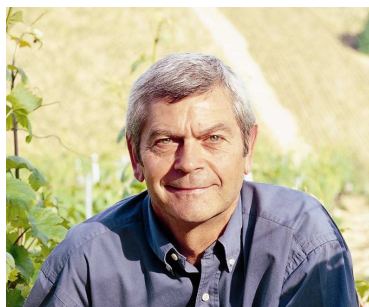




## Top 100 Wineries of the year

### Domaine Laroche



**Michel Laroche**

BURGUNDY

**Founded** : 1850  
**Winemaker** : Denis de la Bourdonnaye  
**Viticulturist** : Yannick Cadiou  
**Acres owned** : 247  
**Annual Production** : 720.00 cases  
**Estate grown** : 100%  
**Known for** : stylish, generous Chablis from top crus  
**Importer** : Rémy Amérique, NY  
**Website** : larochevines.com

The Laroche family has been making wine since 1850, but the firm's significant growth has come under the stewardship of Michel Laroche, who started work in 1967. At the time, his family farmed about 15 acres. Today, it boasts 247, many in top crus such as les Blanchots, les Clos, Fourchaumes and Vaillons. Laroche began farming his vineyards sustainably long before it was the politically correct thing to do. He hasn't used chemical fertilizers since 1989, and limits herbicides and others chemicals in order to encourages stonger vines, which are better able to handle the vagaries of Chablisienne weather and can hang on linger into the autumn for riper picking. Perhaps that has somethnig to do



with the finess of his Chablis in 2006. The vintage wasn't an easy one, if elegant was a goal. July temperatures were hotter than 2003 ; a cool and damp August led to another heat spike in September. The result was botrytis and superripe flavors in many wines. But Winemaker Denis de la Bourdonnaye, who's been at Laroche since 2000, turned out a half-dozen deliciously clean, fresh Chablis. The basic Chablis and the St Martin – fermented exclusively in stainless steel – share a vivacious, firm structure that energizes the ripe apple and lemon zest flavors ; the premier crus offer more expansive flavor with leesy richness. The stars are the grands crus – Les Blanchots with its bold white fruit flavors tightly wrapped in acidity ; the Réserve de l'Obédience, a selection of les Blanchots with a higher percentage fermented in barrel (70 percent, up from 30 percent for les Blanchots), offering an intriguing sweet-savory balance of dried apricots, toast and minerals, hazelnut and apple skin.

Collectively, they testify to Laroche's dedication to his home terroir, even as he continues to make wine as far afiels as South Africa (l'Avenir) and Chile (Punto Alto)

### Top-scoring wines

- 94 06' Chablis Grand Cru Les Clos \$117 (10/08)**
- 93 06' Chablis Les Blanchots Réserve de l'Obédience \$ 145 (10/08)**
- 94 06' Chablis Grand Cru Les Blanchots \$87 (10/08)**