

And delicious new "Les Villages 2021"  
Pinot Noir and Chardonnay releases

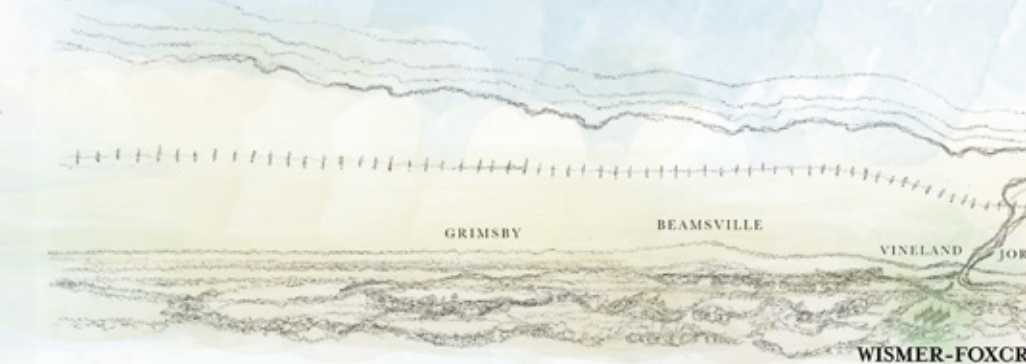
MAY 2ND, 2023

A COOL TIME FOR  
*Niagara* **GAMAY NOIR**

  
**BACHELDER**

MAPPING NIAGARA. ONE VINEYARD AT A TIME.

THE 'LA VIOLETTE' OFFERING



# A Cool Time for Ni

## OUR SINGLE-VINEYARDS 'NIAGARA CRUS'

GAMAY NOIR IS FINALLY COOL, SO FEW PLACES IN THE COOLER PARTS OF THE NEW WORLD EVEN TRY THEIR HANDS AT THIS GRAPE, AND YET IT IS SO EXPRESSIVE OF PLACE!

The cooler 2021 provided us wines just as we love them: wines of freshness, verve, and varietal correctness. All of these wines have a red-fruited nose, a rich, silky mouthfeel, and razor-sharp minerality. As always, we make low intervention wines in micro lots. We vary the ferments by trying different percentages of whole cluster and perfectly round destemmed berries — all in an effort to find the best expression of terroir, whole cluster, and of course the vintage!

As with all Bachelder wines, we favour the use of wild yeast, minimum sulphur addition — only at completion of malolactic, and long élevage in neutral oak barrels the better to reveal terroir and let the wines fall clear, so that only minimal filtration is needed. All the Gamays were aged in a combination of neutral Burgundian 228L French oak barrels and neutral French oak 500L puncheons, which give great freshness and varietal accuracy.

### THE LA VIOLETTE RELEASE 2023

As we continue our vinous journey of discovering and mapping the terroirs of Niagara through our single vineyards, we find ourselves suddenly having arrived at our sixth vintage of Bachelder Gamay Noir with the release of these 2021s! How Fantastic! Looking back now, we are very happy that we decided to include this noble grape variety in our portfolio.

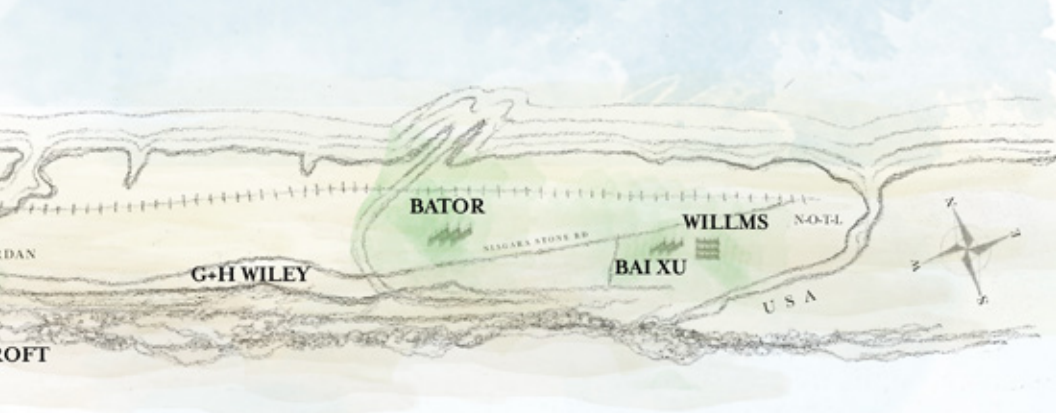
With every release of our wines from this terroir-revealing grape, we are struck anew at how beautifully this grape — this lushly perfumed, mineral, pleasantly-acidic, medium-bodied, Burgundian grape variety — delivers the varying truths of Niagara's glacial till terroir. And this 2021 vintage is no exception.

With this La Violette release, we are now up to eight different cuvées of our single-vineyard Niagara Cru Gamay Noirs, as well as our Les Villages blends. (And, in December, we'll be releasing slightly different versions of three of these wines in magnum — all from 500L neutral puncheons.)



### LES VILLAGES

While we are all waiting for the single-vineyard Chardonnay and Pinot Noir releases this fall, we are thrilled to offer the Les Villages reserve-level wines. This year, both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay have a Niagara-on-the-Lake and a Bench expression.



# Niagara Gamay Noir

## AND BLENDS OF VQA GAMAY NOIR

### THE BACHELDER LABEL REDESIGN

New Labels: why? We wanted to get the vineyards front and centre — with a flourish! So, we leaned into this most agreeable task with the goal of first branding 'place' and secondly, sensitizing wine lovers as to its importance! We trust and hope that you will like the European flourish, and artful minimalism of our labels.

### WE ASKED OUR DESIGNER, LAURA WILLS OF MESSENGER, TO DESCRIBE HER DESIGN PROCESS:

The two most important questions I ask whenever I start a design project are, "What's the story we need to tell, and what's the right voice to tell it in?" If you've ever met Thomas Bachelder, you'll know that he has stories aplenty!

Bachelder has an unmistakable main storyline, and my imagination was really captured by how wine writer John Szabo put it — something along the lines of, "Thomas is on a monk's mission to map out the Niagara Peninsula with Burgundian-like precision." The more I talked with Thomas, the more layers I could add to that description of the monk — an insatiably curious mind, an enthusiastic explorer, an ambassador for the local, a bon vivant, a mad genius. This was going to be FUN.

We began with the wine labels for the spring La Violette release, and our conversation quickly turned to the traditional Burgundian systems of Cru and Villages wines, and Thomas, who is Burgundy-trained, explained how he was using that approach to explore winemaking in Niagara. It's a conversation about geography and terroir, how a particular micro-region can express itself as a collected whole (Les Villages) and how a single vineyard can have its own characteristics to reveal — right down to a small block within a family vineyard.

The obvious thread we ran with through all of the newly redesigned Bachelder labels was using MAPS (one of my all-time favourite art forms) to help set the stage for each series — seen prominently on the front of Les Villages for example, with hand-drawn regional maps by local artist Shelley Szczucki. And then to honour the individual single vineyard stories, we decided to put a stake in the ground and called the series Niagara Cru. Taking design cues from traditional structures of Burgundian wine labels (they have RULES!), we used a classic tiered typography system with gorgeous calligraphy that makes each vineyard's name the main event, and uniquely recognizable within the series. Each vineyard's position is marked on a minimalist map on the back label.

You'll see more of the Mapping of Niagara concepts as we continue to release the other newly redesigned Bachelder labels. It's been a joy and an honour to work with Thomas and Mary on bringing these new designs to life.





A WORD FROM THE WINEMAKER

# 2021 *Harvest Report*

## **VARIABLE WEATHER, BUT WINES OF BALANCE AND ELEGANCE**

Record-setting highs coupled with periodic droughts: sporadic but heavy summer and fall rainfall and humidity – when one looks at the year in the rear-view mirror, 2021 was epitomised by variable weather!

This warm, dry spring saw a slightly earlier than average bud break, leading the peninsula into an earlier-than-usual bloom period. The warm, dry summer weather continued, suggesting we would be looking at a very early, low-yielding harvest. However, a couple of big rains in August pushed crop levels higher, with cluster weights rising dramatically. The heavy / frequent rain continued through harvest, with just enough intermittent sun to ripen the early Burgundian varieties (Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Gamay Noir) to attractive levels. Yes, for some vineyards – especially the heavily-cropped ones – it was a race against time to get them picked and sorted during the sunny breaks, but in general, the brix and acid were only slightly diluted with the rains, and the resulting wines had beautifully-plush fruit, lower alcohols, yet with trademark Niagara acidity and minerality! A very useful, classic-tasting vintage!

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

2021 was evidence of the old saying: the vintage is made from September 1st-on; don't let a great summer lure you into complacency!

The Chardonnays are quite classic: a 'pretty' pure, floral-fruited year with great savoury minerality and solid acidity. The young, still-mute wines are in bottle but portend a great future. Niagara's Chardonnays age well!

Pinot Noir & Gamay Noir: Ever since they were pressed off to barrel, the 2021 Burgundian reds have shown medium colour, surprisingly lovely floral perfumes and great mineral verve. Classic fruit aromas mingle with great firm minerality that will hold the wines as they age and improve.

# Table of Contents

Map & Introduction .....	2
A Note from the Winemaker: Vintage 2021.....	4
<b>A TRILOGY FROM THE BATOR VINEYARD</b>	
NIAGARA 'CRU' BATOR 'Single Vineyard' P.T.L.G. - "Passez Toutes les Grappes" Gamay Noir / Pinot Noir 2021 VQA Four Mile Creek.....	6
NIAGARA 'CRU' BATOR 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - 100% Destemmed VQA Four Mile Creek.....	8
NIAGARA 'CRU' BATOR 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - 20% Whole Cluster VQA Four Mile Creek.....	10
NIAGARA 'CRU' WILLMS 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - 55% Whole Cluster, Planted 1983/87, Vieilles Vignes VQA Four Mile Creek.....	12
NIAGARA 'CRU' WILLMS 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - PUNCHEON RÉSERVE in MAGNUMS- 55% Whole Cluster, Planted 1983/87, Vieilles Vignes VQA Four Mile Creek.....	14
NIAGARA 'CRU' BAI XU 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - 32% Whole Cluster; Planted 1981, Vieilles Vignes VQA Four Mile Creek.....	16
NIAGARA 'CRU' BAI XU 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - AMAZING PONZI SURVIVAL BARREL 32% Whole Cluster; Planted 1981, Vieilles Vignes VQA Four Mile Creek.....	18
NIAGARA 'CRU' BAI XU 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - PUNCHEON RÉSERVE in MAGNUMS - 32% Whole Cluster; Planted 1981, Vieilles Vignes VQA Four Mile Creek.....	20
NIAGARA 'CRU' WILEY 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - 100% Destemmed VQA SHORT HILLS BENCH .....	22
NIAGARA 'CRU' WISMER-FOXCROFT 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - 33% Whole Cluster VQA TWENTY-MILE BENCH.....	24
NIAGARA 'CRU' WISMER-FOXCROFT 'Single Vineyard' GAMAY NOIR 2021 - PUNCHEON RÉSERVE in MAGNUMS - 33% Whole Cluster VQA TWENTY-MILE BENCH .....	26
NIAGARA Chardonnay 2021 'Les Villages' "N.O.T.L." VQA N.O.T.L. ....	28
NIAGARA Chardonnay 2021 'Les Villages' "BENCH" VQA Niagara Escarpment.....	30
NIAGARA Pinot Noir 2021 'Les Villages' "N.O.T.L." VQA N.O.T.L.....	31
NIAGARA Pinot Noir 2021 'Les Villages' "BENCH" VQA Niagara Escarpment.....	32
How Gamay Noir is Vinified "Les Villages" GAMAY NOIR 2021 VQA NIAGARA PENINSULA ...	33
'TECHNIQUE AT THE SERVICE OF TERROIR': How Gamay Noir is Vinified.....	34
Thank-You's .....	



