



WINE TOURISM — MAG —

ISSUE
13

WINE TOURISM MAG

WINE TOURISM MAG
013

EDITORIAL
MICHAEL MCDUFF EDITOR
JOANIE METIVIER HEAD WRITER

CONTRIBUTORS
KRISTINE MANSUY
CLAUDE LALONDE
MARIÈVE ISABEL

MARKETING & ADVERTISING
JOANIE METIVIER
CONTACT@JOANIEMETIVIER.COM

WWW.WINETOURISMMAG.COM
CONTACT@JOANIEMETIVIER.COM

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

CONTENTS

04

EDITOR'S NOTE

05

THE NEW RIOJA

10

DISCOVERING THE WINES
OF ABBRUZZO

14

CHAMPAGNE AYALA

17

FOUR DAYS IN CHABLIS

24

INTERVIEW SEVERINE PINTE

Editor's note

S panish delights

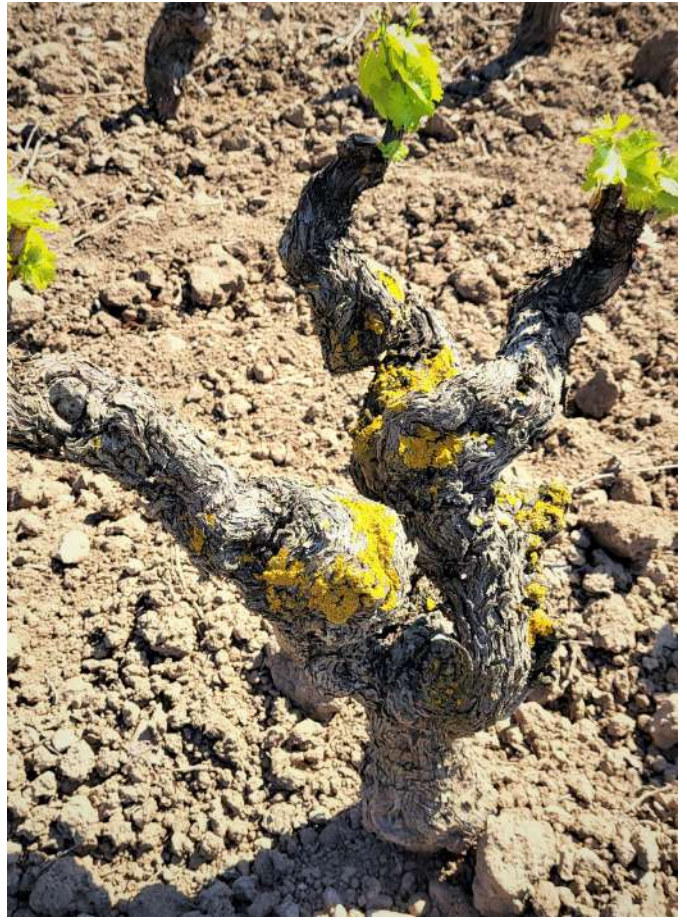
The Rioja wine region, nestled in the heart of Spain, is a hallowed ground for wine enthusiasts and connoisseurs alike. This region has a rich history that dates back centuries, and its wines have earned a well-deserved reputation for excellence. Here, tradition and innovation seamlessly coexist, creating a tapestry of flavors that captivates the senses.



One of the defining features of Rioja wines is the careful craftsmanship that goes into their production. Rioja winemakers have perfected the art of blending different grape varieties, with Tempranillo, Garnacha, and Mazuelo being some of the most prominent.

The aging process is another hallmark of Rioja wines, with classification labels like Crianza, Reserva, and Gran Reserva indicating the duration of aging in oak barrels and bottles. This attention to detail imparts a unique character to each bottle, showcasing the region's terroir. The Rioja wine region's diverse landscape, with its mix of soils, altitudes, and microclimates, plays a pivotal role in the distinctive flavors of its wines. From the cooler, higher-altitude vineyards in Rioja Alta to the warmer, Mediterranean-influenced Rioja Oriental, each subregion contributes its own nuances to the wines. This geographical diversity, coupled with the winemakers' expertise, results in a range of styles that can suit any palate. In recent years, Rioja has also embraced sustainability and modern winemaking techniques. Many wineries have adopted organic and biodynamic practices, reducing their environmental footprint while preserving the region's natural beauty. This commitment to sustainability ensures that future generations can continue to enjoy Rioja wines. In conclusion, the Rioja wine region is a treasure trove of vinicultural heritage and excellence. Its wines are not merely a drink; they are a testament to the passion and dedication of the people who have nurtured this land for generations. Whether you're a seasoned wine aficionado or a curious novice, a bottle from Rioja is an invitation to savor the soul of Spain in every sip.

