



PRESQUE ISLE
WINE CELLARS
WHERE PENNSYLVANIA WINE BEGAN



Our Region

The Lake Erie American Viticultural Area (AVA) is the largest US wine growing area east of the Rockies and was the first multi-state wine appellation to be approved. It covers the 300-mile long region along the south shore of Lake Erie from Toledo, Ohio, through Pennsylvania, to Buffalo, New York, on



lands climatically affected by the lake. Virtually every existing vineyard lies in the narrow band below the first ridge south of the lakeshore which is known locally by the French term 'escarpment'. This arrangement provides a unique micro climate where the large mass of lake water holds heat from the summer which moderates local temperatures and provides warm breezes through autumn to delay typical first frost into November. Conversely, the lake moderates winter low temperatures, but keeps the area cooler into the spring, delaying first budding until past the typical last frost date. The steady sloped terrain below the escarpment also provides good cold air drainage. This is a somewhat similar situation to that of the Finger Lakes Region of

New York state. In Erie County, Pennsylvania, where we are located, the escarpment lies closer to the Lake and is at its highest elevation of about 1500 ft, which is a rise of over 900 ft from the average Lake Erie elevation of 573 ft. As one goes either east or west the escarpment is lower and farther from the lake and the frost-free season is shorter and winter temperatures can be colder. The only other portion of the Appellation with as long a growing season is the Lake Erie Islands (North Bass Island, Middle Bass Island, and Kelley's Island) in Ohio.

This happy confluence of geography and topography has made our region a sort of northern oasis and a successful producer of fruits – cherries, peaches, apples, plums, berries, and, most of all, grapes – since the 1800's and our local area was and remains the center of production for Welch's Grape Juice. We have the greatest concentration of vineyards (acres per square mile) in the country after the Central Valley of California, albeit far below that region in total vineyard acreage quantity, since California produces over 90% of the wine produced in the US. We have a 194-day average frost-free season, and in the majority of winters don't have sub-zero temperatures. We are relatively cool with average temperatures of 71°F in July and August. We have fewer problems with many of the fungal diseases because of the almost continuous breezes off the Lake.



White wines greatly outnumber reds in the region, although several reds also do very well. Good ripeness can be achieved by avoiding overcropping, and pH levels are low, which is a real plus for stability and longevity of the wines. Acidity can be high in poorer years with less sunlight and rainier, colder summer weather. Most wines show good varietal fruit character and have fairly light tannins. Chardonnay, Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris, and French hybrids like Vidal (used in Ice Wines), Seyval Blanc, and Vignoles are whites that generally show very well in the region as do Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Syrah, Carmine, Blaufränkisch, Dornfelder, and French hybrids Noiret (NY 73) and Chambourcin as reds.



Our region is also famous for such native *Vitis labrusca* grapes as Niagara, Catawba, Steuben, and Delaware which are used for whites and Concord and Fredonia for reds. These wines are typically intensely grapey, reminiscent of the Welch's grape juices these grapes are used to produce, with strong fruit character carrying through, and are usually finished sweet with 4 to 8 percent residual sugar.

A perhaps surprising fact is that in 2016 Pennsylvania was the fourth largest wine producing state in the U.S., behind California, Washington, and New York and ahead of Oregon, Ohio, Michigan, Virginia, and Texas.

Our Winery

Presque Isle Wine Cellars is a family-owned winery located in North East, PA, in the heart of the beautiful Lake Erie Wine Growing Region. We began winery operation in 1964, before any other Pennsylvania winery operating today, and received one of the first two winery licenses issued in Pennsylvania since Prohibition which makes us Pennsylvania's Pioneer Winery.



Our founder, Douglas P. Moorhead, grew up on a fruit farm on which the Moorhead family has been growing grapes for over 125 years. Doug's father, Douglas McCord Moorhead, to help survive during the Great Depression, had a side business brokering what few wine varieties there were in the area to several small ethnic wineries in the Cleveland, Ohio, area and to Gold Seal Vineyards and Widmer Vineyards in the New York Finger Lakes Region. He was also very active in farmer's cooperatives in



the Lake Erie area and was President of National Grape Cooperative when it was able to purchase Welch Foods in the 1950's and vastly improve the economic prospects of Concord growers in the region. Douglas M. also served as President of Welch Foods in the late 1950's. Doug grew up in that environment and, after exposure to the German cool climate vineyard and wine industry during his Army service there, became interested in the possibility of growing wine grapes in the Lake Erie region to replace the acreage of other fruits such as sweet and sour cherries, peaches, plums

and apples which had become less and less profitable. Doug experimented with nearly 200 French Hybrid varieties and introduced the growing of classic European *Vitis vinifera* grapes into the Lake Erie area in the late 1950's. Doug's career has been dedicated to advancing the Pennsylvania wine industry and producing quality

wines from traditional European grapes grown in Pennsylvania, a goal which has been accomplished but which continues to develop to this day. Doug was the leader of the group that developed and fought for the legislative proposal that became the 1968 Pennsylvania Limited Winery Act which allowed the creation and development of the Pennsylvania wine industry. It is not a stretch to say that Presque Isle Wine Cellars is “Where Pennsylvania Wine Began”.



We care greatly about producing the finest quality wines possible and we are proud to produce wines that consistently win awards in regional, national, and international wine competitions. Under the leadership of Doug and our Winemakers, Bob Green and Kris Kane, we have consistently produced many award-winning wines and the Presque Isle Wine Cellars brand is recognized as a quality leader in the region.

Starting with the knowledge that great wine must start with great grapes, we have established long relationships with and buy our fruit only from the best regional growers who have committed to best practices and to our quality standards. Under the watchful eyes of our Winemaking team, our high-quality grapes are given equal care of art and science through the crushing, fermentation, racking, aging, and bottling stages in their transformation into premium quality wine. That care and insistence on only using the best grapes available has been the foundation of our ongoing success.



Presque Isle Wine Cellars produces many excellent traditional dry and semi-dry *Vitis vinifera* and French Hybrid varietal wines, as well as our legendary Port and Kisses ice-style dessert wines under our flagship Presque Isle Three-Sails label. We also serve our customers who prefer sweeter native *Vitis labrusca* based varietal wines and blends under our Creekside and Blue Heron labels.

The winery is situated along a beautiful cascaded section of Twelve Mile Creek that winds through our property. This wonderful and unique setting also has gorgeous woods with vibrant fall colors, and vineyards on a rise with flowering slopes falling gently down to a tranquil green meadow. We are fortunate and inspired to do our work here and we invite you to come visit us at our beautiful creekside location and enjoy a picnic and glass of wine by the waterfalls.

