

## OntarioWineReview

A bi-weekly newsletter dedicated to helping you discover Ontario's best Wines and Wineries.  
Enjoyment comes from understanding - Passion comes from understanding more.



**OntarioWineReview Newsletter – 94**  
**October 23, 2008**

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#### OntarioWineReview: *WINERY REVIEW – Le Clos Jordanne*

*Our winery reviews are done blindly – the wineries have no prior knowledge of our visit and are not made aware until just before we leave their premises that they have been “spot-checked” – this ensures that we get the same level of service that anybody walking off the street would get.*

Well it's as official as it gets ladies and germs, in a conversation earlier this year with Bruce Walker, executive VP government and media relations, he pretty much confirmed that an actual Le Clos Jordanne winery would not be forthcoming as planned. One of the reasons given is that they sell out of wine too quickly - what would be the point of having a winery sit vacant of wine for 325 days of the year? So Le Clos does the next best thing, they have a tasting of their wines annually, just before they are released to the public.

Now this article would have normally appeared in the On the Road with Grape Guy section of my website, but with all the interest in Le Clos wines, and a lack of a winery (never-to-be?) - for the reason mentioned above - it only feels right to say a few things about this cult-winery and the launch event that introduced us to the 2006 vintage.

Le Clos Jordanne makes (or will make) a maximum of 16,000 cases per year ... and the demand for this wine continues to be amaze both the owners and winemakers. The LCBO is screaming for a raise in their allowance and so are the other distribution channels. All the wine is made from their 52 acres of plantings, of which 75% is Pinot Noir; hand harvesting of all this fruit takes approximately fourteen days to complete. Winemaker Thomas Bachelder is also quick to point out growing and making practices, “we grow it in the vineyard and respect it inside, this is real winemaking, the real thing, nothing added.” The event itself went something like this.

First Jay Wright, President and CEO Vincor Canada, thanked us all for coming announced that Le Clos wines have achieved distribution for the first time in Tokyo, Japan and Southeast Asia, not bad for a Canadian wine that doesn't have the word “Ice” in front of it. Then Jean-Charles Boisset, the other half of the Vincor/Boisset partnership, gave us his view of the project – how Le Clos Jordanne “encourages mother nature to give us her best” by using certified organic farming practices (Le Clos was certified in 2005). JC said that this project could only be done in very small pockets of the grape growing world, citing Burgundy, some parts of New Zealand, the Russian River (California) and Niagara; finally he thanked Jay for “keeping the vision alive” even as Vincor was being “swallowed up by a larger entity.”

Then it was time to hear from the winemaker himself, Thomas Bachelder, who in four short years has made quite a name for himself in Niagara and within the Canadian wine industry as a whole. Thomas B. has become kind of mythical figure in Niagara, every one talks about him as if they know

him, using just his first name: "Thomas is picking his Pinot today", "I visited Thomas in his cellar", "Have you tried what Thomas is cooking up". In some circles you say "Thomas" and everyone knows of whom you speak - it's only a matter of time before his moniker actually is just "Thomas" - like Sting, Madonna or Carrot Top.

Thomas was both humble in his comments to the crowd while still showing a wee bit of hubris, but that is to be expected from a winemaker of his caliber heading one of the most prestigious wineries in the area. First he said how surprised he was that there is still such excitement about this project, even after four years. He made mention of his fellow winemakers in Niagara, "my brothers and sisters out there are making good Pinot in the area," and it was here that he let loose with a little chest pounding, "but while they're catching up, we're pulling ahead," here he paused and smiled his best winning smile, "and that continues to be our motto." He then went on to give us a rundown of all the vintages in Ontario that he has been a part of (2003 to 2008) and how he believes the wines will stack up over time. He concluded his formal comments with a few bon mots: about Le Clos wines - "judge us on our Village [declassify barrel blend] because it's the hardest wine to make"; difficult vintages, "a difficult year does not mean bad wines - it means you just have to be more careful"; and vineyard management during tough years, such as 2008, "ripeness and small yields will get you through - sorting is also very important."

