



CLAYSTONE TERRACE SINGLE-VINEYARD

2022

PINOT NOIR

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

Classically Burgundy-coloured in the glass, this 2022 Claystone Terrace Single-vineyard is an expression of Pinot Noir that is deliciously different, a savoury, flinty, iron-laced, minty, wild-brambled beast that has a top note of musky, violet-tinged licquorice florals... Tight and saline/linear in the mouth, yet absolutely delicious, the high-toned perfumed raspberries, cherries and pomegranates compete on the savory palate with earthy-toned iron and granite. This wine shows the need of a few years in the cellar... deliciously-tight and crunchy-fruited now, but developing an intriguing dark minerality that induces salivation. What's more, the smoky baking spices on the glycerin slatey finish indicate 'a precise wildness' – excellent with a streak or a swordfish already! Will be magic as it develops perfume and complexity as it ages in bottle!!

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

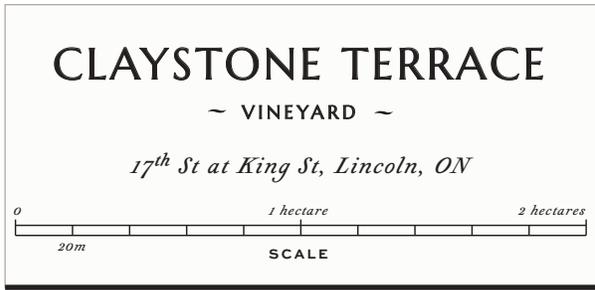
harvest gave the vine time to ripen all her babies completely - but under classic, cool conditions! The resulting wines are simply stunning: to be sure, the Chardonnays are beautiful, focused, fresh and concentrated examples that will help define our limestone terroirs for years to come. However, the Burgundian reds 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 2160 vines/acre)
VQA Sub-Appellation	Twenty Mile Bench
Alcohol	13.0 % Vol
pH	3.61
Residual Sugar	2.2 g/L
Total Acidity	5.7 g/L (expressed as Tartaric Acid)
Racking	Once, after full barrel ageing term, from barrel to vat.
Cases Bottled	1,010 (6 packs)
UPC Code #	063657044360