**BACHELDER**

NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Bator*

**GAMAY NOIR-PINOT NOIR**

P.T.L.G.

**2021**

PASSEZ  
TOUTES les  
GRAPPES

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA

## A TRILOGY FROM THE BATOR VINEYARD



### NIAGARA CRU BATOR SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR / PINOT NOIR 2021 P.T.L.G.

-"PASSEZ TOUTES LES GRAPPES" VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

#### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;

Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN NEUTRAL  
BARRELS (OLDER BUT CLEAN),  
FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE  
OF INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

#### SUB-APPELLATION:

VQA Four-Mile Creek

ASPECT: North-Facing with a  
slight incline towards the Lake.

DATE OF PLANTING: Gamay  
Noir: One acre planted 1998;  
One acre planted 2001; 0.35  
acres planted 2015. CLONE 509  
on 3309 rootstock WAS THE  
MAIN PLANTING (A clone that  
entav / inra calls balanced,  
aromatic and full-bodied wines),  
BUT A LARGE PART OF THE  
PARCEL ARE A FIELD-BLEND.

**PINOT NOIR:** 0.35 ACRES  
PLANTED IN 2003. 0.35 ACRES  
PLANTED IN 2014. All are Clone  
375 on so4 rootstock. 375 is a  
productive clone: Rusty Gaff-  
ney of www.Princeofpinot.com  
calls this clone CLONE 375.  
AVERAGE CLUSTER, COMPACT,  
SMALL TO AVERAGE BERRIES,  
QUALITY AROMA, ELEGANT AND  
SUPPLE, LIMITED AGEABILITY.  
entav / inra says it makes for  
supple and fruity red wines.  
The 2 -acre Chardonnay plot  
was planted in 2005 with clone  
76 on SO4 root stalk.

#### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

This classic Gamay Noir / Pinot Noir blend is the first wine in our Bator Vineyard Trilogy. With 2/3 Gamay Noir, the smaller 33% of Pinot Noir somehow still brings finesse, structure, and some greater ageing potential to the blend. A bright mineral nose with great aromatic intensity, a seductive strawberry nose, a chalky loveliness and a tight, angular yet suave and smooth-textured finish, it is a bird of a different feather. The P.T.L.G. reference means 'Passez Toutes les Grappes' or 'let all the Gamay and Pinot Grapes into the vat!' It is a nod to the 'P.T.G.', or 'Passe-tout-grain' of Burgundy! One of a pair of wines from 'Line Two,' along with the Willms vineyard, Bator is closer to the Welland canal, a few kilometres west of the Niagara Stone Road, whilst Willms is east of Stone Road, much closer to the Niagara River. It will likely be at its best from 2023-2026.

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Pinot-like: Rhubarb and Baby Strawberry nose, silky mouthfeel and slightly-grippy tannins on the finish.

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now - 2028

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2023-2026

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 0.2 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 26TH & 27TH OF SEPTEMBER 2021

Just 69 CASES PRODUCED

#### THE PARCEL

Located in the Four-Mile Creek sub-App, in the extreme west of the appellation... not far from the border of St. Catharines. The Lakeshore closest to the farm describes an irregular path heading North-east towards Old Town and the Niagara River, and the location of the Bator Vineyard is close enough to the lake to minimize the coldest parts of the winter, and benefit from cool air off the lake to slow bud break in spring, yet also far enough from the Lake to acquire enough heat units for complete ripening.

#### THE GROWER

The Bator family bought the 80-acre tender fruit and grape farm back in 1950, and had planted mixed fruit and labrusca grapes, then when Robert Bator met Doris Todd, they bought the farm from his parents in 1980, and planted the vineyard portion to vinifera and some French Hybrids.

#### SOIL COMPOSITION

The soil in the chardonnay is clay loam. The soils in the pinot noir and gamay are fine clay at the south end to sandy loam at the north end.



**BACHELDER**  
NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Bator*

**GAMAY NOIR**

2021 100%  
DESTEMMED

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA



## A TRILOGY FROM THE BATOR VINEYARD



# Bator Vineyard

## NIAGARA CRU BATOR SINGLE-VINEYARD

### GAMAY NOIR

100% DESTEMMED / ÉRAFLÉE VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

#### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;

Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN NEUTRAL  
BARRELS (OLDER BUT CLEAN),  
FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE  
OF INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

#### SUB-APPELLATION:

VQA Four-Mile Creek

ASPECT: North-Facing with a  
slight incline towards the Lake.

DATE OF PLANTING: Gamay  
Noir: One acre planted 1998;  
One acre planted 2001; 0.35  
acres planted 2015. CLONE 509  
on 3309 rootstock WAS THE  
MAIN PLANTING (A clone that  
entav / inra calls balanced,  
aromatic and full-bodied wines),  
BUT A LARGE PART OF THE  
PARCEL ARE A FIELD-BLEND.

**PINOT NOIR:** 0.35 ACRES  
PLANTED IN 2003. 0.35 ACRES  
PLANTED IN 2014. All are Clone  
375 on so4 rootstock. 375 is a  
productive clone: Rusty Gaffney  
of www.Princeofpinot.com  
calls this clone CLONE 375.  
AVERAGE CLUSTER, COMPACT,  
SMALL TO AVERAGE BERRIES,  
QUALITY AROMA, ELEGANT AND  
SUPPLE, LIMITED AGEABILITY.  
entav / inra says it makes for  
supple and fruity red wines.  
The 2-acre Chardonnay plot  
was planted in 2005 with clone  
76 on SO4 root stalk.

#### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

This Bator Gamay Noir is the second wine in our "Bator Vineyard Trilogy," and was completely destemmed at harvest (like a classic Pinot Noir fermentation), and this gives a wine that is finer, perhaps less 'Gamay,' less exuberant, and slightly more finely tannic. However, it is quite noble and fine, and goes very well at the table: one can put it in the cellar. One senses a lightness of being here; a larger berry spectrum with Pinot-like flavours, some blueberry nuances and vanilla cherries, with a long glycerine finish: much more focused than the 'Les Villages.' Tasted against the Whole Cluster version, you might think it bears more than a passing resemblance to Pinot, until you try the Bator P.T.L.G., which puts this wine into relief, showing really how much it DOES taste like Gamay. The wine is Step #1 for Pinot Lovers who want to try to learn to love Gamay Noir! It is one of our two 'Line Two Wines,' along with Willms, however Bator is closer to the Welland Canal, a few kilometres west of the Niagara Stone Road, while Willms is a few kilometres east towards the Niagara River. It will likely be at its best from 2023-2025.

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Marzipan nose, cherry cough drops on the mid-palate, choke cherry finish!

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now - 2028

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2023-2026

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 0.15 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 26TH & 27TH OF SEPTEMBER 2021

Just 45 CASES PRODUCED

#### THE PARCEL

Located in the Four-Mile Creek sub-App, in the extreme west of the appellation, not far from the border of St. Catharines. The Lakeshore closest to the farm describes an irregular path heading North-east towards Old Town and the Niagara River, and the location of the Bator Vineyard is close enough to the lake to minimize the coldest parts of the winter, and benefit from cool air off the lake to slow bud break in spring, yet also far enough from the Lake to acquire enough heat units for complete ripening.

#### THE GROWER

The Bator family bought the 80-acre tender fruit and grape farm back in 1950, and had planted mixed fruit and labrusca grapes, then when Robert Bator met Doris Todd, they bought the farm from his parents in 1980, and planted the vineyard portion to vinifera and some French Hybrids.

#### SOIL COMPOSITION

The soil in the chardonnay is clay loam. The soils in the pinot noir and gamay are fine clay at the south end to sandy loam at the north end.



BACHELDER

NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Bator*

GAMAY NOIR

20% WHOLE  
CLUSTER

2021

VIEILLES  
VIGNES

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA

## A TRILOGY FROM THE BATOR VINEYARD



### NIAGARA CRU BATOR SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR

- 20% WHOLE CLUSTER / GRAPPES ENTIÈRES

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

#### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN NEUTRAL  
BARRELS (OLDER BUT CLEAN),  
FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE  
OF INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

#### SUB-APPELLATION:

VQA Four-Mile Creek

ASPECT: North-Facing with a  
slight incline towards the Lake.

DATE OF PLANTING: Gamay  
Noir: One acre planted 1998;  
One acre planted 2001; 0.35  
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MAIN PLANTING (A clone that  
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PARCEL ARE A FIELD-BLEND.

**PINOT NOIR:** 0.35 ACRES  
PLANTED IN 2003. 0.35 ACRES  
PLANTED IN 2014. All are Clone  
375 on SO4 rootstock. 375 is a  
productive clone: Rusty Gaff-  
ney of [www.Princeofpinot.com](http://www.Princeofpinot.com)  
calls this clone CLONE 375.  
AVERAGE CLUSTER, COMPACT,  
SMALL TO AVERAGE BERRIES,  
QUALITY AROMA, ELEGANT AND  
SUPPLE, LIMITED AGEABILITY.  
entav / inra says it makes for  
supple and fruity red wines.  
The 2-acre Chardonnay plot  
was planted in 2005 with clone  
76 on SO4 root stalk.

#### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

This 20% Whole Cluster Bator is the last wine in our Trilogy from the Bator Vineyard. So different from the silkiness of Willms and Bi Xu: Bator, with just 20% of whole grape bunches added, makes us palpably feel the exuberant, slightly rough, tannic, lovely rich smoky rusty fruit complexity that hints at darker fruit than the wine above. A fatter, juicier mouthfeel here with a salty savouriness that comes through angular and chalky, these are the characteristics that first attracted me to the Bator Vineyard. This terroir is enhanced by the character that the use of whole Cluster brings to the fermentation, and they make for a haunting, cherried classic gamey Gamay feel in the wine: more ageable tannins here. One of our two 'Line Two Wines,' along with Willms, Bator is closer to the Welland Canal, a few kilometres west of the Niagara Stone Road, while Willms is a few kilometres east towards the Niagara River. It will likely be at its best from 2023-2026.

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Licorice nose, rich cherry-pit mouthfeel!

