



# CLAYSTONE TERRACE SINGLE-VINEYARD

2022

## CHARDONNAY

### A NOTE ON CLAYSTONE TERRACE

Both the Claystone Single-Vineyard Chardonnay and Pinot Noir blocks happen to both come from the extreme western side of the vineyard: a happenstance of aspect and geology. Claystone is so different from the Grand Clos, Why? Just a couple of hundred metres away: It's all in the minerality: Claystone's seems a darker, more savoury flintiness, with breadth on the savoury stone-tight finish: impressive and distinctive!

### TASTING NOTES

The 2022 Claystone Terrace Single-Vineyard has an elegant yellow color with an intense, saline, mineral nose with a slight truffle-scented stone fruit, accompanied by savoury citrus, ginger, fresh apple: incredibly dense fruit with a sea spray classy matchstick/mineral component sitting out above the ensemble; as subtle as the Grand Clos on the palette, this is an incredibly-defined version of Claystone that seems set to live and improve for well-on a decade. Musing, I wonder if we have ever made a Claystone this true to itself, a lip-smacking iteration at its salty-rock best! Consider drinking from 2025 to 2030 ... Tasted thrice.

### VINE MANAGEMENT

We farm our vineyards traditionally and sustainably in order to preserve the natural balance of the vines and maintain the quality of the fruit and the parcel's terroir specifics. Each vine is cared for by hand, from pruning through to hand-harvest. The vines are pruned to a single or double Guyot cane system (depending on the vine spacing and individual plant's age and vigour). As the vine grows, we position each shoot by hand, removing lateral shoots and shoulder spurs for better ventilation and concentration of the clusters. Before véraison, we strip the leaves on the eastern side of the vine, exposing the cluster to more sun and airflow, which promotes healthy ripening and prevents disease development (Typically, in more humid years, we also remove the leaves on the west side of the vine; in warmer vintages, we may also leaf-pull on the western side, although later, to prevent 'sunburn' of the grapes). At mid-véraison, we practice a green harvest if we feel the crop is too large, and/or if disease pressure is present, while also netting the parcels at risk to protect the grapes from bird damage until harvest.

Our soil management goal is to nurture and maintain a natural level of microbiological life. We cultivate every other row (in alternate years) and leave a varied cover crop in the remaining rows, which creates competition within the root system and allows the topsoil to remain loose and aerobic. Each year, we also break up the soil (deep-ripping) in every second row, in order to aerate the soil structure, and to help avoid compaction.



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### GROWING SEASON & HARVEST

The background to this vintage was the brief episode of cold in winter 2021/2022 that occurred after the vines everywhere were enfeebled by a big crop - and their resulting unpreparedness for winter... the perfect recipe for bud and trunk damage. Unfortunately, though, it didn't stop with bud damage - whole swaths of vineyards, even entire vineyards experienced high vine mortality and had to be ripped out. The scene was the worst on the flatter lands where the cold air had nowhere to go. The Bench shone and had less loss than in some other places, but even there, aspect, lower yields and careful viticulture made the difference.

After 'winter events' that reduce the potential crop in the following growing season, Niagara often experiences quite warm summers, further concentrating the fruit flavours into wines that have 'fruit bomb' flavours. Happily, that was Not the story in 2022, where the 'average' summer and later, cool

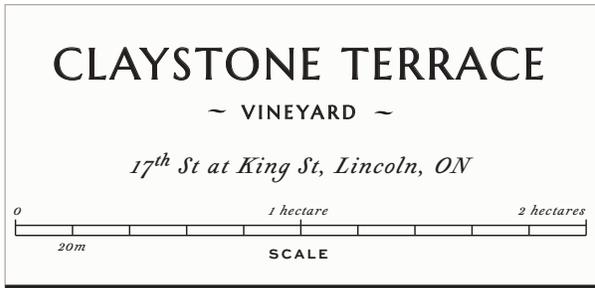
harvest gave the vine time to ripen all her babies completely - but under classic, cool conditions! The resulting wines are simply stunning: to be sure, the Chardonnays are beautiful, focused, fresh and concentrated examples that will help define our limestone terroirs for years to come. However, the Burgundian reds that leave me speechless: I have not yet seen a vintage like this in Niagara: both cool and rich?! In many vintages, our Pinot Noirs rival the rest of the world for perfume and terroir transparency, but they rarely have the cool drive and dry extract that Burgundy's better (read cooler) vintages display. Well, these 2022 wines are well-coloured but not opaque; they are firm, driven with energy, balance, with heaps of fresh fruit and power! - Make no mistake: this is an impressive vintage for Niagara, and one that will be scarce. Small but utterly beautiful!