Michael mcduff - Editor in chief





THE *NEW* RIOJA

REVITALIZING
VINEYARDS &
EMBRACING
TRADITION

Rioja, a renowned wine region in Spain, has undergone a transformation in recent years, with producers spearheading initiatives to bring back health to their vineyards and revive traditionally planted varietals. This movement, led by esteemed winemakers such as Juan Carlos Sancha, Bodega Ruiz Jimenez, Valenciso, and Arizcuren, has resulted in the emergence of a new era for Rioja wines. Alongside this, the introduction of Vinedos Singulares labels and the embrace of the Joven label have brought new dimensions and freedom to winemaking in the region.



Recognizing the importance of preserving Rioja's viticultural heritage, several producers have embarked on a mission to bring back health and vitality to their vineyards. Through sustainable and organic practices, they revitalize the soil and cultivate grapes in harmony with nature. Juan Carlos Sancha, a legendary winemaker in Rioja, is known for his incredible wines produced in the hills of Baños de Río Tobía in Rioja Alta. He is a mentor a professor of enology and a pioneer in experimenting with new grape varieties such as Tempranillo Blanco. His wines, made from old vines at high altitudes in excellent sites, showcase freshness and focus. In addition to working with renowned varieties like Tempranillo and Garnacha, Juan Carlos explores lesser-known grapes such as Tempranillo Blanco, Maturana Tinta, and Maturana Blanca, some of which he and his colleagues rediscovered or brought back from extinction.

His philosophy revolves around organic viticulture, focusing on high-quality grapes, minimal intervention, and hand harvesting. The vineyards feature dense plantings of various grape varieties at altitudes of up to 565 meters, benefiting from poor calcareous soils and old vines, some over 95 years old. Importing some of Juan Carlos Sancha's best wines is a source of excitement and pride.





Rediscovering Traditionally Planted Varietals

While Tempranillo has long been the star grape of Rioja, there is a growing interest in reviving and celebrating the region's historically planted varietals. Garnacha (Grenache), Mazuelo (Carignan), Graciano, and Maturana Blanca are among the forgotten gems that are finding their place in Rioja once again. These varietals bring unique characteristics and flavors, adding diversity and complexity to the region's wine offerings. These wines are often featured under the Joven Rioja label, which translates to "young" in Spanish, and are now

becoming a synonym of free-made wines and experimentation. This designation allows winemakers greater freedom and flexibility in crafting wines that exhibit the pure expression of the grape varieties. Joven wines are typically vibrant, fruit-forward, and meant for early consumption. This label has given producers the opportunity to experiment, showcase unique blends, and cater to evolving consumer preferences for fresh and approachable wines. It has brought a new level of excitement and innovation to the region.

Vinedos Singulares: Celebrating Unique Vineyards:

VIn a bid to highlight the distinctiveness of specific vineyards, Rioja introduced the Vinedos Singulares (singular vineyard) label. This initiative allows winemakers to showcase wines produced from exceptional plots with distinct terroir and grape characteristics. By emphasizing these unique vineyards, Rioja aims to promote diversity and terroir-driven wines. Producers like Valenciso and Arizcuren have seized this opportunity, producing wines that truly reflect the essence of their singular vineyards, with each bottle telling a story of its origin and heritage. Following the incorporation of 20 new ‘Viñedos Singulares’ there are now more than a hundred vineyards that have been awarded the new quality indication approved in 2017 by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. It’s a label that seeks to give due prominence to the terroir and identity.



The New Rioja is an exciting movement that encompasses the revitalization of vineyards, the revival of traditionally planted varietals, and the introduction of innovative labeling practices. This transformation, which may also be seen as a return to their roots, focuses on emphasizing sustainability, diversity, and terroir-driven wines. With Vinedos Singulares and the Joven label, Rioja is embracing its rich winemaking heritage while adapting to the changing preferences of wine enthusiasts. The future of Rioja is bright, with a renewed focus on quality, tradition, and innovation.

DISCOVERING THE WINES OF ABBRUZZO

Written by
Claude Lalonde



I recently returned from a beautiful press trip to Abruzzo, an enchanting region with its wonderful landscapes and wines made from native grape varieties that you absolutely must discover. I have a renewed appreciation for its wines, which consistently offer exceptional quality-to-price ratios, both in terms of Montepulciano d'Abruzzo and Trebbiano d'Abruzzo, Pecorino d'Abruzzo, and the wonderful rosé wine Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo.