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now - 2030

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2023-2027

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 0.15 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 26TH & 27TH OF SEPTEMBER 2021

Just 48 CASES PRODUCED

#### THE PARCEL

Located in the Four-Mile Creek sub-App, in the extreme west of the appellation, not far from the border of St. Catharines. The Lakeshore closest to the farm describes an irregular path heading North-east towards Old Town and the Niagara River, and the location of the Bator Vineyard is close enough to the lake to minimize the coldest parts of the winter, and benefit from cool air off the lake to slow bud break in spring, yet also far enough from the Lake to acquire enough heat units for complete ripening.

#### THE GROWER

The Bator family bought the 80-acre tender fruit and grape farm back in 1950, and had planted mixed fruit and labrusca grapes, then when Robert Bator met Doris Todd, they bought the farm from his parents in 1980, and planted the vineyard portion to vinifera and some French Hybrids.

#### SOIL COMPOSITION

The soil in the chardonnay is clay loam. The soils in the pinot noir and gamay are fine clay at the south end to sandy loam at the north end.



**BACHELDER**

NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Willms*

**GAMAY NOIR**

55% WHOLE  
CLUSTER

2021

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA

1983  
PLANTING  
VIEILLES  
VIGNES



# Willms Vineyard



**NIAGARA CRU WILLMS, CUVÉE PARCELLAIRE,  
GAMAY NOIR, 55% GRAPPES ENTIÈRES**  
— PLANTÉ EN 1983-1987 (VIEILLES VIGNES),  
VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

## WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN TWICE;  
THRICE-USED AND NEUTRAL  
BARRELS, FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

## SUB-APPELLATION:

Four-Mile Creek  
VQA Chardonnay &  
Gamay Noir

DATE OF PLANTING: 1983

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
6.9 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 98M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 2M

ELEVATION OF OLD TOWN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE: 79M

## The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

One of our two 'Line Two Wines,' along with Bator, Willms is similar but different: with red and black, dark, beguiling, berried fruit and impressive weight, class, poise, and a clean, slatey finish! Is this, perhaps, the 'terroir of the vintage?' Planted in 1983, we have learned that we simply cannot push these older Gamay Noir vines to give something they can no longer give. Young, they gave a deep, dark, concentrated, more tannic wine; now, we make sure to never over-extract, we just let it be! Many find Willms absolutely thrilling, compelling! Why? The purity of the flavours, fine and silky? The old vines from 1983? The painstaking selection of only the best, most harmonious fûts for the Cru? Yes, to All!! It will likely be at its best from 2024-2027!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Pinot Like: Watermelon Nose; laser-focused beam of fruit on the mid-palate.

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now – 2032

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2024-2027

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.2 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 17TH OF OCTOBER 2021

Just 84 CASES PRODUCED

## THE PARCEL

This Chardonnay vineyard is right down near Old Town in NOTL, and is from the Four-Mile-Creek VQA, and was planted way back in 1983, when there was hardly any vinifera in Niagara! Both the Chardonnay (1983) and the Gamay Noir (1983 & 1987) are from old vines - the Willms Vineyard (which was called "Sandstone" in an earlier incarnation) is uniquely located between two bodies of water, some 6 km from the lake, and about 4 km from the Niagara River. It is a combo of silt, loamy-clay, gravel, limestone and sand."

## THE GROWER

Erv and Esther Willms bought the farm in 1981, which had been a cow field for a long time. Along with son Eric and daughter Rebecca, today they run the old-vines part of the farm, much of which was planted in 1983 and 1987. When the vineyard has just been cultivated, then followed by a rain, the dirt is washed off the stones, and they are clearly visible. Thus, they named the vineyard Sandstone, when they founded the original 13th St. Winery in 1998, in which the Willms were partners (at that time, on 13th Street in Louth), and the winery bought all their grapes under the vineyard name "Sandstone."

## SOIL COMPOSITION

Clay-loam till: a combo of silt, loamy-clay, gravel, limestone, and sand. The soil is not incredibly sandy, but with a cultivator works up as nicely as if it were sand. That said, the soils the 1983 Chardonnay is planted on are sandier than most: one can easily sink a shovel or a hoe into it. The rest of the vineyard has lots of stone and gravel.



BACHELDER

NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Willms*

GAMAY NOIR

55% WHOLE  
CLUSTER

2021

PUNCHEON  
RÉSERVE

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA

PUNCHEON RÉSERVE – MAGNUMS SEULEMENT  
– MIS EN MARCHÉ DÉCEMBRE 2023



# Willms Vineyard

NIAGARA CRU WILLMS SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR

- 55% WHOLE CLUSTER / GRAPPES ENTIÈRES,

— PLANTÉES EN 1983-1987, VIEILLES VIGNES

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

## WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN TWICE;  
THRICE-USED AND NEUTRAL  
BARRELS, FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

## SUB-APPELLATION:

Four-Mile Creek  
VQA Chardonnay &  
Gamay Noir

DATE OF PLANTING: 1983

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
6.9 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 98M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 2M

ELEVATION OF OLD TOWN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE: 79M

## The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

Compared to the 750ml version (above), that completely did its 16-month élevage in neutral 228L Burgundian barrels, this Willms PUNCHEON RÉSERVE seems more serious, more umami-laden; a darker, more seriously-deep fruit that shows bright, steely deep-fruited glycerine-textured flavours: 'How can this have more mouthfeel?' There is an impressive precision to the volume here! Finishes long, pure, and wet-stone-slatey; mineral, like a pebble plucked from a mountain creek in spring! This Magnum will likely be at its best from 2026-2032.

*\*surprising, because wines from neutral puncheons (500L) are often more focused, steely, mineral with less breadth that wine made in smaller cooperage (228L) with thinner staves.*

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Bright fruit in a focused beam...

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now – 2030

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2024-2028

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.2 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 17TH OF OCTOBER 2021

Just 22.8 CASES PRODUCED

## THE PARCEL

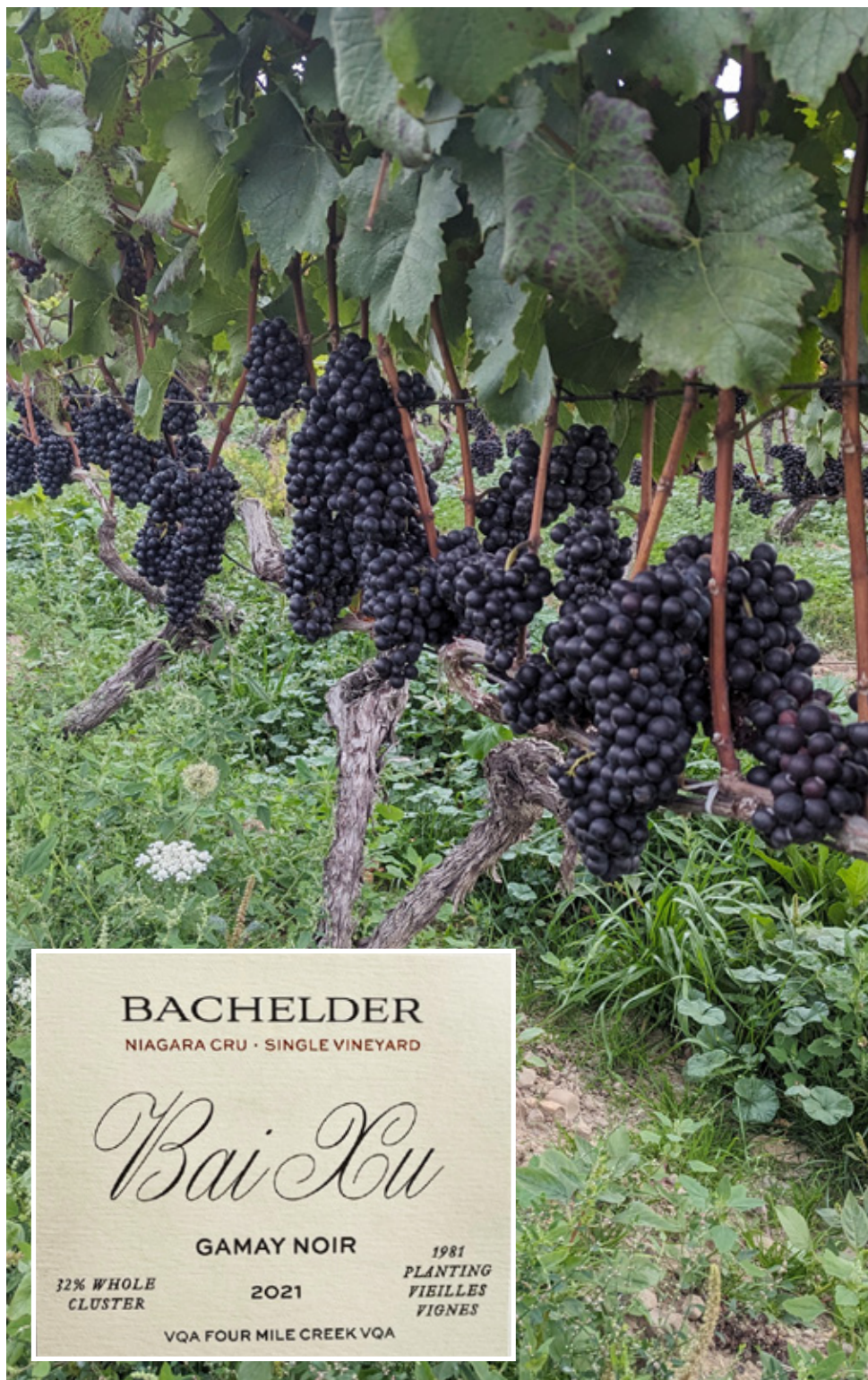
This Chardonnay vineyard is right down near Old Town in NOTL, and is from the Four-Mile-Creek VQA, and was planted way back in 1983, when there was hardly any vinifera in Niagara! Both the Chardonnay (1983) and the Gamay Noir (1983 & 1987) are from old vines - the Willms Vineyard (which was called "Sandstone" in an earlier incarnation) is uniquely located between two bodies of water, some 6 km from the lake, and about 4 km from the Niagara River. It is a combo of silt, loamy-clay, gravel, limestone and sand."

## THE GROWER

Erv and Esther Willms bought the farm in 1981, which had been a cow field for a long time. Along with son Eric and daughter Rebecca, today they run the old-vines part of the farm, much of which was planted in 1983 and 1987. When the vineyard has just been cultivated, then followed by a rain, the dirt is washed off the stones, and they are clearly visible. Thus, they named the vineyard Sandstone, when they founded the original 13th St. Winery in 1998, in which the Willms were partners (at that time, on 13th Street in Louth), and the winery bought all their grapes under the vineyard name "Sandstone."

## SOIL COMPOSITION

Clay-loam till: a combo of silt, loamy-clay, gravel, limestone, and sand. The soil is not incredibly sandy, but with a cultivator works up as nicely as if it were sand. That said, the soils the 1983 Chardonnay is planted on are sandier than most: one can easily sink a shovel or a hoe into it. The rest of the vineyard has lots of stone and gravel.



