

# 2026 International Cold Climate Competition

## Rules

1. Only commercial wineries are eligible for this competition, as described below. Wines must be:
  - A. Bottled and commercially available for sale.
  - B. Produced by a TTB licensed commercial winery and have TTB COLA approval for the label.
  - C. Have been produced with a minimum of 20 cases available at retail when released. For the purpose of this competition, a case consists of twelve 750 ml bottles. For Specialty/Fortified (but not Sparkling) categories, a case may consist of twelve 375 ml or 500 ml bottles.
  - D. Professional and TTB approved, commercially printed label must appear on all bottles.
2. Proper registration process must be followed to enter wines in the ICCWC. Wineries entering must:
  - A. Create an account on Enofileonline.com and follow the steps to register each wine in the proper category and pay the appropriate fees online by **July 9, 2026**.
  - B. Submit three (3) bottles per entry and include a copy of the registration confirmation receipt in every box of the shipment.
  - C. Deliver each wine entry under the following terms:
    - i. Hand deliver or ship to this address:  
University of Minnesota Horticultural Research Center  
C/o Drew Horton  
600 Arboretum Blvd.  
Excelsior, MN 55331
    - ii. Hand-delivered entries will be accepted between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm, Monday through Friday only. Entries must be received between **June 22 and July 10, 2026, no later than 4:30pm**.
    - iii. Clearly label the box(es) "ICCWC"
  - D. Pay entry fees - entry fee is \$55 per wine, paid via Enofileonline.org. Entry fees are non-refundable.
3. Categorization for each wine must be properly followed with each varietal or blend percentage indicated during registration. All wines must be made from a minimum of 75% Cold Hardy varieties as listed in Appendix A. Category guidelines are as follows:
  - a. An individual wine may not be entered in more than one category.
  - b. A winery may enter as many different wines as they like in each of the categories.
  - c. Competition coordinators have the right to reclassify entries if they believe the entry has been incorrectly classified at registration.
  - d. Indicate all grape or fruit varieties used in each entry on the registration form.

- e. A varietal wine must contain at least 75% of the designated variety (75% cold-hardy grape).
- f. A blended wine with no single variety of 75% must be entered as a blend. Note that wines in the blended wine categories must contain a minimum of 75% cold-hardy grape varieties. Varieties used in the blend must be identified on the registration form.
- g. If wines are to be judged as dessert, fortified, or sparkling wines, they should be entered in those categories, not as a varietal.
- h. Fruit wines must be from 75% cold-hardy fruit varieties for cultivated fruit and 75% cold-hardy species for wild fruit. Please list varieties or species during registration. Competition coordinators reserve the right to make final decisions concerning eligible varieties.

4. Judging, awards and promotions will occur as follows:

- a. Judging will be held on **July 15, 2026**, at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, in Chaska, MN.
- b. Panels of wine experts will conduct blind judging. The Chief of Competition will approve the qualifications of judges before each competition.
- c. The following awards will be given out:
  - i. Double gold, Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals will be awarded based on each wine's individual merit within its own category.
  - ii. Best of Class Awards will go to the wines with the most points awarded in each of the varietal and blend categories and each of the Dessert, Sparkling, and Fruit categories.
  - iii. Best of Show Awards will be awarded to the best Red, White, Dessert, and Sparkling.
  - iv. The top-scoring Minnesota wine in each Class (except Fruit) will be re-flighted in a final round of judging and The Minnesota Governor's Cup will be awarded to the top-scoring wine in that flight.
  - v. Winery of the Year will be determined based on a weighted score, with 70% being the average score of medals won (Gold - 10, Silver - 7, Bronze - 4, None - 0) and 30% being the average of any bonus scores (Best of Show, Best of Class, and Double Gold). A winery must enter a minimum of six (6) wines to be eligible for Winery of the Year.
- d. Only award-winning wines will be published.
- e. The Minnesota Wine & Grape Alliance and the University of Minnesota reserve the right to promote awards won as soon as results are published, including individual wines and the wineries from which they were produced.
- f. Award winning wines will be posted on the [MWGA website](#) within five days after the competition.
- g. Award-winning wines may be displayed in the Minnesota Wine & Grape Alliance booth in the Agriculture–Horticulture Building on the Minnesota State Fairgrounds during the 2026 Minnesota State Fair.
- h. Unopened wines will be utilized for promotional and educational activities to support the Cold Climate Wine industry.

### Eligible Cold-Hardy Grape Varieties

ICCWC will accept the following varieties considered generally hardy without winter protection in USDA zone 4. If a variety is not on this list, wineries should contact the ICCWC organizers to determine eligibility. Competition organizers reserve the right to make final decisions concerning eligible varieties.

Adalmiina (E.S. 6-16-30)	La Crosse
Alpenglow	Leon Millot
Baltica	Louise Swenson
Beta	Luci Kuhlmann
Brianna	Marechal Foch
Castel 19637	Marquette
Clarion	Petite Amie
Chisago	Petite Pearl
Crimson Pearl	Prairie Star
D M 8521-5	Radisson (E.S. 593)
E.S. 6-16-30	Riparia (native grape)
Edelweiss	Sabrevois
Elvira	Sipaska
Frontenac	St. Croix
Frontenac blanc	St. Pepin
Frontenac gris	Swenson Red
GR7	Swenson White
Itasca	Troubador
Joffre	Valiant
Kay Gray	Vandal-Cliché
King of the North	Ventura
L'Acadie Blanc	Verona
La Crescent	