I met winemakers who are dedicated to promoting the wines of their region, focusing on the diverse terroirs, both coastal and mountainous. I sensed a wave of change in the various appellations, raising the level of quality and facilitating communication with consumers and their appreciation of the wines.

Abruzzo is located in the east of Italy, between the Adriatic Sea and the Gran Sasso d'Italia mountain range. It can be divided into two zones: the internal mountainous zone, which makes up over 65% of the entire territory, and the coastal zone with its broad hilly belt. What many people don't know is that this region is quite mountainous, with renowned ski resorts and elevations of up to 3,000 meters. It closely resembles New Zealand in terms of altitude, making the wines from this region high-altitude wines.

Over 500 square kilometers are reserved for national parks and protected natural reserves, making it one of the wildest and most mountainous regions in Italy. Most of the vineyards I visited were characterized by rolling hills surrounded by mountains and the proximity of the Adriatic Sea.





The Corno Grande in the Gran Sasso massif, at 2,914 meters, is the highest peak in the Apennines, and the Majella, with its 2,793 meters, dominates the landscapes. Abruzzo has four provinces: Pescara, Teramo, Chieti, and L'Aquila, the latter being the only one not bordered by the Adriatic Sea, as it is located in the mountainous areas.

The climate in Abruzzo is similar to that of the Rhône Valley, with cool nights and fairly warm days. The production areas are almost entirely concentrated in the hilly zone, particularly in the Chieti area, which accounts for 83% of the production, followed by Pescara (10%), Teramo (6%), and L'Aquila (1%). The proximity of the sea and the mountain ranges creates ideal conditions for viticulture, with constant winds that dry the vines and significant diurnal temperature variations that enhance acidity.

New Generation Abruzzo has long been known for producing great red wines and rather simple white wines. However, this has changed rapidly, and the region is now one of the most interesting in Italy. In addition to iconic producers like Emidio Pepe, whom I had the pleasure of meeting, there is now a new generation of young producers who have taken over their family vineyards to produce great wines.

The new generation of producers prefers high-altitude vineyards, unlike the vineyards in the plains near the sea. High-altitude vineyards have a much more favorable climate for producing quality wines.

Winemakers are also much more selective in their use of barrels, using them judiciously to produce fine wines. There is a growing emphasis on using cement tanks to produce wines that reflect the terroir from which they originate. All these recent changes in the vineyards of Abruzzo mean that Abruzzo wines offer some of the best quality-to-price ratios for consumers.



LA VALENTINA

This vineyard is located on the hills overlooking Spoltore, near Pescara (25 minutes from Silvi Marina) in central Italy. The owners, Sabatino, Roberto, and Andrea Di Properzio, have been running the business since the implementation of their development project in 1994. This beautiful estate produces about ten wines on its 40 hectares of organic vineyards, with an annual production of approximately 375,000 bottles.



AZIENDA AGRICOLA FRANCESCO CIRELLI



What sets this producer apart is the production of wines according to biodynamic principles and vinification and aging in amphorae, with no use of wood in the winemaking process. Additionally, the grape harvest involves multiple passes to capture the grapes at their optimal ripeness. This is a small producer (25,000 bottles) with 22 hectares of vineyards located in the village of Atri, only 8 kilometers from the sea and about twenty minutes from Silvi Marina. Francesco Cirelli can be considered an artisan who places great importance on terroir. He has recreated his farm as it was in the 1960s, before the rush to use chemical products. His farm reflects a strong commitment to polyculture. His wines are made from four grape varieties: Trebbiano, Pecorino, Cerasuolo, and Montepulciano d'Abruzzo.

FATTORIA NICODEMI

brother and sister, are now the owners of Fattoria Nicodemi, located in Notaresco, at the heart of the Colline Teramane zone. When their father passed away in 1999, they took over the estate with limited experience, but over time, they persevered and now produce approximately 200,000 bottles per year using organic farming practices (since 2016) on their 39 hectares of vineyards. Only native grape varieties are planted. The 30 hectares of vineyards are situated at about 300 meters above sea level, facing southeast, with stunning views of the Gran Sasso mountain and the sea approximately 10 kilometers away (35 minutes from Silvi Marina). The vines grow in clay-limestone soils that give the wines character.





