



CLAYSTONE TERRACE SINGLE-VINEYARD

2021
CHARDONNAY

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

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 Claystone Terrace Chardonnay is exceptionally fine, with more pronounced richness on the nose at this stage than the Grand Clos Chardonnay, a soft, delicate, honied perfume of orchard fruit, even Stone fruit, yellow apples with nutmeg, almonds, and lychee. Rich on the palate with crisp acidity, the lush texture is packed with spice; cream; light truffled notes. There is a savoury stoniness in the mouth; a fine subtlety to this vintage: it finishes long and pure with a subtle, savoury grittiness.

A Final word on Terroir across Pinot Noir & Chardonnay: Wines from both grapes from Claystone Terrace are built to last: the conundrum of a wine that seems at once both pure and wild. Compared to Le Grand Clos, they share a broader, savoury, darker minerality, often couple with some light anisette notes.

VINE MANAGEMENT

We farm our vineyards traditionally and sustainably 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 hotter years 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, to aerate the soil structure, and to help avoid compaction.



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GROWING SEASON & HARVEST

2021 was evidence of the old saying: the vintage is made from September 1st-on; do not let a great summer lure you into complacency! When one looks at the year in the rear-view mirror, 2021 was epitomised by variable weather! The warm, dry spring saw a slightly earlier than average bud break, leading the peninsula into an early bloom period, suggesting an early, low-yielding harvest. However, a couple of big rains in July & August pushed crop levels higher, with cluster weights rising dramatically. The heavy, frequent rain continued through harvest, with just enough intermittent sun to ripen the early Burgundian varieties (Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Gamay Noir) to attractive levels. Yes, for some vineyards – especially the heavily-cropped ones – it was a race against time to get them picked and sorted during the sunny breaks, but in general, the brix and acid were only slightly diluted with the rains, and the resulting wines had beautifully-plush fruit, lower alcohols, yet with trademark Niagara acidity and minerality! A particularly useful, classic-tasting vintage!

2021 Growing Degree Days: “Growing degree days for 2021 were 1736. This is the highest total GDD in over 10 years! Contributing to the overall total, the months of June, August, September, and October were all above average GDD.” Gerald Klose, Vineyard Manager

The resulting Chardonnays are quite classic: a ‘pretty,’ pure, floral-fruited year with great savoury minerality and solid acidity. The young, still-mute wines are in bottle but portend a great future. Niagara’s Chardonnays age well!

Pinot Noir: Ever since they were pressed off to barrel, the 2021 Burgundian reds have shown medium colour, surprisingly lovely floral perfume, and great mineral verve. Classic fruit aromas mingle with great firm minerality that will hold the wines as they age and improve.

VITICULTURE & PRODUCT INFO

Trellising System	Single and Double Guyot
Planting Density	5292 vines/ha 2160 vines/acre)
VQA Sub-Appellation	Twenty Mile Bench
Alcohol	13.5 % Vol
pH	3.46
Residual Sugar	2.2 g/L
Total Acidity	5.6 g/L (expressed as Tartaric Acid)
Racking	Once, after full barrel ageing term, from barrel to vat.
Cases Bottled	1000 cases of Six
UPC Code #	063657044360



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WINEMAKING & ÉLEVAGE OF THE CLAYSTONE TERRACE CHARDONNAY 2021

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 completely brown, which is an indicator of true phenolic ripeness.

When required, the Chardonnay bunches are manually sorted on the vibrating table and then whole cluster pressed. The juice (or 'must') settles in tank at 8-10°C for a couple of days before letting the tanks 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 to 22 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. 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 20-25% new, just enough to continually renew our precious fleet of barrels).

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. 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.