



Tuesday October 29, 2024

To Niagara-on-the-Lake Lord Mayor and Town Councillors,

The Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake, a not-for-profit organization, is seeking funding of \$50,000 from the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake to support the re-launch of the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Festival. This initiative aims to establish the festival as a legacy world-class tourism event, backed by the wine and hospitality industries.

The Icewine Festival will highlight the rich heritage and expertise of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, recognized as the birthplace of Canadian Icewine. Serving as the official kickoff to the Canadian winter, the festival will complement the calendar of Niagara Grape & Wine Festival events. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Village, based in downtown Niagara-on-the-Lake, will attract thousands of visitors throughout January, featuring a series of spectacular weekends that celebrate premium Icewine and culinary experiences along historic Queen Street in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

The Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake have successfully repatriated the annual festival, with their membership serving as the primary stakeholder. The execution of the event will be supported by the Niagara Grape & Wine Festival, which brings an experienced event management team to the project. The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce has previously received significant funding for this event over multiple years from Town Council, and we are seeking the same funding to enhance all aspects of the festival.

The 2025 edition of the Icewine Village will be reinvented and modernized to bolster interest and new visitors to the already popular event. The Village consists of two incredible weekends in historic Niagara-on-the-Lake comprised of Icewine tastings, music, entertainment, cooking demonstrations, panel discussions by winemakers and chefs as well as new interactive elements to celebrate winter in Niagara. Historically, the Icewine Festival draws over 6000 annually; with the new programming strands and re-energized marketing campaigns we anticipate a 25% increase in visitation.

Celebrations will be hosted in Niagara-on-the-Lake and the magic of Old Town in partnership with hotels, B&Bs, and restaurants across the Niagara Region. Partner businesses will benefit

from increased winter tourism traffic, new visitors to Town and continue to position Niagara-on-the-Lake as a year-round destination.

Partner product development includes hotel packages, experiential packages and signature dining packages, as well as weekend packages featuring the Cool As Ice Gala, presented by the Niagara Grape & Wine Festival.

The festival's new goal is to reinvent this celebrated tradition to put Icewine and Niagara on the Lake on the world stage. By offering exciting new programming, the tourism community can leverage the festival to drive economic growth across the Niagara Region. The repatriation of the festival is intended to revitalize the event, developing a new world class tourism product that drives the Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine brand recognition and creates an international tourism event.

Wine Tourists are visiting to experience our Icewine, food and culture. Strong growth in the wine industry will support growth in restaurants and experiential offerings across the community. The resulting growth will drive tourism and innovation, specialized education and labour, transportation infrastructure and housing. [\*\\*The Niagara Super Cluster. A Catalyst for Economic Growth\*](#)

### **Key Economic Impacts**

1. Increase tourism in shoulder season months: by extending the festival over two weekends in January, the event aims to draw visitors during traditionally slower months, effectively turning the shoulder season into a vibrant and appealing period for tourism.
2. Encourage Year-Round Visitation to Niagara-on-the-Lake: the festival seeks to create sustained interest in the region's wineries and tourism partners throughout the year, showcasing the diverse offerings and experiences beyond the usual peak seasons.
3. Boost Icewine and Ontario wine sales: with a focus on showcasing the birthplace of Canadian Icewine, the festival aims to increase sales of Icewine and other wines produced by local wineries, providing a direct economic benefit to the participating vineyards.
4. Showcase Niagara-on-the-Lake as the birthplace of Canadian Icewine: the festival positions Niagara-on-the-Lake as the authentic and historical birthplace of Canadian Icewine, creating a strong association with the Region and reinforcing its significance in the Canadian wine landscape.
5. Highlight Culinary Talent of Restaurant Partners: collaborating with local restaurants emphasizes the culinary aspect of the festival, showcasing the gastronomic expertise of the Region. This not only enhances the overall festival experience but also promotes local businesses.

6. Highlight local retailers: the goal is to have complimentary retailers participate in celebrating Niagara Icewine throughout the month of January. For example, a retailer could partner with wineries for in-store tastings.
7. Highlight local distilleries and breweries: the goal is to have Icewine highlighted in complimentary spirit and brewery programs. For example, a distillery could feature a Icewine martini or a brewery could infuse a feature beer with an Icewine grape.
8. World Class Branding Opportunity for Wineries and Town Tourism: the festival serves as a powerful branding platform for both local wineries and Niagara-on-the-Lake. It creates a positive image, attracts attention, and reinforces the association between Niagara, the wine and culinary industry, and the exceptional tourism products in the Region.
9. The increased traffic and tourism generated by the Icewine Festival will have a positive impact on the local economy by creating job opportunities across various sectors.  
Specifically:

**Winery Staff:** Employment opportunities will be secured for winery staff who might otherwise face layoffs during the off-season. The influx of visitors during the festival ensures that staff are needed to handle the increased demand for wine tastings, tours, and other related activities.

**Accommodation Sector:** Hotels, bed-and-breakfasts, and other lodging options will experience higher occupancy rates, leading to more job opportunities.

**Restaurant Sector:** Local restaurants and cafes will see increased patronage, creating jobs for servers, chefs, kitchen staff, and management. This boost in business can also lead to extended hours and additional shifts.

**Festival Vendors:** Vendors selling food, crafts, and other goods at the festival will need extra help, which can lead to temporary or part-time employment for people working at stalls, managing sales, and handling logistics.

**Tourism Sector:** Tour guides, information center staff, and other tourism-related jobs will be in demand to assist and inform the influx of visitors, enhancing their overall experience and potentially leading to longer stays.

**Transportation Sector:** Increased travel to and from the festival will boost demand for transportation services, including taxis, rideshare drivers, and public transit. This can create temporary or part-time driving and support roles.

Overall, the Icewine Festival not only promotes local businesses but also creates a ripple effect of employment opportunities across multiple sectors, benefiting the entire Niagara Region.

Thank you for considering our request. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this initiative further and look forward to partnering with you for this year's Icewine Festival.

Sincerely,

*Madison Vine*

Madison Vine

Andrew Peller Limited

Co-Chair, NOTL Icewine Festival

*S. YAMAKAWA*

Sumie Yamakawa

Arterra Wines

Co-Chair, NOTL Icewine Festival