

Winter 2015

CCOVInews

A newsletter from
the Cool Climate Oenology
and Viticulture Institute



CCOVI

Brock University

Cold-hardiness programs fight frosty temperatures

As Ontario grape growers experience another deep-freeze winter, scientists at Brock University are taking steps to help growers avoid millions of dollars worth of cold-weather damage.

CCOVI has reinstated VineAlert, a program that measures the cold hardiness of grapevines and warns growers when to turn on their frost-fighting wind machines. As another tool, CCOVI partnered with Ontario Grape and Wine Research Inc. (OGWRI) to produce a best-practices manual to help growers avoid devastating injury to grapevines.

This comes as a new [economic impact study](#) says VineAlert helps Ontario's grape industry avoid up to \$13.8 million in lost sales from a single severe cold weather event, as well as \$11.7 million in lost sales while damaged vines recover in subsequent years, and \$29.1 million in vine renewal and replacement costs.

The study by the Goodman School of Business Consulting Group also found that, last winter alone, VineAlert helped growers save as much as \$2.3 million in fuel costs just by knowing when it was not necessary to turn on their wind machines.

Ontario's \$3.3-billion grape and wine sector represents half of the Canadian industry, and CCOVI Director Debbie Inglis says preventing winter injury is a constant concern.

"It only takes one cold event where vines are not protected, and you can have serious crop loss and ongoing costs

associated with that loss," she said.

"Our cold hardiness program gives growers the knowledge to make informed decisions, which results in savings of time and money."

Niagara-on-the-Lake grape grower Trevor Falk says VineAlert helps local growers by providing distinct information for different micro-climates within a single Ontario region.

"To have research done on representative vineyards is invaluable when making business decisions in the vineyard regarding wind machine use," said Falk.

VineAlert tracks a grape bud's ability to survive severe cold during the dormant season from October to April, signaling at what temperature different varieties would sustain damage.

"The key is to know when to turn on a wind machine, to warm up the local air so the vine never experiences the cold temperatures," said Inglis. "You cannot tell that just by looking at the vine. We actually go out and sample buds from grapevines, bring them back and use our freezer systems to measure how cold tolerant they are before they die."

Besides considering the vine variety and vineyard location, VineAlert researchers also factor in the conditions and lateness of the preceding growing season, and how deep into the winter a cold snap is occurring.

"If a vine's cold hardiness in autumn has been delayed due to a late start in the spring growing season, or a cool

growing season like we had this year, then a minus-15 spell in late November has more impact than a minus-15 event two months later."

Beyond economic savings, there are social and environmental gains from knowing when wind machines are required. Benefits include noise reduction in areas where vineyards border urban developments, and reduced running time for wind machine engines.

CCOVI scientist Jim Willwerth, supported by colleagues Kevin Ker and Inglis, developed the new [best-practices manual](#), which is based on five years of cold-hardiness research.

VineAlert is currently supported through funding from the Grape Growers of Ontario and the Ontario Ministry of Research and Innovation's (MRI) Ontario Research Fund's Research Excellence program. Funding from MRI and OGWRI supported the development of the best practices guide and the VineAlert database.

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Len Pennachetti recognized as Distinguished Leader

Len Pennachetti, founder of Cave Spring Cellars and prominent supporter of Ontario's wine industry, has been honoured as the 2015 Distinguished Leader of Brock University's Goodman School of Business.

The Goodman School of Business' Distinguished Leader Award honours prominent Canadian business leaders and connects the recipients with current undergraduate and graduate students through the annual Distinguished Leader Lecture Series.

On Jan. 13, Pennachetti spent the day on campus speaking with small groups of business students before delivering the annual Distinguished Leader Lecture to students, faculty and members of the Brock community.

In his address, Pennachetti spoke to students about his experiences and stressed to students the importance of developing strong communication skills.

Pennachetti was selected as Goodman's 2015 Distinguished Leader in recognition of his entrepreneurial spirit, leadership skills and the positive impact he has made in the Niagara community.

"Since the moment he planted his first vines in the Beamsville Bench, Len's leadership has been transformative. He has succeeded in elevating Ontario's wine industry to new levels and his revitalization of the Jordan Village has created another high-end tourism destination in the region," says Don Cyr, dean of the Goodman School of Business.

"Len has unparalleled credentials as an entrepreneur, a visionary and as a powerful voice in the Ontario wine industry," says Cyr. "We are honoured that he will share his wisdom and knowledge with our students as our 2015 Distinguished Leader."

