

# VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

*By John Gilman*

*January – February 2018*

*Number Eighty-Seven*

## **Recently- Tasted Loire Valley Wines Spring 2020 In The Garden of France**

*By John Gilman*

### **2018 Muscadet et Sèvre Maine “Sur Lies”- Domaine des Quatre Routes (Éric Poiron)**

The 2018 Muscadet from Éric Poiron’s Domaine des Quatre Routes is produced from twenty-five year-old vines and aged sur lies until March or April following the vintage, prior to bottling. The 2018 offers up a lovely bouquet of lemon, lime, breadfruit, lovely, gentle leesy tones, a fine base of soil and a topnote of dried flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp, full-bodied and nicely soil inflective, with a good core, zesty acids and a long, fairly complex and zesty finish. This is a good, solid bottle of Muscadet that will be even better with another years’ worth of bottle age. 2020-2030. **(88 points)**

### **2017 Savennières- Domaine Laffourcade**

The 2017 Savennières from Domaine Laffourcade is a good young wine in the making, offering up a still quite primary bouquet of quince, a touch of fresh pineapple, lanolin, a good base of soil, citrus peel and a whisper of the honeycomb to come with bottle age. On the palate the wine is full-bodied, focused and nicely chalky on the palate, with a good core and cut, zesty acids and a long, closed and still fairly stubbornly adolescent finish. This needs some bottle age to relax and blossom, but I like the backend length and bounce and I suspect it will be a good bottle of Savennières when it starts to stir. But, be patient, because today it is a bit grumpy. 2024- 2040. **(88+ points)**

### **2016 Clos des Quarts Anjou Blanc- Domaine Pascal Laffourcade**

The 2016 Clos des Quarts Anjou Blanc from Pascal Laffourcade is quite concentrated from the frosts in the spring and the attendant tiny crop size. The bouquet offers up scents of quince, lanolin, orange peel and a good base of soil tones. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with a completely dry profile, sound acids and good length and grip on the currently closed and adolescent finish. This has plenty of depth and length, but it is pretty shut down right now and could do with a couple of years in the cellar to start to blossom. 2022-2035+. **(89 points)**

### **2016 Anjou Rouge- Château Perray Jouannet (Pascal Laffourcade)**

The 2016 Anjou Rouge from Château Perray Jouannet hails from vines planted in the appellation of Coteaux du Layon (which of course is reserved for chenin blanc-based wines). This is almost entirely cabernet franc, with just a small percentage of cabernet sauvignon included in the cuvée. The wine is aged for just under six months in older casks prior to blending and bottling. The 2016 version offers up fine depth and nascent complexity in its bouquet of dark berries, cassis, espresso, woodsmoke, a fine base of soil and a beautiful topnote of balsam bough. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and nicely balanced, with a superb core, some firm, but well-integrated tannins, fine focus and grip and a long, soil-driven and ageworthy finish. This needs a few years to soften up its backend tannins, but all of the constituent components are in place here for an excellent bottle in three or four more years. Great value!

**2024-2050. (91 points)**

### **2018 Chinon “Les Terraces”- Domaine Béatrice et Pascal Lambert**

Béatrice and Pascal Lambert started their fourteen hectare domaine in Cravant-lès- Côteaux in 1997. They started farming organically in the early 2000s, were certified by Ecocert in 2005 and have since moved onto biodynamics. Their Les Terraces bottling is made from vines that range from ten to twenty-five years of age, grown primarily on gravelly soils. The wine is fermented and aged in cement tanks prior to bottling. The 2018 version comes in at 14.1 percent octane in this hot summer and offers up a nicely ripe and youthful bouquet of cassis, sweet dark berries, cigar smoke, gravelly soil tones and a touch of tree bark. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, complex and rock solid at the core, with fine focus and balance, ripe, firm and well-integrated tannins and impressive length and grip on the promising finish. As this does not see any oak during its élevage, it is pretty tightly-knit when first opened right now and needs fifteen minutes in decanter to start to blossom and show its personality. It deserves a few years in the cellar to really get rolling, but has impressive stuffing and fine balance and is going to be an excellent example of Chinon with sufficient bottle age. 2026-2055+. **(90+ points)**

### **2015 Chinon “Les Perruches”- Domaine Béatrice et Pascal Lambert**

The vineyard of Les Perruches has a very stony signature to it, as the clay and flint soils are peppered with stones. The Lamberts do not have particularly old vines here, as the oldest are twenty-five years of age, and the wine is fermented and raised in cement vats prior to bottling. The 2015 Les Perruches is just starting to blossom at five years of age, offering up a fine nose of cassis, black cherries, cigar wrapper, stony soil tones, espresso and cigar ash. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied, focused and sappy at the core, with good soil signature and grip, ripe, softening tannins and excellent length and grip on the complex and very well-balanced finish. As this wine is aged in cement during its élevage, it is slower to unfold than a comparable wine would be raised in oak, as it has not seen the same micro-oxygenation prior to bottling. Consequently, the wine is still on the young side today, but it is impressively precise and deep at the core and is aging very gracefully and is already starting to show its potential quite vividly. It is approachable today, albeit, still a bit chewy. 2020-2050+. **(92 points)**

