

HERON HILL
WINERY



Icewine

NECTAR OF THE GODS

The generally accepted definition of Icewine is as follows: A sweet dessert wine made from grapes that are naturally, frozen on the vine, picked in late November and possibly into February of the following year. Most often the vines and grapes need to be covered with plastic netting in order to protect the berries from predacious birds. The ideal temperature for picking should be around 20 F or a little lower. At this temperature the water crystallizes and the juice concentrates and remains unfrozen. Picking usually occurs at night or if lucky on cold mornings and the frozen grapes once picked are quickly pressed outside so as not to warm the berries. The pressing may take a day or two as the ultra concentrated juice makes its way through the ice block that forms in the press. Usually, Riesling grapes will produce 160 gallons of clean juice when picked for table wine. Icewine juice only yields 25 to 40 gallons per ton. The classic style of Icewine is one that reflects great purity of variety, a vivid contrast of intense sweetness followed by laser like acidity that refreshes the palate and the senses resulting in a rare, ethereal wine tasting experience that leaves the taster with a life long imprint on their soul. Pretty unbelievable sounding, right?

In taste there is Truth!



The origins of Icewine making are a little unclear. One of the most popular versions suggests that a vineyard in the Franconia region of Germany, near the city of Wurzburg, was harvested much later than normal due to a cool growing season in the year 1794. Sometime in late November the peasant pickers went to pick the last remaining grapes at the crack of dawn and to their surprise the grapes were frozen hard. Not knowing what the results would be they proceeded with the normal practice of pressing and fermenting. After much frustration and muscle power with the pressing the first droplets of juice came into existence. In a period of time when sugar was unknown and anything sweet was highly prized these first exotic drops changed the reality of the wonders of the vine forever!

Heron Hill Winery respects the tradition of Icewine making as practiced by the great estates of the Mosel region of Germany. Only the Riesling variety is produced in minuscule quantities of 1000 half bottles or less and only in years when our intuition guides us. Or when we are just plain old lucky.

In 2007, the third Riesling Icewine in the last 6 years was picked at 4:00 am on December 5th. The first from the Heron Hill Estate vineyard in 2003, the next from Ingle Vineyard in 2004 and then once again from Ingle Vineyard in 2007.

