

ICE WINE PRODUCTION INFORMATION

Ice wine is a type of dessert wine produced from grapes that have been frozen while still on the vine. The sugars and other dissolved solids do not freeze, but the water does, allowing a more concentrated grape must to be pressed from the frozen grapes, resulting in a smaller amount of more concentrated, very sweet wine. With Ice Wines, the freezing happens before the fermentation, not afterward.



Ice Wine can be made from various grape varieties.

However, grapes with very fruity taste character and high acidity provide the basis for the most elegant flavored wines. The Chenin Blanc and White Riesling are favored for Ice Wine production at Kiona Vineyards.

Major factors in Ice Wine production -

- Grape variety choice is principal factor for resulting flavor characteristics.
- Grape variety character stem hardiness that enables the grape to “hang” on the vines long after normal grape maturity is complete.
- The climate characteristics of the grape growing region must provide for maturing the grapes and at some point sub-freezing temperatures necessary for on-vine freezing of the grapes.
- Grapes must be free of “moldy conditions” at harvest. Grapes may raisin during the final hang stages but molds will cause undesirable flavors and aromas.
- Natural Ice Wines require a hard freeze normally -8°C (17°F) to occur sometime after the grapes are ripe which means that the grapes may hang on the vine well beyond the normal harvest.
- If a freeze does not come quickly enough, the grapes may rot and the crop will be lost.
- If the freeze is too severe, the juice extraction by pressing can be very long.
- The longer the harvest is delayed, the more fruit will be lost to wild animals and dropped fruit.
- Since the fruit must be pressed while it is still frozen, pickers often must work at night or very early in the morning, harvesting the grapes within a few hours. Because of very short labor availability and extremely short freezing period at night, Kiona now mechanically harvests most of the Ice Wine grapes

In the United States, Austria, Germany, and Canada, the grapes must freeze naturally to be called ice wine. Some winemakers use cryoextraction (mechanical freezing) to simulate the effect of a freezing and typically do not leave the grapes to hang for extended periods as is done with natural ice wines. These non-traditional ice wines cannot be labeled as Ice Wine and are generally given a proprietary name. Cryoextraction wines suffer from flavor loss because they do not develop the intricate flavors resulting during extended ripening on the vine.



The high sugar level in the must leads to a slower-than-normal fermentation. It may take months to complete the fermentation (compared to days or weeks for regular wines) and special strains of yeasts are used.

Because of the lower yield of grape musts and the difficulty of processing, ice wines are significantly more expensive than table wines. Kiona Ice wines are sold in half-bottle volume (375 ml) size.

Kiona Ice Wine is maintained at less than 60 °F after fermentation until bottling. This assures that flavor and aroma are not lost during the final stages of wine production.

Due to the labor-intensive and risky production process resulting in relatively small amounts of wine, ice wines are generally quite expensive.