EMIDIO PEPE

The name Emidio Pepe is legendary among the great producers of Abruzzo and the world. In the 1970s, he introduced the concept of aging Abruzzo wines in bottles when other producers were focusing on making lower-quality wines. Furthermore, from the beginning, he embraced the principles of organic agriculture and later biodynamics (since 2005) while chemical products were popular among other producers. His 17 hectares of vineyards in Torano Nuovo (1 hour from Silvi Marina) on various plots produce extraordinary wines sold at high prices. In addition, the emphasis is on polyculture with various crops.

New viticultural techniques are implemented to eliminate the use of copper as a treatment for vine diseases. Everything is done by hand and with feet—no industrial pumps! The grapes are all gently pressed after manual selection. No industrial pumps are used. Additionally, aging takes place exclusively in bottles; there are no barrels. In the cellar, you can see hundreds of thousands of bottles from various vintages waiting for time. Finally, a unique aspect is that the wines are aged for long periods and sold after at least 20 years. After this period, they are decanted and rebottled. Emidio's daughter and granddaughters are in charge of the vineyard and operations. It's truly a family affair!

PODERE CASTORANI

The origin of this ancient farm dates back to 1794. Since 1999, the Trulli and Cavuto families (including Jarno Trulli, former F1 driver) have been involved in the management of the company. The vineyard is located in the new DOCG Casauria (the 3rd DOCG) on 100 hectares of vineyards on the hills of the province of Pescara, situated at 350 meters above sea level between the mountains and the Adriatic Sea (35 minutes from Silvi Marina).



The average age of the vines exceeds thirty years, and the entire estate is cultivated using organic farming methods, without the use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers. In particular, the vines are protected by biological control methods and fed with natural fertilizers. Vinification takes place in cement tanks with an epoxy surface, limiting oxygenation of the wine. The grapes are vacuum-pressed to preserve the wine's freshness. The wine is aged in 500-liter barrels, a volume that balances the nature of the wines with the influence of wood.

TENUTA TESTAROSSA – PASETTI

We visited Tenuta Testarossa, located in the heart of the Gran Sasso National Park (550 meters above sea level) and Monti della Laga in the small village of Pescosansonesco (45 minutes from Silvi Marina). The vineyards of this estate are in Pescosansonesco, surrounded by mountains, and in Capestrano near Capo d'Acqua. The long history spanning 5 generations of the Pasetti winery begins in the Bourbon era and continues to this day. In the 1960s, they began bottling their wines, and in the 1980s, Mimmo Pasetti bottled his Montepulciano to celebrate the birth of his firstborn, Francesca, who had red hair like Mimmo's grandmother, Donna Rachele. Thus, the Testarossa (literally "Red Head") was born, the flagship of the Pasetti family and the winery, which, for 5 generations, has pursued the viticultural tradition. With the development of Pescosansonesco, the vineyards in Capestrano, Castiglione a Casauria, and Ofena were added, totaling 83 hectares. Pasetti is the only vineyard authorized to use the logo of the natural park on its bottles.



A
Y
A
L
A



THE RENAISSANCE OF CHAMPAGNE AYALA

BY KRISTINE MANSUY

Led by a young and dynamic team, Champagne Ayala is innovating and reinventing itself by focusing on the essentials: a pure expression of the best terroirs of Chardonnay, the art of blending and an artisanal approach to winemaking. A brand that always stood out for the freshness and pure character of its wines, famously known for its dryer style. I was immediately charmed by the refined new look of the bottles and the exquisite new wine blends showing Ayala's unique and thriving signature.

THE STORY

Nestled in the heart of Champagne's Grands Crus in the famous village of Aÿ, Ayala is one of the oldest Champagne houses founded by Edmond de Ayala in 1860. It was one of the 18 founding members of the Great Champagne Brands in 1882 and enjoyed a golden age in the 1920s, becoming one of the most exported Champagne in the world. Ayala's renaissance, after a long commercial pause, began with its acquisition by the Bollinger family in 2005. Today, both estates are managed independently with very distinct philosophies and signatures.





THE RENAISSANCE

Drawing on the freshness and elegance of Chardonnay, the relationships developed with producers by Bollinger over time gave Ayala access to some of the best crus of Champagne. A brand-new winery was built in 2007 to meet the high demand of visitors. Several investments are planned, including the installation of a rooftop terrace and the creation of a museum, with the aim of offering world-class wine tourism experiences.

Ayala is also committed to a sustainable approach from vine to glass. Several projects are under development, such as converting the vineyards into organic culture and new green packaging for its Champagne bottles. The full portfolio is now being packaged in Ayala's signature bottle shape, which was inspired by the famous La Perle bottle launched in 1995. The design represents a more premium style and an updated visual identity for the brand, while also providing the perfect bottle shape for the cellar and longevity of the wines.

