

Our goal with the Wine Club is to provide you a wide diversity of wine to showcase the styles of the world. This month, we bring you two classics...  
*Bourgogne Rouge and Cote-du-Rhone Blanc.*

# THE CELLAR D'OR

## WINE & CIDER

Wine Club • April 2021

### Bitouzet-Prieur Bourgogne Rouge 2018

Key Words: (Volnay) Burgundy, France Notable Burgundy Family Practicing Organic No Herbicides/Pesticides Hand-Harvest

Like many European wine regions, Burgundy has seen a millennia of viticultural trial and error. All of the grapes we know and love are indigenous to Europe and Europe's had *ages* to figure out what grapes should grow where and why. As a result, you really can't buy a wine from Europe unattached to a specific wine region. To put it another way, these regions have historical precedent (relying on a millennia of note-taking monks) that planting specific varieties in specific places yields specific results. This is in contrast to places outside of Europe where viticulture is comparably young and a plethora of different varieties grow in any given region.

This is why a lot of European wines are labeled by their place name rather than their varietal. The place *is* the varietal... because that place *only* cultivates one key variety that has shown to grow best and/or show an expression unique to that area. We buy 'Sancerre Blanc' because we know it will be the bright and steely Sauvignon Blanc it has been for ages. It's in this way that the Sancerre isn't just Sauvignon Blanc, it's the Sancerre-style of Sauvignon Blanc... i.e.... *It's just Sancerre.*

Back to Burgundy. It's like someone took the ripe, ubiquitously-lovable cherry flavor, brushed it with gamey-earthy brooding character... and then presented that in an elegant, lifted package. I recall a wine professor I had spout that, "... we start off liking sweet wine, then big reds, then delicate whites, and then... finally... *just Pinot Noir.*" It's a misnomer — that Pinot Noir is the end-all-be-all of grapes — but Pinot Noir is truly special. Pinot Noir's ability to transfer terroir — sense of place — is unrivaled, specifically amongst red grapes. It's also that Pinot Noir, notably Burgundy, can provide the easy-going supple-red-fruit we all tend to enjoy, without pushing that fruit over the top. The softer structure of Pinot Noir means it is more readily drinkable in its youth than the similarly seductive but more tannic Nebbiolo (an Italian grape held in similar regard that shares many of the same attributes) and this adds to its popularity. Bitouzet-Prieur Bourgogne Rouge is a classic entry-level example of the interplay of fruit and lift and elegance and acidity and earth and, and, and...!



(Francois Bitouzet)

### La Manarine Cotes-du-Rhone Blanc 2019

Key Words: Rhone Valley, France Practicing Organic Indigenous Yeasts Stainless Steel Aging Lees-Aging No Malolactic

The Rhone Valley in France is a fantastic entry point for European wines. Located south of Burgundy, the Rhone Valley receives a bit more sun and the warmer climate plays into why many of the wines ooze with richness. Grapes get pretty ripe here.

The Rhone Valley is subjugated into two subregions, the Northern Rhone Valley and the Southern Rhone Valley. Nothing tricky here, we're talking about the northern versus the southern parts of the Rhone Valley. We find Syrah in the North with Grenache and Mourvedre taking on larger roles in the South. White wine is produced across Northern and Southern Rhone Valley, comprising varietal-centric wines in North and blends in the South. Viognier, Roussanne, Marsanne, Grenache Blanc, and Clairette Blanche are a few of the more widely-planted white Rhone varieties but the Southern Rhone allows many different varieties the opportunity to make their way into blends. Cotes-du-Rhone wines offer fantastic quality price ratios and are often composed of a medley of different grapes. I like to frame Cotes-du-Rhone *Rouge* as the "red blend of the Old World". They're ripe, fruity, and dependable — they work in a variety of situations for a variety of people. This month, we've packed the often overlooked Cotes-du-Rhone *Blanc*.

Cotes-du-Rhone *Blanc* is also easy-drinking and broadly likeable. I like to compare Cote-du-Rhone Blanc to Pinot Gris. They have a similar fresh, round feel with supple but *light* fruit. Because neutral grapes (ex: Pinot Gris or Gruner Veltliner) like the Clairette and Bourboulenc in Manarine's CDR Blanc have toned-down fruit, non-fruit elements become more apparent. Think of it like this — you don't taste the mineral of mineral water if you add a splash of guava juice to it. With that said, Rhone white wines come across as less mineral than Pinot Gris/Grigio... instead leaning into textural elements. In Manarine's CDR Blanc look for yellow plum, green flowers, and light papaya, with a delicate but broad presence on palate. Pair with mild dishes, like herbed-sauteed vegetables, grilled chicken, white beans. Cote-du-Rhone Blanc is kind of like the 'Italian white wine' of France...



(Gilles Gasq)