



Welcome to the CellarHand newsletter for December 2016. Here's a little taste of what's going on this month...

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CHRISTMAS BUSINESS

MAGNUM MAYHEM

We've said it before: cracking open a magnum has to be one of the wine world's most selfless acts. That's why we've compiled a complete list of the 1.5-litre bottles we have on hand. It's a joy just to look at. The domestic list includes top wines from **clos Clare, Cullen, Glaetzer** and **Mount Mary**, while the imports include **Jacquesson, Louis Michel, André Bonhomme, Piron, Pittnauer, Moric** and **Zorah**. And then all those statuesque Riesling and Grüner mags from **Emmerich Knoll, F.X. Pichler, Dr Loosen, Heymann-Löwenstein, Georg Breuer, Dönnhoff, A. Christmann** and **Wittmann**.

Please contact CellarHand on ed@cellarhand.com.au for more details on availability and reviews, and to find out where you can get hold of them.

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SPARKLING IDEAS

We'll avoid the clichés for once and get straight to the point: The occasion calls for bubbles, and bubbles we got. Below is a list of options from Australia, New Zealand and further afield.

Another little piece of news is that **Jacquesson Cuvée No. 739** followed in the footsteps of its predecessor 738 by being included in the **Halliday Top 100 Wines** list. That review has been included below. Please note, too, that we have a wide range of Jacquesson's late-disgorged and single-site vintage wines available, dating back to the 90s.

NV Airlie Bank Sparkling Brut Yarra Valley RRP \$23

The non-vintage Airlie Bank sparkling is a blend of 64% Chardonnay and 36% Pinot Noir, sourced from within the Yarra Valley and produced by Tim Shand and the team at Punt Road. Small portions were barrel fermented and given extended time on lees to build texture and complexity. Pale gold in appearance with a fine persistent bead. It has aromas of citrus fruits and subtle apricot, complemented by a doughy, bready complexity. It's fresh and vibrant with a focussed palate structure of apple blossom and citrus characters with complex brioche notes.



2011 Punt Road Vintage Sparkling Yarra Valley RRP \$31

The base wine is a blend of 86% chardonnay (Block 12, clone I10V1) and 14% pinot noir (Block 13, clone 777), hand harvested in the early morning from Punt Road's estate vineyard. 2011 was an excellent vintage for sparkling fruit, with vigorous canopies and mild, cool conditions. Crop levels were slightly below average, leading to fruit intensity and acid levels not seen since 2006. Winemaker Tim Shand took a shorter free run cut at the press to minimise phenolic extraction. A small portion of the must was fermented in old French hogsheads. The team blended with the aim of making a chardonnay dominant wine, what with 2011 being an outstanding year for whites in general (and Chardonnay the Yarra's strongest white variety). The wine was tiraged in September of 2011, and spent nearly four years in bottle on lees

in an underground cellar at a temperature of around 7 degrees Celsius. It was disgorged in July of 2015. It shows flint, brioche and hazelnut kernel on the nose. The palate has a very fine bead. It's elegant, harmonious and has a zing of lemon zest to finish.

NV Dominique Piron Crémant de Bourgogne Burgundy RRP \$37

Crémant de Bourgogne is a hit-and-miss appellation but can be a great buy when you find something well made that taps into the impeccable Chardonnay potential of the region. This is 100% Chardonnay sourced from the village of Corcelles, from soils that are a mix of clay and limestone. The vines face north-northwest, ensuring slow ripening and good acid retention. Made in the traditional method over 12 months, the wine is given only a very light dosage at final bottling.

NV Stefano Lubiana Sparkling Brut Tasmania RRP \$41

Stefano Lubiana is Tasmania's first biodynamic certified estate and specialises in Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and sparkling wines. This traditional-method fizz is a 50:50 blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. It's predominantly estate-grown with some select parcels of Derwent Valley fruit. The majority of fruit is from the 2013 vintage, with roughly 15% reserve wines from 2011 and 2012. It was vinified in a blend of small oak, large oak and stainless steel and given full malolactic conversion. After secondary fermentation in the bottle it spent at least two years on lees and one year on cork pre-release. The natural viticulture, low yields and incorporation of reserve wines create a sparkling wine that tastes fruit-pure, intense, rich, creamy and complex.