As co-founder of Cave Spring Cellars, Pennachetti was part of a group of winemaking pioneers that first established the Niagara's wine region. Now, 29 years after its founding, Cave Spring Cellars is internationally recognized as one of the foremost producers of Riesling in North America.

In addition to being a successful entrepreneur, Pennachetti is also an advocate for the entire Ontario wine region. He played an influential role in the founding of the Vintners Quality Alliance (VQA) and has served as the organization's President and Chair from 1994 to 2005. During his tenure with VQA, he oversaw the 1999 passing of the provincial Vintners Quality Alliance Act.

He is the vice-chair of the Wine Council of Ontario, a past director of VQA Ontario and on the board of directors of the International Riesling Foundation. He is also a past board member of the Canadian Vintners Association (CVA).

Past Distinguished Leader Award recipients include Ned Goodman of Dundee Corporation, Michael McCain of Maple Leaf Foods, Paul House of Tim Hortons, Galen Weston of Loblaw Companies Limited, Donald Ziraldo of Ziraldo Estate Winery, and John McCall MacBain of McCall MacBain Foundation.

CCOVI affiliates recognized with faculty honours

Two CCOVI affiliates have been honoured by Brock's Faculty of Mathematics and Science at its inaugural awards ceremony.

Gail Higenell and Gary Pickering were honoured by Dean Ejaz Ahmed at the awards that recognized contributions and dedication to research, teaching and student experience.

"I have always felt that it is important to gather and recognize the accomplishments and efforts of our faculty and staff, in front of their Brock family," Ahmed said.

Higenell, a senior laboratory demonstrator and OEVI adviser, was recognized with the Distinguished Staff Award for her commitment to innovation in the classroom and dedication to recruiting and retaining students.

Pickering, a CCOVI researcher, was honoured with the Faculty's Distinguished Research Award for his leadership on CCOVI's Ontario Research Fund, Research Excellence grant and research collaborations with international and domestic research partners.

Continuing education offerings

Students looking to take advanced wine education courses will have the opportunity to do so in both the classroom and online this spring.

The Wine & Spirit Education Trust (WSET) Level 2 award will be offered in class Wednesdays from April 8 to June 3. The eight-week course examines all aspects of wine and introduces the WSET systematic approach to tasting.

For those interested in expanding their wine knowledge off site, the online Level 2 award will run March 7 to April 10 and from May 2 to June 5. In the five-week online course learners are connected to classmates through social media activities.

For a complete listing of CCOVI's continuing education courses and to register, visit: ccovi.ca/ce/courses

Students gain coast-to-coast experience through co-op placements



OEVI co-op student Paul van der Merwe.

Students in the Oenology and Viticulture co-op program take their skills from the classroom into the field, and as students are discovering, that field stretches across the country.

For Paul van der Merwe, the opportunity to complete work terms at Culmina Family Estate Winery in British Columbia and Jackson Triggs Winery in Niagara gave him invaluable experience and networking opportunities.

For his work at Culmina, Van der Merwe was recognized as Brock's co-op student of the year. Culmina's co-proprietor Don Triggs praised him for his initiative, ideas and energy during his term.

Fourth-year student Andréanne Hébert-Haché's co-op experiences took her to Nova Scotia's burgeoning wine region last year. She spent the summer term working on the vineyard team at Lightfoot and Wolfville Vineyards and spent harvest, gaining experience at sparkling producer Benjamin Bridge.

"Nova Scotia is a really inspiring wine region," Hébert-Haché said. "By travelling for my placement I was exposed to different grape varieties than I've worked with before."

The mandatory co-op placements give degree students an opportunity to become well-rounded graduates with required work terms in the vineyard, in a winery during crush and on the retail sales floor incorporated into the program.

Interested in hiring a student?

If your business or winery is looking to hire a vineyard, winery or retail staff member consider posting the position with Brock's co-op department.

OEVI students are currently seeking co-op jobs for Summer and Fall 2015 terms and are trained in winemaking, viticulture and wine business.

To have a position posted, contact Alesia Dane at alesia.dane@brocku.ca or by calling 905 688 5550 x 4252.

Knowledge exchange gives OEVI students international insights

Brock students studying winery equipment and processing took a break from their regularly scheduled lesson Jan. 20 to host a joint session with a visiting cohort from the Finger Lakes Community College in Canandaigua, N.Y.