### **2014 Chinon “Les Puys”- Domaine Béatrice et Pascal Lambert**

The Les Puys bottling from Béatrice and Pascal Lambert hails almost entirely from a lieu à dit called Les Puys de Rochette in the village of Chinon (soils of clay and limestone), though they do add a couple of other tasty small plots from their holdings in Cravant-lès-Côteaux to the cuvée. This is one wine from the Lamberts that sees a bit of oak during its élevage, as it is fermented in a combination of oak vats and cement and then raised in six hundred liter demi-muids for fully two years, prior to racking back into tank for six more months of élevage prior to bottling, so the 2014 is the current release of this bottling of Chinon. The wine offers up a refined aromatic constellation of black cherries, sweet dark berries, tobacco leaf, a beautiful base of chalky soil tones, gentle notes of smoky oak, a dollop of menthol and a topnote of cigar smoke. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and more suave structurally than the 2015 Les Perruches (due to its sojourn in demi-muids), with a fine core of fruit, excellent soil signature and grip and a long, ripely tannic and very nicely balanced finish. This is good juice that deserves just a few more years of bottle age to fully blossom. 2024-2050+. **(92 points)**

### **2018 Antidote Rouge- Domaine Bertrand Galbrun (Vin de France)**

Bertrand Galbrun is based in Bourgueil, so even though this wine is officially a Vin de France appellation, I have listed it here. His vineyards are certified biodynamic by Demeter and though this is an entry level wine from him, the fruit is harvested by hand, foot-trodden, fermented with indigenous yeasts and aged in concrete vats prior to bottling without added SO<sub>2</sub>. The 2018 Antidote Rouge from Monsieur Galbrun is composed of a blend of sixty percent grolleau and forty percent cabernet franc and offers up a bright and inviting nose of red and black cherries, fresh thyme, a nice base of soil, a hint of tree bark and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is fullish, complex and nicely light on its feet, with good intensity of flavor, just a bit of backend tannin and sneaky length and grip on the well-balanced finish. This comes in just a whisper over twelve percent octane in 2018 and is a delightful wine and a good value. 2020-2028. **(88 points)**

### **2018 Bourgueil “Chatrois”- Domaine Bertrand Galbrun**

The 2018 Bourgueil “Chatrois” from Bertrand Galbrun is a lovely example of the vintage. Like all of Monsieur Galbrun’s vineyards, these are farmed biodynamically and certified by Demeter. The vines were planted in 1992, so they are just starting to really come into their own now, and Bertrand foot trods the grapes, uses only indigenous yeasts and raises the wine in concrete prior to bottling. The 2018 Chatrois is nicely ripe at 13.5 percent octane and offers up a deep and complex bouquet of cassis, dark berries, cigar smoke, a touch of tree bark, dark soil tones and a bit of French roast in the upper register. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied and rock solid at the core, with lovely detail and balance, fine-grained tannins and a long, nascently complex and classic finish. This is very good Bourgueil in the making, and though it is quite approachable already, I would be inclined to tuck it away in the cellar for a handful of years and really let it blossom properly. 20202-2040. **(90+ points)**

### **2018 Sancerre “la Maison d’Anais”- Domaine A. et A. Chaumeau (Bué)**

The 2018 Sancerre “la Maison d’Anais” from Domaine Chaumeau is a very pretty example of the vintage, offering up a vibrant bouquet of gooseberry, fresh-squeezed lime, a beautiful base of Bué’s chalky limestone soil, cut grass and a topnote of white flowers. On the palate the wine is crisp,

full-bodied, focused and quite deep at the core, with bright acids, good focus and grip and a long, ripe and still bright and zesty finish. This has the deep, ripe fruit of the vintage, but better than average acids for 2018, which gives the wine fine lift on the backend. This is a very good bottle of Sancerre. 2020-2025. **(91 points)**

**2018 Sancerre “Florès”- Domaine Vincent Pinard (Bué)**

Domaine Vincent Pinard in Bué is now run by Vincent’s children, Florent and Clémentine Pinard, and their 2018 Sancerre “Florès” is a lovely example of the vintage. The fruit for this cuvée hails from vines planted between 1982 and 1987 on pure terres blanches, so they are reaching a very good age now and the Pinards ferment this bottling half in stainless steel and half in cask for added depth and complexity. The 2018 version offers up a bright and classic nose of gooseberry, lime, fresh-cut grass, a lovely base of chalky soil tones and a topnote of citrus peel. On the palate the wine is ripe, full-bodied and nicely soil-driven, with a plump core of vibrant fruit, sound framing acids and a long, complex and nicely balanced finish. Like many 2018 Sancerre, this will probably not make old bones, but it will be very tasty during its prime. 2020-2025. **(89 points)**

**2018 Sancerre “les Comtesses”- Domaine Paul Thomas (Chavignol)**

Raphaël Thomas now runs the family domaine in Chavignol, having taken over after his father Paul passed away suddenly back in 2000. His les Comtesses bottling is made from twenty-five year-old vines and fermented and raised in stainless steel, with an extended period of aging on its fine lees to add more complexity. The 2018 Comtesses is deep and beautifully inflected with minerality on the nose, wafting from the glass in a mix of lime, green apple, complex Kimmeridgian minerality, gentle botanicals and citrus peel. On the palate the wine is deep, full-bodied, focused and still youthful, with a fine core of fruit, excellent transparency and grip, good acids and a long, complex and promising finish. This is fairly primary in personality today, though already quite tasty, but it will have another layer of complexity emerge with a year or two of bottle age. A fine example. 2020-2030. **(91+ points)**

