



LE GRAND CLOS

2022

CHARDONNAY

A NOTE ON LE GRAND CLOS

Both Le Grand Clos Chardonnay and Pinot Noir blocks happen to come from blocks on the western side of the vineyard: a happenstance of aspect, altitude, drainage, geology, and destiny! When tasting the wines from the Le Grand Clos blocks, one often first senses a great brooding tension of fruit and longevity under the mantle of a fine perfume. Simply profound. How the Le Grand Clos parcel defines itself in juxtaposition to that of Claystone Terrace, just several hundred metres away to the east, is astonishing! The purity of the almost 'reluctant volume' here is unbelievable: the terroir wants to be chalky-lean - but carries the regal breadth and weight of a Grand Vin with ease; poise.

TASTING NOTES

Le Grand Clos Chardonnay 2022 possesses a clear, canary yellow colour, some yellow florals, with crystallized lemon rind and truffle-scented, classy lemon oil on the bouquet: - one senses the fruit power that lies underneath the huge pear and citrus-chalky mouth feel with its notable poise and depth. Here the low-tide, seashell, mineral/saline notes are hidden under the dense, noble fruit that is in itself in austere and hidden. Wow! - An incredible feat, and typical of Le Grand Clos! The tense acidity belies the rich fruit, and on the long finish, I am transported to thinking about the future by the deft minerality tucked into the plush yet tight fruit!

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	3.36
Residual Sugar	0.2 g/L
Total Acidity	5.4 g/L (expressed as Tartaric Acid)
Racking	Once, after full barrel ageing term, from barrel to vat.
Cases Bottled	1,350 (6 packs)
UPC Code #	063657040171



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2022
CHARDONNAY

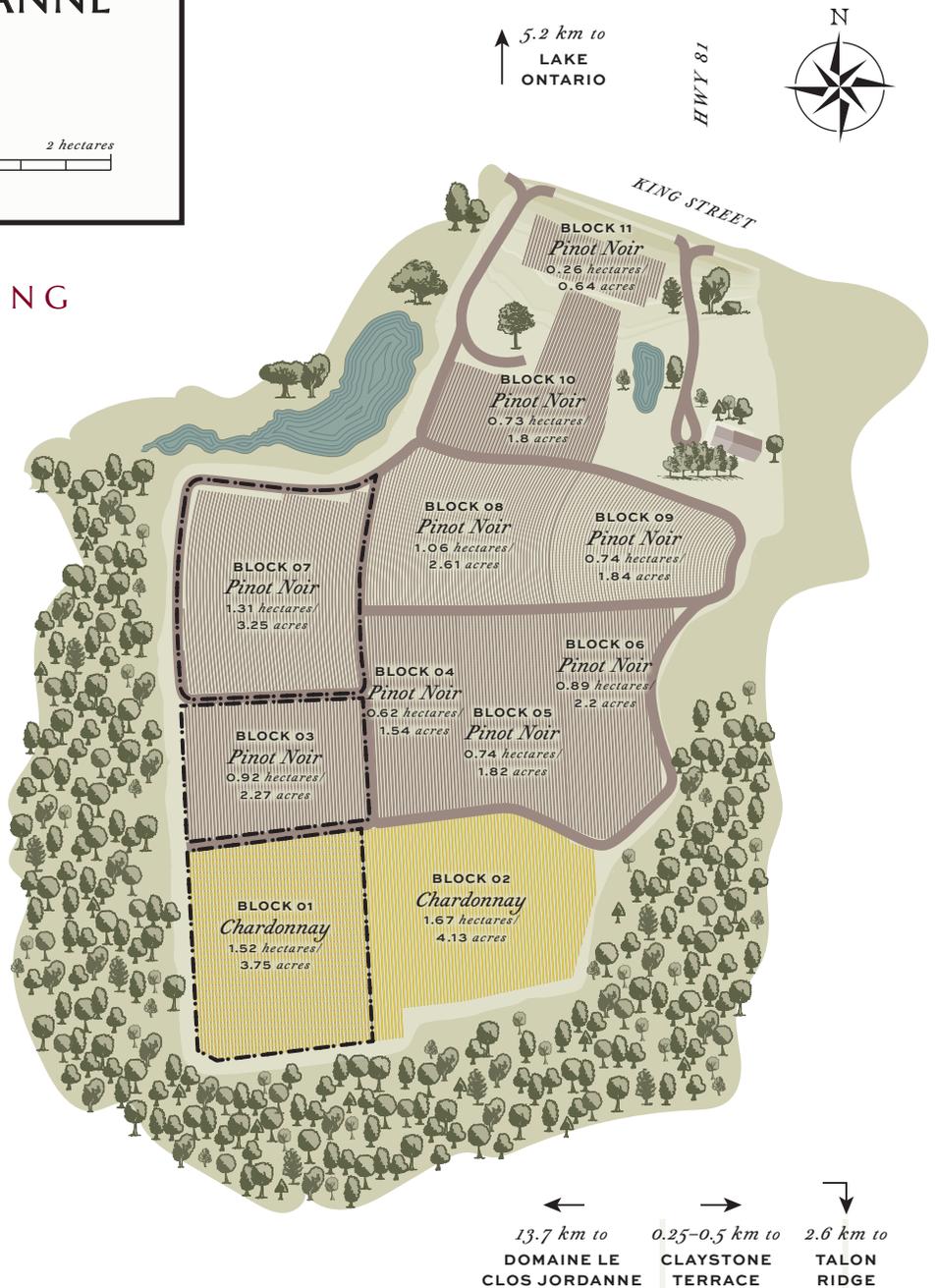
LE CLOS JORDANNE

~ VINEYARD ~



VINEYARD SOURCING

For the 2022 vintage, Le Grand Clos 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 just below the Bruce trail, on varying soils on the Western side of Le Clos Jordanne Estate Vineyard, these blocks have proven, over time, to make the most regal, distinctive and ageable Chardonnay of any of our properties and parcels. If a little agreeably-lean, even a little austere in its youth, the wines evolve to display stone-fruited and citrus-perfumed bouquet, a silky mouthfeel, and a firm chalky mineral finish.





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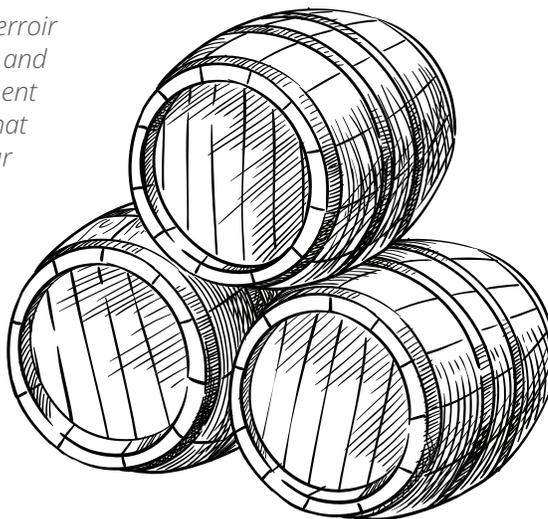
CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKING & ÉLEVAGE OF THE LE GRAND CLOS 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.