**BACHELDER**

NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Bai Xu*

**GAMAY NOIR**

32% WHOLE  
CLUSTER

**2021**

1981  
PLANTING  
VIEILLES  
FIGNES

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA



# Bai Xu Vineyard

## NIAGARA CRU BAI XU SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR

- 32% WHOLE CLUSTER / GRAPPES ENTIÈRES; PLANTÉ EN 1981,  
VIEILLES VIGNES VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN TWICE;  
THRICE-USED AND NEUTRAL  
BARRELS, FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

### SUB-APPELLATION:

Four-Mile Creek  
VQA Chardonnay &  
Gamay Noir

DATE OF PLANTING: 1981

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
6.9 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 98M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 2M

ELEVATION OF OLD TOWN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE: 79M

### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

One of the Seven Wonders of our cellar that shines so brightly, Bai Xu hails from the oldest vines we work with (1981) planted on Line Three in N.O.T.L. - The wines are cared for with great love by Jackson Bai (Xu Bai) himself. In the wine, we sense the calm purity and lightly-perfumed fruit of the immense viticultural effort that Jackson puts in. Instantly-recognizable as Gamay on the nose: at once light/deep; lithe/agile; elegant, perfumed/ reticent - this, SURELY, must be Bai Xu's moment!!!! Glassene, bright, rich, a deep, ripe-berried savoury volume, long and oh, so evanescently agreeable!! The old-vine flavours and mouthfeel reveal the clay and limestone tangy mineral terroir of the parcel. Drink it tonight with immense pleasure: drink it five years from now just to experience the pure complexity and joy this wine will doubtlessly bring us! It will likely be at its best from 2024-2028!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Bramble fruit nose; waves of dark fruit, tangy finish

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now - 2032

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2024-2028

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.2 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 21st of SEPTEMBER 2021

197 CASES PRODUCED

### THE PARCEL

The Bai Xu vineyard is one of the oldest vinifera plantings in the region: their Grape Grower number is 01!!!! - The Chardonnay and Gamay Noir vines are the oldest we have the pleasure to work with - 40 years-old at the 2021 Harvest!!!! The Byland Vineyard is located close to two major bodies of water, some 6 km from Lake Ontario, and about 4km from the Niagara River. The Chardonnay and Gamay are now old vines, and were planted at the same time circa 1981: The Chardonnay clone is 95, the Gamay clone is 358.

### THE GROWER

Jackson and Amy Bai are the newer owners (2015) of one of the oldest vineyards in Niagara, which was planted 40 years ago, back in 1981! Jackson left his former career to become a vigneron and proudly does all the vineyard hand work himself.

### SOIL COMPOSITION

The soil - very different from the neighbouring Willms vineyard is a mixture of sandy and loamy sediments over lacustrine clay with some silt, as well as limestone, with excellent moisture-holding properties, which help sustain the vines through the drier months of summer.



**BACHELDER**  
 NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Bai Lu*

**GAMAY NOIR**

32% WHOLE CLUSTER      2021      AMAZING PONZI BARREL

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA





# Bai Xu Vineyard

## NIAGARA CRU BAI XU AMAZING PONZI SURVIVAL BARREL SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR

32% WHOLE CLUSTER / GRAPPES ENTIÈRES; PLANTÉ EN 1981,  
VIEILLES VIGNES VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN TWICE;  
THRICE-USED AND NEUTRAL  
BARRELS, FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

### SUB-APPELLATION:

Four-Mile Creek  
VQA Chardonnay &  
Gamay Noir

DATE OF PLANTING: 1981

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
6.9 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 98M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 2M

ELEVATION OF OLD TOWN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE: 79M

*\*(Mary and I had been in Beaune,  
Burgundy at school in with Luisa  
Ponzi (of Oregon) ... and, years  
later, bought an old barrel from  
the Ponzi winery whilst Bachelder  
was still making wine in Oregon.  
Said barrel eventually ended up  
in Niagara - still clearly marked  
"Ponzi, Oregon!")*

### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

The barrel that bounced! Unloading stacks of four barrels at a time from the truck at the BatCave just after the barrels had been filled during harvest 2021, one of the aluminum racks succumbed to metal fatigue (see photo) and we lost two and a half barrels of precious Bai Xu 2021!!!! However, the Ponzi barrel\* essentially bounced a bit and hung on! But does that magic survival barrel actually taste different than our cuvée of chosen Bai Xu barrels??? JUDGE FOR YOURSELF: 'Purity; intense red & black fruit; more earthiness and more rich cherry liqueur volume & texture than the combined single-vineyard barrels, perhaps? Liquid silk, and a bitter almond/anis/amaro thing; a sense of 'feeling' that this wine, this barrel, parcel, the whole emotion of working with the terroir of this place is humbling.' It will likely be at its best from 2024-2029!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Intense fruit; earthy amaro and waves of texture

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now - 2032

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2024-2029

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.2 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 21st of SEPTEMBER 2021

25 CASES PRODUCED

### THE PARCEL

The Bai Xu vineyard is one of the oldest vinifera plantings in the region: their Grape Grower number is 01!!!! - The Chardonnay and Gamay Noir vines are the oldest we have the pleasure to work with - 40 years-old at the 2021 Harvest!!!! The Byland Vineyard is located close to two major bodies of water, some 6 km from Lake Ontario, and about 4km from the Niagara River. The Chardonnay and Gamay are now old vines, and were planted at the same time circa 1981: The Chardonnay clone is 95, the Gamay clone is 358.

### THE GROWER

Jackson and Amy Bai are the newer owners (2015) of one of the oldest vineyards in Niagara, which was planted 40 years ago, back in 1981! Jackson left his former career to become a vigneron and proudly does all the vineyard hand work himself.

### SOIL COMPOSITION

The soil - very different from the neighbouring Willms vineyard is a mixture of sandy and loamy sediments over lacustrine clay with some silt, as well as limestone, with excellent moisture-holding properties, which help sustain the vines through the drier months of summer.



**BACHELDER**  
NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Bai Xu*

**GAMAY NOIR**

32% WHOLE CLUSTER      2021      1981 PLANTING  
VIEILLES VIGNES

VQA FOUR MILE CREEK VQA



PUNCHEON RÉSERVE – MAGNUMS SEULEMENT  
– MIS EN MARCHÉ DÉCEMBRE 2023



# Bai Xu Vineyard

## NIAGARA CRU BAI XU SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR

- 32% WHOLE CLUSTER / GRAPPES ENTIÈRES; PLANTÉ EN 1981,  
VIEILLES VIGNES VQA FOUR MILE CREEK

### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN TWICE;  
THRICE-USED AND NEUTRAL  
BARRELS, FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

### SUB-APPELLATION:

Four-Mile Creek  
VQA Chardonnay &  
Gamay Noir

DATE OF PLANTING: 1981

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
6.9 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 98M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 2M

ELEVATION OF OLD TOWN  
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE: 79M

### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

Compared to the 750ml version (above), that completely did its 16-month élevage in neutral 228L Burgundian barrels, this Bai Xu PUNCHEON RÉSERVE has a gloss and an intense transparent purity that is remarkable and Haunting; but a finish that at once classy and intense, limestone steely, and so full of surprisingly-weighty\* fruit aromas! This Magnum will likely be at its best from 2026-2032.

*\*surprising, because wines from neutral puncheons (500L) are often more focused, tight, mineral with less breadth that wine made in smaller cooperage (228L) with thinner staves, and thus, wines tend to evolve more slowly in puncheons.*

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Liquorice 'Allsorts' nose; raspberry jam mouthfeel

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now – 2032

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2024-2028

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.2 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 21st of SEPTEMBER 2021

21 CASES PRODUCED

### THE PARCEL

The Bai Xu vineyard is one of the oldest vinifera plantings in the region: their Grape Grower number is 01!!!! - The Chardonnay and Gamay Noir vines are the oldest we have the pleasure to work with - 40 years-old at the 2021 Harvest!!!

The Byland Vineyard is located close to two major bodies of water, some 6 km from Lake Ontario, and about 4km from the Niagara River. The Chardonnay and Gamay are now old vines, and were planted at the same time circa 1981: The Chardonnay clone is 95, the Gamay clone is 358.

### THE GROWER

Jackson and Amy Bai are the newer owners (2015) of one of the oldest vineyards in Niagara, which was planted 40 years ago, back in 1981! Jackson left his former career to become a vigneron and proudly does all the vineyard hand work himself.

### SOIL COMPOSITION

The soil - very different from the neighbouring Willms vineyard is a mixture of sandy and loamy sediments over lacustrine clay with some silt, as well as limestone, with excellent moisture-holding properties, which help sustain the vines through the drier months of summer.



**BACHELDER**  
NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Wiley*

**GAMAY NOIR**

2021 *100%  
DESTEMMED*

VQA SHORT HILLS BENCH VQA





# Wiley Vineyard

NIAGARA CRU G&H WILEY SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR  
VENDANGE 100% DESTEMMED /  
ÉRAFLÉE VQA SHORT HILLS BENCH

## WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

16 MONTHS IN NEUTRAL  
BARRELS, FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED

## SUB-APPELLATION:

Short Hills Bench VQA  
DATE OF PLANTING: 1981

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
10.0 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 110M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 5M

## The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

This, our first 'Cru' from the G&H Wiley vineyard, was completely destemmed at harvest (like a classic Pinot Noir fermentation), and this gives a wine that is finer, deeper blue-fruited with perfumed, almost soap-scented violets. Perhaps, arguably, less 'Gamay,' less exuberant, and slightly more finely tannic, however noble and fine the flavour is. Clearly 'bloody,' flinty Bench, a lovely and deep slightly-vanillaed strawberry Italian 'Campino Candy' attack and a long & tight curious rusticity. A unique blend of Iron-like firmness and great viscous cherried plushness! "Clearly Bench\*!" ("in flavour).

**A WORD FROM MARY:** 'Purple Gummi Bear nose; rich plum pudding mid-palate'

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now - 2029

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2024-2027

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.1 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 29th of SEPTEMBER 2021

68 CASES PRODUCED

## THE PARCEL

Located at 8th Avenue and 1st Street Louth, in the South-eastern part of the Short Hills Bench, The Wiley farm is a classic example of Short Hills Bench terroir. Although it may appear fairly level to the eye, the vineyard actually has quite a discernable south to north slope.

