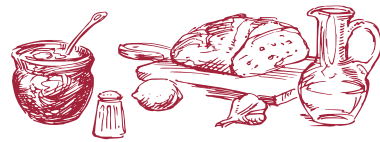


In this month's edition, we will focus on France's four great northern winemaking regions: Champagne, Alsace, the Loire Valley, and Burgundy. Stylistically, their latitude is the only thing that ties them together: a vast diversity of grape varieties call these northern regions home, giving rise to wines of all colors, still and sparkling, dry and sweet. The relatively cool weather, then, is the primary common thread: you can expect wines driven more by lively acidity than ripe fruit, as one might find in the south.

Today, these cool-climate regions are enjoying the most success of their history, helped in part by a recent string of extraordinary vintages that, in ancient times, would be completely unheard-of: with warming temperatures across the globe, achieving adequate ripeness in these septentrional appellations is no longer the exception to the rule of sour, green grapes. Loire wines, often dismissed for their harsh, vegetal nature, now achieve plump ripeness with regularity, while Champagne has come to rely less and less on the use of high *dosages* to round out sharp acidities.

Like Champagne, Alsace has seen a renaissance of quality-oriented, *terroir*-driven winemaking, gradually overcoming decades of unsustainable farming to spotlight an array of talented growers eager to show off the region's full potential. Meanwhile, Burgundy remains Burgundy—humble, quiet, and, despite weather mishaps that have significantly reduced yields in recent years, still clinging to the centuries-old institutions that give rise to some of the finest wines in the world.

Now it's time to dabble with traditional French cuisine—don't hold back on the butter and cream—and dive headfirst into the wines of the North. —*Anthony Lynch*



### NV ROSÉ BRUT *IER CRU* • J. LASSALLE \$66

The wines of J. Lassalle are among the first, and certainly the longest-standing, “grower Champagnes” present in the United States. While the house style is deeply rooted in the *terroir* of Chigny-les-Roses, a small village in the Montagne de Reims, a vigneron's touch—or a vigneronne's, in the case of the three generations of Lassalle women to manage the estate—can also help define a house style. Their twenty-eight-year tradition of “*une femme, un esprit, un style*” (one woman, one spirit, one style) holds true today more than ever: one can point to their use of malolactic fermentations and careful blending of different *climats* and *cépages* as the key to their lush, creamy, sublimely refined Champagnes. The Lassalle women craft a pale, elegant rosé Champagne, all about delicacy and lovely, plush fruit. Aged extensively *sur latte* before disgorgement, this soft, round rosé maintains a great balance of richness and refreshing acidity. It will provide utter satisfaction sipped as an *apéritif*, or all throughout a meal. —*Anthony Lynch*

### 2015 GENTIL D'ALSACE • MEYER-FONNÉ \$18

At Meyer-Fonné, embracing tradition, respecting *terroir*, and making a concerted effort to communicate the countless virtues of their wines has enabled the domaine to succeed in putting Alsace back on the map. The winery and family home is in the village of Katzenthal, known for its distinctive granite soils. Meyer is a master at the art of blending and astutely applies this skill in mixing the wine from various parcels into complex, balanced *cuvées*. Their bottling of Gentil d'Alsace, named after the older meaning of the word, noble (and noble it is), is made up of 50% Riesling and 25% Muscat, with Pinot Blanc, Sylvaner, and Pinot Gris rounding out the blend. You'll find an elegant and chalky nose, on a delicate base of rose petals. But it's the palate of lychees, yellow raspberries, and chamomile that shows the full complexity of this dry, linear wine. —*Julia Issleib*

### 2015 CHABLIS *IER CRU* “FOURCHAUME” • DOMAINE SAVARY \$42

When I asked around about the origin of the name Fourchaume, I expected to hear the notion of a *four*, or “oven” in French, given the sun-drenched exposure of the slope, and *chaume*, meaning the vegetation growing on the scraggy slope between the vines, used for making the traditional thatched roofs in the area. Such a derivation would make sense, given that Fourchaume is celebrated for combining the local Kimmeridgian minerality with an uncommon unctuousness and concentration. Savary likes to drive home the point and show the depth of his Fourchaume by serving it with foie gras, with which it pairs perfectly.

