

CHÂTEAU DES CHARMES 2005 HARVEST REPORT

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

Grape Variety: Gamay Noir 'Droit'

Vineyard Block: St. David's Bench Vineyard, blocks just east of the Château and bordering Concession 6 Road

Sub-appellation: St. David's Bench

Weather Conditions: Part sun and cloud, 24°C

Yield: 2.2 tonnes per acre

Brix: 21.5°

ph: 3.3

Total Acidity: 6.3

Field Notes:

This time the weather forecasters were wrong, the predicted rain and thunderstorms didn't materialise. This means we didn't have to work with mud up to our ankles. The lack of rain was also important for the remaining grapes on the vines. Yesterday I discussed "physiological ripeness" as a benchmark to determine when to pick a particular vineyard block. When it rains late into the harvest, when you are trying to get more hang time for the grapes, you begin to worry about rot setting in and "breaking down" the grapes. This means the skins burst rendering the grapes useless. Because we didn't get the predicted rain, we are all cautiously breathing a sigh of relief. At least for today, who knows what tomorrow will bring.

Today was spent picking Gamay Noir 'Droit'. There is something about wine and stories and how the two go together. This particular wine has a great story. Gamay Noir as you know is the red grape of Beaujolais. Typically it makes a light red wine that has a characteristic candy cherry profile. Our Gamay Noir 'Droit' is so much more than this. Here's the story. Many years ago Paul Sr. noticed a single vine in a Gamay Noir block that was growing straight up (image #1) rather than spreading out, then up like other vines (image #2). At first he thought this quirk would make vineyard management easier. So, he took cuttings of the single vine and propagated them. After several years he decided to make wine from this new block of vines. What he found was this wine did have the characteristic candy cherry profile but it was layered with a smoky, racy complexity that was completely new and interesting. He also realized that these vines matured a couple of weeks later than the rest of the Gamay Noir and contained higher sugar levels, which translates to higher alcohol levels. When the genetic testing was done on these new vines, it was determined that this natural mutation was in fact a genetically discrete clone. We then applied for and received International Plant Breeder's Rights. We are the only producers in the world who make wine called Gamay Noir 'Droit'. Canada's first *vitis vinifera* vine was born.

Gamay Noir 'Droit', St. David's Bench Vineyard has become my favourite BBQ wine. And, because it is not aged in oak at all, it can be slightly chilled on those warm summer nights. I think I have just decided what I'm making for dinner this evening!



1. Gamay Noir 'Droit' growing straight up.



2. Regular Gamay Noir growing out then up.

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.

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