

THE  
NEXT  
GENERATION



*André et Michel Guenard*

CHIGNIN - BERGERON



SAVOIE

COTEAU DE TORMERY

CHEVALIER

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# THE NEXT GENERA- TION

A new generation has come of age in the vineyards and cellars across France. In the past several years, we have seen numerous vigneronns and vigneronnes retire, handing the keys to the *cave* to sons and daughters keen on honoring their parents' legacies.

Inheriting a family domaine is no small endeavor, especially knowing that some of these properties have been continuously running for a very long time. For instance, Château d'Epiré—now in the hands of the young Paul Bizard—has been in the family since 1882, while brothers Vincent and Philippe Guillemot represent the ninth generation to head their Burgundy domaine. The pressure is none the lesser for other vigneronns featured here whose forebears were veritable pioneers in their respective regions. Claire Laval of Gombaude-Guillet, for example, became the first grower in Pomerol to embrace organic, and later biodynamic, viticulture—all while being one of few women to manage a château of such prestige—before passing the reins to her son, Olivier Techer. Meanwhile, Jean-Paul Thévenet's status as an influential "Gang of Four" Morgon producer, an early icon of natural wine, certainly leaves big shoes for his son, Charly, to fill.

The obstacles these **young vigneronns** face extend far beyond the inevitable stress of being compared to who came before. More than vineyards, a winery, and a label, they are inheriting a whole new world in which to operate. The climate in which they grow their grapes bears little resemblance to what their parents started with, forcing them to adapt and think critically. Global tastes are shifting, leaving them important decisions as to what style of wine they should strive to make. Technology is allowing for new methods of working in the vineyard and cellar, for better or for worse. The internet and social media have upended old ways of selling and marketing wine, with today's globalized world bringing producers closer than ever to their clients all over the world. And that is all without mentioning the unexpected catastrophes through which they must navigate, such as the unprecedented challenges posed by international trade disputes and a global pandemic.

And yet, these budding vigneronns have taken their responsibilities with a steady hand and shown tremendous ambition and **youthful energy**. They demonstrate that it is possible to respect the "house style" their parents and grandparents established, all while bringing new touches that increase the purity and expressiveness of their wines. They have responded valiantly to the obstacles they face—climatic or otherwise—to lead the family business through thick and thin, always with an excellent bottle of wine to show for it.

The producers featured in this month's club have all been part of the KLWM family for many years, but each has recently undergone a **changing of the guard**, so to speak, in which the young generation has taken charge. It is with respect and admiration—and a deep thirst—that we tip our hats and raise our glasses to *la nouvelle génération*.

—ANTHONY LYNCH



Paul Bizard, holding a 1981 photo of Epiré's former cellarmaster. © GAIL SKOFF

## 2018 SAVOIE CHIGNIN “VIEILLES VIGNES”

◆ ANDRÉ ET MICHEL QUENARD \$22

THE VILLAGE OF CHIGNIN is among Savoie’s top *crus*, and this family-run domaine—now headed by Guillaume Quenard, the fourth successive generation to tackle these daunting slopes—has a history of doing this *terroir* justice.

Jacquère takes on an intensely mineral expression in these “soils” of limestone scree—rocks that have broken off the mountain over tens of thousands of years of erosion. This is particularly true of this cuvée from seventy-year-old vines that have set their roots deep into this stony pile of rubble. The nose is delightfully fruity with nectarine, peach, and citrus, along with a talc-like dusting of minerals. On the palate, you’ll find the same succulent fruit backed by bright acidity and a cool-climate snappiness as pure as melted snow. Few things are more satisfying as an apéritif than a chilled glass of this Alpine elixir.



## 2018 SAVENNIÈRES

◆ CHÂTEAU D’EPIRÉ \$25

STANDING IN CHÂTEAU D’EPIRÉ’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 on the horizon to take this historic domaine to the next level. Any changes he should implement would be with the goal of achieving a purer expression of the strikingly rocky *terroir* he farms in Savennières, and this was also his primary objective with his first harvest in charge, the 2018.

