

21 DAYS TO WINE: DAY 16

THE DEFINITION OF TERROIR IN WINE

WINE: Chablis Vincent Mothe 2018

SCENTS: Chalk, Matches, Gravel

SUPPLIES: A white napkin or piece of white paper (to observe)

21 DAYS TO WINE

REVIEW

Refer back to Day 14 to review the definition of minerality.

- Types of mineral notes
- How to describe them
- Where they come from

CHARDONNAY AND CHABLIS

PRONUNCIATION: *Shar-Dough-Nay //Sha-Blee*

Chardonnay is consistently among the top five most planted grape varieties in the world. It produces white wines and is amenable to a variety of winemaking styles. While you may think of Chardonnay as having quite distinctive aromas, it is considered a neutral grape variety, which means it takes on the character of the surrounding area, climate, as well as winemaking techniques like oak aging or secondary fermentation (sparkling wines).

Chardonnay is an incredibly versatile and resilient grape. The same grape variety produces bone dry and mineral driven Chablis (White Burgundy), tropical-fruit packed, buttery bouquets in the Central Coast of California, cool green and sleek versions in New Zealand and northern Italy, and it is one of the principle grapes of the Champagne blend (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier).

CHABLIS

Also known as White Burgundy, wines carrying the Chablis appellation are some of the world's most coveted Chardonnays, known for distinctive mineral notes (flint, chalk, limestone), and fresh bright fruit aromas.

CHABLIS GROWING AND PRODUCTION AREA (TERROIR)

Chablis is located in the northernmost part of Burgundy. There, a chalky outcrop ridge runs all the way top the Atlantic in the West, creating a soil type called Kimmeridge, which is also famous for its effects on nearby appellations Sancerre (Loire Valley) and Champagne.

UNIQUE FLAVORS AND AROMAS

The soil is believed to impart ultra distinctive flinty, steely notes on the wines. The cool climate produces wines rich in acidity with a stiff backbone (structure) that enables the wines to age for years and evolve.

Chablis is also known for a long, mouthwatering mineral finish.

TERROIR

The word Terroir comes from one single French word, which in English translates to three words with different meanings: **land, terrain, and soil.**

- Land belongs to you and means something to you. It is also a specific location: ex. "This land is our land.," "We've got some land."



- Terrain refers to physical components, like rocky terrain, or a hilly terrain. Think of topographical maps that look 3D. That's terrain.
- Then there is soil itself, which we might describe as fertile, or mineral-rich, or arid and sandy or rocky.

The concept of terroir in winetasting is that all of these natural elements influence the characteristics of the wine.

WINE BEGINS IN THE VINEYARD.

When a wine is described as an island wine, as having coastal influence, or distinctive alpine qualities. That is terroir. It is the life story of your wine, from grape to glass. Imagine yourself growing up. What and who were the influences that made you who you are today?

SCIENCE OF TERROIR

There is very little hard evidence that limestone soil is guaranteed to produce mineral notes, or that wines made from grapes grown on the slopes of an active volcano will have a powerful sulfur scent. And yet they exist. Some wines are so famous for what we call “distinctive terroir,” scientific facts don't matter because the sensory experience is so extraordinary.

IMPORTANCE OF TERROIR

As we have discussed since Day 1, wine tasting is a multisensory and absolutely romantic adventure. The concept of tasting a wine that is so representative of place and time that it is capable of transporting you to a place or a time is very powerful. It is also why people are willing to spend so much on a bottle of wine that tastes and smells like a place they recognize.

WINE NOTES

WINERY

Guy Mothe began with one tiny parcel of vineyard in Fontenay-pres-Chablis that he had inherited. He has since passed on ownership to his own son Vincent, and the style remains traditional. Unoaked and pure with an emphasis on terroir and local character.

WINEMAKING

Hand harvested grapes are crushed and fermented and aged in stainless steel.

TASTING NOTES

LOOK: Crystalline white gold

SMELL: Intense and distinctive chalky aromas, citrus notes of lemon, lime and orange, fruity notes of stone fruit (peach, apricot)

TASTE: Vibrant and zingy on the palate, with a long mineral finish with traces of citrus

DISCUSS

A quintessential Chablis and beautiful example of how Chardonnay can taste from a specific terroir and without the influence of oak barrel fermentation or aging.

Cheers!
ANNIE

my notes