Le Clos Jordanne is putting Canadian wines on the worldwide map, for something other than Icewine, and any winery that does that is a bonus for our industry. I love Icewine and I love Late Harvest wines, but it's time for Canada, and especially Ontario, to be known for something other than the sweet stuff, if we get pigeon-holed into that category we may never recover (just ask the Germans how long it has taken them). We see that problem within our own province as we attempt to overcome our past ills and our need to be taken seriously by our own countrymen (and women) - we don't need to add to that pressure on the world stage too. Wineries like Le Clos Jordanne, along with their "brother and sister" wineries, that help put Ontario table wines on that stage and especially onto tables around the world, are a welcome addition to our industry and our growing reputation.



**Grape Guy's Picks of the Bunch:** *Pinot Noir and Chardonnay – what else*  
For directions and more information visit [www.leclosjordanne.com](http://www.leclosjordanne.com)

Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Grand Clos Pinot Noir - \$70.00 (W, L)

Thomas (Bachelder, winemaker) said that the single vineyard wines they produce are the "purest form of the vineyard"; by form I suspect he meant expression, and each of the single vineyard Pinots definitely express something different. In each, no more than 15% new French wood is used, so that the fruit shines through and is not masked by too much oak. The nose of this beauty is as complex as the taste: light cherry nuances with sweet herbs and cured meats - though the cherry seems to dominate as more air and gets into the wine, you'll also find vanilla and cranberry vodka aromas. The palate is just as pleasing with cherry, vanilla, salted and smoked meat (like prosciutto) with good minerality and acidity. The finish lingers persistently with sour cherry and cranberry – Grand indeed, in every sense of the word.

Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Claystone Terrace Chardonnay - \$40.00 (W, L)

Of the four Chardonnays Le Clos makes this is my favorite of the 2006 vintage, and of their Pinots, the Claystone was my second favorite; so there must be something in this vineyard that appeals to me and my tastebuds. The nose starts off very Chardonnay-like, with the buttery-apple notes along with mineral, rusty apple and buckwheat. The palate shows some real finesse and fun flavours; sure there's apple, butter and mineral – that's to be expected from this single vineyard Chardonnay, but then creamy caramel, cinnamon apple and peach pie dance across the tongue and you're hooked for another sip - another and another and another.

*Availability legend: W (Winery) – L (LCBO/Vintages) – WTH (Winery to Home).*



**Weekly Wine Notes and More:** *New Crimes, 7 Roads, and the latest Vintages report*

*The Grape Guy presents the "Weekly Wine Note"! A savoury selection of Ontario wines to impress, enjoy, or just plain drink! A NEW Wine Selection is added every Tuesday or you can listen to the Podcast.*

Here are the [Weekly Wine Notes](#) that were added to the Blog and Pod in the past two weeks:

October 14, 2008 – The Organized Crime Winery 2006 The Download ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

October 21, 2008 – The Organized Crime Winery 2006 Pipedown ([read](#)) ([listen](#))

**NEW Reports in the [On the Road with the Grape Guy](#) section:**

[Wines from the South of France](#)

[Share Yalumba with Jane Ferrari](#)

[Two Hands Plus Tasting](#)

[Durbanville Hills Dinner and Tasting](#)

[South Australia "Master Class"](#)

[Portfolio Wine and Spirits Tasting](#)

[Chilean Icon Wines Tasting](#)

**[What's NEW in the ... Lost and Found \(blog\)](#)**

Wines that got "lost" on my wine racks - some are Treasures others are Trash ... Find out what happened

**Nothing this week – but keep checking back**

**[What's NEW ... Taste it Again Grape Guy \(blog\)](#)**

Find out what has happened to some of my favourites over the past few years

[Flat Rock Cellars 2004 Rusty Shed Chardonnay](#)

[Tawse Winery 2005 Echos Bistro Red](#)

**[NEW BLOG – What I'm drinking Tonight](#)**

When it's not an Ontario wine, here's what I'm pulling out of the cellar

[4 New ones added](#)

