

2012
MERLOT
CABERNET FRANC

Le grande réserve

Winemaker's Notes

If, like us, you have a weakness for the 'grand vins' of the Right Bank ('rive droite') made primarily of Merlot, the Domaine Queylus Merlot-Cabernet Franc 'Grande Réserve' 2012 echoes that style, but with the typical fruit and exuberance of Niagara wines! Although Labeled 'Niagara, this wine is a 'Single-Vineyard' from our Estate vineyard in the Lincoln Lakeshore VQA sub-appellation in Beamsville.

The Grande Réserve is, very simply, a blend of the very best barrels of the very best cuvées in the cellar, pulled together after trials undertaken to assemble the most elegant, harmonious, complex and ageable wine possible from the incredible 2012 vintage...

The Merlot brings its intense, plummy, brooding, cocoa-laced fruit to the table, while the Cabernet Franc is all about finesse: perfectly ripe and perfumed, it dances on the palate, adding yet another layer of complexity. Here at Domaine Queylus, we are all lovers of the finesse of Pinot Noir, and it is perhaps for this reason that we also have a weakness for the 'softer' of the Bordeaux varieties, those blended from Merlot & Cabernet Franc. In these wines, we find a perfume and finesse less evident in the other, later maturing Bordeaux varieties.

Our 2012 Grande Réserve is a 'meditation wine' to sip slowly at the end of an evening, to watch carefully mature in you cellar for several years.

The 2012 Season in Niagara

Late winter and spring 2012 were warmer and drier than normal, and the crop was already maturing ahead of schedule by the end of June. The weather continued to be hot and dry throughout the summer - the daytime high temperature surpassed 30 C on 17 days, nearly three times the normal amount! This hot weather meant that the grapes ripened a few weeks ahead of most years, and the sanitary condition of the grapes was very nearly perfect going into harvest. The 2012 vintage has already showed itself to be a great one for Domaine Queylus, which, through a combination of vineyard management and attention to detail during the gentle vinification and élevage in barrel, has enabled us to make slightly richer yet still-classic wines from perfectly-ripe grapes.

Domaine Queylus : Terroir and Viticulture

All three of our vineyards are planted on silty-clay, limestone-laced soils, with sand occurring at the northern end of the vineyards. The proportions of these elements – perhaps unsurprisingly – vary enormously from plot to plot – and even within certain parcels. These variations imbue the resulting wines with structure, complexity, finesse and minerality. Each vineyard is cared for by hand, including pruning; shoot-thinning; shoot positioning; leaf-pulling; green-harvest (when necessary, depending on the vintage) and not forgetting the hand-harvesting of the entire crop. The vines are grown organically (uncertified) out of respect for the precious, fragile soils of the Niagara Bench (to preserve this legacy and heritage for future generations) and its Terroir (and to have it sing out in our vines). No synthetic herbicides or insecticides are ever used, and, as of colourchange (véraison) all of the vines are covered with nets to protect the low-yielding vines... Vine Training: Guyot pruning, single and double, depending on the terroir and vigour.

Density of plantation : Domaine Queylus is planted very tightly for the New World – this high density per hectare produces competition among the vines, forces the roots downwards – not laterally - and encourages them to 'pump' a maximum of terroir into the grapes: from 5 000 - 5 250 plants per hectare (2 160 - 2 134 plants per acre).

Vinification and Barrel-ageing (Élevage)

Upon arriving at Domaine Queylus, the grape bunches are manually sorted on a 3 metre vibrating table, then completely destemmed and never crushed – even the Bordeaux varieties. We believe that destemming makes for more terroir-specific wines. After a short cold maceration, we let the tanks warm up and the naturally-occurring indigenous yeast from the vineyard slowly start the fermentation. (We believe indigenous yeasts make 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/weeks more to fully delicately extract all the aromas, finesse and complexity possible from the grape skins, before pressing gently to separate the new wine from the grape skins. The wine then naturally goes through malolactic fermentation, usually by the spring following the harvest. The wine is then 'élevé' – patiently aged - in selected French oak barrels (about a third of which are new) for 16 to 20 months (according to the needs of the particular cuvée and or vintage). About a third of the wine is aged in New French oak made by coopers we have hand-selected over the years

for their finesse and commitment to quality. The wood comes uniquely from forests in the northeast of France; known for their tight grain and subtlety of perfume: Allier, Nevers, Bertranges, Bourgogne, Châtillon and Vosges. These barrels (which are made of wood that has been air-dried for three years) are made uniquely by the Burgundian cooperages of Sirugue, Cadus, Damy, Dargaud & Jaegle, Séguin-Moreau & Billon. To ensure that the terroir is at the forefront of the wine, two-thirds of the cuvée is aged in used barrels from one to four years old. After bottling, the wines are aged a further 6-12 months to develop perfume and round out the velvety mouthfeel.

Bottling: the 30th of May, 2014.

Alcohol by volume: 13,5 %

Retail price: \$49.95

Code : 000000000

Total production: 491 cases (of six)

Ageing potential: drink within 4-12 years following the harvest