

Chenin Blanc that's mineral, faintly honeyed, and mouthwatering. Two and a half hours directly south of Paris, meanwhile, lies Reuilly, one of the Loire's only appellations where you'll find Pinot Gris. Domaine de Reuilly turns this grape into an ethereal and floral rosé.

Two hours southeast of Paris, the region around Auxerre is home to the renowned Chardonnay appellation of Chablis, but also two up-and-coming Pinot Noir villages, Epineuil and Irancy. All three stretch across Kimmeridgian limestone, which yields mineral and mouthwatering red and white Burgundy. While the villages of Epineuil and Irancy might be sleepy, quick stops, the town of Chablis is well worth a full afternoon or even overnight stay.

Finally, less than two hours east of Paris lies the Champagne region. After stopping in Chigny-les-Roses for a tasting of J. Lassalle's exquisite Champagnes, you can head twenty minutes south to Epernay or twenty minutes north to Reims to enjoy some more wine and explore the region's most fascinating cities before heading back to Paris. —TOM WOLF



“MY work requires that I spend time in the wine bars of Paris, hoping to run across something worth bringing back. This is called research. First you have to find a good wine bar because most of them serve indifferent wines. Once I find a good one, the chase is on.”

—KERMIT LYNCH, February 1995 Newsletter

## MARCH 2025 CHEVALIER PARISIAN SATELLITES



## PARISIAN SATELLITES

While Paris might be the first thing that comes to the American mind when we think of France, the capital feels more distant—physically and spiritually—than you might expect when you visit the majority of our growers scattered across the country's rural villages. A vigneron in Bandol, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, or Savoie might ship their wines to Paris a few times a year, but otherwise the City of Light doesn't loom too large in their lives.

A few wine regions, however, feel more within Paris's gravitational pull—so much so that the next time you spend a few days in the capital, you might consider driving or taking a train a couple of hours away to visit them. Start with the Loire Valley, which, for decades, has provided Parisians with joyous, bistro-friendly bottles for remarkably good value. Take the A10/A11 southwest from Paris toward Nantes and the Atlantic coast, and in about three hours you'll arrive at the historic city of Angers and the Savennières appellation. Here, on the northern bank of the Loire River, Château d'Epiré produces



NV ROSÉ BRUT 1ER CRU ♦ J. LASSALLE \$88

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 vigneronnès, 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 vineyard sites and grape varieties 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 supple, 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.



2023 SAVENNIÈRES ♦ CHÂTEAU D’ÉPIRÉ \$30

STANDING IN CHÂTEAU D’ÉPIRÉ’S chilly cellar, housed in a perfectly preserved Romanesque church dating back to the twelfth century, one has the impression that time has stood still. But a quick look around reveals that the clock has ticked as much here as anywhere else, especially when greeted by the young face of Paul Bizard, the fifth and latest generation of Bizards to cultivate the schist-laden vineyards surrounding the château. Paul shows ambition and determination in his work, with fresh ideas to take this historic domaine to the next level. Achieving a purer expression of the strikingly rocky terroir he farms in Savennières has been his primary objective since his first harvest in charge, back in 2018. In this 2023, Chenin Blanc’s floral qualities shine through unabashedly, generously expressing acacia and jasmine. On the palate, a firm core of minerality and racy acidity keep this bone-dry white sharp as a razor, with a lovely fleshiness and trademark hint of walnuts on the finish.



2023 REUILLY PINOT GRIS ♦ DOMAINE DE REUILLY \$24

PINOT GRIS IS A CHAMELEON of a grape, able to give drastically different styles of wine depending on its region of origin and production methods. In the Upper Loire appellation of Reuilly, the traditional treatment yields a pale *vin gris* that reflects the grape’s pinkish tint at ripeness. Vigneron Joseph de Maistre accomplishes this by letting the fruit sit for a few hours in the press during the slow, gentle pressing cycle, ensuring a wine of the utmost delicacy with just the slightest hint of color from limited contact with the skins. This expression of Pinot Gris features a shimmering freshness, its silky texture punctuated by a saline focal point that makes it especially mouthwatering.



2022 CHABLIS “VIEILLES VIGNES” ♦ ROLAND LAVANTUREUX \$51

IN A 1997 NEWSLETTER, Kermit announced the arrival of the latest vintage from Domaine Roland Lavantureux, writing, “If you like real Chablis you will find what you want right here. Save money, too; this is better than most *premiers crus*.” He’s imported Lavantureux for nearly forty years, since Roland’s 1982 vintage. Today Roland’s sons David and Arnaud run the show dutifully. Their acquisitions of *premier cru* and *grand cru* vineyards have elevated the domaine to new heights, and proof of an inherent passion for purity and *goût de terroir* can be found in each bottle.

