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Chateau Grand Traverse Releases Ice Wine

For the first time since 2008, Chateau Grand Traverse is proud to announce the release of their much anticipated 2016 Riesling Ice Wine. The 2016 vintage, which was just awarded Double Gold and Best of Class at the 2018 Michigan Wine Competition, is set to be released in the tasting room this Friday, August 3rd. CGT has been producing ice wine for over 40 years and were the first in Northern Michigan to do so. Ice Wine is a specialty dessert wine that can only be made from frozen grapes that are left on the vine well past the traditional grape harvest. The grapes cannot be picked until temperatures dip to about 15 degrees Fahrenheit or lower. The below-freezing temperatures cause the water in the grapes to freeze, isolating a rich and sugary concentration of juice.

Chateau Grand Traverse's 2016 Ice Wine was harvested completely by hand with the help of many CGT staff members, just as temperatures dropped to a chilly 12 degrees on the morning of Monday, December 19, 2016. After hand picking, the frozen grapes were lightly pressed for an extended period of time to gently extract a miniscule amount of unfrozen juice. The wine then underwent a slow, cold fermentation in order to preserve the bright fruit flavors and characteristics of the Riesling grape. From there, the wine fermented for about 6 months before being moved to small, stainless steel tanks, where it continued to ferment until it was deemed ready to be bottled and enjoyed.

Ice Wine production is a risky business for winemakers, given that there is no guarantee that nature will cooperate. From the time CGT winemaker, Bernd Croissant, set out to leave ten rows of Riesling on the vine after harvest, there were many forces of nature to contend with – including hail, sleet, wind, rain, insects, wildlife, and the potential for rot. True, high-quality Ice Wine can only be made when vineyard and weather conditions are absolutely ideal, and that only happens every four to six years in Northern Michigan. Not only is this a risky business for winemakers, but a costly one as well. Production of this sought-after wine is uniquely labor intensive for a final product that yields 10-15% of a normal grape harvest per cluster.

Although the path to Ice Wine production is paved with risk, when the conditions align, we are rewarded with a rich, almost nectar-like dessert wine that is unlike anything else. The 2016 vintage comes alive with flavors of ripe pineapple, golden raisins, dried apricot, and ripe lemon. Aromas of honeysuckle and sweet herbs lead to a soft and creamy palate, combined with notes of ripe grapefruit and honey to finish.

Perfect for special occasions or paired with decadent desserts, this Ice Wine will be sold in a 375 ml bottle and will be available in the CGT Tasting Room and Online Store as of August 3rd. Previous vintages were produced in only the best years, including 1978, 1982, 1986, 1992, 1998, 2001, 2005, and 2008.

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Chateau Grand Traverse is a family-owned and operated winery, producing world-class wines on Old Mission Peninsula for over forty years. The winery focuses on making wines from European Vinifera grape varieties with the upmost quality, consistency, and environmental sustainability. Visit their Old Mission Peninsula Tasting Room for a complimentary tour of the winery, and taste regionally distinctive, award-winning wines.