The cellar has been run since 2018 by Julian Gout, born in Champagne and coming from a family of winemakers, this young cellar master has a deep commitment to the environment and pursues Ayala's ambition to cultivate the vineyards organically.

Champagne Ayala production has increased from 600,000 bottles to 1 million in 10 years and in 2022 sales increased by 10%. The wines are exported today in more than 60 countries.

THE WINES

CHAMPAGNE AYALA BRUT MAJEUR

Ayala proposes to rediscover the Brut Majeur through a new blend. Multi-vintage and multi-terroirs, this new blend is mostly made of Chardonnay. It went from 45% to 55% and became the majority grape with a wide variety of crus (more than 70 including 50 of Chardonnay) and with an increased proportion of reserve wine with more than 40%.

Tasting notes: A delicate nose of floral and herbaceous aromas. A beautiful silky texture dances on the palate and leaves us with a saline and lemony aftertaste. Very dry with a good structure. The ideal Champagne to start the evening with fresh oysters or fish ceviches.

CHAMPAGNE AYALA ROSÉ MAJEUR

Made exclusively from Pinot Noir Grand Cru added in small proportion.

A blend of 51% Chardonnay, 39% Pinot Noir, and 10% Pinot Meunier.

Tasting notes:

A fresh and seductive nose with aromas of strawberry, melon, and orange peels. On the palate, the bubbles are creamy, worn by a slightly tannic texture. Citrus notes with fresh acidity on the long finish. A well-made and precise rosé that has the structure to accompany a bluefin tuna tataki, a pork fillet, or a spicy lobster bisque.



CHAMPAGNE AYALA ROSÉ MAJEUR

Made exclusively from Pinot Noir Grand Cru added in small proportion. A blend of 51% Chardonnay, 39% Pinot Noir, and 10% Pinot Meunier. Tasting notes: A fresh and seductive nose with aromas of strawberry, melon, and orange peels. On the palate, the bubbles are creamy, worn by a slightly tannic texture. Citrus notes with fresh acidity on the long finish. A well-made and precise rosé that has the structure to accompany a bluefin tuna tataki, a pork fillet, or a spicy lobster bisque.



FOUR DAYS IN CHABLIS

(Without a car)

by Mariève Isabel



Chablis is a white wine paradise. A Chardonnay Eden, to be more precise. Perhaps nowhere else in the world does this grape variety attain such excellence and precision, thanks to its exceptional terroir, including the famous Kimmeridgian soils. In this region, the standards are extremely high and the reputation, precious. But above all, the passion for elegance can be found in every bottle, from the Petits Chablis to the Grands Crus. Welcome to Chablis!

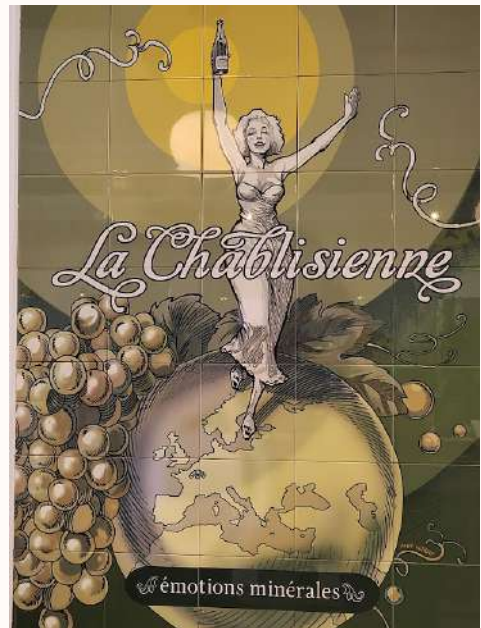




A Small Appellation with Exceptional Wines

In Chablis, you can wake up in your hotel, open the curtain, and admire the Colline des Grands Crus view. Not bad as a first sight in the morning. It also speaks of how small the appellation is, especially regarding the Grands Crus. In 2018, the Chablis area comprised 5 641 hectares, but only 100 hectares are Grands Crus, representing less than 1% of the appellation. As for Chablis Premier Cru, it is less than 1000 hectares. 66% of the area is occupied by Chablis, and the rest, 19%, is producing Petit Chablis.

One of the main differences between these appellations is the soil composition. The Grands Crus and most of the Premiers Crus are situated in pure Kimmeridgian calcareous soil, incrustated with oyster fossils called *Exogyra virgula*. These soils are famous for the minerality expressed in the wines. In the Chablis and Petit Chablis area, clay is often mixed with limestone. Slope and orientation, as well as vinification methods – Grands Crus are generally lightly oaked for better aging – make the rest of the distinctions. Of course, expect to pay more as you go up the ladder.

