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**COOLCHARDONNAY.ORG**  
905.309.9487

### 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”. Amongst 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 “Coolest” Wines

The clear distinction between the characteristics of cool and warm climate Chardonnay is not necessarily recognized 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.

### How To Be Cool

If a winery is located in sunny California, but is 9km from the Pacific, is it cool? If a winery is located in Chile, but is 500m above sea level, is it cool? If a winery is located in Australia, but suffers from extreme temperative variations, is it cool? Is it possible to have a wine considered “cool climate” if it’s from a nugget of land in an other warm place?

The debate on how to define “cool” is vibrant an ongoing, and we think that’s great. The i4c isn’t intended to define cool climate, but rather to explore the many ways that wines can be cool, and to let sippers make the call on their own. Wineries who claim to be cool - but may not be considered cool climate by classic definition – are permitted at the event for that very reason.

Below are the guidelines that we follow when considering participating wineries for the event:  
Just remember... I AM COOL!

- A – Altitude
- M – Microclimate
- C – Coastal influence
- O – Old World / Classic Cool Style
- O – Ontario’s Extreme Weather
- L - Latitude

As we’ve met hundreds of producers from cool climate regions, there’s one more category that we feel is important to include...

### Cool by attitude

Cool climate producers share a commitment to producing wines that allow the ‘cool’ to shine through. They know that this grape, when grown in cool climate sites, not only wears the badge of its terroir proudly, but also allows the winemaker to strut his/her stuff. The influence of the winemaker can shine through with cool climate chardonnay, which gives our winemaking friends an awesome canvas on which to create.

At the i4c, we don’t judge a wine by its head office location. Many renowned warm climate producers have prized vineyards in cool climate regions and produce exceptionally cool chardonnay. The vineyard designations on the bottle is the true marker of cool for many internationally renowned producers.





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**Cool, or Not Cool? That is The Question:**

This simple tasting chart is a guideline used in consumer tasting sessions to help identify cool vs. warm climate chardonnay.

**COOL CLIMATE CHARDONNAY**

- Clear definition of terroir – strong sense of place is evident in the wines
- Fruit definition – pronounced flavours, often tree fruit, citrus, apple
- Dry, high-acid (refreshing, clean)
- Mineral
- Elegant
- In a love affair with food – cool chard is one of the most food friendly wines

**WARM CLIMATE CHARDONNAY**

- Generic/neutral tone to wine. Chardonnay from warm-climate zones are difficult to differentiate
- Flavours of tropical or dried fruit, overripe fruit. Less crispness
- High alcohol, often more residual sugar
- Can be described as “flat”
- Often over-oaked, overdone
- Often masks flavours

With a minimum of 50% of presenting winemakers from international cool climate regions, the i4c truly offers the opportunity for wine enthusiasts to “tour the world with one glass”.

**Wine Country Ontario**

**How Ontario fits into this global picture**

Entering the third year of the i4c, we have truly created an international home for cool climate chardonnay. Each year the list of renowned global producers wishing to attend the Celebration grows, as does the consumer interest in this seriously cool grape.

Each year, many celebrated winemakers and renowned wine writers leave Ontario with an unexpected respect for the Chardonnays of Ontario. As Matt Kramer noted in 2011, Ontario is “The Worlds Least-Known Great Wine Region.”

Here are some of the factors that make the Chardonnays of Ontario so cool. For more information, visit [www.winecountryontario.ca](http://www.winecountryontario.ca)

**Latitude with attitude** – Wine Country Ontario shares latitude with wine growing regions in Burgundy, the Loire Valley, Oregon, Northern California and New Zealand

**Nature’s central air** – The Niagara Escarpment and Lakes Ontario and Erie combine to create a unique mesoclimate

that protects and nurtures our vines. Take away any of these three factors and we wouldn’t have a wine or tender fruit industry in Ontario!

**The Lake Effect** – Lake Ontario and Lake Erie act as temperature moderators – holding summer’s heat into late fall and winter; sharing winter’s cooling effects during spring and summer. For example, the lake effect can be responsible for up to 8 degrees in temperature variation inside the Twenty Valley area.

**The Niagara Escarpment** – our “famous bench” areas are the envy of winemakers across the country. Not only do they hold valued limestone soil, but they “catch” the lake effect breezes, distributing them across the vineyards

**Don’t call it dirt** – Soils have a major influence on the quality of the grapes, and different grape varieties do better in specific types of soils. Because much of Wine Country Ontario is situated in a former lakebed, we’re blessed with a variety of soil types, each offering ideal growing conditions for varietals. For example, “bench lands” often contain glacial till (mix of limestone, clay, silt, sand, gravel, and large stone); while sandy loam is found near the Lake Ontario shore.