From their sixty-year-old vines, Arnaud and David have captured the boiled-down essence of Kimmeridgian limestone in this stunning bottling. Everything about this cuvée, from the delicately briny scent of slick oyster shells to the concentrated, pristinely focused sensation on the palate, demonstrates why this domaine has become one of Chablis’ very best. That they can channel razor-sharp freshness with such silky-fine touch is a remarkable feat.



2023 BOURGOGNE EPINEUIL ♦ FAMILLE SAVARY \$32


MADE FROM PINOT NOIR and grown in Kimmeridgian limestone, Savary’s Epineuil is Chablis *rouge* if one were to exist. It benefits from the same cool climate and fossil-laden soil as Chablis, giving us a red Burgundy with a pronounced mineral identity and a lacy, delicate frame. In contrast with its more structured neighbors to the south in the Côtes de Nuits, Epineuil is juicy and bright, with wisps of peppery, herbal notes. For a light lunch with friends, you might open this bottle alongside a platter of sharp and tangy goat cheese and earthy Saint-Nectaire, some thinly sliced prosciutto, and bowls of white beans with tart sorrel.

2019 IRANCY “LA GRANDE CÔTE” ♦ BENOÎT CANTIN \$38

IN THE SPRING OF 2023, a handful of KLWM staff hoisted ourselves into the back of the Cantin family’s pickup truck for what was a decidedly bumpy, but ultimately life-affirming ride around the appellation of Irancy. Bobbing atop the cargo bed with Benoît’s son Félicien as our guide, we took in the fresh air, and witnessed first hand the magnificence of this appellation. Irancy, which is planted mostly to Pinot Noir, happens to showcase the same Kimmeridgian limestone soils as Chablis. One of the more splendid *lieux-dits* we visited was a primely positioned parcel called La Grande Côte, which spreads across a steep, south-facing hillside and produces wines with ageability, structure, and complexity you might not expect from this nearly forgotten appellation of northern Burgundy.

Arriving back at the winery to taste through their lineup, Benoît, who is captain of the local hunting club, had prepared a spread of homemade boar pâté, alongside perfectly ripened Époisses and other hearty snacks. A standout of the tasting, the Grande Côte was the most brambly of the bunch, vigorous, and gourmand with sour plum, fig, and a touch of smoke. Featuring just a trace of Irancy’s claim to fame, the local César grape, the wine ages in barrel and can easily be cellared for an amount of time beyond what its price would suggest—that is to say, decades.

To visit the Cantin family in Irancy is to fall in love with them, their charm, their passion, and the contagious spirit they have for making great wines from a lesser-known appellation. Tradition runs deep at this winery that has been passed down from father to son since the mid-1800s. Ask Benoît’s father Bernard what he would have been if not a vigneron, and he says he never even considered the possibility! He recalls that you would have found him at fourteen years old pushing a wheelbarrow behind a horse plow, and he wouldn’t have it any other way.

					
NV Rosé Brut 1er Cru J. Lassalle CHAMPAGNE	70% Pinot Noir, 15% Chardonnay, 15% Pinot Meunier	50-year-old vines Clay, limestone	Serve cold 48–52°F  Do not decant	Strawberries, cream, brioche  Plush, rich, elegant	Drink now through 2030
2023 Savennières Château d’Épiré LOIRE	Chenin Blanc	Vines planted 1965–2013  Schist	Serve cold 48–52°F  Decant optional	Honey, Meyer lemon, stone fruit  Chiseled, mineral, lively	Drink now through 2028
2023 Reuilly Pinot Gris Domaine de Reuilly LOIRE	Pinot Gris	10-year-old vines Siliceous gravel	Serve cold 48–52°F  Decant optional	Bergamot, white peach, lychee  Vivid, saline, versatile at table	Drink now
2022 Chablis “Vieilles Vignes” Roland Lavantureux BURGUNDY	Chardonnay	60-year-old vines Clay, Kimmeridgian limestone	Serve cold 48–52°F  Decant optional	Citrus skin, chalk, brine  Textural, concentrated, precise	Drink now through 2030
2023 Bourgogne Epineuil Famille Savary BURGUNDY	Pinot Noir	25-year-old vines Kimmeridgian limestone	Serve cool/ 56–60°F  Decant optional	Cherry, earth, orchard blossoms  Bright, elegant, bistro worthy	Drink now through 2030
2019 Irancy “La Grande Côte” Benoît Cantin BURGUNDY	Pinot Noir	30- to 40-year- old vines Kimmeridgian limestone	Serve slightly cool/ 58–62°F  Decant optional	Forest berries, wet stone, spice box  Classy, herbal, fresh	Drink now through 2035

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