As to the name of the *cru*, I was surprised to discover that it's actually derived from *fourches à homme*, meaning literally “pitchfork of man.” The local lord in medieval times had installed three tall wooden pillars on that slope, invoking the shape of a pitchfork to the locals, which he would use for public hangings. The altitude of the slope and its exposure to the neighboring villages made it an ideal spot to leave the corpses dangling as a constant and vivid reminder of who's in charge. Fourchaume seems to be a *cru* of many surprises. The 2015 is fresh and perfumed, with hints of finely sliced lemons and crushed oyster shells. What more could you ask of your Chablis? Perfect balance? A delicious finish? Sure, it's got all that, too, and more. —*Chris Santini*

### 2013 CHINON “LE CLOS GUILLOT” • BERNARD BAUDRY \$36

This single-vineyard Chinon comes from a producer whose Cabernet Franc bottlings capture the spirit of the Loire Valley like few others in the region. Bernard Baudry has always taken a traditionalist stance to winemaking, with each of his wines bringing out the best of the myriad different soil types and *climats* Chinon has to offer. For Le Clos Guillot, a vineyard of limestone, clay, and silica, the grapes are hand-harvested and the wine is aged for a year in old barrels to give a focused Chinon with plenty of crunchy forest fruit. While approachable young, it also boasts the ideal balance of fresh acidity and grippy tannins to evolve for several years in your cellar. In the meantime, you can appreciate the leafy, herbal tones that characterize this classic rendition of Loire Cabernet. —*Anthony Lynch*

### 2015 SAUMUR CHAMPIGNY “TERRES CHAUDES” • DOMAINE DES ROCHES NEUVES \$40

Very few domaines anywhere in the world can match this one pound for pound in ecological footprint, consistent quality across a wide range of wines, and that all-important combination of intellectual interest with pure deliciousness. A cellar tasting with Thierry Germain in Varrains reminds me of tasting in Burgundy: the barrels are a little larger, and the grape varieties are different, but the way he isolates each parcel and extracts its nuances into each of his *cuvées* is a thing of great beauty. An added bonus is the geological complexity of Saumur—far more diverse than Burgundy, it provides this vigneron/artist an expanded palette with which to paint his masterpieces. Predominantly from the *lieu-dit* of Les Poyeux, this great Cabernet Franc is full-bodied and dense, loaded with spice. While delicious now, this red can easily be tucked away in a good cellar for many years of future drinking pleasure. —*Dixon Brooke*

### 2014 ALOXE-CORTON *IER CRU* “CLOS DU CHAPITRE” • DOMAINE FOLLIN-ARBELET \$76

Franck Follin-Arbelet bottles a pure, unadulterated expression of Aloxé-Corton's *terroir*. Only a few lucky growers work this holy plot, a small *clos* in front of the Aloxé church in the center of town. Franck's style brings out its charms and presence faithfully. His reds ferment naturally in old wooden vats, and are then racked by gravity into barrel for a long and patient *élevage* in the domaine's deep, cool cellar. With a total purity of flavor enhanced by subtle hints of earth, Clos du Chapitre graces the palate with the utmost finesse. While still tightly wound, its sensuous texture and silky-fine tannins impart a graceful, ethereal harmony to the wine. Follin's wines are *le vrai Pinot*, one of the holy grails for wine lovers, Pinot as it can only be produced here in Burgundy. —*Dixon Brooke*

### ROAST CHICKEN WITH MORELS IN TRUFFLED CHAMPAGNE SAUCE

BY ANGÉLINE TEMPLIER, J. LASSALLE

- 1 whole chicken
- Butter
- 2 minced onions
- 2 cloves garlic
- 1 bottle of Champagne
- Bay leaf, thyme
- 1 oz. jar dried morel mushrooms *or* 1 lb fresh morels
- Olive oil
- Salt, pepper
- 2 tablespoons of crème fraîche
- 1 teaspoon truffle oil (*available at specialty grocery stores*)

In a large pot, heat butter and place a whole bird inside it after the butter has melted. Brown the bird quickly on all sides. Take the bird out and put aside on a plate, then add the two minced onions to the pot.