## THE GROWER

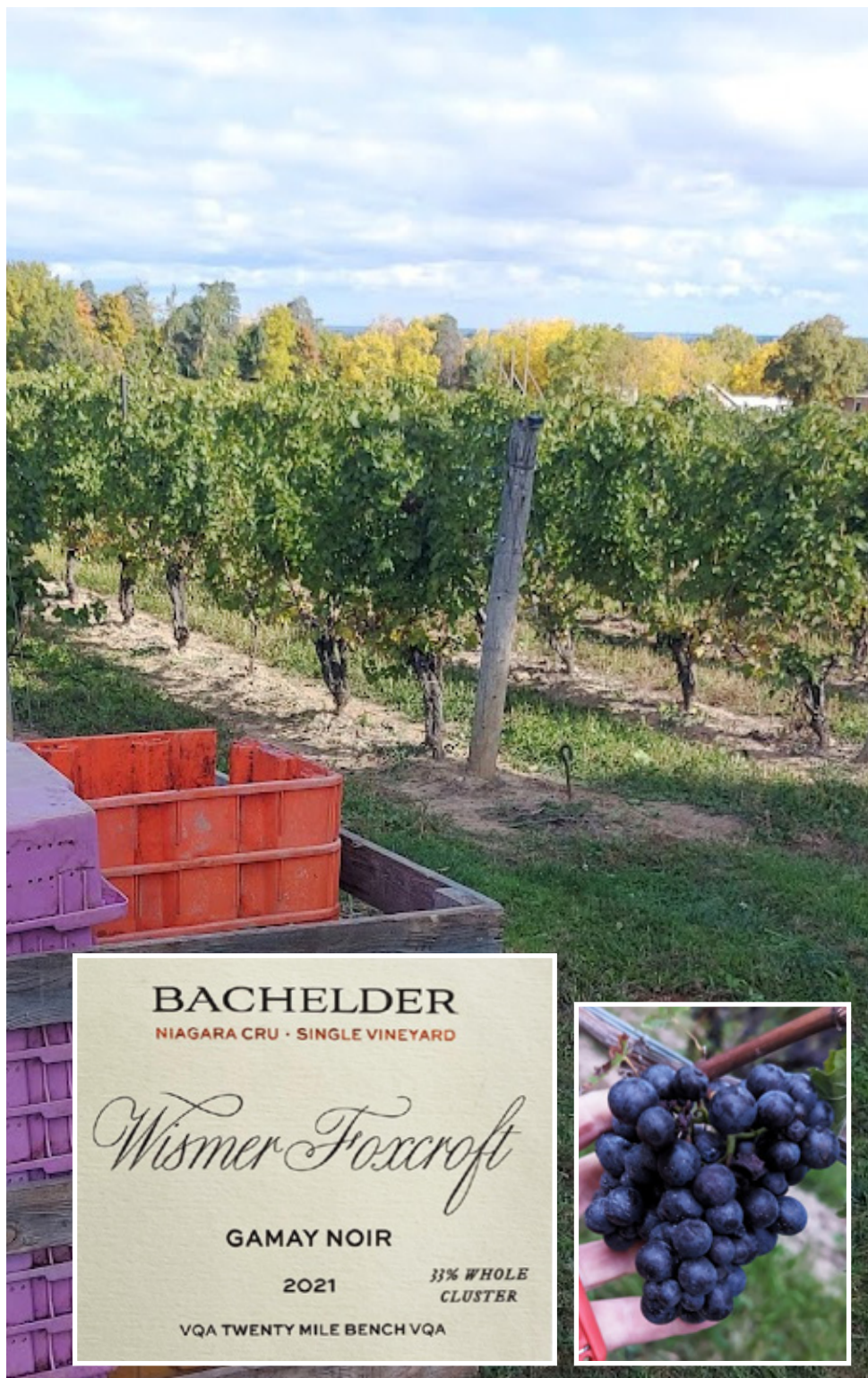
George Wiley has continued the grape growing business of his forefathers with his family in Louth Township. The parcel has been farmed in many different ways over the years, including sheep, dairy, and beef farming, as well as peach & pear orchard harvests.

Grapes, however, grapes have always been the main focus.

The Wiley family originally settled in St. Catharines in the late 1700's (initially as blacksmiths), however in the mid 1850's the first George Wiley purchased property in Louth Township and began the Wiley grape growing tradition that we know today, several generations on.

## SOIL COMPOSITION

Located in the southern part of the Short Hills Bench, the soils here vary over short distances, and are composed varying of water-stratified clay and silty clays with a brownish hue. Although clay and silt compose largely the upper layers of the soil, there is a fair bit of dolomitic limestone ('dolostone') in the soils, which adds a tangy minerality to the resulting wine, which usually has a rich fruit component, due to the deeper clay soils. The classic rustiness of the deep red flavours really feels like the western bench, it feels like there must be some magnesium oxide in these soils, despite the high clay, silt (even sand) content.



**BACHELDER**

NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Wismer Foxcroft*

**GAMAY NOIR**

**2021**

**33% WHOLE  
CLUSTER**

**VQA TWENTY MILE BENCH VQA**





# Wismer Foxcroft Vineyard

**NIAGARA CRU WISMER-FOXCROFT,  
GAMAY NOIR SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR**  
- 33% WHOLE CLUSTER / GRAPPES ENTIÈRES,  
VQA TWENTY MILE BENCH

## WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN NEUTRAL  
BARRELS (OLDER BUT CLEAN),  
FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED  
12,5% alc. / vol; RESIDUAL  
SUGAR 1,3 g/l

## SUB-APPELLATION:

Twenty-Mile Bench VQA  
CLONES IF APPLICABLE: GAMAY  
NOIR CLONE 358 (on two  
different rootstalks);  
CHARDONNAY CLONE 95

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
5,4 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 110M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 15M

HARVESTED 9TH  
OF OCTOBER 2021

## The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

This wine, vinified with 33% whole grape clusters, is the more closed (a 'low-talker' Fox!?), and the more structured of all our Gamay Noir 'Crus.' Incredible presence and verve: the 'Bench' speaks loudly here: More colour than the others, with more flinty dark fruit than red, and a deep umami mouthfeel – Iron? Rust? A curl of musky funk and deep, mixed forest-berry black fruit in the mouth; it possesses a finish that is slightly longer, with a more iron-like tannic, raw minerality. We find the use of 33% whole cluster speaks a little more clearly to us about its gravelly, iron-tinged magnesium oxide soil origins, and since the taste of the land is what we are all about, we are so happy to work with Wismer-Foxcroft – not least for the contrast it underlines between the Vineland Bench and the beautiful, more lush propositions coming out of the Niagara-on-the-Lake terroir parcels.

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Dark chocolate nose; luscious blackberry pie mid-palate.

**DRINKING PRIME:** Now – 2029

**BEST FRUIT WINDOW:** 2024-2027

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.3 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 9th of OCTOBER 2021

173 CASES PRODUCED

## THE PARCEL

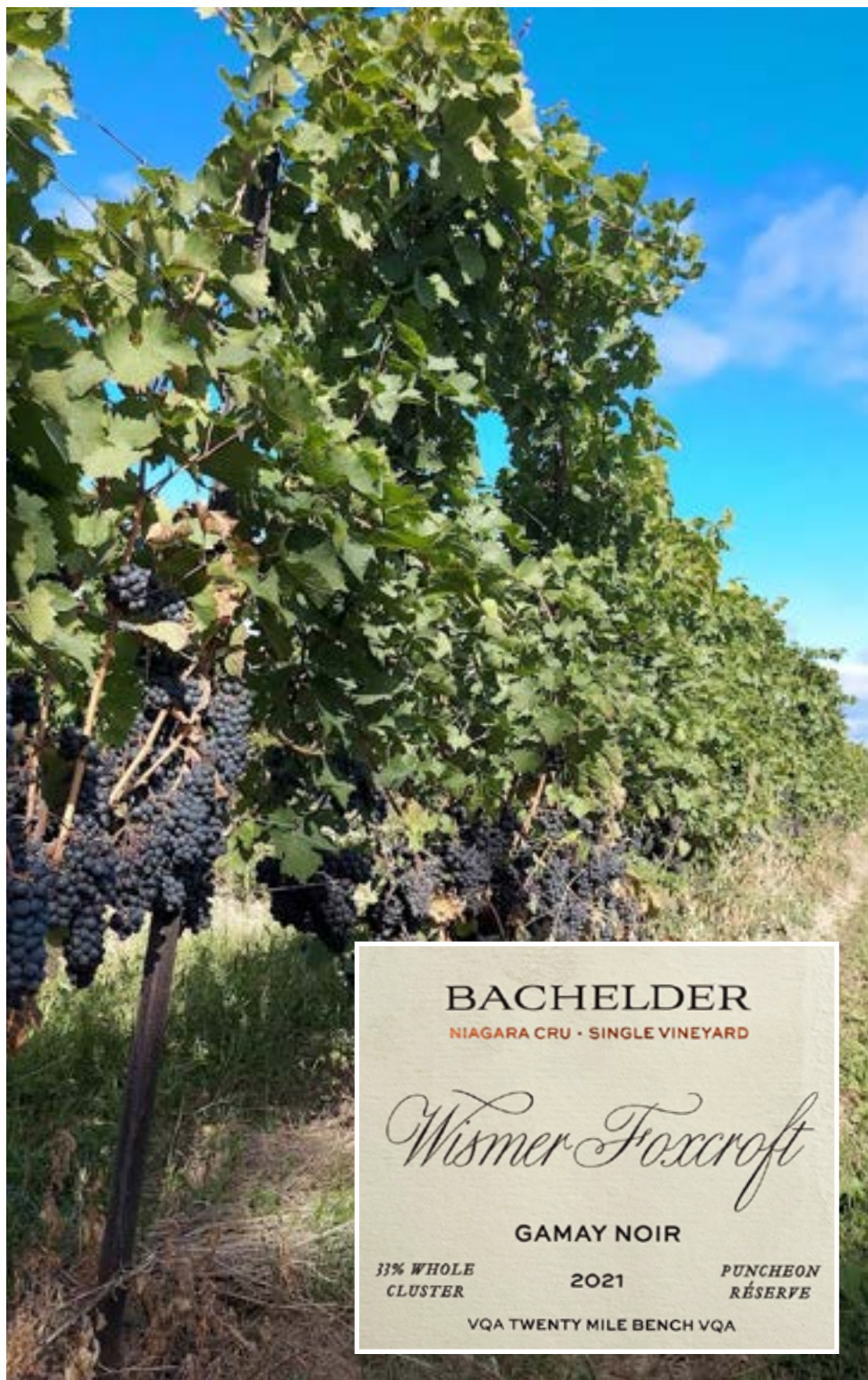
What is it about the soil here, on the Vineland Bench, that makes for wine with such a distinctive mineral tang – in both red and white Burgundian grapes?? Quickly becoming a reference vineyard for Niagara, with different versions of Wismer-Foxcroft Chardonnay, Gamay Noir, Riesling, and Cabernet Franc\* available from several local terroir-obsessed producers in any given vintage, the Wismer-Foxcroft Gamay vineyard is found just below (north) of our Chardonnay blocks. It is on a good incline, a stony-silty clay site laced with magnesium oxide and limestone site. (\*Bachelder makes no Riesling or Cabernet Franc!)

## THE GROWER

Now into the second generation, The Wismer family has been growing grapes on the Vineland Bench for 25+ years. Craig Wismer is a wine lover with a good palate, a man of passion and commitment, and he and I have been thick as thieves for years in our pursuit of understanding soils, terroirs, clones and viticulture.

