and engagement from the participants was second to none. Flawless organisation with an abundance of delicious cool climate wines from around the world was enhanced by a diverse program of different events with one being better than the other. Additionally, the joyful atmosphere filled with wine professionals from around the globe really set this conference apart." *Stefan Neumann MW & Wine Educator*

"i4C is a great opportunity to showcase your Chardonnays amongst the best in the world. The consumers who attend are engaged wine lovers, interested in learning about the products they are trying. All of the events are well attended, so provides an opportunity to interact with a large number of people over the course of the 3-day event." *Linda Sinclair, Director of Retail Operations, Noble Estates*

"As South African Chardonnay producers, one of the highlights of a wine year for us, is the i4C. We have been privileged to have attended this beautiful event for long enough to witness not only the incredible rise in the quality of Ontario Chardonnay, but the increasingly clear stylistic identity of the wines, with their bright minerality and elegance. This is brought into focus with tastings of other top Chardonnays from around the world. What we find uplifting about the i4C is that we are able to immerse ourselves in the winelands. It is always motivational being where wine is made, when so much of our travel involves being where wine is sold. The panel discussions, the tastings and the vineyard visits give us many new things to think about and we always learn something valuable. Enjoying the company and insights of enthusiasts, winemakers and wine writers in wonderful settings with great Chardonnay and a variety of excellent food choices is hard to beat." *Anthony Hamilton Russell, Proprietor, Hamilton Russell Vineyards, Hemel-en-Aarde Valley, South Africa*

"My earliest memories of Niagara as a wine region were courtesy of my Father and Grandfather who regularly purchased Niagara grown grapes destined for their home-made wine. Niagara and my Italian heritage are the foundations of my wine career so to be asked to be the keynote speaker for i4C 2023 is an honour. I look forward to meeting fellow Canadian wine lovers in July 2023." *Michelle Cherutti-Kowal MW, i4C 2023 Keynote Speaker*

"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*

"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 mouth-watering and fresh." *Karen MacNeil, Author of "The Wine Bible"*

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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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ONTARIO MEMBER WINERIES | 2011-2025

1. 13th Street Winery
2. 16 Mile Cellars
3. 2027 Cellars
4. Adamo Estate Winery
5. Angels Gate Winery
6. Bachelder Wines
7. Big Head Winery
8. Black Bank Hill
9. Broken Stone Winery
10. Cave Spring Vineyard
11. Château des Charmes
12. Closson Chase Vineyards
13. Cloudsley Cellars
14. Creekside Estate Winery
15. Divergence Wines – New for 2025
16. Dobbin Estate Vineyard & Winery
17. Domaine Le Clos Jordanne
18. Domaine Queylus
19. Ferox Estate Winery
20. Flat Rock Cellars
21. GreenLane Estate Winery
22. Henry of Pelham Family Estate Winery
23. Hidden Bench Estate Winery
24. Honsberger Estate Winery
25. Huff Estate Winery
26. Icellars Estate Winery
27. Inniskillin Wines
28. Jackson Triggs
29. Kew Vineyards
30. KIN Vineyards
31. Lailey Winery
32. Leaning Post Wines
33. Lighthall Vineyards
34. Maenad Wine Co.
35. Magnotta Winery
36. Malivoire Wine
37. Niagara College Teaching Winery
38. On Seven Estate Winery
39. Palatine Hills Estate Winery
40. Pearl Morissette Estate Winery
41. Pelee Island Winery
42. Peller Estates Winery
43. Peninsula Ridge Estates Winery
44. Pillitteri Estates Winery
45. Pondview Estate Winery
46. Queenston Mile Vineyard
47. Ravine Vineyards
48. Redstone Winery
49. Redtail Vineyards
50. Reif Estates Winery
51. Rockway Vineyards
52. Rosehall Run Vineyards
53. Rosewood Estate Winery
54. Southbrook Organic Vineyards
55. Stoney Ridge Winery
56. Stratus Vineyards
57. Strewn Winery
58. Tawse Winery
59. The Farm
60. The Foreign Affair Winery
61. The Grand of Prince Edward– New for 2025
62. The Organized Crime Winery
63. Therianthropy Inc.
64. Thirty Bench Winemakers
65. Trail Estate Winery
66. Trius Winery
67. Two Sisters Vineyards.
68. Vineland Estates Winery
69. Wending Home Estate Vineyards– New for 2025
70. Westcott Vineyards

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THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE COOL

The i4C is fuelled by a dedicated Board of Directors:

- ❖ Mark Torrance (Andrew Peller Ltd.), Chair /Marketing Committee member
- ❖ Suzanne Janke (Stratus Vineyards), Past Chair/Director, Marketing Committee, Education Committee
- ❖ Mary Delaney (Bachelder), Director/Winery Relations
- ❖ Scott Wilkins (Dancing Swallows Vineyard), Director & Educational Committee member
- ❖ Elsa Macdonald MW (Arterra Fine Wine), Director & Educational Committee member
- ❖ J.J. Syer (Rosehall Run Vineyards), Director/Winery Relations
- ❖ Rob Power (Queenston Mile Vineyard), Director & Educational Committee member
- ❖ Dean Foerter (Wines of Ontario), Executive Director

- ❖ Trisha Molokach, Event Director
- ❖ Jen Feschuk, Artistic Director
- ❖ Elena Galey-Pride, Social Media
- ❖ Kim Auty, Guest Services

I4C 2024 Event Sponsors – as of Feb 23024

GRAND CRU & PRESENTING	❖ VQA Wines of Ontario and Wine Country Ontario The Wine Marketing Association of Ontario – <i>Founding Sponsor</i>
GRAND CRU	❖ White Oaks Resort & Spa ❖ Saxco
MEDIA SPONSOR	❖ Toronto Life
PREMIER CRU	❖ Niagara Parks
FRIENDS OF i4C	❖ CCOVI at Brock University Trilogen Technologies Winestains Special Event Rentals