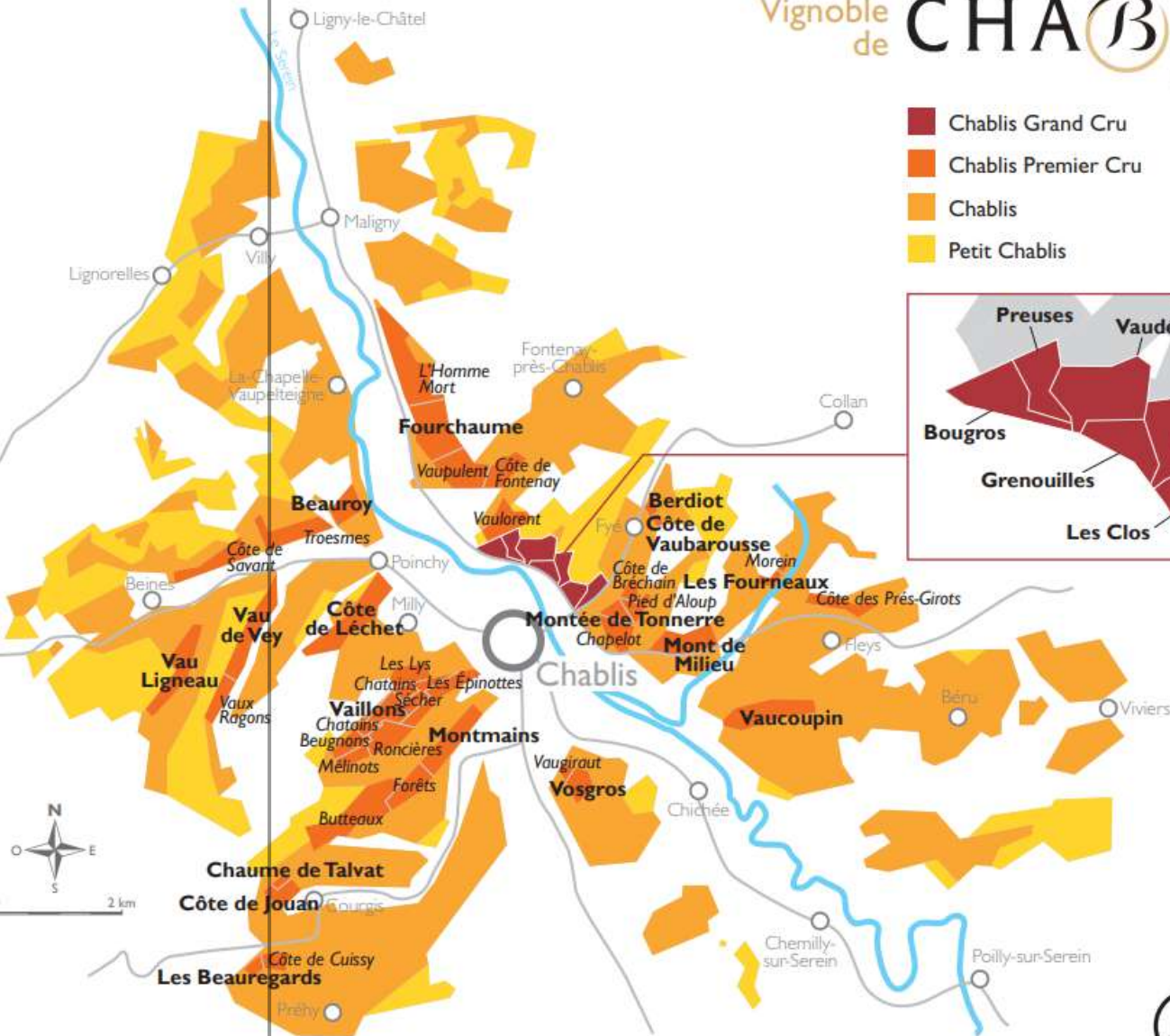
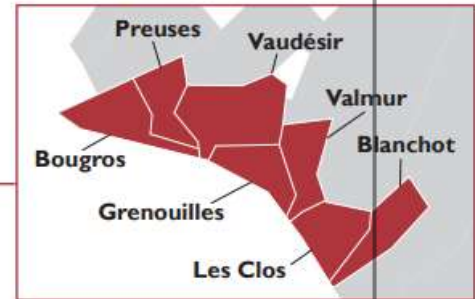


Visiting two to three vineyards and/or tasting rooms per day is ideal if you're an average taster. Here's an itinerary that will allow you to get acquainted with Chablis and enjoy what the village and its people have to offer.