Organized by Gail Higenell, senior lab demonstrator for the OEVI program, this is the third year that the two groups of oenology students have been able to meet and learn from each other.

Brock instructor Jamie Quai described the geography, grape varieties and regulatory environment of the Ontario industry while Paul Brock, Finger Lakes Community College instructor, discussed the opportunities and challenges in the Finger Lakes.

Both instructors are also winemakers in their respective regions, which provided additional insights for the students. Students learned about what it's like to source grapes, a brief history of each region and the regulatory differences between the two areas.

The instructors also walked the students through a comparative tasting of wines from the two regions, adding background and context to why each wine was being featured.

Quai says that the exchange is always an eye-opening experience for his students as the Finger Lakes wine region shares a lot of the same climate challenges and opportunities as the Ontario industry.

"We are about the same age, we grow a lot of the same varieties, and we are both in an interesting period of natural evolution," said Quai.

"This knowledge exchange allows students to see into a parallel universe of sorts. Like twins separated, and reconnected to see how much of who they are is a result of nature and how much is a result of nurture."

Cuvée weekend set to celebrate excellence in Ontario winemaking

Cuvée 2015
GRAND TASTING | Feb. 27, 2015

Throughout its history, the Cuvée Grand Tasting has become a hot ticket based on its reputation as an influential salute to Ontario's best VQA wines.

Now under the organization of CCOVI, the institute is ready to continue the tradition with the 27th annual Grand Tasting at Fallsview Casino Resort on Feb. 27.

More than 50 Ontario winemakers have selected their favourite wine to showcase at the event, with the big reveal of what they chose coming when the doors open.

More than a dozen top Ontario chefs are busy scheming a culinary tour de force. This year, however, organizers have upped the cuisine ante by adding chefs from three Toronto restaurants to serve up their own signature dishes.

The event ends with the Après Cuvée party that features a live band, Icewine and sparkling wine bars, and is a perfect opportunity to dance the night away.

Continues all weekend long

The celebration of the best Ontario wine doesn't end with the Grand Tasting. The Cuvée en Route passport program runs from Feb.

27 to March 1. The passport allows participants to tour, taste and shop along the wine route.

More than 30 wineries have specially chosen flights that may include vertical and horizontal tastings, older vintages and limited edition wines. Saturday and Sunday, participants can purchase each winemaker's favourite wine that was featured the night before at the Cuvée Grand Tasting.

There are also five unique culinary opportunities available to Cuvée en Route participants.

Cuvée en Route passports are included with Grand Tasting tickets or can be purchased on the Cuvée website or at participating wineries for \$30.

Supporting industry growth

For the first time in the event's history, money raised will go to help grow the industry it is showcasing.

Proceeds from the 2015 wine weekend will support scholarships and bursaries for students studying in areas across the grape and wine value-chain and will support research activities that address industry priorities.

For details visit cuvée.ca

Lecture series returns

Canada's grape and wine experts will share their latest findings as CCOVI's Lecture Series returns for its eighth season.

The seven-week series gets underway Feb. 23 and takes timely research out of the lab and into the hands of industry.

This year's lineup covers a range of subjects of interest for grape growers and winemakers. Some of this year's talks include topics such as weather volatility in emerging wine regions, experiences with growth regulators on table grapes, and sparkling wine and grapevine cold hardiness.

All lectures are free and take place Monday afternoons at 2 p.m. EST in room H313 of the Mackenzie Chown complex at Brock University. For those not able to join in person, the lectures will be available via live webcast and online on Brock's YouTube channel.

To watch the live webcasts or view the video archive, go to brocku.ca/ccovi

2015 CCOVI Lecture Series lineup

* **Feb. 23:** Vincenzo De Luca

"A review of marker development to monitor the appassimento process in grapes"

* **March 9:** Tony Shaw

"Volatility in the evolving cool climate wine regions of Ontario"

* **March 16:** Andy Reynolds

"Experiences with growth regulators on table grapes in Ontario"

* **March 23:** Belinda Kemp

"Press fractions and timing of bentonite addition on Ontario sparkling wine quality"

* **March 30:** Jim Willwerth

"Optimizing cold hardiness and winter survival in grapevines based on trials and experiences in Ontario"

* **Date to be determined:** Wendy McFadden-Smith,

"Viruses, vectors and vines, oh my!"

* **Date to be determined:** Debbie Inglis

"Appassimento wines for Ontario: a comparative trial of different drying techniques"