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.

Things may be evolving at Epiré with the passage of time, and the changing of the guard certainly suggests good things to come from this literal church of Chenin Blanc. We can count on this domaine now as much as ever to deliver bracingly fresh, stony Savennières, just the way we like it.

## 2018 CHABLIS “VAUPRIN”

◆ ROLAND LAVANTUREUX \$44

FOUNDER ROLAND LAVANTUREUX’S SONS Arnaud and David are turning heads in Chablis and all over the world as they have taken this already very reliable domaine to new heights in record time. Among their many brilliant moves was isolating their best village parcel in their hometown of Lignorelles



—a steep, southerly exposed slope—and bottling it separately to create this single-vineyard wine that shows off the potential of a previously unheralded site. Vauprin showcases Chardonnay’s ability to produce a wine that is simultaneously both round and taut in this mighty northern Burgundian *terroir*. This is *premier cru* quality, folks.

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## 2018 RÉGNIÉ “GRAIN & GRANIT”

◆ JEAN-PAUL ET CHARLY THÉVENET \$37

THE SON OF “GANG OF FOUR” Morgon producer Jean-Paul Thévenet, Charly had early exposure to the world of organic farming and natural winemaking. Passionate about the family business, he struck out on his own as soon as the opportunity presented itself, purchasing a parcel of eighty-year-old vines in the neighboring *cru* of Régnié. Today, he works side by side with his father, collaborating in the production of both wines.

As with the Morgon, Charly’s Régnié grapes are harvested when fully ripe, by hand, then vinified via whole-cluster fermentation, in typical Beaujolais fashion. The wine is aged in concrete tanks before bottling without fining or filtration. The 2018 vintage gives us a rich, bold, and spicy Régnié, saturated with luscious fruit and earthy funk. Serve it with grilled sausages, or let it sit in your cellar for three or four more years before uncorking.



## 2017 SAVIGNY AUX SERPENTIÈRES 1ER CRU

◆ DOMAINE PIERRE GUILLEMOT \$55

THE GUILLEMOT FAMILY is a staple of Savigny-lès-Beaune. Kermit's first visit to the domaine in 1985 introduced him to the characterful, mustachioed Pierre Guillemot; today, Pierre's grandsons Vincent and Philippe carry on the tradition.

The bulk of the Guillemot holdings lies in the Serpentières vineyard, the source of Savigny's most complex, long-lived, and beguilingly aromatic wines. This 2017 represents a superb vintage for red Burgundies, full of depth, elegance, and floral charm. Serpentières offers a sweet, seductive perfume of wild raspberry and clove, with a bright acidity and sappy viscosity that seem to characterize all the domaine's cuvées. Delicious yet tightly wound, this fine Pinot will live many, many years.

The family proudly opened a 1947 during a recent visit, from two barrels their great-grandfather chose to bottle rather than sell for a new car. Someone gave him the sage advice that the wine would last longer than the car.



## 2015 POMEROL

◆ CHÂTEAU GOMBAUDE-GUILLOT \$100

SINCE TAKING OVER MANAGEMENT of the domaine in 2010, Olivier Techer has contributed his energetic, youthful outlook to this already groundbreaking estate. He has built on the pioneering work of his mother, Claire Laval, who was the first in Pomerol to farm organically. Olivier has cemented this commitment to sustainability by acquiring biodynamic certification, and has experimented in depth with the nuances of sulfur, aging vessels, and blending.



The châteaux's *grand vin*, however, maintains a flavor profile as classic as can be, with a rich, velvety texture and vivid fruit suggesting blackberry and plum. The incredible depth, power, and fine but grippingly youthful tannins are textbook Pomerol, in the style upon which this great appellation built its reputation. Old vintages of Gombaude-Guilgot dazzle with aromas of truffle, cocoa, and turned earth, and this 2015 is perfect for the cellar. Already approachable, it will improve for twenty years or more.





