



KERMIT LYNCH WINE MERCHANT

## DOMAINE DE L'ALLIANCE

Country: France

Region: Bordeaux

Appellation(s): Sauternes

Producer: Valérie & Daniel Alibrand

Founded: 2005

Annual Production: Varies greatly vintage-to-vintage

Farming: Organic (Certified starting with 2013 vintage)



In Sauternes, an appellation that is more well-known for wine châteaux than for the talented people that work the soil and make the wine, Valérie and Daniel Alibrand are braving it on their own without the safety net enjoyed by their more established neighbors. KLWM has a tradition of buying direct from the *vigneron*, which is not easy in Bordeaux, where brokers play a dominant role in the dealings and add a percentage to the cost of each bottle. Finding just the right fit in Bordeaux may be rare for us with standards like these, but when it happens, it is a rewarding feeling. It was love-at-first-sip when Kermit tasted the wines of Domaine de l'Alliance, and we are proud to welcome them to our portfolio.

The Alibrands are relatively new to wine, having started Domaine de l'Alliance in 2005, upon the purchase of the vines from Valérie's side of the family. Although Daniel had been an Atlantic fisherman by trade, the two jumped at the opportunity to start their new vocation in Valérie's hometown. Such a leap of faith has not been without its struggles, however the Alibrands have been attracting quite a bit of attention for such newcomers. They farm seven hectares of vineyards in the village of Fargues, known for the eponymous and prestigious wine château to which their land runs adjacent. They are fortunate to have old vines, which impart fabulous complexity to the wine, although it means lower yields than are the norm for Sauternes. (The yields for Sauternes average around 25 hectolitres per hectare, however the Alibrands' vines only get 10-13, like Yquem!) They started farming in *lutte raisonnée* but have recently begun the three-year conversion process to have their vineyards certified as organic. *Alliance* refers to the marriage between man and nature, a fitting homage to this decision, and the salamander on the label pays tribute to the many they regularly find in their vineyard.

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## DOMAINE DE L'ALLIANCE (continued)

<u>Wine</u>	<u>Blend</u>	<u>Vine Age</u>	<u>Soil Type</u>	<u>Vineyard Area*</u>
<b>Sauternes</b>	<i>Varies :</i> 90% Sémillon 10% Sauvignon Blanc	Average 50 years	Gravel, Clay, Sand	7 ha
<b>Bordeaux Sec</b>	50% Sauvignon Blanc 50% Sémillon			
<b>IGP Atlantique Sec Botrytisé "Déclinaison"</b>	Sémillon			
<b>IGP Atlantique Molleux "Sauvé des Eaux"</b>	Sémillon			

\* "ha"=hectares; one hectare equals roughly two and a half acres

## VITICULTURE / VINIFICATION

- Grapes are farmed organically (domaine is in the 3-year conversion process)
- Harvest is done 100% by hand, in anywhere from four to seven passes through the vineyards (depends on the propagation of botrytis for each vintage)
- All fruit goes through a rigorous sorting and selection process, all by hand
- Grapes are pressed very slowly by pneumatic press (between 4-5 hours)
- Fermentation takes place with natural yeasts, in 1-2 year-old barrels
- Wine is also aged in 350-L Bordelaise barrels for 18 months. The Alibrands have also started experimenting with Burgundian barrels, which they believe to produce finer wines
- Wines are bottled in 500-mL bottles and shipped in 12-packs

### 2007 Sauternes:

- Yields were 10 hl/ha, brought in over seven passes
- No new oak – all wine aged in barrels of one passage
- Residual sugar: 144 g/L

### 2008 Sauternes:

- Yields exceptionally low due to frost, at 2.4 hl/ha, brought in over three passes
- Residual sugar: 141 g/L

### 2009 Sauternes:

- Wine is aged in 350-L barrels, half of which are made from Bordelaise oak, the other half from Burgundian oak



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### DOMAINE DE L'ALLIANCE (continued)

#### 2010 Sauternes:

- 20% of wine is aged in new 350-L barrels, 60% in 225-L barrels of one passage, 20% in 225-L barrels of two passages
- Barrels are made from Bordelaise oak
- Residual sugar: 148 g/L

#### Bordeaux Sec:

- Vinified in barrels that have seen at least three passages of wine
- Raised *sur lie* with regular stirring of the lies for a year before bottling

#### IGP Atlantique Sec Botrytisé “Déclinaison”:

- A dry wine made from botrytized grapes
- Grapes were not ripe enough to produce a true “Sauternes”
- Contains Sauternes-tropical aromas but fully dry on the palate
- Vinified and raised in 350-L barrels (new and one passage)

#### IGP Atlantique Molleux “Sauvé des Eaux”:

- A dry wine made from botrytized grapes
- Grapes were not ripe enough to produce a true “Sauternes”
- A similar sweetness to a Vouvray Moelleux
- Vinified in barrels that have seen two or three passages of wine
- Regular stirring of the lies for a year before bottling

#### NV Vin de Franc “Herethique”:

The NV Vin de France “Herethique” is from a single parcel of Sauternes vines that were heavily overrun by botrytis during 2009 harvest. Yields were so low the Alibrands decided to leave the parcel to harvest last as other parcels were more urgent. When they finally had time to pick this parcel, the fruit was at 33% potential alcohol.

The wine slowly fermented for a year in barrel and ended up with 8% alcohol and 600g/L residual sugar. This amount of RS is too much for AOC Sauternes, so it had to be declassified to a Vin de France. The total production was 1 barrel—430 bottles of 500ML. Dixon Brooke describes it as “crazy, like drinking honey”.