

We recently sat down with David Shiverick to talk about Les Chais du Vieux Bourg, one of the properties we represent out of Jura, France. Owned by Ludwig Bindernagel and Natalie Eigenschenck, these first-generation winemakers have made quite an impression on this small, close-knit winemaking region.

“Ludwig, originally from Bavaria, is a trained architect. While he was working in Paris he met Natalie and they quickly fell in love. They wanted to make wine in Burgundy, but the land was too expensive, so they settled in the Jura. Ludwig took to the area very well and he’s rapidly become a big star there - people love him.

In an old community like that you might think that they might not be accepting of a new person, but it’s been no problem. There’s so much infighting in this old community in Jura that he’s a breath of fresh air. He has an electrifying smile that wins you over so easily. He has this beautiful, cherubic face and smile, and he’s such a fair-minded person, no angeriness, just an amazing guy. He makes everyone happy, everyone likes the guy.”

When David first met Ludwig, he thought it would be a quick trip to his tasting room. He quickly learned otherwise.

“I figured we’d have 15 wines to taste, that’s what he said, so I said ‘okay, maybe 45 minutes to an hour.’ No. He and his wife served 15 courses of food and a different course for each wine. And this is the way they think about wine in the Jura. That it’s very important that it be matched up to the cuisine. No one just drinks wine by itself.”

The oxidative quality of many of the wines of Jura often create an impediment to consumers used to a different style of wine. While many of Ludwig’s wine aren’t oxidative, even those that are prove to be an excellent match to the traditional cuisine of the region.

“...they’re very difficult wines to learn about and enjoy, because you can’t just drink the wine by itself. It tastes a little sour and it has a unique curry profile that you never taste in any other wines, it’s quite pleasing. But match it with a washed-rind cheese and it’s delicious. It’s also perfect with the local specialty of chicken in a cream sauce with morel mushrooms.”

Ludwig’s latest acquisition is property in the vaunted Château-Chalon, the home of Vin Jaune. Land in the appellation is incredibly difficult to come by, with every available plot owned by people whose roots in the area often go back generations. Thanks to Ludwig’s considerable charm however, he was able to get a foothold in this historic place.

“It’s a beautiful site. It’s the name of a medieval village that sits on top of what is in essence an atoll, with a village right on top like a beret, and the vineyards go around the hill on the east, south and west sides. It’s almost entirely planted and you can never buy vineyard sites in Chalon.

But one day about four years ago, there was a knock at his door, and there was a young man who introduced himself and informed Ludwig that his father has land in Château-Chalon and he had sent the young man there because he would like to sell it to Ludwig – who was understandably overwhelmed. Ludwig asked ‘why do you think he wants to sell to me, I don’t really know your father?’ To which the

young man replied 'because he knows everyone else and he doesn't think the other vigneron play fair. And he sees you and sees that you're so fair and he would love to find a way to sell this land to you.' So here he got the most perfect gift and it fell right into his lap."

In addition to Ludwig's winemaking, the family also purchased an old hôtel particulier (similar to a bed & breakfast), which was once home to a family with eight children. There, Nathalie cooks an inclusive breakfast and optional seasonal dinner. With their completely natural approach to winemaking and veneration to the Jura's ways and traditions, Ludwig and Natalie are attracting attention for all the right reasons.