Vignoble de CHABLIS

Ses 47 Climats

- Chablis Grand Cru
- Chablis Premier Cru
- Chablis
- Petit Chablis



Discovering Chablis, One Day at the Time

Chablis is by all means a lovely village, with a medieval feel to it. You can easily plan to stay there for at least four or five days, even without a car, and enjoy the village, the food, and, it goes without saying, the wines. Be warned that you will have difficult choices to make: either visit vineyards or linger in the many tasting rooms that can be found everywhere in the village. Renting a car may facilitate your exploration, especially to visit more vineyards, but walking will also allow you to have a great time and explore plenty of nearby sites.

DAY 1 — Arrival in Chablis



Chablis is situated about 3h away from the Charles de Gaulle airport. You can dedicate your first day to settling in and getting familiar with the village. The [Hôtel Restaurant Hostellerie des Clos](#) is well located, minutes away from the [Bureau Interprofessionnel des Vins de Bourgogne](#) which share grounds with the [Cité des Climats et vins de Bourgogne](#). There, you'll find resources (such as maps) and good advice to plan your stay.

If time allows you to do it, take a couple of hours to visit the brand new Cité des Climats et vins, a scenographic museum about the wine region. What you'll learn will give you a great head start to understand Chablis – its climate, soils, history, and wines. Also, if you forgot to bring some reading, you'll certainly find something interesting in their store, such as the excellent book by [Sandrine Audegond, L'expression cristalline d'un terroir](#). Once you're done acclimating yourself, you can plan your first diner at the [Bistrot des Grands Crus](#), right in the Hostellerie des Clos. The place offers a pleasant setting to relax in a historical building, including a lovely, enclosed terrace. If you spend the night there, make sure to ask for a room with a view of the Colline des grands crus, a sight you won't forget.

DAY 2 — A Walk in Village

Time to taste some wines! There's a lot you can do by foot in Chablis. The village is split in its center by a quiet river, the Serein, that you can follow for a pleasant walk. Reaching the Colline des Grands Crus takes about 20 minutes from the hotel, and it will allow you to cross the village and get an idea of its size. On your way there, you can stop at Domaine Pinson Frères, a family winery established in Chablis since 1640. Domaine Pinson owns 14 hectares of parcels in the AOC Chablis Premier Cru and Chablis Grand Cru. Their winery is seated on the bank of the Serein, by the Quai Voltaire. The old rose bushes climbing on the walls of the ancient lavoir seem made for "Instagramable" pictures. If all this walking made you hungry, you can stop for lunch at the restaurant Le Maufoux on your way back to the hotel. The seasonal menu, the nice terrace, and the wine cellar will for sure fulfill your hunger, thirst, and need to sit down for a moment.

In the afternoon, make an appointment to visit the Domaine Long-Depaquit. The Château is surrounded by a flowery park filled with rose bushes. You can book a visit online. You won't be disappointed. Just walking on the grounds of this beautiful property is an activity in itself. The estate belongs to Albert Bichot and comprises a somehow controversial 2.35 hectares parcel, La Moutonne, considered by some as a Premier Cru, but not officially recognized by the INAO (Institut national des appellations d'origine des vins et des eaux-de-vie), the organization granting these labels. For dinner, the restaurant Les Trois Bourgeois is a favorite in town. The place is quite small and the ambiance is minimalist, but the menu is gastronomic and elegant.



DAY 3 — Time Travel

La Chablisienne is a cooperative created in 1923. Many grape producers, around 280, choose to sell their fruits to La Chablisienne, which has been producing everything from Petit Chablis to Grands Crus, but also some other AOC such as Saint-Bris and Bourgogne aligoté from the larger region surrounding Chablis, called Grand Auxerrois. It is the only place where you'll be able to taste the Premier Cru Château Grenouilles, since the cooperative owns all of this Cru which only covers 7.2 hectares. You'll be able to taste many wines, including this rare Cru. While you're in the village, don't miss the Chablis Wine Not, an impressive wine bar "downtown" Chablis. The selection is vast and goes way beyond the local selection.



In the afternoon, let yourself get carried away in time by visiting the Maison Simmonnet-Lefebvre. This winery is one of the oldest in Chablis, having been founded in 1840. Bought by the Maison Louis Latour in 2003, it continues to honor its tradition of excellence and precision. The historical building makes a great visit, including the old cellars filled with ancient bottles and wine tools from another era. To complete your day, book a table at the restaurant Kimm & Ridge, where terroir and fresh seasonal cooking are put forward. As a bonus, if it's a hot day, the stone walls keep the place cool and pleasant.