2014 Chalmers Felicitas Sparkling Fiano Heathcote RRP \$41

Chalmers Felicitas is made from 100% hand-harvested Fiano grown on the Cambrian soils of the

family's Heathcote vineyard. Fermented cool in stainless steel tank, the wine was tiraged in April 2014, then spent 15 months on yeast lees in the bottle prior to being riddled and disgorged in July 2015. The wine showed a perfect natural balance so it required no dosage at disgorging. The 2014 Chalmers Felicitas sits somewhere between a premium dry prosecco and a blanc de blancs in style. It has a distinctly Italianate palate with the savouriness and texture you would expect from Fiano. It shows aromas of lemon, lime, pear and grapefruit. The palate is creamy and crisp with flinty minerality and great length.



2013 Chalmers Lambrusco Heathcote RRP \$41

Chalmers Lambrusco is 100% Lambrusco Maestri grown on the Cambrian soils at the Heathcote vineyard. It's intensely fragrant showing purple florals, tobacco, blackcurrant fruit and sweet spices of vanilla, cinnamon and clove. The palate shows bright fruit with savoury notes, refreshing acidity and a lasting tannic grip and fine persistent fizz.

NV Bründlmayer Brut Sekt Kamptal RRP \$62

Willi Bründlmayer take great pride in his sparkling wine program and has rightly won a fine reputation for it. This wine is a blend of 40% Pinot Noir and 30% Chardonnay, with the balance made up of Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc and Grüner Veltliner. Hand-selected bunches are pressed and the must ferments in stainless steel where it also undergoes malolactic fermentation before being racked into used 300-litre or 2500-litre Austrian oak barrels, with about 10% of the lees included. In the following year, the base wine is undergoes secondary fermentation in bottle, with 18 months' yeast contact before hand riddling. Disgorgement is done without freezing the bottleneck. A 1983 late-harvest Pinot Blanc is used as dosage, giving this a very unique tone.

2011 Contratto Millesimato Piedmont RRP \$62

Hand-riddled metodo classico sparkling wine made from 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Chardonnay. The grapes are handpicked, selected and kept separate according to their vineyard location. In the winery they are cooled down before pressing and then the juice is fermented dry in temperature-controlled tanks. Here the wines stay to mature until May after the harvest, then are blended and bottled for the second fermentation. A wonderfully stylish and savoury traditional-method sparkling wine with dominant pinot characteristics. Scented with fragrant notes of flowers, berries, cherries and fresh bakery yeasts, it's backed by meaty, nutty and creamy complexity with underlying notes of cinnamon. Medium to full-bodied, it's round and generous, with a smooth, vinous presence extending all down the palate. Very sophisticated and elegant, it's underpinned by a refined extract that provides a restrained sense of length.

2013 Hattingley Valley Rosé England RRP \$88

*Rather delicate red fruit. Very crisp and zesty and super-tight. Finesse in texture and purity. Really fruity and long and zingy. I think this has more to give, given time, though I have not tasted older vintages to be able to support this expectation. 16.5+/20 **Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com** May 2016*



Jacquesson Cuvée No. 739 Champagne RRP \$115

57% Chardonnay, 21% Pinot Noir and 22% Pinot Meunier, its base year of 2011 contributing 69%, reserve wines 31% - all detailed on the back label. Given the very wet '11 vintage, this has no business being as good as it is. Its almond, citrus and mineral notes have extreme length, as unexpected as it is welcome. 94 points. **James Halliday Top 100 Wines, The Weekend Australian** November 2016

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AUSTRALIA & NZ

RIVERLORE FLOWS

This could be very handy indeed: A fresh and flavoursome Pinot Grigio from the Rose family. This is a pioneer producer of Marlborough's Wairau sub-region, established back in 1978. This estate-grown grigio showcases all that's auspicious about Marlborough as a place to grow wine grapes. It has a balance of purity and intensity set around alluring aromatics, distinctive fruit and harmonious acidity. Fresh, stylish and great value.



2016 Riverlore Pinot Grigio RRP \$22

Delicate aromas of ripe pears and white pepper under-pinned by floral aromatics. A refreshing palate with a moreish finish of peaches and cream.

