

CHÂTEAU DES CHARMES 2005 HARVEST REPORT

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 1, 2005

Grape Variety: Chardonnay (for sparkling wine)

Vineyard Block: Lepp Vineyard, small block near Concession 7 Road

Sub-appellation: Four Mile Creek

Weather Conditions: Sunny, few clouds, 25°C and breezy

Yield: 1.5 tons per acre

Brix: 20°

ph: 3.23

Total Acidity: 8.85

Field Notes:

Today is the day after remnants of hurricane Katrina blew over Southern Ontario. While we didn't feel the effects anywhere near as severely as the poor citizens of Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, the harvest was interrupted. Yesterday was a washout with rain and wind. Though it wasn't as bad as it could have been. This morning the workers were back at Lepp Vineyard picking Chardonnay, again for sparkling wine production. The going was slow because of the mud. As you can see from the yield numbers above, the volume of grapes from these vines was low. This is intentional because the vines are young. In order to keep the quality of the grapes high, we limit the crop on young vines so all the energy of the smaller vine is directed to fewer bunches. The brix, ph and TA numbers show the quality of the crop is good.

At the core of our vineyard management philosophy is the use of sustainable agricultural practices. We strongly believe that high quality wine is made in the vineyard. Over the course of these Harvest Reports I will highlight many of these sustainable practices. I happened to be in the Harvest Room and saw a bin of discarded stems and skins after the Auxerrois was crushed/destemmed/pressed. Below left is a picture of these spent skins and stems. At this point this mixture is called pomace. One of the cornerstones of sustainability is reusing what would otherwise be considered a by-product. In the case of pomace, we return it to the vineyard as fertilizer. It doesn't end up in a compost pile or a landfill nor does it require a large amount of fossil fuels to transport it to a waste management centre.

Later this afternoon the crew switched sites and moved to the St. David's Bench Vineyard to pick Pinot Noir, still for sparkling wine production. The image below right shows the yellow boxes laid out under the vines ready for picking to begin. You can also see the tractor tire grooves. This gives you an idea of how much rain we received yesterday. The St. David's Bench Vineyard is extensively underdrained, pulling away excess water. This year's growing season saw much less rain than normal. Therefore, the ground was dry and hard then we received a lot of rain in a short period of time. Fortunately the ground wasn't saturated and was able to absorb the water. The ground and underdrainage is doing a good job, it will just take a bit more time. One day of rain is quite manageable and welcome after the dry summer. From the image you will also see a wind machine. Later in the harvest I will talk more about the importance of these machines. I'll have more on the St. David's Bench Vineyard and the Pinot harvest from this site tomorrow.



Pomace awaiting spreading in the vineyard as fertilizer.



Pinot Noir rows at St. David's Bench Vineyard just before being picked.

As always, please feel free to email me directly if you have any suggestions or questions. Watch for many more postings as the harvest continues.

Michèle Bosc

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