Cook the onions on low heat until they are tender and translucent. Add the chicken, the cloves of garlic, and moisten with the entire bottle of Champagne. Add a few bay leaves and a bit of thyme. Cover and allow to simmer on low heat for 45 minutes.

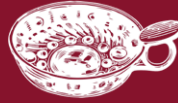
During that time (if using dried morels), rehydrate the dried mushrooms in hot water, changing the water two or three times. Alternatively, thoroughly rinse and cut 1 pound of fresh morels (or other wild mushrooms) into 2-inch pieces.

After cooking the bird for 45 minutes, remove the lid and add the mushrooms to the pot. Cover again and allow it to cook together for a good half an hour.

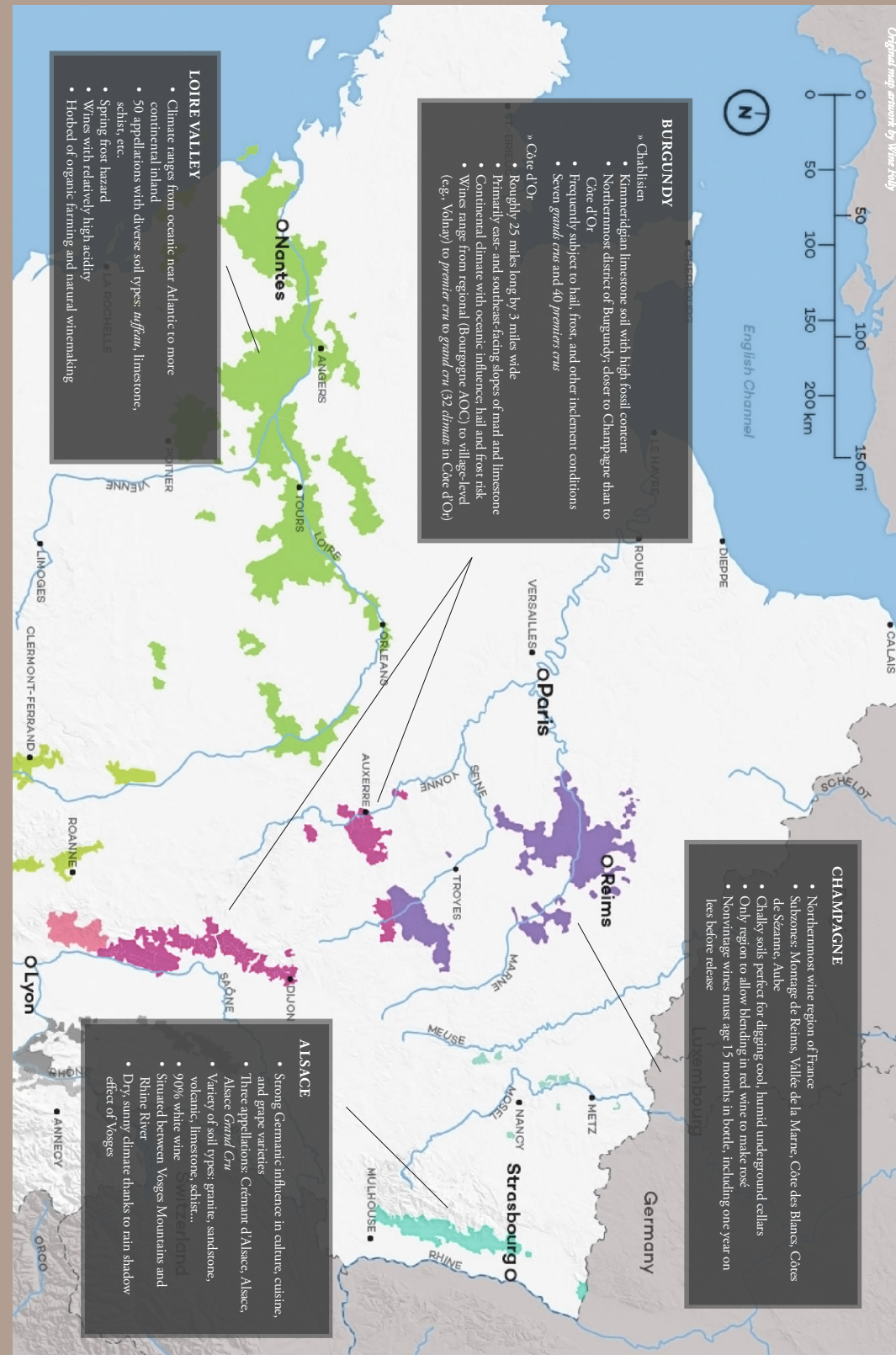
When it's done, remove the bird (and set aside to carve), then incorporate the crème fraîche and truffle oil into the pot with a whisk. Turn off the heat. Carve the bird and coat it with the champagne sauce. If desired, drizzle with additional truffle oil.