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ENTER ENTAV

"A new wine from Coonawarra. Words we don't say every day," was how **Campbell Mattinson** of **The Wine Front** introduced it in his recent review. "Presented fresh from vintage, and as a 'drink now'. Ditto."

You can see where he's coming from. This region is esteemed the world over as one of the finest for the production of the world's most popular grape variety – but innovation and, some might cruelly say, relevance have not been Coonawarra's strong suit.



Cabernet most assuredly is its strong suit, and Balnaves sits unquestionably among the first growths of the district. Winemaker Pete Bissell is one of the sharpest minds and surest hands there, and he's been making the Balnaves wines for more than 20 years now. If anyone's going to have a brainwave and blow you away, it's them. Enter Entav. The name derives from the acronym for l'Établissement National Technique pour l'Amélioration de la Viticulture in the South of France. It selects, grows and tests the best clones from France. As luck would have it, some of this cutting edge Cabernet and Merlot has made it to

Australia. The Balnaves family is trialling three of these clones to see how they go next to their current material.

They combined their two new Entav Cabernet clones with their new Petit Verdot (15%)

plantings to make a bright young red for early consumption. The grapes were co-fermented in a 10-tonne open-top fermenter. The wine was matured in a combination of stainless steel and new, large-format French oak for five months before bottling in October 2016.

It's the first in a series of experimental wines to be released by Balnaves, hence the "1" on the label. Progressive, impressive and quite delightful.

2016 Balnaves Entav Cabernet Sauvignon / Petit Verdot RRP \$31

*You certainly would want to drink it now. It tastes lovely. So fresh. So fruit driven. So heightened by florals and unhindered by tannin, though still with excellent shape and focus. Charge your glass for another round. Berried flavours on full, exuberant show. Stitches of bay leaf. Redcurrant. Smells and tastes the goods. 91 points. **Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front** November 2016*

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FRANKLAND FÊTED AGAIN

Well done again to those legends at Frankland Estate. Their Isolation Ridge Riesling was included in **James Halliday's** list of the **Top 100 Wines**. Time and again this vineyard reinforces its reputation as hallowed turf of Australian wine. The review is replicated below. Just to keep things even, it's included alongside the write-up for Poison Hill, seeing as both were tied on points. Together they're an irresistible example of what Great Southern – and the Smith Cullam crew – can do with this variety.

2015 Frankland Estate Isolation Ridge Riesling RRP \$41

*Detailed is the single word essence of Isolation Ridge Riesling with its citrus and wild flower blossom aromas and its compelling, perfectly balanced, ballerina-light imprint on the mouth. Is its own style, shaped by a determination to make riesling of world class. 97 points. **James Halliday Top 100 Wines, The Weekend Australian** November 2016*

2015 Frankland Estate Poison Hill Riesling RRP \$41

*There is always (of course) a difference between the Poison Hill and Isolation Ridge, but seldom is it more obvious than this year. This is immediate and naked power, with a cascade of lime and grapefruit flavours rushing through the palate, finish and aftertaste. Ripe, to be sure, but how enjoyable. It's an orange and apples comparison, yet with the same outcome. 97 points. **James Halliday, Halliday Wine Companion 2017** August, 2016*

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IMPORTS

BY GEORGE, LUCAS!

Sometimes you wonder if it's Jedi mind games. But no, F.X. Pichler just has a sixth sense about these exceptional sites the family's tended so closely for so long. It helps, too, that Lucas Pichler is ahead of the curve on questions of style. "The trend is away from exaggeration and toward frankness and wholesomeness," he told **Vinous Media's David Schildknecht** this time last year. Lucas was talking about the general shift in fine wine and dining, and how it was reflected by the best growers in the Wachau.

Certainly the comment is apt to describe the arc of this fabulous estate since Lucas has taken the

reins. Purity, finesse and finely-etched lines have become the hallmark of F.X. Pichler. Austria regards 2015 as an “excellent vintage with marvellous depth of fruit” for white wines on this stretch of the Danube. There’s no doubt that this leading light of the Wachau was one of those that shone brightest. In the words of **Wine Advocate’s Stephan Reinhardt**, “Lucas Pichler has produced another outstanding collection.”

