

Niagara Chardonnay 2009

Niagara, Ontario, Canada



PRODUCER

Thomas Bachelder is known by many as the first winemaker at Le Clos Jordanne. However, since 2009 Thomas and his wife, Mary Delaney, have been producing their own high-quality, cool-climate Chardonnay and Pinot Noir in three regions: Burgundy, Niagara and Oregon. Years of making Chardonnay, in hallowed areas such as Meursault and Corton-Charlemagne, have taught Thomas to be as low intervention as possible. Using the same winemaking techniques in each region (wild yeasts, minimal intervention and the same barrel makers), the difference in the wines is solely down to the vineyard, which makes for some very interesting blind tasting results.

VINEYARDS

The grapes for this wine come primarily from the organically-grown Saunders Vineyard (Beamsville Bench) and the Wismer Vineyard on Twenty Mile Bench. The combination of Niagara's strongly continental climate and the Dolomitic limestone-rich soils of these vineyards, imparts great minerality and freshness to the resulting wines. Harvest is done entirely by hand.

VINTAGE

May was warm and summery with mean temperatures hovering 2° -3°C above normal and a number of high temperature records broken. Early season growth was rapid and healthy. Despite the heat, there was relatively little severe weather. Despite some thunderstorms, on balance the July weather was hot, sunny and perfect for maturing grapes. August was warmer and drier than normal in all regions. Conditions could not have been more perfect for ripening grapes and winemakers were very excited about quality prospects heading into harvest. The Chardonnay grapes were harvested in early September - most unusual!

VINIFICATION

Years of making Chardonnay - in Meursault and Corton-Charlemagne in Burgundy; in the Willamette Valley in Oregon and in Canada's Niagara - has taught Thomas to be as natural as possible in his winemaking. Pressing of the grapes was therefore very gentle and fermentation was carried out only with wild yeasts. Malolactic fermentation took place in specially selected oak barrels, followed by an extended ageing period which has made the wine more sinewy, broader on the mid-palate, more integrated, elegant, subtle, truer to its terroir and, surprisingly, less oaky.

TASTING NOTES

Bright lemon-yellow in colour. On the nose lifted, ripe lemon citrus notes mix with hints of white stone fruit and flinty mineral touches. Medium to full bodied on the palate with a scented, stone fruit character and a long, complex, mineral finish.

Grape Varieties	100% Chardonnay
Winemaker	Thomas Bachelder
Closure	Natural Cork
ABV	13%
Residual Sugar	2g/L
Acidity	7g/L
Wine pH	3.3
Notes	Sustainable, Vegetarian, Vegan