*To serve alongside wild rice or fresh pasta with, of course, some Champagne!*





<p><b>NV ROSÉ BRUT IER CRU</b> J. Lassalle <i>Champagne</i></p>	<p>85% Pinot Noir, 10% Chardonnay, 5% Pinot Meunier</p>	<p>50 year-old vines Clay, limestone</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 42–48° F</p>	<p>Pale salmon color; rose petals, pomegranate, raspberry; supple, delicate, elegant</p>	<p>Drink now</p>
<p><b>2015 GENTIL D'ALSACE</b> Meyer-Fonné <i>Alsace</i></p>	<p>50% Riesling, 25% Muscat, 20% Pinot Blanc, 5% Sylvaner and Pinot Gris</p>	<p>Granite, marl</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 46–52° F</p>	<p>Blossoms, exotic fruit, chamomile; crisp, bright, dry</p>	<p>Drink now</p>
<p><b>2015 CHABLIS IER CRU "FOURCHAUME"</b> Domaine Savary <i>Burgundy</i></p>	<p>Chardonnay</p>	<p>30 year-old vines Kimmeridgian limestone</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 46–52° F Decant optional</p>	<p>White and yellow fruit, cream, oyster shell; focused, fleshy, mineral</p>	<p>Drink now through 2022</p>
<p><b>2013 CHINON "LE CLOS GUILLOT"</b> Bernard Baudry <i>Loire</i></p>	<p>Cabernet Franc</p>	<p>Vines planted between 1993 and 2000 Yellow limestone, clay, silica, sand</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 55–60° F Decant 1–2 hrs</p>	<p>Cassis, forest floor, fresh herbs; dense, earthy, with fresh, grippy tannins</p>	<p>Drink now through 2030</p>
<p><b>2015 SAUMUR CHAMPIGNY "TERRES CHAUDES"</b> Domaine des Roches Neuves <i>Loire</i></p>	<p>Cabernet Franc</p>	<p>45 year-old vines Clay, <i>tuffeau</i> limestone</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 55–60° F Decant 1–2 hrs</p>	<p>Floral, pepper, cinnamon spice; deep, full, with fine tannins</p>	<p>Drink now through 2030</p>
<p><b>2014 ALOXE-CORTON IER CRU "CLOS DU CHAPITRE"</b> Domaine Follin-Arbelet <i>Burgundy</i></p>	<p>Pinot Noir</p>	<p>Vines planted in 1960s Clay, limestone</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 60–64° F Decant 1–2 hrs</p>	<p>Bright cherry, red currant, subtle earth; ethereal, sensuous, silky</p>	<p>Drink now through 2035</p>



# CLUB CHEVALIER

MAY 2017



WINES *of the* NORTH