2015 F.X. Pichler Riesling Loibner Burgstall Federspiel RRP \$62

Just a hint of lime to make sure you know it's Riesling. Pichler's is a cool spot (Burgstall is warm and gneiss at a low level). Riesling shows the lees impact more starkly. Wachau white pepper spice. So juicy and open. Fresh. And all those yellow fruits and spice that we see from this producer. – Sam Hooper, CellarHand

2015 F.X. Pichler Riesling Kellerberg Smaragd RRP \$144

*The 2015 Riesling Smaragd Dürnsteiner Kellerberg displays a clear, ripe and concentrated bouquet of white fruits intermixed with crystalline flavors of the weathered gneiss and granite soils. Full-bodied, piquant and full of tension, this is a stunningly clear and refreshing Smaragd from a warm year. The alcohol is well hidden and the finish is very long and vibrantly fresh. There is a lot of mineral tension and music in this wine that should be cellared for another five or six years. 93-94 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate June 2016***



2015 F.X. Pichler Riesling M Smaragd RRP \$152

MAGNUM RRP \$304

A really delicious yellow-fruited, supple, powerful and complex wine. – Sam Hooper, CellarHand

2015 F.X. Pichler Riesling Unendlich Smaragd RRP \$320

MAGNUM RRP \$740

*The 2015 Riesling Smaragd Unendlich follows the 2013. Sourced from the Loibenberg (50%), Kellerberg (25%) and Höhereck (25%) in the middle of November and assembled after the fermentation to age in a 3,500-liter oak vat for seven or eight months on the fine lees, this is very intense but precise and concentrated Riesling with a creamy texture and intense and well-structured fruit. The finish of this full-bodied and firmly structured wine is very long and complex. Well-dosed power here. 94-95 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate June 2016***

2015 F.X. Pichler Grüner Veltliner Frauenweingarten Federspiel RRP \$47

*Always the lightest wine from FX Pichler, the 2015 Grüner Veltliner Federspiel Loibner Frauenweingarten is sourced from the flat vineyards in Dürnstein, Oberloiben and Unterloiben. The wine starts with a clear, ripe and intense fruit bouquet which leads to a medium-bodied, lovely juicy and fruit-intense palate with a vivacious, perfectly ripe acidity. Very digestible and ready to drink. 88 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate June 2016***

2015 F.X. Pichler Grüner Veltliner Loibenberg Smaragd RRP \$113

375ml RRP \$68

From probably the warmest vineyard of the Wachau, the 2015 Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Loibner Loibenberg is a full-bodied, rich and intense, very juicy, but also piquant and mineral Veltliner with tobacco flavors on the nose. Dense and with an old-vines intensity, this Loibenberg offers ripe yellow stone fruits with a tropical touch, but is also very well structured and finishes with a long

*and salty aftertaste. An impressive wine. 92-93 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

2015 F.X. Pichler Grüner Veltliner M Smaragd RRP \$144

375ml RRP \$80

MAGNUM RRP \$304

*The 2015 Grüner Veltliner Smaragd M is a selection of the ripest (overripe) grapes from the Loibenberg, Kellerberg and Liebenberg. Harvested in the last week of November and macerated for 20 to 24 hours, this is a rich and creamy textured yet elegant and vibrantly fresh Veltliner monument with finesse and purity and a long and tension-filled finish. Great salinity and concentration. An elegant and expressive wine for XXL drinkers. 94-95 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

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KNOLL ON A ROLL



“One of the icon wine producers of Austria with one of the icon wine labels of the wine world,” wrote **Mike Bennie** of **The Wine Front** earlier this year, adding: “These are excellent wines.” **Bennie** was talking about one of Knoll's 2014 Grüners; we're on the fantastic '15s now. Still, he's bang on when it comes to the respect that Emmerich Knoll commands (not just on account of the forbidding label) and the brilliance of these aromatic whites.

There's an element of truth to the notion that the famous names of the Wachau don't start cheap. However, it's also clear that the best are expressive and precise right out of the blocks. Take **Wine Advocate's Stephan**

Reinhardt on the Loibner Riesling Federspiel: “A beauty that would be a cash cow in any restaurant that offers it by the glass. Drink it young, but calculate a bottle per person.” Or, indeed, the Grüner Veltliner Steinfeder from Loiben: “a stunningly characterful Veltliner in the elegant and aromatic Knoll style”.

