

PROFILE OF THE CANADIAN WINE INDUSTRY

The principal grape-growing and wine-making regions of Canada are located in the Niagara region of Ontario, and the Okanagan/Similkameen region of British Columbia. In 1986, the latest year for which figures are available, there were 50 wineries in Canada, employing about 1,350 people. There are over 1500 grape growers in Canada, approximately 1150 of which supply grapes to Ontario processors and 325 service the British Columbia market. The Labrusca grape is the easiest to produce in Canada and remains the most prevalent. However, Canadian growers have been shifting recently to Vinifera and French Hybrid grapes which, though more sensitive to the Canadian climate than the Lubrusca, are more suitable for producing top quality wines. The move to Vinifera and French hybrid grapes is expected to be a gradual one, given the cost and production restraints associated with making the transition.

While practically all Canadian wine production is consumed domestically, several wineries are making important inroads in foreign markets namely the United States and Pacific Rim countries. Production totalled \$216 million in 1986, accounting for nearly half of the \$476 million Canadian wine market. Exports amounted to \$1 million.

A growing number of Canadian labels are being recognized at prestigious wine competitions around the world, raising the international profile of an industry which is still in its early stages of development. Canadian wineries also contribute to the tourist industry in Canada by offering tours to visitors wishing to sample the local flavour or our wine-making regions.