

CHÂTEAU DES CHARMES 2005 HARVEST REPORT

TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 2005 (REPORTING FOR SEPTEMBER 15)

Grape Variety: Gewürztraminer

Vineyard Block: St. David's Bench Vineyard

Sub-appellation: St. David's Bench

Weather Conditions: Mostly sunny and 25°C

Yield: 2 tonnes per acre

Brix: 25°

ph: 3.60

Total Acidity: 5.85

Field Notes:

Yesterday's rain gives me an opportunity to play catch up on a couple of topics: picking Gewürztraminer and a rehabilitation project at our Creek Road Vineyard.

Last week we picked Gewürztraminer. The G-wine, as it is sometimes euphemistically called, is native to Germany and Alsace. It is a later maturing white varietal that is reasonably hardy in the vineyard. What is a bit peculiar about G-wine is its colour. As you can see below, its skin is the reddest of all the white varietals. This means you have to be careful when pressing so as to not extract colour from the skins. You may also notice from the ph and Total Acidity numbers above, this is one of the lowest acid varieties I've reported. This is typical of Gewürztraminer.

For those of you who are familiar with G-wine, you will know it as an exotic wine. "Traminer" is German for spicy and this wine is definitely a bit spicy. More like cardamom than pepper or clove, a warm spice. Layered on top of this are wonderful lychee and rose water notes. Many producers, including Château des Charmes, leave a bit of residual sugar in the wine to add balance to the weight. This means, we halt fermentation before all the sugar is converted to alcohol. The classic Germanic style is to leave quite a bit of residual sugar so the wine is a 3 or 4 on the sugar scale. The Alsatian style is to leave a little less sugar so the finished wine is a 1 on the sugar scale. At Château des Charmes, our approach is more in the Alsatian style.

The second topic for today is a significant rehabilitation project on a block of land at our Creek Road Vineyard. From the image below, right, you can see this is a major earth-moving initiative. The Creek Road Vineyard was where my father-in-law's dream began to take flight. Over the years we noticed this part of the vineyard didn't drain as well as it should. So, this year we are correcting the problem. New under drainage is going in and the land is being reshaped to help water drain away after a storm. Once this is completed, we will revitalize the soil with composted manure, let it rest then replant. We can't forget that top quality wine can only be made from top quality grapes grown in well-maintained vineyards. It's a constant labour of love.



Rosy coloured G-wine on the vine.



Vineyard rehab.

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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