Behind the dramatic apparition of Saint Urban lie definition and intrigue that grows as you move up the scale to the single vineyards and Vinothek bottlings. Thus the 2015 Riesling Vinothekfüllung is “a powerful and concentrated Riesling with a piquant acidity and a remarkable elegance and tension”, while the GV from Loibenberg is “a stunning GV that is pretty coolish and finesse-full, not just for the vintage but also the vineyard”.

2015 Emmerich Knoll Loibner Riesling Federspiel RRP \$52

*The 2015 Loibner Riesling Federspiel is lovely aromatic and ripe on the elegant and very distinguished nose (as if it were a Muskateller). Medium-bodied, round and piquant this is an expressive, salty and stimulating Riesling that's just perfect to drink today. With 12.5% alcohol, this wine is on the upper level of the light Federspiel category. A beauty that would be a cash cow in any restaurant that offers it by the glass. Drink it young, but calculate a bottle per person. 89 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

2015 Emmerich Knoll Riesling Schütt Smaragd RRP \$128

MAGNUM RRP \$288

*The 2015 Dürnsteiner Riesling Ried Schütt Smaragd offers a super ripe and intense, herbal-flavored bouquet of ripe golden delicious apples. Full-bodied, elegant and fresh this is a powerful and pretty rich Riesling with grip and tension, but it lacks the coolish character of the Kellerberg or even the Steinertal. 91-92 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

2015 Emmerich Knoll Riesling Smaragd Vinothekfüllung RRP \$144

MAGNUM RRP \$288

*The 2015 Loibner Riesling Smaragd Vinothekfüllung was picked very late (after the rain) and with a significant portion of botrytis. Rich and elegant on the palate, this is a powerful and concentrated Riesling with a piquant acidity and a remarkable elegance and tension. The finish is long and firm. 92-93 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

2015 Emmerich Knoll Loibner Grüner Veltliner Steinfeder RRP \$41

*Sourced from vineyards close to the Danube and picked in later September, the 2015 Loibner Grüner Veltliner Steinfeder displays a clear and characterful bouquet with intensely sweet herbal flavors and a good fruit ripeness. Clear, fresh and elegant on the palate, this is a stunningly characterful Veltliner in the elegant and aromatic Knoll style. The yield was pretty good, otherwise the must weight would have been too much for the lightest wine category of the Vinea Wachau. 87 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

2015 Emmerich Knoll Loibner Grüner Veltliner Federspiel RRP \$47

*The 2015 Loibner Grüner Veltliner Federspiel displays an intense and elegant bouquet of ripe and overripe apples. Medium-bodied, fresh and fruity, this is an elegant and pretty intense Veltliner with grip and tension. Although it tastes like a rather full-bodied Federspiel it has been bottled with a rather moderate alcohol level of 12% alcohol. 88 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

2015 Emmerich Knoll Loibenberg Grüner Veltliner Smaragd RRP \$93

*From the lower part of the cru, the 2015 Loibner Grüner Veltliner Ried Loibenberg Smaragd offers a well-defined, flinty and elegant bouquet of ripe white fruit aromas. Full-bodied, intense and mineral, this is an elegant and firmly structured wine that is fresher and more pure than the Loibenberg Riesling. A stunning GV that is pretty coolish and finesse-full, not just for the vintage but also the vineyard. 91-93 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

2015 Emmerich Knoll Grüner Veltliner Vinothekfüllung Smaragd RRP \$128

MAGNUM RRP \$256

*The 2015 Loibner Grüner Veltliner Smaragd Vinothekfüllung is clear and intense on the nose, very ripe, bit still precise and smoky in its white-fruit aromas. Full-bodied, rich and elegant this is a velvet-textured wine with a lot of power and a bit of bitter flavors in the finish. 91-93 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** June 2016*