## SOIL COMPOSITION

Reddish shallow Dolostone: magnesium-oxide and dolomitic limestone-influenced clay soils with a solid silt component. "Loamy textures over reddish clay/loam till."



BACHELDER

NIAGARA CRU • SINGLE VINEYARD

*Wismer Foxcroft*

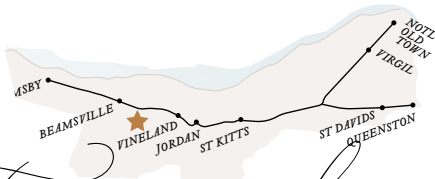
GAMAY NOIR

33% WHOLE  
CLUSTER

2021

PUNCHEON  
RÉSERVE

VQA TWENTY MILE BENCH VQA



# Wismer Foxcroft Vineyard

## NIAGARA CRU WISMER-FOXCROFT

### SINGLE-VINEYARD GAMAY NOIR

- 33% WHOLE CLUSTER / GRAPPES ENTIÈRES

VQA TWENTY MILE BENCH

#### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;

Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN NEUTRAL  
BARRELS (OLDER BUT CLEAN),  
FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY CLARIFIED  
12,5% alc. / vol; RESIDUAL  
SUGAR 1,3 g/l

#### SUB-APPELLATION:

Twenty-Mile Bench VQA  
CLONES IF APPLICABLE: GAMAY  
NOIR CLONE 358 (on two  
different rootstalks);  
CHARDONNAY CLONE 95

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
5.4 KM

ELEVATION AT TOP OF  
VINEYARD: 110M

METRES DIFFERENTIATION  
FROM TOP TO BOTTOM OF  
VINEYARD: 15M

HARVESTED 9TH  
OF OCTOBER 2021

#### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

Compared to the 750ml version (above), that completely did its 16-month élevage in neutral 228L Burgundian barrels, this Wismer-Foxcroft PUNCHEON RÉSERVE comes across as being much finer yet punchy, and more compelling roundness\*, and yet - more amazingly-slatey minerality! This Magnum will likely be at its best from 2026-2032.

*\*surprising, because wines from neutral puncheons (500L) are often more focused, tight, mineral with less breadth than wine made in smaller cooperage (228L) with thinner staves, and thus, wines tend to evolve more slowly in puncheons.*

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Delicious Loganberry pie!

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** BONE-DRY; LESS THAN 1.8 G/L

**HARVESTED:** 9th of OCTOBER 2021

JUST 25.5 CASES PRODUCED

#### THE PARCEL

What is it about the soil here, on the Vineland Bench, that makes for wine with such a distinctive mineral tang - in both red and white Burgundian grapes?? Quickly becoming a reference vineyard for Niagara, with different versions of Wismer-Foxcroft Chardonnay, Gamay Noir, Riesling, and Cabernet Franc\* available from several local terroir-obsessed producers in any given vintage, the Wismer-Foxcroft Gamay vineyard is found just below (north) of our Chardonnay blocks. It is on a good incline, a stony-silty clay site laced with magnesium oxide and limestone site. (*\*Bachelder makes no Riesling or Cabernet Franc!*)

#### THE GROWER

Now into the second generation, The Wismer family has been growing grapes on the Vineland Bench for 25+ years. Craig Wismer is a wine lover with a good palate, a man of passion and commitment, and he and I have been thick as thieves for years in our pursuit of understanding soils, terroirs, clones and viticulture.

#### SOIL COMPOSITION

Reddish shallow Dolostone: magnesium-oxide and dolomitic limestone-influenced clay soils with a solid silt component. "Loamy textures over reddish clay/loam till."

# Les Villages

## NIAGARA CHARDONNAY 2021 'LES VILLAGES' N.O.T.L. VQA NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN 15% NEW OAK  
BARRELS, THEN TWICE AND  
THRICE USED AND THE  
REMAINDER NEUTRAL (OLDER  
BUT CLEAN), FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

### SUB-APPELLATION:

VQA NIAGARA-ON-  
THE-LAKE N.O.T.L

A CONSIDERED,  
CAREFUL BLEND OF THREE  
DIFFERENT SITES

VARIOUS SOIL TYPES IN N.O.T.L  
PRIMARILY CLAY, LACUSTRINE  
CLAY, SILT, DOLOMITIC  
LIMESTONE, SOME SAND

CLONES IF APPLICABLE:  
See individual vineyards.

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
FROM 6.5 TO 14 KM, FROM  
4 TO 7.7 KM FROM  
NIAGARA RIVER

PLANTING YEARS:  
1981-2005

ELEVATION:  
VARIOUS, FROM 80M TO 95m

### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

#### TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

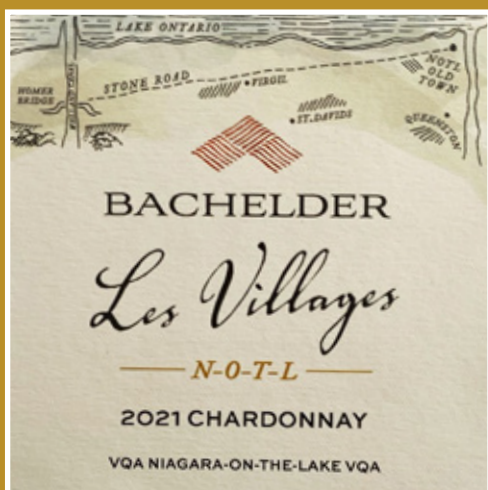
These two Les Villages cuvées offer a rare opportunity to see how similar and yet how different the Chardonnays from N.O.T.L. and the Bench can be, made by the same producer, using the same techniques and cellaring. Straight off on the nose we perceive (with great joy) the classic N.O.T.L. Chardonnay hallmarks of very fine aromas of white flowers, white peach, and yellow July plums, all poised to deliver a crisp, clean message: honied yet dry slately minerals and a crisp, refreshing, complex, cool finish that has some lovely notes of marzipan & minty basil. This wine is a revelation to me: there is a surprising delicacy of terroir about this wine: creamy vanillaed notes of citrus and NOTL white peaches: silky-rich, even a bit exotic, but dead-dry with a spicy but savoury minerality, tight but not stony. One might even call this a 'N.O.T.L. Chardonnay for lovers of Bench wines!' (The Willms, Bator, and Bai Xu parcels make up this complex blend.) It will likely be at its best from 2023-2025!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** White peach, estragon with tilleul and White Flowers. Almost oily, 'Gewurzy' (Contributed by our daughter, Violette!)

RESIDUAL SUGAR:: 2.1 G/L

HARVESTED: 5th-17th OF OCTOBER 2021

186 CASES PRODUCED



# Les Villages

## NIAGARA CHARDONNAY 2021 'LES VILLAGES' BENCH

### VQA NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

#### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN 15% NEW OAK  
BARRELS, THEN TWICE AND  
THRICE USED AND THE  
REMAINDER NEUTRAL (OLDER  
BUT CLEAN), FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

#### SUB-APPELLATION:

VQA NIAGARA ESCARPMENT  
BENCH

A CONSIDERED, CAREFUL  
BLEND OF FIVE DIFFERENT  
SITES/CUVÉES

VARIOUS SOIL TYPES,  
PRIMARILY CLAY, DOLOMITIC  
LIMESTONE, MAGNESIUM  
OXIDE, SILT

CLONES IF APPLICABLE:  
See individual vineyards.

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
FROM 3,25 TO 6,9 KILOMETRES

PLANTING YEARS:  
1990 TO 1999

ELEVATION:  
VARIOUS, FROM 120M TO 169M

#### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

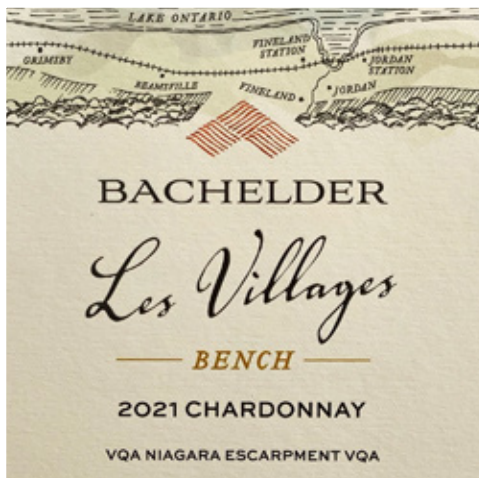
TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

How does one recognise a Chardo from the Bench? You can smell the effortless minerality in this wine peeking through the fruit before ever tasting a drop! These two Les Villages cuvées offer a rare opportunity to see how similar and yet how different the Chardonnays from the Bench and N.O.T.L can be, made by the same producer, using the same techniques and cellar-ing. A seamless, expansive, glassene nose that speaks of the texture to come : pear nectar and seaside aromas intermingle with green apple, vanilla bean and lemon curd flavours. A 'low-tide' feel, with a lemon-spiked, briny sensibility and a great, chalky stoniness on the long finish! This wine presents like the great, rich, saline-tinted, mineral terroir Chardonnays that we all know and love! (The parcels of Saunders, Wingfield Ouest & Est, Foxcroft Sud & Nord are all here.) It will likely be at its best between 2023-2026!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** shades of pear and lemon deke below the sea-spray of the palpable sea air saltiness! Mineral on the floral nose with a hint of anise!

**RESIDUAL SUGAR:** 13,5 % ALC/VOL; RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1,8 G/L

**HARVESTED:** FROM 28th OF SEPTEMBER TO 20TH OF OCTOBER 2021  
338 CASES PRODUCED



# Les Villages

## NIAGARA PINOT NOIR 2021 'LES VILLAGES' N.O.T.L VQA NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE

### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN 15% NEW OAK  
BARRELS, THEN TWICE AND  
THRICE USED AND THE  
REMAINDER NEUTRAL (OLDER  
BUT CLEAN), FROM BURGUNDIAN  
COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

### SUB-APPELLATION:

VQA NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE  
N.O.T.L

A CONSIDERED, CAREFUL  
BLEND OF FOUR DIFFERENT  
PARCELS

VARIOUS SOIL TYPES IN N.O.T.L  
PRIMARILY CLAY, LACUSTRINE  
CLAY, SILT, DOLOMITIC LIME-  
STONE, SOME SAND

CLONES IF APPLICABLE:  
See individual vineyards.

