



Written by
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18 Aug 2009

Closson Chase and Le Clos Jordanne



From £15.94, Can\$26.35, €20

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[Find Le Clos Jordanne](#)

Quite unintentionally, this seems to be evolving into a Canada Week, what with yesterday's [Canadian con contd](#), my tasting notes on almost 100 wines from British Columbia in the far west of the country planned for Thursday, and extended *FT* article on the Okanagan Valley to be published on Saturday in Free for all.

Just to demonstrate, after yesterday's onslaught, that I am not anti-Canadian, I am highlighting arguably the two finest producers in Ontario as my wines of the week.

First, Deborah Paskus of **Closson Chase**, a relatively new outfit in a very new and exciting wine region, Prince Edward County, where Closson Chase is now far from the only producer but is certainly the most impressive to have come my way. Vines were first planted here in 1999, in shallow soils on fractured limestone, thus dictating Burgundian varieties Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

Vines have been planted on a slope leading down to the north shore of Lake Ontario, thus benefiting from the warming *lake effect* despite the high latitude and extremely continental climate. In fact, the winter of 2004/5 was so cold and there was such damage that vines are now routinely, painstakingly and expensively banked up every winter and released from their protective mound in the spring. But the limestone really does seem to have brought something special to the Chardonnays in particular, which seem to be outstanding by any measure. There's a highly successful unoaked Chablis style called Sans Chêne as well as regrettably small volumes of an oak-aged bottling. We have served them blind to wine professionals with top white burgundies and, quite literally, amazed and astounded our friends. This is perhaps not so surprising as Deborah Paskus established such a track record for top Chardonnay in Niagara, where some of the grapes were sourced for early Closson Chase vintages before the Prince Edward County vines matured.

Don't ask me what's going on in the picture of Paskus, taken by Clay Stang for Air Canada's *EnRoute* magazine, but do be aware that Closson Chase is an exciting private enterprise, one of whose major investors is Seaton McLean, formerly of Alliance Atlantis Communications, who made a big fuss *here in the Financial Post* a few months back about the iniquities of Canadian wine labelling regulations. (Go, Seaton!)

Closson Chase's Pinot Noir is more of a work in progress but the Ontario Pinot producer I have found to be most impressive is **Le Clos Jordanne**, owned by the giant Canadian Vincor company and Jean-Charles Boisset of Burgundy (rumoured to be about to make his own Alliance Atlantis with Gina Gallo). Le Clos Jordanne's talented ex-Oregon winemaker is **Thomas Bachelder**, born in Montreal. Bachelder was back in Oregon at the recent IPNC and here are my notes on his wines, a vintage on from some of those currently in circulation:

Le Clos Jordanne, Claystone Terrace Chardonnay 2006 Niagara Peninsula 17 Drink 2010-15

Very minerally and stone fruity. Chewy stuff - so different from the average North American Chardonnay! Dry finish. Just enough juice. Long. 13.5%

Le Clos Jordanne, Village Reserve Pinot Noir 2007 Niagara Peninsula 17 Drink 2010-13
Drought year - exceptional. Yet it tastes lighter than most in this context [of Oregon Pinot Noirs]. Fresh and refreshing in fact! 13.5%

Le Clos Jordanne, Le Grand Clos Pinot Noir 2007 Niagara Peninsula 16.5 Drink 2010-14
Dark crimson. Very deep. Black cherry. Quite extreme for Canada! Almost hot! Should certainly cause a stir in Toronto for its extreme ripeness, although I found the Village Reserve more to my personal taste. 13.3%

Le Clos Jordanne is pretty well distributed, with wine-searcher.com finding listings in the UK (via importers Liberty Wines), Germany and of course Canada - though the wines do not seem to be available across the border in the US.

Finding Closson Chase wines is altogether more complicated. They were listed by the LCBO, the Ontario monopoly, but they seem to have sold out, not surprisingly. The only option currently seems to be to put yourself on their mailing list [here](#). I am assured they have more than 1,000 cases in stock.

But, I assure you, the wines are truly eye opening, especially for the great majority of wine lovers who think that all Canada is good for is Icewine.