



Getting a handle on Megalomaniac. LEFT: Lakeview Cellars.

“Riesling is a winter-hardy grape with good cold resistance,” says Sébastien Jacquey, vice-president of winemaking and vineyards operations. “We make the **Narcissist Riesling** from grapes planted in 1996, from the Weis 21 Clone, which **Megalomaniac** owner John Howard imported from Germany. Our site at the top of the Escarpment has good air flow, and the site is warmed in the winter and cooled in the summer. But it’s still important to understand the challenges as well as the advantages of our macro-climate and make the right adjustments in the vineyard – do we need to leave the leaves to shelter the grapes or de-leaf to expose the fruit more? Niagara has more extremes than Europe; we have to stay on top of the grapes to be sure that we keep the balance in the wines.”

The grapes for the **Château des Charmes Brut Sparkling** are sourced from vines planted in 1995. “These mature vines give us great fruit,” says Amélie Boury, vice-president of winemaking and operations. “The site is protected by the Escarpment, which shields the grapes from the cold and makes the site just a little warmer with low humidity. This is good because it helps with disease pressure and is good for ripening.” These factors are important to Amélie and her team as they look for “pristine grapes. We hand-harvest and select carefully. We try for a 50-50 split between the Pinot and the Chardonnay, and though some years we have to have a little more of one or the other, conditions in our vineyard help us keep the wine consistent.”

The **G. Marquis** wines were created to honour Magnotta’s founder, Gabe Magnotta, who passed away in 2009. “He was an inspiration to me,” says winemaker Peter Rotar. “It was important to celebrate him. So this meant choosing one of the best vineyards to make the best wines.” The site selected was the former Stone Road Vineyard, now called G. Marquis. “It was planted in 1994 and is very good for **Pinot Noir**. We have to take what the vineyard gives us, and Pinot Noir is very sensitive, but the temperatures here are usually 2-3°C lower than in other sites. We ferment in stainless steel and then age the wine for six months in stainless and three months in oak. We do this because we want to keep the freshness and balance of the wine. It is quality first – this is to honour Gabe. I always tell people to look closely at the label; it tells the story of Gabe’s life.”

“The **Vidal** for our Icewine comes from the Four Mile Creek area,” Scott McGregor, winemaker at **Lakeview Cellars**, explains. “The moderating effect of the lake means that we can pick much later than other areas, which is good because the fruit has longer to develop on the vine, but it is also a risk.” Icewine requires consistent temperatures of -8°C before the grapes can be harvested, with -10 to -12°C being optimal. “In 2018, we harvested in late January into early February. We are lucky because we have the luxury to pass on opportunities for harvesting. It can be a bit of a gamble, as we go through periods of freeze and thaw, but one thing about Niagara-on-the-Lake, we can be certain that the cold will come, and the flavours we get are worth waiting for.”