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MORE MÂCON

“Really, It’s just a joy to drink,” wrote **The Wine Front’s Campbell Mattinson**. “It sits at the wonderful place where freshness shakes hands with charisma.” Why not come with us to that

place? It's called Viré-Clessé in the Mâconnais, and your personal guide is André Bonhomme. You may recall our excitement at this gem CellarHand's Patrick and Lak discovered on their expedition to seek out great-value, great Burgundy earlier this year. We shipped the first wines from Bonhomme a few months back. As we'd hoped, they've been a hit. Superbly expressive of their origin, they marry great Chardonnay flavour with terrific energy and personality. No fewer than five iterations of Viré-Clessé and surrounds are here to join the three already being gleefully slurped here in Australia (though please note that the '14 Viré-Clessé Vieilles Vignes is only available in half bottles and magnums). Don't turn your back on Mâcon; this is your passport to deliciously affordable white Burgundy.

2015 André Bonhomme Mâcon-Villages Vieilles Vignes RRP \$38

*Seamless and energetic. There's a combination for you. It's frisky but svelte with lemongrass, citrus and white peach flavours gently melting into wet slate. There's a hint of honeysuckle here, almost into lactose but not quite. Really, it's just a joy to drink; it sits at the wonderful place where freshness shakes hands with charisma. 92+ points **Campbell Mattinson, The Wine Front** November 2016*

2015 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Pierres Blanches RRP \$45

*(13.8% alcohol; done entirely in stainless steel and bottled at the end of July; from 40-year-old vines located near Bonhomme's Mâcon-Villages, but with more calcaire and little white stones in the soil): Pale yellow-gold. Strongly mineral-dominated aroma of flinty silex. Concentrated and complex on the palate; richer and deeper than the Mâcon-Villages Vieilles Vignes, communicating a tactile saline quality. Incidentally, the yield here was a generous 55 hectoliters per hectare but this borderline-austere wine will need time to soften in bottle and blossom. These vines are planted on a south/southeast-facing slope at an altitude of 384 meters; lower-altitude vines on both sides of this parcel are classified as Mâcon-Villages. 90 points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** October 2016*

2014 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Vieilles Vignes

375ml RRP \$31

MAGNUM RRP \$115

*(bottled in June; the vines here are 75 to 95 years old; made entirely in barriques, 20% new, then moved into stainless steel for its second year of aging): Pale straw-yellow. Riper, yellower and more exotic on the nose than the cuvée Spéciale, with aromas of apricot, honey and fresh porcini. Rich and firm on the palate, with enticing fruit flavors of peach, apricot and quince complemented by lightly saline minerality. Not a sweet or fleshy style, and nicely dry at 1.8 grams per liter of residual sugar. Finishes firm and persistent, with a strong impression of extract and brisk citrusy grip. "This wine is our ID card," noted Palthey, adding that his grandfather was best known for this cuvée. 91 points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** October 2016*



2015 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Cuvée Spéciale RRP \$50

375ml RRP \$31

*(began in 70% oak, none new, and 30% stainless steel, and was then moved entirely into stainless steel for the second year; from 45-to-75-year-old vines): Bright light yellow. Quince and citrus peel aromas convey an impression of tangy acidity. Quite concentrated, tactile and full but also linear and backward, conveying a distinctly dry impression to its flavors of citrus and fresh stone fruits and saline minerality. This is the estate's second wine, priced between the Brenillons and Vieilles Vignes bottlings. This juicy, youthfully edgy wine has the spine to age. 89-91 points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** October 2016*

2015 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Les Brenillons RRP \$57

*(from a 45-year-old planting on the north side of Viré; done in foudres "like in Alsace," according to Palthey, who added that these vines on shallow, chalky white soil with marl look even older than they are): Bright yellow. Wet-stone minerality with hints of peach and orange zest on the nose. Penetrating, linear wine with flavors of orange and crushed stone complemented by a discreet touch of oak and sexy hints of botanical herbs. Finishes youthfully austere and persistent, with noteworthy lift to its firm lemon, orange and wild mint flavors, plus a suggestion of smoke that will doubtless become more pronounced as the wine ages. There's something Alsace-like about this bottling, which is a big success in 2015. This fruit went into an Hors Classe Cuvée Spéciale bottling until 1999, when Palthey's grandfather André Bonhomme started bottling it separately. But the wine was still called Viré-Clessé Hors Classe until Palthey took over in 2008. Palthey noted that the estate's Viré-Clessé Cuvée Spéciale bottling is rounder and also more complex owing to its greater vine age. 91 points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** October 2016*