**Vintages Release:** [Ontario "Vintages" Releases: Saturday October 25, 2008 Vintages Release](#)

**Ontario Wines of Note at Vintages for October 25, 2008:**

[Chateau des Charmes 2006 Vidal Icewine](#)

[Coyote's Run 2006 Riesling Icewine](#)

[Jackson-Triggs 2005 Proprietors' Grand Reserve Meritage](#)

[Mike Weir Estate 2005 Cabernet Shiraz](#)

[Wayne Gretzky Estate No.99 2006 Shiraz Icewine](#)



**The Wow Factor: More Pinot and Chardonnay**

*Every winery has a uniqueness to it ... be it the tasting bar, the barrel cellar, the gift shop ... something besides just the wine – it is here where we highlight another reason you should visit.*

With nothing else but the wines, here are 5 more reviews of the newly released 2006 Le Clos Jordanne wines:

**Pinot Noir:**

[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Claystone Terrace Pinot Noir - \\$40.00](#)

[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Village Reserve Pinot Noir - \\$30.00](#)

[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Le Clos Jordanne Vineyard Pinot Noir - \\$40.00](#)

**Chardonnay:**

[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Le Grand Clos Chardonnay - \\$65.00](#)

[Le Clos Jordanne 2006 Village Reserve Chardonnay - \\$30.00](#)



**Quick Sips:** *Occasionally interesting things cross my desk that I would like to pass on*

For October 2008

**A Canadian In-FuZion ...** It seems that our thirst for one of the newest listings at the LCBO has made the news across the pond. Tuesday morning I woke up to an email asking for my comments on the FuZion wine situation in Ontario. If you have not heard, there's a wine called FuZion, from Argentina, which is a Shiraz (70%) Malbec (30%) blend, that is quite good ... and at only \$7.45 a bottle it's a real steal (by LCBO standards). [Check out the UK press piece here.](#)

**It's Official, Everything Is Made In China ...** A cooper from Spain has partnered with a supplier in China to bring the newest in wine barrels to market using 'Quercus Mongolicus', or Chinese oak. Word is that over two dozen European wineries have already taken delivery and one in Washington. It is said that the barrels give a smoky character to the wine, along with low tannins, an exotic nose and creamy mouthfeel – in some cases users have said there's a toasty, almost bacon-like, quality. I guess we wait and see if any of our Canadian winemakers jump on this bandwagon.

**To all California Wine Lovers, You Have Been Warned ...** Estimates say that California's 2008 harvest is down by at least 20% from 2007's harvest, the grapes most affected are Chardonnay and Pinot Noir – if this is indeed true (numbers have yet to be finalized) consumers will likely see a rise in prices for California wine in the near future.

**Now this is Ballsy ...** A new book by Serbian born chef Ljubomir Erovic just might have you doing a protective crotch grab. [Cooking with Balls](#), dubbed as the first testicle recipe book, includes such delicacies as testicle pizza, battered testicles and barbequed testicles with giblets, using sets from stallions, ostriches, bulls, pigs and turkeys. Erovic states that "all testicles can be eaten – except human, of course." I don't think this kind of warning would stop an angry girlfriend with a kitchen knife though. Ouch.

**Whatcha' Drinking Bill? Oh Just Some Crappy French Wine ...** One of the newest wines to emerge from the Languedoc region of France is called "Vin de Merde" (poop wine) which was successfully launched to great publicity earlier this year, and is now almost completely sold out. A blend of Syrah and Grenache this wine was put out to draw attention to the great wines being made in this once jug-wine region – only 5000 bottles were release and this shit just flew off the shelf.

**The Lizard Becomes Watery ...** For those fans of Palandri wines, you'll be glad to know that they have changed their name to "3 Oceans Wine"; a name derived from the fact that Australia is surrounded by three oceans: Indian, Pacific and Southern.

**Get 'em a PET for Christmas ...** Beaujolais Nouveau from Boisset this year will be shipped and sold in plastic PET bottles under screwcap – it really is the perfect vessel for this early drinking wine and it reduces shipping costs significantly, the folks at Boisset tell us. They also claim that we should also see a reduction in the sale price of these wines. Boisset produces Beaujolais Nouveau under the Mommessin and Bouchard Aine & Fils labels.

