

AMBIENT • WINE

'3C' TROIS CÉPAGE NV EXTRA BRUT
CHAMPAGNE, BOURGEOIS-DIAZ, CHAMPAGNE,
PINOT NOIR, PINOT MEUNIER, CHARDONNAY

We're very excited to share this natural Champagne, grown and produced by Jérôme Bourgeois-Diaz, a 4th generation vigneron who has been making some of the most mesmerizing Champagne in Crouttes-sur-Marne. Jérôme adopts a biodynamic approach, with wild plants growing amongst his vines, a lush and stark contrast to the monocultures of the big Maisons that surround. Harvesting is done by ancient methods, according to lunar cycles and all by hand. Grapes are pressed on a traditional manual press with a team of three people using a method called *retroussé*, which Jérôme says is absolutely essential for the most gentle extraction. The wines are made only with indigenous yeasts, to give a true sense of terroir. A sense of terroir may not be rare in Champagne, but the use of wild yeasts is.

"3C" is a Cuvée made to reflect the full terroir of the Domaine. It is a blend of the three Champagne varieties, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, and Chardonnay, for a perfect blend of fruit and minerality. It is very dry, a Brut Nature, with no residual sugar. Complex nose of citrus fruits, white fruit and walnuts. A taut, fresh palate, with a beautiful body, and rich aromatics, evocative of candied lemon. Makes an ideal aperitif and a versatile partner to food.

(Wine list price £90)

'MINERVOIS' ROC DU PIERRE 2016, DOMAINE DE
COURBISSAC, LANGUEDOC, FRANCE

SYRAH, MOURVÈDRE

This domain was first made biodynamic by German film producer Reinhard Brundig, which explains why Jim Jarmusch is apparently a fan (they made *Only Lovers Left Alive* together). Brundig was drawn to the place by the complexity of the soil, its old and carefully tended vines, and its geography. Near to Montagne Noire, cool breezes blow down the mountains and help keep grapes from over-ripening in the long, hot Languedoc summers.

Nestled in a valley at high altitudes, the old vineyards of Courbissac escaped replanting. The old vines and their mature roots help make a more complex wine. Unlike much wine from Minervois, the terroir of clay and limestone leads to a fresh and fruity wine. Today the Domaine is led by Brunnhilde Claux. She hand-harvests each variety and plot of land separately. The grapes are hand-selected. Clusters are then layered and pressed by foot to squeeze out trapped oxygen, before their nine to twelve days of maceration. The wine is aged in traditional 40l foudre casks.

(Wine list price £64)

BIANCO TOSCANA 2019, COLOMBAIA,
TUSCANY, ITALY

TREBBIANO, MALVASIA

Colombaia is a small family winery. Dante and Helena work the vineyard as a big garden, just four-hectare estate near Colle Val d'Elsa, following biodynamic methods. Each year they produce no more than 10,000 bottles, and no more than a few thousand reach these shores.

The soil is full of fossilised shells. The vines are surrounded by the house and the cave, where the wines are made. The activity in the cave is held in full respect of the fruit keeping intervention as little as possible, acting softly and sensitively.

Their Bianco Toscano is typical of the old macerated white wines of Tuscany, that predate commercial winemaking. Today it tastes very modern, but this only goes to show how far we have veered from these traditional methods. The wine is macerated on the skins for 30 days, giving tannins, structure and colour,

The extraction process is slow and careful, keeping the vital cycles of fermentation, without clarifying, filtering or stabilizing. The fermentation is spontaneous with the ambient yeasts naturally present on the grapes and in the cave. The wine is unfiltered with no added sulphites. This is true terroir-driven wine. Nothing added, nothing taken away, nothing from outside the farm.

(Wine list price £70)

'ESPONTANEO' 2018, LUDOVIC ENGELVIN,
LANGUEDOC, FRANCE

GRENACHE NOIR

Sommelier Ludovic Engelvin was an apprentice winemaker in the Loire Valley where he trained under Didier Dagueneau. When he eventually returned to his native Languedoc, it was to open a wine shop. Ludo decided to try making his own wine on the side and purchased the hectare of Grenache Noir vines where the grapes for this wine are grown, originally in 1955, now 65 years old.

Several years later, he sold his shop and began making wine on a full-time basis. Not bad for someone who found his own way into winemaking, having no family history in the trade. Ludo is now famed for this wine, his Blanc de Noir, a white wine made from red grapes. He uses no mechanical intervention in the process, and a herd of sheep help keep the soil healthy. If the vines ever need treatment, only essential oils and herbal remedies are used. Bottling is further designed to maintain the quality of the final product, using only gravity and no mechanics in the process. Grapes are hand-harvested and directly pressed. Natural fermentation with indigenous yeasts and no sulphur added. Ageing in stainless steel vats.

(Wine list price £55)

'GRAND LARGUE' 2018, LA PETITE BAIGNEUSE,
ROUSSILLON, FRANCE

LLEDONER PELUT, CARIGNAN

Philippe Wies left behind the city life, full of pressures and demands, and followed the cool breeze all the way to Maury, near Perpignan on the Mediterranean coast.

He works a 13-hectare estate nestled between the dramatic landscape of the Pyrenees and scrubland in the far Southwest of France. It represents the highest altitude vineyard in the Maury appellation, which means greater freshness and ventilation, and all the better to keep an eye fixed on the sea, which sits on the horizon 20 kilometres away.

Slow and long press of young grapes on schist in vallée de Maury. The altitude of these vines brings a cool sea breeze bearing fruit full of freshness and juicy crunch. The wine is made unfiltered, unfiltered and with no added sulphites.

(Wine list price £62)

GRAIN DE FOLIE, 2018, DOMAINE CAUSSE
MARINES, GAILLAC, FRANCE

PETIT MANSENG, VERDANEL

Domaine Causse Marines wines are a perfect reflection of their terroir, and the traditional means of their production makes for unique, authentic favours. But for Patrice Lascarret,

natural wine doesn't mean something rustic or unrefined: "We can make organic wine without having long hair and smoking grass! One can do natural wines that don't smell like a cow's fart."

This wine definitely does not smell like that. It is flowers and quince on the nose.

A biodynamic dessert wine made with obscure local varieties. This is an unctuous and complexly sweet wine. Made from noble rot grapes with late harvesting, they are left on the vines later to dry out to concentrate the juices, the *passerillage* technique. The wine has a beautiful balance of sweetness and acid. It is made with very low sulphur addition and none through the ageing process which takes place in old barriques for about 18 months. They only make this wine when the conditions at harvest are just right. It's not been made for several vintages, so we are very pleased to be able to include it in the box. This is going to improve any cheeseboard. It might be the best bottle of wine you drink all Christmas.

(Wine list price £58)