<p>2018 Savoie Chignin "Vieilles Vignes" <i>André et Michel Quenard</i> SAVOIE</p>	Jacquère	<p>70-plus-year-old vines Limestone scree</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52° F Do not decant</p>	<p>Nectarine, peach, wildflowers, wet stone Crystalline, focused, stony, crisp</p>	Drink now
<p>2018 Savennières <i>Château d'Epiré</i> LOIRE</p>	Chenin Blanc	<p>30- to 55-year-old vines Schist</p>	<p>Serve <i>cold</i> 48–52° F Decant optional</p>	<p>Acacia blossom, jasmine, citrus, walnut Lively, bracing, fleshy, mouthwatering</p>	Drink now
<p>2018 Chablis "Vauprin" <i>Roland Lavantureux</i> BURGUNDY</p>	Chardonnay	<p>25- to 45-year-old vines Clay, Kimmeridgian limestone</p>	<p>Serve <i>cool</i> 50–54° F Decant optional</p>	<p>Lemon curd, oyster shell, apple, pear Broad, round, snappy, saline</p>	Drink now through 2030
<p>2018 Régnié "Grain &amp; Granit" <i>Jean-Paul et Charly Thévenet</i> BEAUJOLAIS</p>	Gamay	<p>Vines planted in 1932 and 1946 Granite</p>	<p>Serve <i>cool</i> 54–60° F Decant optional</p>	<p>Fresh berries, brambly fruit, violets, earthy spices Juicy, bright, rustic, gritty</p>	Drink now through 2025
<p>2017 Savigny Aux Serpentières 1er Cru <i>Domaine Pierre Guillemot</i> BURGUNDY</p>	Pinot Noir	<p>55-year-old vines Marl</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 56–60° F Decant optional</p>	<p>Sour cherry, roses, raspberry, pine Elegant, silky, seductive, sappy</p>	Drink now through 2040
<p>2015 Pomerol <i>Château Gombaude-Guillet</i> BORDEAUX</p>	85% Merlot, 15% Cabernet Franc	<p>40-year-old vines Clay, gravel</p>	<p>Serve <i>slightly cool</i> 58–62° F Decant recommended</p>	<p>Plum, turned earth, bitter cocoa, blackberry Rich, deep, dense, grippy</p>	Drink now through 2040

upper far left: David and Arnaud Lavantureux © DOMAINE LAVANTUREAUX

lower far left: Jean-Paul and Charly Thévenet © CHARLY THÉVENET

near left: Gombaude-Guillet's vineyards in Pomerol © STEVE WATERS

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Vincent Guillemot  
© ADRIEL TAQUECHEL

How would you compare your winemaking style with that of your father and grandfather?

**VINCENT GUILLEMOT:** My father and grandfather made a rather rustic style of wine with more severe tannins. My brother Philippe and I have changed two things: we do cold “prefermentations” for ten days during which we cover each tank with a tarp, then add CO<sub>2</sub> between the grapes and the tarp for a sort of semi-carbonic maceration. We also use 30–50% whole clusters.

The length of the *cuvaison* [vatting] is a bit longer—one month total between cold maceration and the end of fermentation. We control the temperature of each tank in order to extend the length of vinification to extract only the good tannins from the grape skins, and to give more depth to the wine.

How would you compare your winemaking style with that of your parents?

**OLIVIER TECHER:** I try to make the kind of wines I like, testing different aging vessels and lowering sulfur levels, which naturally modifies the style.

Little by little I am diminishing the proportion of wood aging, prioritizing tank and amphora. I imagine this is perceptible, yielding wines that are perhaps more accessible in their youth, less austere, and more *gourmand*.

Tell us honestly . . .

who makes the better wines?

**OLIVIER:** I tasted the 1990 recently, it’s a marvelous wine after thirty years . . . I’ll have to answer that at the end of my career!



Olivier Techer © GARRETT PIERCE