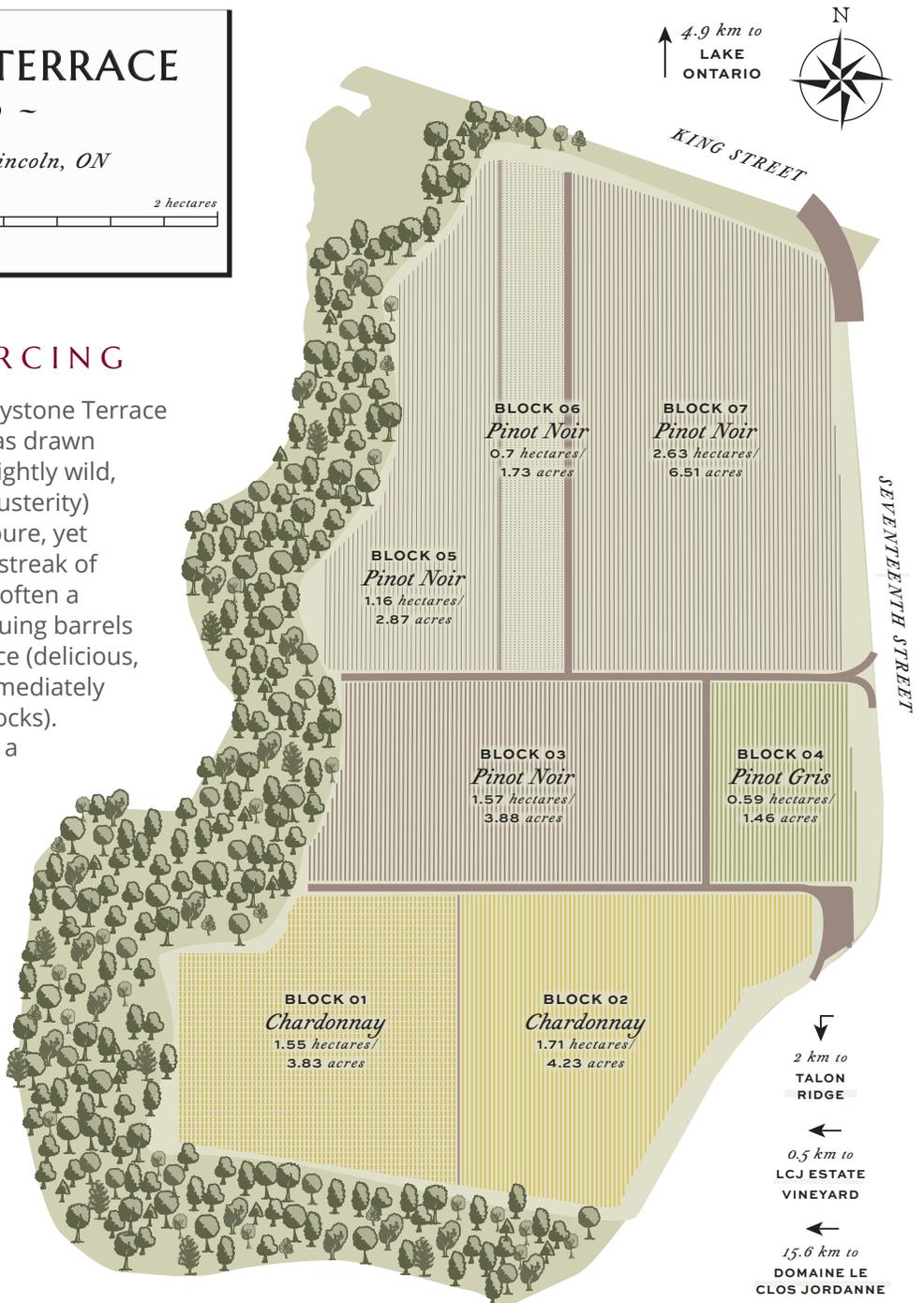


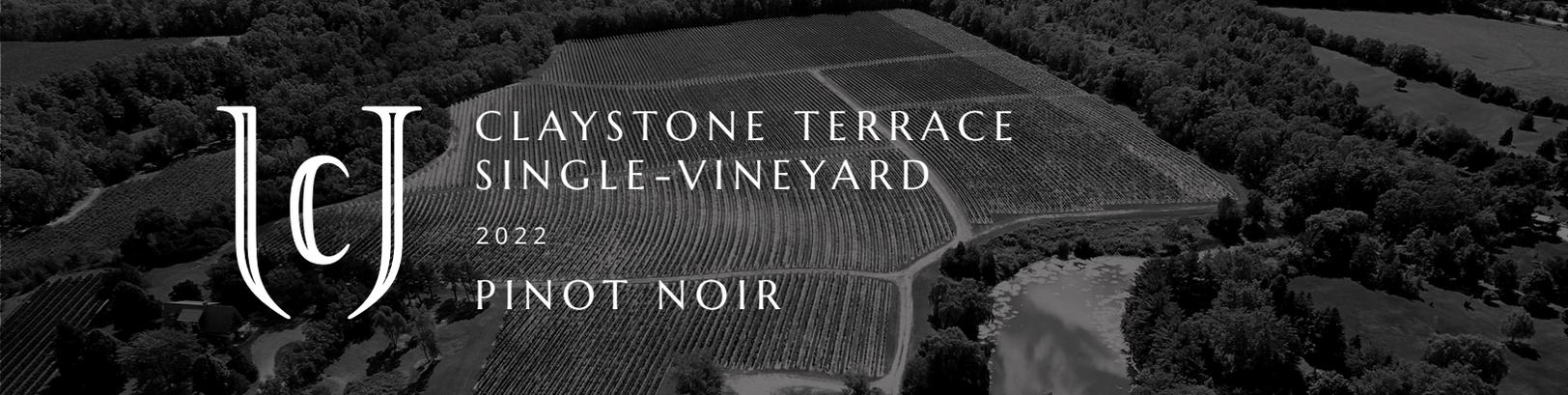
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VINEYARD SOURCING

For the 2022 vintage, The Claystone Terrace Single-vineyard Pinot Noir was drawn from a majority of Block 6 (slightly wild, but elegant with a touch of austerity) and Block 5 (the ‘wild child,’ pure, yet with a complex ferric gamey streak of brambleberry fruit). There is often a smattering of the most intriguing barrels of Block 7 in Claystone Terrace (delicious, a little rounder and more immediately ‘giving’ than the other two blocks). Located on varying soils with a majority coming from the steeply-pitched hill down to Highway 8 (Niagara’s ‘Route des Grand Crus’) on the Western side of Claystone vineyard.





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WINEMAKING & ÉLEVAGE OF THE CLAYSTONE TERRACE PINOT NOIR 2022

The grapes for our Pinot Noir only come into the winery when we think the flavours are "there;" when the skins are thick, ripe 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 Pinot Noir bunches are manually sorted on the vibrating table and then completely destemmed. After a short cold maceration, we let the tanks warm up, and the naturally-occurring yeast from the vineyard slowly starts the fermentation. We believe indigenous yeasts make wines more reflective of each specific vintage year, and every individual parcel: complete, textured, complex, ageable wines. After the fermentation, we leave the young wine 'on the skins' for several days to a week, to delicately macerate and capture all the aromas, finesse, and complexity appropriate to the vintage and terroir. The wine is then gently pressed and run to selected Burgundian (French) oak barrels* (typically 20-25% new, just enough to continually renew our precious fleet of barrels) for the natural malolactic fermentation. The wine is then patiently aged for 20+ months to integrate both the tannins and the fruit, and to let the tertiary perfumes and textures develop and emerge, a technique that helps push terroir to the forefront. Throughout the long months of ageing, we repeatedly taste 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 further four to 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.