2014 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Les Prêtres de Quintaine RRP \$78

MAGNUM RRP \$176

*(Palthey estimated that about 40% of these 103-year-old vines on marly soil with red clay still remain, with the rest having been replanted over the years; production here is still 25 to 30 hectoliters per hectare; done entirely in pièces, 25% new, the rest one, two and three years old; bottled two days before my visit): Bright, light yellow. Sexy aromas of yellow fruits, smoky minerality, marzipan and white truffle. Large-scaled and ripe but dry, filling the mouth without leaving any impression of weight. More large than long in the typical style of Quintaine, whose wines are known for their residual sugar. Finishes lively and gripping, with a light touch and lingering notes of fresh apricot and lemon. Needs time. Today I prefer this wine to the 2013 version, which was extremely tight when I first tasted it but is now revealing its botrytis influence. 91 points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** October 2016*

2014 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Le Côteau de l'Épinet RRP \$88

MAGNUM RRP \$200

*(just 800 bottles made from 95-year-old vines; the same élevage and oak as the Prêtres de Quintaine): Pale yellow-gold color. Very ripe aromas of peach, apricot and smoky minerality are a bit more dynamic than those of the Prêtres de Quintaine. Unctuous on entry, then tighter in the middle palate, with very ripe stone fruit flavors accented by spicy oak. This thick but energetic wine shows a distinctly creamy quality for the vintage. Finishes with slowly mounting length and considerable power. This mid-slope climat on red clay soil with small stones in the extreme north of the appellation is one of its best sites, says Palthey, who added that the calcaire here is far under the surface. He added that his 2014s are actually lower in acidity than his 2015s. 92 points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** October 2016*

2014 André Bonhomme Viré-Clessé Les Hauts des Ménards RRP \$88

MAGNUM RRP \$200

*Bright yellow with a gold tinge. Sexy, expressive, very ripe scents of dried apricot, ripe peach, white pepper and hazelnut. Very rich, smooth, ripe and silky but youthfully unforthcoming in the middle palate. This plush wine finishes powerful and very long, with a touch of citrus peel firmness and a tannic quality I did not pick up in the other 2014s at this address. Less harmonious than the other 2014 Viré-Clessé examples but a complete wine nevertheless (like the Prêtres de Quintaine and Côteau de l'Épinet, this was bottled two days prior to my visit). 91+ points. **Stephen Tanzer, Vinous Media** October 2016*

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MEURSAULT WITH A TWIST

Domaine Matrot, like Bonhomme, was a discovery from the ProWein foray earlier this year. Like their Mâconnais counterpart, they also made a good splash when they first arrived a few months ago. So much so that the 2014 Meursault under screwcap disappeared fast. The same went for the Meursault 1er Cru Charmes.

You know where we're going with this, don't you? They're back – same vintage, same silk, same seduction. Just to even things up - given this month's dearth of imported red news – we're including a reminder of the very good Bourgogne Rouge (also under screwcap) produced by this same family.



2014 Matrot Meursault RRP \$136 screwcap

An ultra-fresh and attractively well-layered nose features notes of hazelnut, pear, white peach and floral scents. There is once again good volume coupled with excellent delineation on the tension and mineral-inflected medium-bodied flavors that deliver really lovely depth and length for a villages level wine. Recommended. 89 points. Allen Meadows, Burghound

2014 Matrot Meursault 1er Cru Charmes RRP \$200

*Delicate note of struck match. The same on the palate but also a little creamy. Direct and piercing fresh fruit, good length and very pure. 17/20 **Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com***

2013 Matrot Bourgogne Rouge RRP \$56 screwcap

*The expressive nose is very pinot in character with its almost entirely red berry fruit aromas that reveal hints of spice and earth. The delicious, textured, vibrant and detailed flavors exude a slight salinity on the clean, fruity and linear finish. This is clearly intended to be enjoyed young. 86 points. **Allen Meadows, Burghound***

2014 Matrot Bourgogne Rouge RRP \$56 screwcap

*Screwcap. Lightish cherry red. Juicy and with that tightness that I like from this combination of closure and wine style. Excellent example of generic burgundy – has lively fruit, fine tannins and unexpected length, all at a good price. Fine tannins are just right with the lightish body. 15.5/20 **Julia Harding MW, jancisrobinson.com** January 2016*

EVERYDAY GERMANS

December is summer and summer is Riesling and, coincidentally, a certain container landed in Australia on the 1st day of the month. In it were Riesling wines from 2015, a wonderful year for the great regions of Germany.

