

# HIDDEN BENCH



## 2023 GAMAY

### WINEMAKING DATA

**Harvest Date:** October 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**Brix at Harvest:** 22.8 weighted average

**Blend and grape source:** 100% organic and estate grown Gamay Noir from our Lincoln Lakeshore and Beamsville Bench vineyards.

**Appellation:** VQA West Niagara

**Alcohol:** 13.2%      **pH:** 3.55

**Residual Sugar:** <1.0/L      **T.A.** 5.89g/L

**Bottling Date:** April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2025

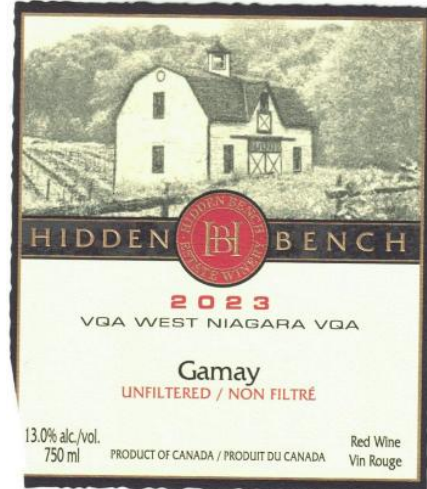
**Oak regime:** 100% French Oak; 10% new, 10% 2nd fill, 14% 3rd fill and balance neutral. Blended in August 2024 and aged in stainless steel tank for an additional 8 months.

**Time in barrel:** 9 months

**Vine Age:** Planted 2016 and 2020.

**Unfined and Unfiltered.**

**Certified Organic by Pro-Cert.**



### THE GROWING SEASON

The 2022 vintage began with cold temperatures in January, with overnight lows close to -21°C. This cold snap caused some primary bud damage in low-lying areas. The higher-than-normal crop load and late season rains of 2021 meant that the vines were particularly susceptible to winter damage. These climactic factors resulted in a 25% reduction of grape yield for the vintage compared to our historical average yield.

Spring brought better weather with seasonal temperatures and minimal precipitation. Bud break started the second week of May, and the first signs of flowering were noted earlier than normal around June 16th. Peak flowering occurred just before the Summer Solstice and berry set was complete by late June.

The summer was moderate and dry, with seasonal rain fall. The main challenge in the vineyard was managing disease pressures, the result of high humidity from June through August and the vineyard team kept fruit clean through timely leaf removal, crop thinning, and a disciplined and timely organic spray program. The first signs of veraison were seen on August 4<sup>th</sup>.

Harvest began on September 8th with the last fruit processed on October 23rd. We were blessed with consistent, favorable weather during harvest that permitted us to choose dates based on flavor and ripeness. As is often said, the quality of the vintage is determined by the weather in September and October, and overall, we are pleased with the quality of fruit we harvested in 2022, even if the quantity was less than we expected.



### WINEMAKER'S NOTES

This year the blend includes the first fruit from the block of Gamay planted by the winery at our Locust Lane Vineyard. The clay rich soils here provide the wine with darker fruit characters and structure while the sandier soils at our Lincoln Lakeshore vineyard give the wine freshness, elegance and hint of spice.

The grapes were handpicked, sorted and cold-soaked for 5 days in our concrete fermenters. With 16% whole cluster fruit and the balance destemmed, fermentation started naturally with indigenous yeasts and the caps were gently submerged twice daily during fermentation. At the end of fermentation, the free run wine was drained and settled in tank before barreling down by gravity. The skins were gently pressed in a traditional basket press. Following 9 months of ageing in barrel the wine was racked and blended into a stainless-steel tank in August 2024. The wine was then bottled un-fined and unfiltered to capture its purity in April 2025.

### TASTING

As these vines planted in 2016 continue to mature and develop, the concentration and intensity of this wine increase with every vintage. The nose smells like a bowl of pure, fresh summer berries at peak ripeness, purple flowers, and white pepper. A naturally high acid and low tannin variety, on first sip the wine is fresh and vibrant with candied red cherry flavours with savoury mineral and earthy character supporting. Drink slightly chilled – a quick 30-minute stay in the fridge should do it – alongside a classic herb roast chicken with root vegetable gratin.