DAY 4 — Where the Story Began



You cannot miss the *Domaine Laroche* and the *Obediencerie* when you visit Chablis. Its history dates back from 867, when the abbots of Saint-Martin first established there. The *Obediencerie* is famous for harboring the relics of Saint-Martin in the late 900s, the knight which appears in the Chablis crest still to this day, known for giving half of his cape – his only belonging, the other half being the property of the army – to a beggar. You can still see today where the relic were kept safe before being sent back to the Roman Church. In 1128, the place is already known for producing wines. Over the centuries, the *Obediencerie* is the main wine producer in the region, before being privatized during the French Revolution. Today, the site, which contains a giant wooden wine press, is dedicated to sharing the history of Chablis with visitors. It still produces exceptional wines, which you can try in their nearby tasting room.

For your last dinner in town, treat yourself to *Au Fil du Zinc*, a fine gastronomic restaurant by the Serein. Here, you don't choose what you eat – you only choose between three or five services, and you let the chef do the rest. Don't miss your chance to taste a wine from Vincent Dauvissat or Raveneau, the two best and most famous producers in Chablis, known worldwide. Their wines are rare and at *Au Fil du Zinc*, you can get a bottle for a more than reasonable price (60-80 euros), so don't hesitate. It is a unique chance, and it will certainly be a wonderful experience!

SEVERINE PINTE

WINEMAKER AT LE VIEUX PIN
& LA STELLA ESTATE
IN OKANAGAN VALLEY, B.C.

Interview by Joanie Metivier





WHAT ARE THE WINE SIGNATURES FOR BOTH ESTATES, LE VIEUX PIN & LA STELLA?

At Le Vieux Pin, we work a lot with the Syrah grape varietal for the reds, and for the whites, we work a lot with three Rhône white varietals Roussanne, Viognier, and Marsanne.

We do 3 different cuvées of Syrah. The cuvée Violette is one of the most popular and represents the feminine, silky side of the syrah. The cuvée Classique is more robust, tannins are a bit stronger and aromas are leaning more towards the meaty, gamy side. Finally, the Equinoxe Syrah is our high-end cuvée where we try to bring together all these different personalities of the Syrah.

The main white wine is called Ava and is a blend of the three Rhône varietals. It is usually showing some delicate aromas of white flowers and a rich creaminess on the mouth. It is named after my daughter.

At La Stella, we work a lot with Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Sangiovese. So we make different styles of super Tuscan wines. There are only 8 acres of Sangiovese planted in the south Okanagan and we own 3 acres of it.

WHAT MAKES THEM RECOGNIZABLE AND UNIQUE?

I believe that everything starts in the vineyard, and we work really hard to produce balanced, high quality grapes. I pick when I have the perfect balance between ripe tannins, intense flavors and a good natural acidity. So all our wines have this distinct characteristic of a nice spinal cord of natural acidity. The mostly sandy loam terroirs with different variations of pebbles, rocks and clay are giving us delicate and elegant flavors.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO BECOME A WINEMAKER?

I fell in love with the fact that I could create something right from the start. Being able to nurture the vines, watch them grow, study the soils; and from that knowledge, manage the growth, the canopy and then see how each block has their own personality. Each year, I get to create another unique cuvée.

WHAT ARE THE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE WINERIES?

We obtained our certification with the Sustainable Winegrowing BC program of which I am the chairwoman. As it is an outcome-based program, the certification process is a continuous one, we are using more precision viticulture tools to know our vineyards in even more detail. We also planted another 10 acres last year, and as the vines mature, we will need to get more tanks to accommodate the increased volume. I'm looking forward to playing with different textures (concrete, oak fermenters) and shapes again.

WHAT MAKES YOUR TERROIR SPECIFIC?

The south Okanagan is the northern tip of the Sonoma desert, and the unique hot days, cool nights, and GDD similar to some of the southern France regions allow us to grow perfectly ripened *Vinifera* grapes with natural acidity remaining in the wines.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE MAIN WINEMAKING CHALLENGES FOR THE REGION?

The main challenge is the shorter growing season in the vineyard. We have to ripen *Vitis Vinifera* in 6 months versus 8 to 9 months for some similar GDD region in the world. Vineyard management with a fine-tuned irrigation system, increased knowledge of the soils is the key to success in the Okanagan.