DISTANCE FROM 3 TO 13  
KILOMETRES, FROM 5 TO 7,7 KM  
FROM NIAGARA RIVER

PLANTING YEARS:  
1981-2005

ELEVATION:  
VARIOUS, FROM 90M  
TO 115m

**The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.**

### TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

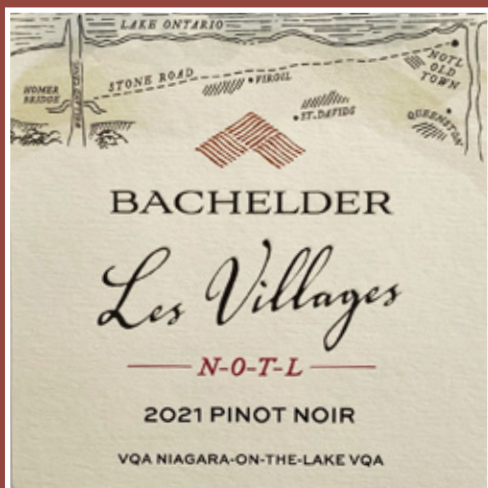
These two Les Villages cuvées offer a rare opportunity to see how similar and yet how different the terroirs from N.O.T.L and the Bench can be, made by the same producer, using the same techniques and cellaring. Our FIRST Pinot Noir 'Les Villages' from N.O.T.L - it is a most curious and delicious 'assemblage' - a blend of Bator P.N. (from the classic Four Mile Creek Appellation) - tightened-up with the subtle flavours of the Niagara-on-the-lake 'Bench' - precisely, the chalky flavours of the three different plots of the Lowrey vineyard (from the St. David's Bench Appellation, which is not currently allowed to be a component in the 'Escarpment' appellation). So, here we are: 'Deep red plums and mixed red berries - even dead-ripe, tiny forest strawberries - with a hint of watermelon, cherry liqueur and anise - rounded out by a long and sultry finish. Soft, dry, delicate, and yet with great 'core' strength' - WATCH THIS WINE! It will likely be at its best from 2024-2027!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** On the nose: raspberry mint; follows through with luscious, chalky fruit in the mid-palate. Rhubarb compote in the mouth!

RESIDUAL SUGAR: 1,3 G/L ; 12 % ALC/VOL;

HARVESTED: 21ST SEPTEMBER - 20th OF OCTOBER 2021

141 CASES PRODUCED



# Les Villages

## NIAGARA PINOT NOIR 'LES VILLAGES' BENCH 2021

### VQA NIAGARA ESCARPMENT

#### WINE DETAILS

INDIGENOUS YEAST FERMENT;  
Indigenous Malolactic 100%

17 MONTHS IN 20% NEW OAK  
BARRELS, THEN TWICE AND  
THRICE USED, AND THE 50%  
REMAINDER NEUTRAL (OLDER  
BUT CLEAN), FROM BURGUNDI-  
AN COOPERS, & FORESTS

RACKED TO TANK BY GRAVITY /  
UNDER PRESSURE OF  
INERT GAS

MINIMALLY  
CLARIFIED

#### SUB-APPELLATION:

VQA NIAGARA  
ESCARPMENT or BENCH

A CONSIDERED, CAREFUL  
BLEND OF SEVEN DIFFERENT  
SITES / CUVÉES

VARIOUS SOIL TYPES ON THE  
VINELAND, SHORT HILLS  
& BEAMSVILLE BENCH.  
PRIMARILY CLAY, DOLOMITIC  
LIMESTONE, SILT, SOME SAND  
IN BEAMSVILLE.

CLONES IF APPLICABLE:  
See individual vineyards.

DISTANCE FROM LAKE ONTARIO:  
FROM 3,25 TO 6km

PLANTING YEARS:  
1999-2014

ELEVATION:  
VARIOUS, FROM 110M  
TO 150m

#### The LA VIOLETTE RELEASE, MAY 2ND, 2023.

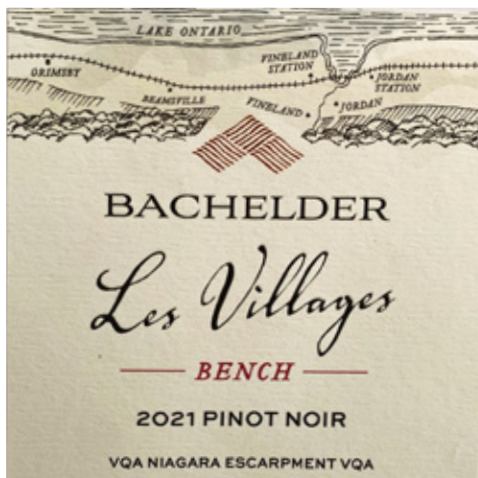
#### TASTING NOTE UPON RELEASE OF WINE AT 18 MONTHS OLD.

These two Les Villages cuvées offer a rare opportunity to see how similar and yet how different the terroirs from N.O.T.L and the Bench can be, made by the same producer, using the same techniques and cellaring. When the 2021 single-vineyards are released later this year (1st of November 2023), this wine will rival them for its complexity, drinkability, and even its ageability! Made from Seven 100% Bench vineyards on the Escarpment in Vineland and Beamsville, the impossibly complex bouquet darts between violets, classy, perfumed raspberries, and darker blue cherry-pit amaro fruit. On the palate, we have intensely-fruity, iron-tinged mineral flavours with notes of anis, and it finishes long and slately-clean, with even a hint of cherried vanilla. From the single-vineyards of Hanck, Wismer-Parke, Wismer-Parke Wild West-End, Saunders, and BeamCity (3 parcels), it delivers the goods we have been waiting for: the rich, hauntingly-complex, and limestone-mineral flavours of the bench! It may be at its best from 2024-2029!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Cranberry, cherry nose with a silky-smooth luscious fruit. Animal, more mineral-driven, a pretty austerity.

**RESIDUAL SUGAR:** 1,4 G/L ; 12,5 % ALC/VOL

**HARVESTED:** FROM SEPTEMBER 21st TO October 17th, 2021.  
722 CASES PRODUCED



## OUR SINGLE-VINEYARDS (NIAGARA CRUS) AND BLENDS OF VQA GAMAY NOIR

# Les Villages

### GAMAY NOIR 2021 VQA NIAGARA PENINSULA

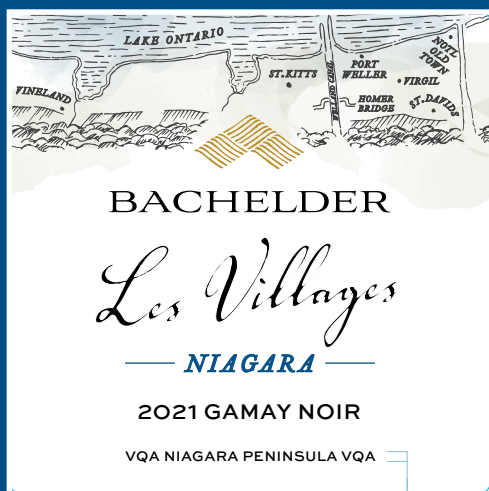
A deft blend (read: "obsessed-over") of Gamay Noir parcels from single-vineyard origins, with the expression of the terroir of 'All-Niagara' as its goal... this wine leads us on a dizzy dance, combining the deep ripe fruit and silky tannins of N.O.T.L. (Niagara-on-the-Lake) with the delicate mulberry perfume and limestone angularity of the best 'Bench' (Escarpment) vineyard fruit. With the 2021 vintage, we sense a deep, cherried, cranberried, minty-dark, almost peppery, juicy-fruited, stewed rhubarb limestone, yet with darker, mysterious, earthy bloody austerity of the Bench fruit: brooding, likely only be at best from 2024 -2027!!! Wismer-Foxcroft; Bai Xu; Bator; Willms and now Wiley... all these great terroirs and treatments have found their place in this wine that so effortlessly marries balance - and a slatey minerality - blurring the line between easy drinkability and ageability!

**A WORD FROM MARY:** Deep red fruit with a red lipstick nose and creamy trifle with vanillaed blueberries! Dead-Dry, Delicious!

**GLUCOSE/FRUCTOSE:** 1.1 G/L; 12.5 % ALC/VOL

**HARVESTED:** From 22nd of September to 20th of October 2021  
(Longest Spread of any Varietal)

491 CASES PRODUCED



# Technique at the Service of Terroir

## —HOW GAMAY NOIR IS VINIFIED

### TERROIR

#### THOUGHTS ON BEAUJOLAIS AND NIAGARA GAMAY NOIR

Great Beaujolais tastes well, uniquely like Beaujolais, like no other Gamay Noir terroir in this world! TSB

Here I sit, ruminating in the writing of the La Violette Terroir catalogue for the 2021\* vintage, and I wonder: 'How much further is Niagara down the road in our understanding of our Gamay Noir terroirs, and our potential niche in a world where Niagara is arguably the Sole wine region outside of our beloved Beaujolais 'betting the farm' on Gamay Noir?

Yes, Niagara has substantial plantings of Gamay Noir, and we are planting more of the grape every year. (but dare we admit that our region is starting to specialize in this grape?)

#### A BLIND TASTING

So, let's start to parse this out: As I write, here I have before me two 2021 Beaujolais Crus<sup>1</sup>; and two of Bachelder's 2021 Niagara 'Crus'<sup>2</sup> from this release. So, four wines await me in glass.



<sup>1</sup> (Brouilly and Morgon 'Les Meurgers'), and, also,

<sup>2</sup> (Willms 1983 planting, and Bai Xu 1981 planting 'Amazing P.B.', both from the Four-Mile Creek VQA)

My goal here was Not to try to 'benchmark' our wines against Beaujolais here – merely trying to understand the commonality – but also the differences between the two regions. Differences of soil, place, terroir, and – equally – vinification techniques).

**GLASS #1** \_ Dark deep ruby colour; the nose has enticing, concentrated, lightly-tarry (reduction?) red and black macerated fruit, black currant, maybe even red currants, and minty cranberries. – seems a little leafy on the pleasingly higher-acid finish – just a touch of stemmy green after a thick, viscous mid-mouthfeel. Will be a more satisfying after a year or two more in the cellar. On Day #2 of being open, the wine is more 'put together', this is a big lesson in 'attentive tasting' for me! **THE REVEAL:** Brouilly

**GLASS #2**\_ Nearly as deep in colour, however here it feels like a wine's nose is more muted, that the dense fruit has been affected by more carbonic maceration on the nose, could this have more whole cluster? Despite that, the black fruit here gives way to thrilling red fruit more readily, seems more balanced a wine, and the mouthfeel is at once rich and taut, a deep-berried, mulberry-deft wine that really grabs me, already feel this is likely to be the fave of the tasting! Softer, more plush, but also more focused.

**THE REVEAL:** Morgon, I love the class and the Kirsch / cherry flavours!

**GLASS #3**\_ A gorgeous mid-deep-red, with less of a purplish tinge than the other two, that is already a clue that we are in Niagara, we just don't get those Beaujolais hues. Despite this, the nose has a glassene pomegranate and spiced-plum strawberry leaf purity that makes the high whole-cluster component (55%!!!) seem less evident. This wine is dense with black fruit that dances with the red. An alluring musky perfume! Excitingly-pure and focused in the mouth, mineral. Very black-curranty-but-not-green finish is quite long.

**THE REVEAL:** Willms. So, 55% whole cluster, but – blind – I cannot see it!

**GLASS #4**\_ A deeper ruby here that presents an alluring, Beaujolais-style nose: could this be more Whole Cluster than wine #3? Rhubarb-cherries, raspberry tea-leaf. Here the wine has tightly-knit fruit that wraps around a fleshy, expressive core!

