

EXPLOR

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DOMAINE DE REUILLY, 2020, PINOT GRIS, REUILLY, FRANCE

When tasting the wines of Denis Jamain, it is clear that the appellation of Reuilly, in the eastern Loire, is experiencing a renaissance, moving far beyond its former status as the “poor man’s Sancerre.” This land was once a source of great pride, having been part of a gift of the 7th century king, Dagobert, to the Royal Abbey of Saint Denis. Phylloxera had ravaged the majority of the vineyards here in the late 19th century, but Camille Rousseau (Denis’ maternal grandfather) had faith in the future of Reuilly. In 1935, he planted his first vines here, in addition to farming a large oak forest on the outskirts of town. Denis shares his grandfather’s passion for the vineyards and the forest, as well as his hometown pride.

Today, he farms a total of seventeen hectares in the heart of the appellation, with eleven planted to Sauvignon Blanc, four planted to Pinot Noir, and two planted to Pinot Gris, which makes his superb and distinctive Reuilly rosé. The soils here are rich, resting on the prized Kimmeridgian limestone, a geological chain that connects the Loire Valley with Chablis in Burgundy. This limestone is valued for its high content of marine and shell fossils dating back 150 million years ago to the Jurassic period.



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These minerals are without equal for producing some of the most beautiful whites in France. Denis has been practicing sustainable agriculture for many years and has recently started the conversion process for organic certification. Though he uses both stainless steel tanks and oak, Denis is very proud to be able to select special oaks from his grandfather's forest to make his barrels. This is the concept of "local" in its purest form.

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Try pairing this wine with salads with fresh seasonal fruit or light chicken dishes.

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CASTELLINUZZA E PIUCA 2019 "IL VEGLIARDO," TUSCANY, ITALY

The Chianti Classico region is known for vanity estates owned by successful people from other fields, with the occasional large commercial winery, not 'terroir' wines. In this sense it is rather like Bordeaux or Napa. But there are many exceptions to this, and Castellinuzza e Piuca is just that: a tiny property near the little isolated hamlet of Lamole, a family-run winery that is the epitome of 'local wine.'

The grapes are Sangiovese (in this case, Sangiovese di Lamole, the local sub-type) and Canaiolo; the winemaking is simple and transparent; and the wine is wonderful, full of interesting flavors but above all drinkable.

This is made with the original formula of Chianti, 80% Sangiovese di Lamole, 20% Malvasia Bianca, picked and fermented together (indigenous yeast) with pump overs for about a week, then left for a further 8-10 days of maceration with the skins. The wine is aged for 12-14 months in cement tanks, then coarsely filtered and bottled. Very simple winemaking, but the vineyards are special, Lamole is famous for Sangiovese, and the high elevation (about 1,650 feet above sea level) ensures nice bright acidity even in warm vintages.

This wine is the perfect pairing for any casual pizza or pasta night.

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SEPTEMBER 2021

SURVEY



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TIE IN: TUSCANY, ITALY

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The Tie-In: Both of these wines hail from regions within Tuscany, Italy and are composed mostly or entirely of Sangiovese. Castellinuzza e Piuca blends in a small portion of Mavasia, a white varietal, which boosts up the aromatic components of the wine and keeps it relatively light and more delicate. The Castell'in Villa uses only Sangiovese for a rustic, more tannic approach.



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SURVEY



CASTELL'IN VILLA 2017 CHIANTI CLASSICO, TUSCANY, ITALY

Castell'in Villa is a small estate in Castelnuovo Berardenga, at the south end of the Chianti Classico region. Both the Chianti Classico and the Riserva are made entirely of Sangiovese, and have been some of the best wines in the appellation for decades. The owner of the estate, Coralia Pignatelli della Leonessa, has never wavered in her commitment to traditional winemaking. The resulting wines are soulful, distinctive, long-lived, and delicious, proof that the Sangiovese grape can rise to greatness when grown in the right place.

The wine is fermented in stainless steel using indigenous yeasts, and is kept in contact with the skins for a little less than two weeks. The wine is aged in large oval barrels ('botti') for two years before bottling. The resulting wine is the best kind of old school Chianti, with the classic aromas of sour cherry, fine leather, sandalwood and cedar, fresh acidity, silty tannins, and a long, complex finish. This style of Chianti Classico is a very useful wine at table, medium-weight, savory, based on fresh acidity rather than tannins.

Drink it with pizza, roast chicken, pork, and red meats.

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PHILIPPE GAVIGNET 2019 "CLOS DE L'HERMITAGE" BOURGOGNE HAUTES-CÔTES DE NUITS, BURGUNDY, FRANCE

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The style of Philippe Gavignet Burgundy "brings back" the profound elegance of Pinot Noir to Nuits-Saint-Georges, an appellation often known for more tannic (and often less balanced) wines. Gavignet wines are solid proof that Nuits has the terroir to produce elegant Burgundy but that it requires a conscientious winemaker such as Philippe to craft it.

What first attracted us to this fourth-generation estate nearly more than 20 years ago was the impressive pedigree of Gavignet's vineyards in Nuits. What you'll discover with these selections are unquestionably some of Nuits' most expressive, very-old-vine terroirs, with vines planted as far back as the 1920s. Vineyards are cared for as naturally as possible, avoiding the use of herbicides and pesticides.

Harvest is by hand; wines are aged in a mix of new and older French oak barrels (with no more than one-third new oak). All wines are bottled unfined and unfiltered. A new vineyard planted by the family in the Hautes-Côtes, a limestone plateau that sits at altitude over the main Burgundian "côte." Here temperatures are cooler, and winds stronger, for wines with incredible poise and balance. Notes of raspberry and cherry, with hints of violet and licorice.

Try pairing this wine with mushroom based dishes or duck confit for a fancy meal.



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