#### VITICULTURE & PRODUCT INFO

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Trellising System   | Single and Double Guyot                                     |
| Planting Density    | 5292 vines/ha<br>2160 vines/acre)                           |
| VQA Sub-Appellation | Twenty Mile Bench   |
| Alcohol             | 13.5 % Vol  |
| pH                  | 3.47  |
| Residual Sugar      | 1.3 g/L   |
| Total Acidity       | 4.9 g/L (expressed<br>as Tartaric Acid)                     |
| Racking             | Once, after full barrel<br>ageing term, from barrel to vat. |
| Cases Bottled       | 944 (6 packs)   |
| UPC Code #          | 063657044384  |

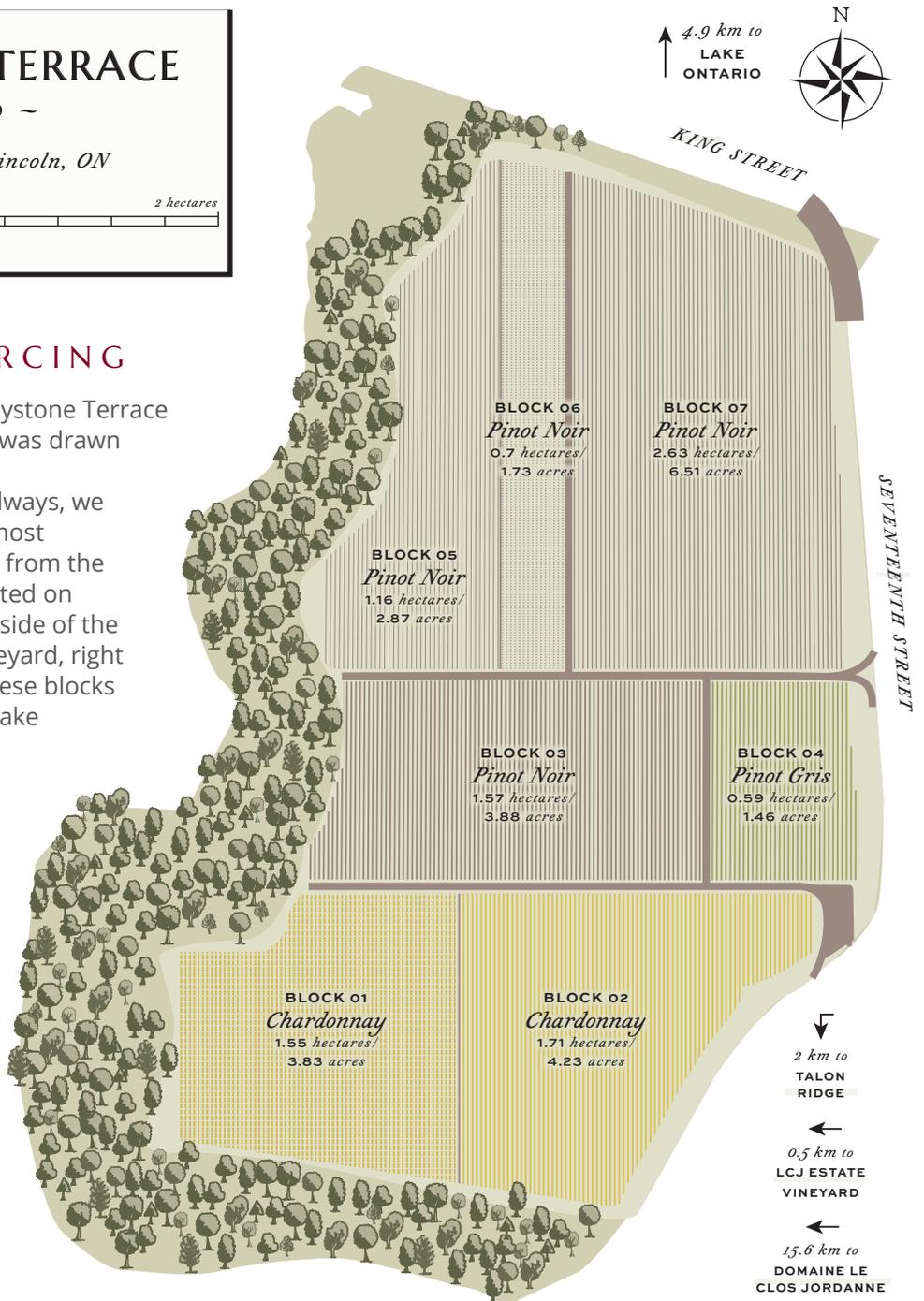


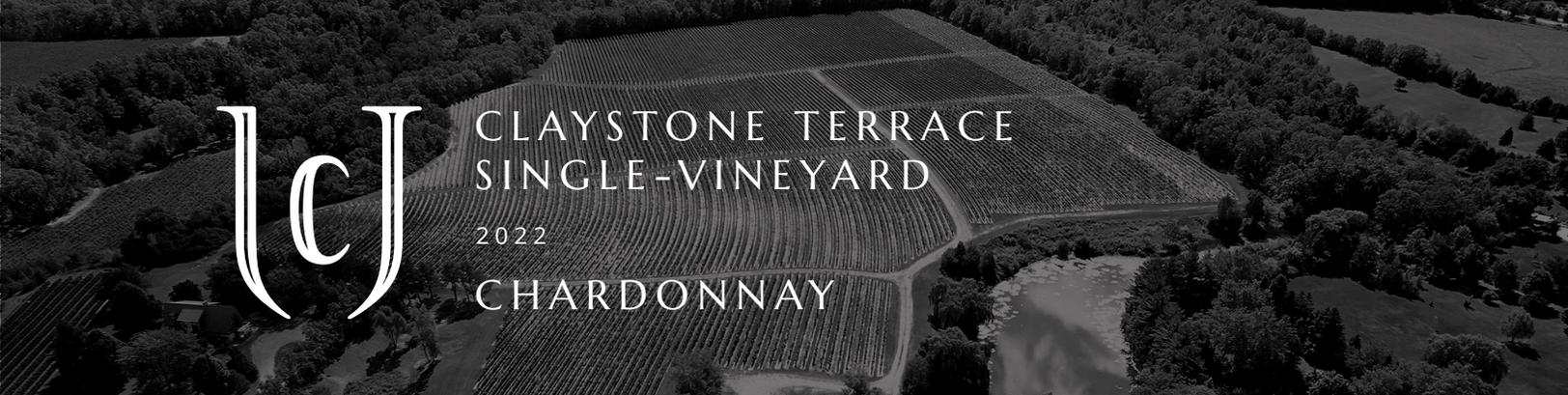
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VINEYARD SOURCING

For the 2022 vintage, The Claystone Terrace Single-vineyard Chardonnay was drawn essentially from Block 1, the westernmost block, but, as always, we took into consideration the most complete, interesting barrels from the western side of Block 2. Located on varying soils on the Western side of the Claystone Terrace Estate Vineyard, right up against the Bruce Trail, these blocks have proven, over time, to make stunningly mineral-scented wine with a broader, slightly more rustic mouthfeel than the Grand Clos.





# LCJ

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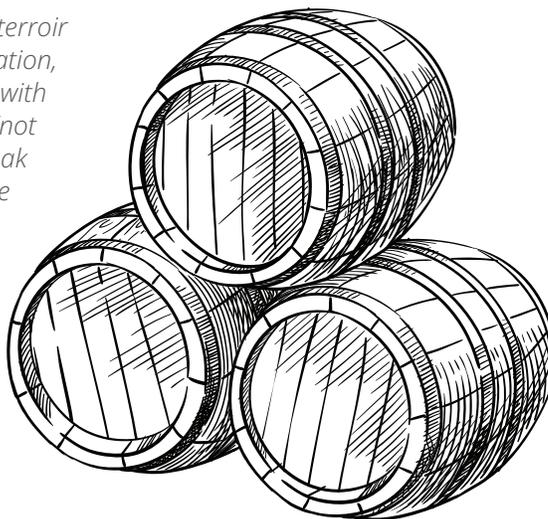
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### WINEMAKING & ÉLEVAGE OF THE CLAYSTONE TERRACE CHARDONNAY 2022

The Chardonnay grapes are only hand-picked when we think the flavours are "there" when the skins are thick, ripe, starting to soften, and in good sanitary condition. We want the seeds to be almost completely brown, which is an indicator of true phenolic ripeness. When required, the Chardonnay bunches are manually sorted on the white belt of the sorting table, then are deposited on the vibrating table, after which they drop into the press by gravity and are gently whole-cluster pressed. The juice (or 'must') settles in tank at 8-10 °C for a couple of