



## LE GRAND CLOS

2018

### SINGLE - VINEYARD PINOT NOIR

## WINEMAKER'S NOTES

From the warmer, riper, but ultimately still cool-climate vintage of 2018, Le Grand Clos Pinot Noir is simply stunning – a head-shaking synthesis of dense richness and raciness. Le Grand Clos is always a bit austere, but with the glorious vintage variation we saw in 2018, it presents an alluring amalgam of dense, intensely-floral black raspberry perfumes somehow intertwined with darker forest fruits (mulberry, brambles) on the nose, with only the faintest whiff of woodsmoke (for now - will soon integrate. With little evolution as yet, it is already showing an almost decadent, intoxicating deep rose-petal and mulberry fruitiness on the nose. Usually, with Le Grand Clos' terroir, one first senses a great brooding

tension of fruit and longevity under the mantle of a fine perfume, but this year, the terroir serves up a less reticent bouquet framed by black raspberry and brooding mulberry. At first, in tank and barrel, it seemed a warmer vintage to enjoy “on the fruit” – however, over the long months of maturation, it has slowly dawned on me that this is a “keeper” vintage with incredible power AND poise. Profound. This wine still has much to teach us of local terroir, and of the longevity of Pinot Noir from the Niagara bench's most august terroirs. With greater vine age, we sense even greater precision - and yet – confoundingly – a greater weight that will certainly grow up around the wine in bottle.

Drinking Prime: From 2021-2032

## VINE MANAGEMENT

All of our vineyards are farmed sustainably in order to preserve the natural balance of the vines and respect their terroir. We use traditional practices in the vineyard, which we feel helps maintain the quality of the fruit and its aromatic identity. Each parcel is treated individually according to its terroir specifics, and each vine is cared for by hand from pruning through to harvest.

At the start of the season, we begin by pruning, using a single Guyot system. We then tie down the canes to the fruiting wire. Following bud-break, we position each shoot by hand, removing lateral and shoulder spurs for better ventilation and better concentration on every single cluster. Just before véraison, we strip the leaves on the eastern side of the vine, exposing the cluster to more sun and airflow, (in wetter, more humid years, we remove

the leaves on both the east and west sides of the vine), which promotes healthy ripening and prevents disease development. At mid-véraison, we green harvest if we feel our crop is too large or if disease pressure is present. After véraison, we net the vineyard parcels at risk to protect our grapes from bird damage until harvest.

In terms of soil management, our goal is to nurture and maintain a natural level of microbiological life. We cultivate every other row and leave a selected cover crop in the remaining rows, which creates competition within the root system and allows the top soil to remain loose and aerobic. Each year, we also break up the soil (deep ripping) of every second row, in order to aerate the soil structure and to help avoid compaction.

## GROWING SEASON & HARVEST

The 2018 wines have a precision that we have seldom seen after other equally-warm summers. The resulting wines (largely due to lower initial brix), despite the heat and stress that led to some light botrytis - show a marked purity and cool-climate character. Somehow, after a dry summer with extraordinarily-little disease, the sorting table was still needed. The intense heat of certain weeks of the summer contributed to a stress that weakened the skins and induced breakdown. This was contributed to by the swings of outside weather and temperature during harvest and fermentation - For Pinot Noir, we were obsessed with getting the grapes in before they became too ripe, but it was so hot that sugar accumulation stalled – the vines went into preservation mode and

stopped photosynthesizing - and nothing got overripe! Careful viticulture and attention to detail in the vines in the summer paid off in more consistent fruit and less rot after alternating intense heat and big rains of the fall.

The older, deeper-rooted vines of the Grand Clos section of the Le Clos Jordanne Vineyard were able to buffer out the heat and delivered, and the quality of fruit received was outstanding. The grapes were hand picked, bringing in only the highest quality clusters for vinification. The Vines were in great shape heading into the winter of 2018/2019.



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## WINEMAKING & ÉLEVAGE OF LE GRAND CLOS PINOT NOIR 2018

Before we bring Le Grand Clos Pinot Noir into the winery, we make sure the flavours are “there,” and that the skins are thick, ripe and in good condition. We want the seeds when they are almost completely brown. The Pinot Noir grape bunches are then manually sorted on a 3-metre vibrating table, then completely destemmed (destemming makes for more terroir-specific wines). After a short cold maceration, the wine ferments with naturally occurring indigenous yeast from the vineyard, which we believe makes for the most complete, textured, complex wines.

After the fermentation, when the wine is dry, we leave the young wine ‘on the skins’ for several days to a week more to extract more fully, (yet delicately) all the aromas, finesse and complexity possible from the grape skins. The wine then naturally goes through malolactic fermentation, and the wine is patiently aged in selected French oak barrels (just 25% of which are new) for 20 months (in 2018) to integrate both the tannins and the richer fruit of 2018 and to help push terroir to the forefront. The extended period of barrel ageing (élevage) also helped to integrate the intense primary fruit of this warmer vintage. We experiment tirelessly with coopers, toasts and forests to find the barrels that express (not mask) terroir with verve and subtlety. French barrels remain our choice due to the trees’ slow growth patterns and ability to deliver a ‘sense of place’ with complete transparency. The wood comes uniquely from forests in the northeast of France: forests known for their tight grain and subtlety of perfume: the Allier, Tronçais, Jura, Bourgogne, and Vosges forests. These barrels (which are made of wood that has been air-dried for three years) come from Coopers such as Siruge (Nuits), Damy (Meursault) Dargaud & Jaegle (Romanèche-Thorins); Billon (Beaune) and Mercurey (Mercurey).

During our barrel declassification, we select the barrels that are the most respectful of the fruit and the vintage. We rack the barrels to tank and leave them to settle in tank for a month in order for the wine to reintegrate. The Pinot Noir is then bottled after a light filtration. The Grand Clos Pinot Noir 2018 will spend several months ageing in bottle prior to release during which it will develop perfume, and the aromatic bouquet and mouthfeel will develop further in bottle.

#### VITICULTURE & PRODUCT INFO

Trellising System	Vertical Shoot Positioning: Single and Double Guyot
Planting Density	5299 vines/ha (2145 vines/Ac)
VQA Sub-Appellation	Twenty Mile Bench
Yields	2 T/Ac
Alcohol	12.5 % Vol
pH	3.55
Residual Sugar	1 g/L
Total Acidity	5.6 g/L (expressed in Tartaric Acid)
Racking	Once after 20 months of barrel ageing, from barrel to vat.
UPC #	063657040140