**THE REVEAL:** Bai Xu, but it has LESS whole cluster than #3!



### CONCLUSIONS:

Despite starting my career as a wine journalist, I confess that I am not an excellent 'Blind Taster,' but here, I did well! Why? Well, perhaps because the BoJos have Everything and Nothing in common with the Niagara Gamay Noir wines! This little blind exercise is inconclusive because I cannot see the link between the two regions yet all four wines are clearly from the Gamay Noir grape! If anything (and, still yet to be really explored), the flavours on the palate are more similar than those on the nose! So, for the moment, we must concede and conclude that these regions are similar, but very, very different – and happily so: both Beaujolais and Niagara have a real identity! One might also put forward the thought that, today, today some of Cru Beaujolais vigneronns might have a heavier hand in winemaking than they used to. In some cases, concentration seems to be prized over having a deft touch. 2021 is not a warm year, and yet – here at least – it is quite extracted.

\*Thankfully, for our purposes, a delightfully cool and classic vintage in both regions.

Niagara! Can one really make Gamay without Granite? and can we possibly understand the terroir the grape transmits the way the Beaujolais do?

Conversely, must one use 100% destemmed berries if one wishes to make Pinot Noir that speaks clearly of its terroirs? That can be true, but how many winemakers in Burgundy or elsewhere like to use 'a few whole bunches' in their Pinot ferments? Many!

How many Beaujolais do 100% destemmed ferments with their Gamay, just like their cousins up north with their Pinot wines in Burgundy? Certainly, not a majority, but many!

So, if people are availing themselves of both techniques with both grapes, wherein lies the road to terroir, other than the place, the soil?

Well, if the GOAL is transparency of intent; transparency of winemaking and élevage; in striving to understand

the flavour of the site, and not just having a goal of making a "good wine," then we are all, 'Pilgrims on the road to Gamay!'

Nobody wants to make Gamay in their own country whilst constantly referring to Beaujolais. But Beaujolais came first, and, as such merits some serious consideration when your heart finds that it turns towards Gamay Noir.

Confession: I have always loved BoJo, and Mary and I first visited shortly after our honeymoon, and, as it turns out, that was but a year before going to wine school a couple of hours north in Beaune, Burgundy.

*P.S.: The Beaujolais Crus are some of my favourite wines in the world! "Drink them! Put them in your cellar the way you would a good Pinot!" Alternatively, find a good Beaujolais-Villages (these may be made from a small producers' single-vineyard, may also be a region-wide blend). These are some of the French wines whose best terroirs have remained affordable. Support them when you can find a good bottle in the LCBO... or elsewhere. Québec's SAQ has an especially-good selection.*

## TIME

NIAGARA SOILS AND HOW WE DISCOVER TERROIR VS, TECHNIQUE

"The Gamay Noir à Jus Blanc shows race or breed when planted on a granitic base, and this is not repeated when the soil becomes more chalky, for instance. Gamay grown on granite with clay topsoil also changes character with age, and can take on Pinot Noir Characteristics that are quite astonishing,"<sup>2</sup> Serena Sutcliffe

Well, we don't have any granite to speak of in Niagara... and yet the region makes great Gamay Noir. "What can this mean?" To me it means that we have to write our own playbook on Gamay – decide what our dolomitic limestone, clay and silt terroirs mean... what sense of place they evoke in the wine!

Remember this: it's the Beaujolais Crus that are mostly planted on granite, whereas some of the Beaujolais-Vil-



lages I love best are planted on sedimentary soils that include Limestone ("Les Pierres Dorées" – formerly referred to as the "Bas-Beaujolais," are a yellowish-brown Lower Jurassic limestone)

We'll leave our thoughts on Beaujolais with another quote from James Wilson that says much about Terroir being evoked outside the Crus – and this might just also apply to Ontario: "Nevertheless, the variable soil conditions of Bas-Beaujolais are offset to a large extent by the vigour of Gamay."

So, Vigour factors into Terroir. Hmmm...

Time, too, factors into terroir in a couple of ways.

Firstly, it takes time to suss out the terroir of a Gamay vineyard. Before vinifying the grapes of a certain parcel, can we first taste a bottle someone else has made from that same vineyard? If not, how do we figure out how to work with a Gamay vineyard we have never worked with before, which has never made a single-vineyard before? Perhaps we have made a single-vineyard Chardo or Pinot Noir from that same vineyard? If so, there could be some clues there.

Otherwise...we can try to listen to the land by:

- Getting into the vineyard in summer, before harvest, tasting the grapes – what are they like? How do they compare with other vineyards? Taste the juice as the grapes go to tank before fermentation. Is the juice ripe, green, iron-like, mineral, overripe, richly-juicy? Vinify that lot in consequence, go for the flavours you believe are unique to that vineyard: whether they are your favourite flavours or not, it is likely they need to be showcased if the individuality of the vineyard is to shine through in the wine at release.
- Time: before you bottle the wine, taste the next harvest in the field. Is it the same as you remember? Can you see new flavours because you now know the wine from the year previous?

## TIME AND NEUTRAL BARRELS

Time and Élevage: How do we try to figure out the terroir

that comes with time alone? Neutral barrels and Gamay Noir and taking the Time to let the wine round out in the presence of micro-oxygenation via the porosity of the cooperage. Consider Bigger-format barrels (500l and more) for the way they preserve the intense freshness and mineral purity of the wine... Many Beaujolais and New-World winemakers like to bottle their Gamays before the next vintage; we like 16-17 months *élevage* (in neutral oak containers of varying sizes) to express terroir and not just fruit! Aside from the dirt bringing the sense of place, we like to try to be patient and make sure we are allowing time and oxygenation to help with the transparency of expressing terroir! As the youthful aromas calm down into bouquet, we find the Gamay more noble, more subtle, more complex, concentrated and expressive in its minerality on the finish. Don't worry, it still won't suddenly become a Pinot!

## TECHNIQUE

### THE GENERAL TECHNIQUES OF GAMAY NOIR VINIFICATION

We want to understand the Gamay Terroirs in Niagara, and make them palpable. We want to make wines that are immediately delicious young but will display even more "sense of place" as they age... So it behooves us to look at what they do over in greater Burgundy: there are a bunch of ways they ferment in Beaujolais, but for those of us interested in serious, ageable, 'sense of place'-style Gamay, let's focus on just a couple: The 'Sémi-Macération Carbonique' and the 'Vendange Égrappée à 100%' (The others: Thermovinification (used largely for the least-expensive wines made from Gamay) and Macération Carbonique (used to make quick-release 'Nouveau-style' and entry-level wines), and so are outside our scope here. (\*100% destemmed grape bunches)

### SÉMI-CARBONIC MACERATION

The most traditional way of making wine in Beaujolais

(and elsewhere) consists of a so-called semi-carbonic maceration where the harvest comes in hand-picked, but a varying percentage goes in the vat as whole bunches, and some percentage of that undergoes some destemming, aiming to extract throughout the vatting time the polyphenols contained in the skins, but also in the stalks. Punching down, pumping over and 'rack and return' are methods of extraction used both to break down the cap (which has formed naturally at the top of the vat through action of CO<sub>2</sub>, like bread dough rising), but also to promote flavour and colour extraction; here one judges the frequency of interventions according to one's knowledge of the terroir of the parcel; the structure that one desires in the wine (again based on one's knowledge of the terroir). The overarching principle here is maturity: knowing the phenolic (real) maturity of the grapes (vintage effect). Indeed, if there is a gap between the alcoholic maturity and the phenolic maturity (say, the greenness of the stalks, for example), one runs the risk of giving herbaceous/vegetal flavors to the wine by extracting green tannins. Temperature also has a very important role on the nature of the compounds extracted, and on the eventual structure of the wine produced.

However, this is to a greater or lesser extent mitigated by the bunches that stay whole throughout fermentation and only finally releases their rich, low-tannic wine when put into the press after ferment. Their role is paramount.

In Beaujolais, the belief is that the greatest wines for laying down are ones made by Semi-Carbonic Maceration. However, in difficult seasons excellent viticulture is needed, to be sure one brings a ripe and healthy harvest into the winery, (we are dealing with whole bunches here), so as not to extract undesirable elements.

## 100% DESTEMMED HARVEST

The other favoured method for fermenting Gamay is the 100% destemmed harvest (also called "Burgundy-style vinification"), not the most widespread in Beaujolais, but very much on the increase. As its name suggests, no stalks go into the vat, just the individual berries themselves, and therefore no tannins from the stalks are extracted. In years when there is a gap in maturity between berries and bunches or when the bunches are damaged (hail), 100% destemming tends to help avoid herbaceous flavours and dry, unripe tannins. This technique gives us wines that tend to be silkier, less rustic, and for some, easier to drink young. With 100% Destemmed harvest, one can also think of doing an extended maceration, as there is less risk of extracting the "harder, greener" tannins. This technique produces wines that sometimes lack the elegance and complexity of whole-cluster wines... and sometimes have a silky complexity that is equally ageable. Fascinating!!!

With a tip of the hat to Laurent Chenier of [www.Beaujoloire.fr](http://www.Beaujoloire.fr), and Christina Rasmussen of [Littlewine.co](http://Littlewine.co) for their ideas and concise expression of the concepts of fermentation, extraction. I have interwoven them into my own thoughts and beliefs, paraphrasing them as I wrote.

## WHICH OF THESE TECHNIQUES DOES BACHELDER USE?

Most of the time: Sémi-Maceration Carbonique. (Semi-Carbonic Maceration).

## EXPERIMENTATION WITH WHOLE CLUSTER TO UNDERSTAND 'PLACE.'

Whole cluster at the service of terroir, and not just for flavour and/or effect. How much Whole Cluster does it take to bring forward the particular nature of a vineyard, of that vineyard in a particular vintage? Especially when one doesn't know the vineyard. Experimentation, starting with a 'Gut-Feel' that comes from experience and tasting the grapes.

## INDIGENOUS YEASTS = SENSE OF PLACE

Lastly, but importantly: Buying packaged yeast is a good way to avoid sleepless nights, but it is not the best way to express local terroir. Better to use the yeasts that grew on the skins of the grape IN your vineyard IN that summer in question. Only they will bring maximum nuance, depth, texture, excitement, variability, complexity (and yes, sometimes, sleepless nights!) :D )

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- James E. Wilson. Terroir: The Role of Geology, Climate, and Culture in the Making of French Wines. 1998 (Buy this book unseen if you are interested in terroir.. it will likely change your life!)
- Laurent CHENIER <https://www.beaujoloire.fr/actualites/79-comment-sont-vinifiees-les-vins-du-beaujolais.html> (Laurent CHENIER is a passionate and informed writer and reseller of Beaujolais.)
- LittleWine: Daniela Pillhofer & Christina Rasmussen (writer) started a great UK online company reselling wine and offering an E-Zine with informative education and great articles penned by Christina. <https://littlewine.co/blogs/editorial/beaujolais-wine-region-gamay-granite-gobelet>

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BACHELDER

MAPPING NIAGARA. ONE VINEYARD AT A TIME.