

CHÂTEAU DES CHARMES 2006 HARVEST REPORT

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2006

Grape Variety: Sauvignon Blanc

Vineyard Block: St. David's Bench Vineyard, west of the Château

Sub-appellation: St. David's Bench

Weather Conditions: Sun/cloud mix, breezy, 20°C

Brix: 20.5°

ph: 3.05

Total Acidity: 8.48

Field Notes:

We are taking advantage of another small window of opportunity. The rain has passed, for now, and the breeze is picking up. This is good news because the wind and sun together make an excellent "grape dryer". Today all the Sauvignon Blanc, just west of the Château, was picked and taken directly to the Harvest Room.

Sauvignon Blanc is a rare variety in terms of the number of acres planted. In all of Ontario there are approximately 11,000 acres of *Vitis vinifera* vines planted. Of these, only about 250 acres are Sauvignon Blanc which represents around 2.5% of *vinifera* plantings in Ontario. On our St. David's Bench Vineyard we have just over five acres of Sauvignon Blanc with another six acres combined on our other vineyard sites. All totalled, about 4.5% of our plantings are Sauvignon Blanc vines. Sauvignon Blanc is particularly cold sensitive, likely owing to its relative scarcity in Ontario. That said, we have fared quite well with this variety and with our St. David's Bench Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc. It seems we sell out each year before the next vintage is ready. I guess that's considered a good problem to have in the wine business.

The pictures below show what happened to the Sauvignon Blanc bunches as they entered the winery:



Step 1: Bunches are de-stemmed. These stems then get returned to the vineyard for compost.



Step 2: Berries are then gently “crushed”. Actually, the skins are split open to reveal the flesh inside.



Step 3: Split open berries are loaded into the press. What you see here is called “free run” juice – it is the highest quality juice that comes from the grapes before the press is turned on.

Just in case you were wondering what the inside of a bladder press looks like before the grapes are loaded in, please see the picture below. The fleshy-looking thing inside the steel drum is the actual “bladder”. It is about 1.5 inches thick and made from a special type of rubber. The grapes are loaded on top and around the outside of the bladder but inside the steel drum and then the hatches are closed. As the bladder expands like a balloon, the grapes are gently pushed to the underside of the steel drum. There are perforations in the drum that let the juice flow out to a collection basin, which you see in step 3 above.



Inside an empty “bladder” press.

Please email me directly if you have any suggestions or questions. Watch for many more postings as the harvest continues.

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