days before racking the naturally-cleared juice, and letting the tank warm up, so that the naturally occurring yeast from the vineyard may slowly start the fermentation. We believe indigenous yeasts make the most complete, textured, complex, ageable wines. We then transfer the barely fermenting juice to 228L barrels to complete the long, slow, unhurried fermentation. The wine is then 'élevé' – patiently aged for 20+months, according to the needs of each cuvée and/or vintage. Malolactic fermentation occurs naturally over the course of winter and finishes in mid-Spring. As our Chardonnays mature in barrel, they develop complexity of fruit while still preserving their crisp acidity and sense of place. This extended élevage in the oxygenative medium of French oak barrels\* permits the tertiary perfumes and textures to develop and emerge, a technique that helps push the wine's terroir to the forefront. (\*typically, just 20% new, just enough to continually renew our precious fleet of barrels).

Throughout the long months of ageing, we systematically taste each lot barrel-by-barrel to select only those that are truly representative of the terroir of each individual parcel. After bottling, the wines are aged a minimum of a further six months in bottle before release to let the aromatic bouquet and mouthfeel further develop and integrate.

*\*We obsess over our barrels, searching for those that deliver terroir through oxygenation, polymerization of tannins and concentration, and not just oak flavours! Hence, we experiment tirelessly with coopers, toasts, and forests to find the barrels that express (not mask) our terroir. French barrels remain our choice: the oak comes uniquely from forests in the northeast of France (Burgundy and surrounding-area forests). Due to the trees' slow growth patterns and soils on which they are grown, these forests produce barrels known for their especially tight grain and subtlety of perfume and have an uncanny ability to reinforce our fruit with verve and nuance; to deliver a 'sense of place' with startling transparency.*



Thomas Bachelder, Winemaker.