

“It’s possible to make a great wine *and* preserve the ecosystem.”

—Claire Laval, winemaker at Gombaude-Guillot

Many months we find ourselves in lesser-known wine regions tracking down unusual wines that challenge our palates and really deliver. We love the dedicated fringe of winemakers who know that the juice in the bottle must speak for itself because the place name on the label won’t sell these unknowns. Well, forget about all that for now—we’re taking a break from off-roading to get back on the wine map. Our first selection is from Bordeaux—Pomerol, no less—home to the big guns of the Right Bank, like Petrus and Le Pin, with their minuscule production and absurd prices. But don’t worry: mainstream and predictable isn’t our style, so we picked a rebel. Claire Laval has bucked tradition in much the same way as our beloved cadre of renegade winemakers from other regions. She’s the only female winemaker in this small, classic region and produces one of the only certified organic wines there. The quality of product and dedication of lesser-known winemakers like Laval keep the old guard from resting on their laurels and labels, and keep us checking in on the region in search of gems like this red beauty.

Laval’s family has owned and operated Château Gombaude-Guillot for so long they don’t even know the acquisition year. It is located in Pomerol, which lies on the left bank of the Gironde Estuary. This area produces wine mainly from Merlot grapes with a smaller amount of Cabernet Franc as well. In Bordeaux, many châteaux have what they call “seconds,” which are wines given a different (second) label than that of their grand vin or first label (though they’re made from the same vineyard in the same style as their house wine), mostly because the fruit comes from younger vines. Since Bordeaux prices have skyrocketed in recent years, seconds are welcomed with open arms, particularly in a stellar vintage such as 2009. Robert Parker even said, “It may turn out to be the finest vintage I have tasted in 32 years of covering Bordeaux.” We tried this wine over the course of three days. On day one it was a little tightly wound, but we could sense its structure and quality. By day two it was perfect. The tannins had turned to a velvety silk, and the fruit was plush. We still enjoyed it on day three, proving that this wine has the potential to lay down for a few years. Our recommendation is to try it now after an hour of decanting, and if you like it as well as we do, get more for the holidays. It will be the perfect complement to any holiday feast.

Our second wine is a Vin d’Alsace, and Paul Ginglinger is a classic domaine in the region. Located at the foothills of the Vosges Mountains, this area experiences an unusually dry and warm microclimate. This family-run business dates back to 1610 and now boasts Michel Ginglinger at the helm. Michel is part of a new generation of very well-educated winemakers and has experience making wine in Burgundy, South Africa, and Chile. His expertise shows in his cleanly crafted wine made in classic Alsatian style. In this region, Pinot Blanc tends to be a little richer and more full bodied. This is due in part to the common regional practice of adding Pinot Auxerrois—an Alsatian varietal that’s a sibling to Chardonnay. Pinot Auxerrois is a bit heavier, adding broadness and spice to the mix. The Pinot Blanc grape, called Clevner in Alsace, emits a more delicate fruitiness with subtle aromatics, citrus, pear and a lively, fresh acidity. Enjoy!

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Until Next Month,

Joe, Tom, & Andria

“fighting for the soul of wine..”



This Month's Biodynamic® / Organic Selections

Cadet de Gombaude Pomerol

75% Merlot, 25% Cab Franc

**Region: Pomerol,
Bordeaux, France**

Vintage: 2009

Decant! Decant! This wine still tasted great a day after it was opened. This medium- to full-bodied red comes from the Pomerol region in Bordeaux. Enticing forward-fruit aromatics of blueberry, plum, and currant integrate seamlessly with the subtle oak and hints of leather and tar. Fruit dominates but isn't gushing; the style is more classic and elegantly refined. Gripping tannins give this wine structure, backbone, and ageability. It's made by the only female winemaker in Pomerol and is certified organic.

Paul Ginglinger Pinot Blanc

100% Pinot Blanc

Region: Alsace, France

Vintage: 2010

This light- to medium-bodied, straw-colored Pinot Blanc is blended with small amounts of Pinot Auxerrois. It's packed with floral, mandarin, and lemon aromatics, with a faintly rich palate and a clean, crisp finish. There's a touch of barely detectable sweetness (0.4% residual sugar, which is exactly the threshold to detect sweetness on the palate). This component makes for a nice pre-dinner sipper. Though this domaine is not certified organic, it respects and practices all the rules thereof.

Hey, why did my wine come in a used box?

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