



## **Buying guide 2006**

### **Top 100**

#### **DOMAINE LAROCHE**

While this estate has been producing Chablis since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, its rise into prominence came in the 1960s, when Henri Laroche began to expand on his family's 15 acres of vines. In 1967 Henri's son Michel joined the business, and together they built the estate to its present 326 acres, concentrated in top premier and grand cru vineyards. One of the most significant holdings is in Blanchots, where they own more than a third of the total vineyard.

The flagship wine of the estate is the Réserve de l'Obédience, a special selection of Blanchots named for the ninth-century monastery that houses the Laroche cellars.

Michel Laroche has increasingly favored natural processes in the vineyards and the cellar. No chemical fertilizers have been used in the vines since 89', and Laroche notes that the promotion of an oenological balance in the vineyards has increased the health of the vines, which in turn allows them to harvest later, and gives wines with greater concentration and character.

Stainless steel is used for fermenting and aging the Chablis, while the Premiers Crus may be fermented and aged in oak barrels or large oak casks, depending on the wine and vintage. Grand Cru wines are always fermented and aged in oak barrels and oak casks. However, Laroche never uses new wood, in order to preserve the delicate and mineral aromas of Chablis.

In fact, Michel Laroche has become a prominent supporter of screw caps, after having conducted extensive tests on these and other alternatives to cork. Though he continues to bottle a portion of the harvest with cork, primarily for the French market, beginning with the 03' vintage, most of his exports, as well as all of Laroche's wines sent to the US, will be sealed under screw cap. It's a bold but calculated move, in the spirit of innovation and forward-thinking that has made Laroche a leader in the appellation. – P.L.

## 7 wines tasted, 4 recommended

<b>93</b>	'02	Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos	\$75	(6/05)	
<b>90</b>	'02	Chablis Grand Cru Réserve de l'Obédience Les Blanchots	\$100	(6/05)	
<b>90</b>	'02	Chablis Premier Cru Vieilles Vignes Les Fourchaumes	\$40	(10/05)	
<b>87</b>	'02	Chablis Premier Cru Vieilles Vignes Les Vaillons	\$37	(6/05)	

Founded : 1850

Winemaker/ owner : Michel Laroche

Acres owned : 326 acres.

Annual production : 250.000 cases.

Estate grown: 100% ;

Known for: Stylish, site-expressive wines from top vineyards in Chablis.

Imported by: Rémy Amérique, NY.

Website: [www.larochewines.com](http://www.larochewines.com)