It would be germane, then, to pour these liberally. Here's our pick of the sub-\$40 newbies.

2015 Dr Loosen 'Dr L' Dry Riesling Mosel RRP \$24

*The 2015er Riesling Dry Dr. L is fermented and matured in stainless steel. It offers a very attractive and direct nose of pear, spices and herbs, leaving an elegantly mineral and fruity feel in the long nice finish. 2017-2020. 87 points. **Jean Fisch & David Rayer, Mosel Fine Wines** October 2016*

NV Dr Loosen Riesling Sekt Mosel RRP \$37

"Well-made aromatic fizz," Julia Harding of jancisrobinson.com calls it. Dr. L Sparkling Riesling is 100% pure Riesling, the crisp, fruity grape that has made German wine famous for centuries. It is made using the Charmat method, where the second fermentation is done in a pressurised tank to keep the bubbles in the wine. This method produces bright, clean sparkling wines that have pure fruit to the fore. As is usual with Riesling a juicy touch of sweetness was left in the wine to balance the naturally brisk acidity. This is a refreshing, fruit-driven sparkler that's gives invigorating pleasure any time.

2015 Dr Loosen Bernkasteler Lay Riesling Kabinett Mosel RRP \$38

*The 2015er Bernkasteler Lay Kabinett was made with fruit harvested at a modest 82° Oechsle. It offers a gorgeous nose of fresh herbs, white peach and spices. The wine dances on the palate, with good presence and elegance. The finish is airy and vibrant. This is a deliciously well-made Kabinett 2025-2035. 91 points. **Jean Fisch & David Rayer, Mosel Fine Wines** October 2016*

2015 Georg Breuer Rudesheim Riesling Rheingau RRP \$37

Talented Theresa Breuer is the Germany's reigning winemaker of the year, as judged by influential Falstaff. Her wines are exceedingly elegant and sometimes a little shy in youth, but this village wine from the Breuer's hometown of Rudesheim is the perfect introduction. It brings strong minerality and stone fruit aromas from the steep slate and quartz soil, direct, energetic and appetising.

2015 A. Christmann Riesling Pfalz RRP \$37

*Christmann's 2015 Riesling Trocken offers a pure, pretty deep and subtle bouquet of crushed stones, lemon flavors and ripe white fruits. Lean and rich and persistent at there same time, this is a stunning dry Riesling that pairs ripeness and its rich core with lightness, freshness and vitality. It's highly delicate and elegant; the finish is mineral and lemony-fresh. Highly recommended, especially for those of you who do not want their Riesling too complex, but ambitious nonetheless. 88 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** August 2016*

2015 Gunderloch Fritz's Riesling Rheinhessen RRP \$22

From the vineyards of the Roter Hang, the famed red-slate slope running along the Rhine in Rheinhessen. This wine is named for Johannes Hasselbach's father Fritz, who sadly passed away a few months ago. Fritz's legacy extends well beyond this everyday wine, but this is affable, charming and great company, just like its illustrious namesake.

2015 Wittmann 100 Hügel Riesling Rheinhessen RRP \$28

*From purchased grapes, the 2015 Riesling Dry 100 Hills is a very clear and fresh, well-structured, pretty intense and ripe Rheinhessen. It has elegance and a nice round fruitiness. The finish is pretty intense and grippy. Very good quality. 87 points. **Stephan Reinhardt, Wine Advocate** August 2016*

2015 Wittmann Estate Riesling Rheinhessen RRP \$37

MAGNUM RRP \$83

*Bottled early April. Very intense floral nose and good balance on the palate - not too austere. Lots to enjoy here. Very fluid and flavourful. Would make a great wine in a resto or wine bar. 16.5/20 **Jancis Robinson, jancisrobinson.com** October 2016*

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