

CHÂTEAU DES CHARMES 2006 HARVEST REPORT

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2006

Grape Variety: Pinot Noir (for Sparkling Wine)

Vineyard Block: St. David's Bench Vineyard, behind Château and finished east of Château

Sub-appellation: St. David's Bench

Weather Conditions: Overcast, 19°C, possible rain

Brix: 18°

ph: 3.0

Total Acidity: 10.65

Field Notes:

This morning the team continued picking Pinot Noir for sparkling wine production. Paul Sr. gave very specific instructions to the team on which bunches should be picked and which should remain on the vine. Image #1 below shows a row that had been thinned and foliage removed over the past few weeks. We are now ready to carefully select the bunches to be removed today. In general, the goal is to leave about 18 bunches per plant (one bunch per shoot). Working from the west side of the row, the remaining leaves are removed, each bunch is hand-picked and unripe berries (or other unwanted material) are removed (image #2). The cleaned bunch then is put into the box for transport to the winery. The remaining bunches (image #3) are left to further ripen on the vine and eventually will make Pinot Noir red wine; the best fruit will go into our Estate Bottled wine (black label) and the rest will go into our Varietal Wine series (white label).

Last year we started picking Pinot Noir for sparkling wine on August 30. It was a much warmer day than today and this year we see higher total acidity levels. This is due to the cool nights we have been experiencing. Each wine region of the world has its own unique "terroir" which include elements like soil type(s), annual rainfall, sunshine hours, average temperatures, among others. Historically in Niagara we can expect warmer summers and more heat unit accumulation than Burgundy and often even Bordeaux. Yet, our wines are not considered "fruit forward" like warm climate wines from California and Australia. This is primarily due to our cool evenings. Warm days and cool nights allow the grapes to achieve very good physiological ripeness yet still retain excellent acidity. The result is a food-friendly wine with elegance, finesse, and aging potential. This balancing acidity is especially important in sparkling wine production. This is why grapes destined to make sparkling wine are among the first varieties to be harvested each year.



#1. Exposed eastern facing Pinot Noir from St. David's Bench Vineyard ready for harvest.



#2. Cleaned Pinot Noir bunch ready to go to the winery.



#3. Pinot Noir bunches left on the vine for further ripening.

Please 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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