**Hard Times Means More Booze ...** If I were a gambling man I would put every dime into booze at this time. A recession might be just around the corner, but in tough times people turn to booze (they turn to booze in good times too – proving that booze is in fashion 24/7 – 365 days a year). The U.S. experienced it's 14th year of consecutive gains in the wine consumption department with a 3.2% bump in 2007.

**There's a New Club in Town ...** Jamie Kennedy Restaurants has teamed up with wine club Sommelier Service to bring a new choice for wine lovers in Ontario. Jamie Drummond, sommelier for JK Restaurants, tastes his way through an array of submitted wines, not currently available at the LCBO (consignment only for now), he then grades them on a scale of 1-to-10 and only the top tier

wines will make it to the club's wine list. The club's wine matching software does the rest – matching your palate preferences with the wines Jamie picked. For more information visit [www.sommelierservice.com](http://www.sommelierservice.com).

**They Came to My Door So I Tasted Them ...** I get the occasional delivery of non-VQA wines to my door, just like any other wine I taste and evaluate them – here are three of my recommendations from those wines:

*Giovello Prosecco* (\$14.95 - #85316) – This Italian sparkling wine is fresh and lively, good apple and citrus on the nose with an apple sweetness on the tongue. Pleasant and refreshing.

*Dog House 2004 Maxie's Merlot* (\$13.95 – #614156) – typical Cali-Merlot that's jammy with red fruit and berries, a bit of barrel spice and some chocolate notes also help this wine along. It's a Merlot to chill and enjoy; and you won't break the bank to do so.

*Drostdy-Hof 2007 Chardonnay* (\$9.65 - #343202) – speaking of inexpensive sippers to chill and enjoy, this one from South Africa, for under ten bucks, hits the mark; it's quite appealing with tropical, melon and a kiss of vanilla.



### **Wine Event Spotlight:** *Taste the Season in Niagara-on-the-Lake*

One of my favourite events has come around again, **Niagara-on-the-Lake's Taste the Season** (see reviews: 2006 & 2007). The 18 participating wineries, pair up food of the season with their matching wines and offer up a delicious weekend of tasting and touring. It takes place on all 5 weekends in November and the cost of tickets is a mere \$40 – you also get a collectible holiday ornament as a keepsake of the event. Make a weekend of it, book some accommodations ... it's a beautiful time to be in wine country. See the [Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake](http://Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake) website for details.

**Winners, Winners We Have Winners ...** Leon Meslin (Mississauga), Daryl Sider (Jordan), Evelyn Truty (Hamilton), Mike Gilechuk (Ajax), John Crawley (St. Catharines), Barry Wylie (Oakville), Catharine Karlo (Whitby), Scott Ryan (Cambridge), Shabnam Khosrowshahi (Toronto), Susan Davis-Bailey (London), Peter Leich (Toronto) and Tim McClure (Fonthill) are all headed to the [Gourmet Food and Wine Expo](http://Gourmet Food and Wine Expo) this November 21-23 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre. Will you be there?

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**OntarioWineReview's** bi-weekly newsletter is devoted to the love, enjoyment and promotion of the wines of Ontario and the wineries that make them.



**What can the Grape Guy do for you ...** Michael Pinkus (Grape Guy) provides a variety of wine related services that you might be interested in taking advantage of: he gives lectures, leads seminars, conducts tastings, sets up tours; consults, selects and judges. He also gives interviews, broadcasts, podcasts and writes. [Contact the Grape Guy if you require any of these services or have any questions](http://Contact the Grape Guy if you require any of these services or have any questions).



**Psst, Pass It On ...** keep the good wine flowing. Forward this newsletter to your mom in Mimico your uncle in Uxbridge, your great aunt in Grand Bend or any other family member or loved one that you know needs good wine advice.

To contact us with feedback, article ideas, comments, concerns or questions – email [michael@ontariowinereview.com](mailto:michael@ontariowinereview.com). We look forward to hearing from you!

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