

ROCK JUICE WINES ✨ January-February 2019

At the very least, all RJ wines are farmed organically/biodynamically (certified or verified practicing), fermented only with native yeasts, and produced with no additives except a small amount of sulfur (50ppm or less).

2018 Cacique Maravilla Gutiflower Frizzante \$24

Region: Bio Bio Valley < Chile

Grapes: Moscatel d'Alexandria (90), Corinto (10)

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming; dry-farmed, OLD, own-rooted vines (planted in 1776) on volcanic trumao (ash) soils; macerated on the skins then foot-stomped and fermented in Ecotanks for 2 months; clarified naturally by gravity; bottled unfiltered with no added SO₂; 166 cases; 13% ABV

Winemaker: Manuel Moraga Gutiérrez

Another crazy cool wine from Manuel Moraga Gutiérrez, a larger-than-life figure who sports an awesome handlebar mustache, is the seventh generation of his family to work this vineyard in the small town of Yumbel, about 300 miles south of Santiago. In 2010, the man behind Cacique Maravilla wines, Manuel Moraga, lost everything to one of the most powerful earthquakes in recorded history. Over the past 8 years he has slowly rebuilt his house and bodega, all the while making his wines, which as real as you get from Chile. This is his fizzy orange wine, made of the aromatic Moscatel d'Alexandria grape in the ancestral method. Sparkling wine is definitely not traditional in Chile, but Manuel's late father accidentally stumbled upon this technique and now Guti is made every year. Viscous and lightly bubbly, there's a little snap, crackle and pop in the mouth at first, before the Rice Krispie action morphs into Orangina with a touch of ginger. Near the end of the bottle, the peachy-orange flavors intensify, taking on a mimosa vibe. This wine is like your entire Sunday brunch in a glass! Drink with something slightly spicy, like Kimchi or Sriracha, as some heat plays nicely with Gutiflower's verve.

2015 Oro en Paz Lake County Semillon 'Lushinger Vineyard' \$22

Region: Lake County < California

Grapes: Semillon

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic farming; volcanic soils; 6 hours on the skins then ferments and ages in 500L old barrels; minimal SO₂ at bottling; 11.5% ABV

Winemaker: Ben Herod

Our friend Ben Herod sources this Semillon from a certified organic vineyard on Clear Lake, which sits on a massive volcanic complex northeast of Napa Valley. The lake itself, the deepest in the US, is actually a volcanic caldera (a large crater formed by the evacuation of a magma chamber – basically a volcano that implodes upon itself). Soils here have some of the youngest volcanic soils around, and the Mt. Konocti, on the shore of the lake, has the potential to erupt again. This is serious volcanic fruit, which comes across loud and clear in this wine. The texture is ethereal, weightless but with a gravitas, structured, with extreme stony minerality balanced by unripe pineapple and grapefruit. The bottle age gives it a completeness. Incredible food wine.

2015 Freiherr Von Gleichenstein Spätburgunder Hofgarten \$19

Region: Baden < Germany

Grapes: Pinot Noir

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic farming; loess-volcanic soils; aged in neutral older and larger barrels, with a kiss of newer oak; unfiltered/unfiltered with minimal SO₂ at bottling; 13.5% ABV; x cases

Winemaker: Johannes von Gleichenstein

Baden is Germany's southernmost wine region, and the most volcanic, with the Kaiserstuhl

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6b/Wiki_Kaiserstuhl.jpg massif, the only large volcanic mass that rises like an island out of the Rhine. Much of Baden's Pinot Noir arrived via some of the same Catholic monks who planted it in Burgundy. First acquired by the von Gleichenstein family in 1634, the estate has been a multi-faceted farm for 11 generations. Current proprietors Baron and Baroness von Gleichenstein oversee their estate's organic vineyards—all of which are planted to classic Burgundy -- no Riesling here – as they have stayed true to the region's Burgundian roots. Plus, the Pinots (Noir + Gris) love this region's combo of warmer climate and volcanic soil.

Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), from Germany is lean and elegant, leaning more towards Gamay than the jammy, fruit-forward Russian River PN style common in our neck of the woods. This one tastes like a bowl of plump cherries with a leafy, herby edge and a bright jolt of acidity layered over a core of crushed rock minerality. The screwcap and under-\$20 price tag add to the everyday charm of this wine – you can and should crush a bottle on a Tuesday night.

NV Champagne Dehours Œil de Perdrix 'La Croix Joly' Rosé Extra Brut \$65

Region: Marne Valley < Champagne < France

Grapes: Pinot Meunier

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic farming; old vines in the Lieu Dit 'La Croix Joly' with chalky limestone soils; grapes macerated on skins for a few hours (saignée method); base is the 2015 vintage with 2g/L dosage; 103 cases
Winemaker: Jérôme Dehours

Domaine Dehours was founded by Jérôme's grandfather, Ludovic, in 1930 and was among the first independent growers. Jérôme's father Robert continued the legacy but sadly passed away when Jérôme was too young to take over the family business. Unfortunately, a financial group with no passion for quality took control of the vineyards, but, in 1996, with the help of his brother-in-law, Jérôme bought the Domaine back. Inspired by the legendary Anselme Selosse, godfather of Champagne's organic, low-intervention movement, he immediately converted to organics. And, like Selosse, Jérôme is dedicated to maximizing the characteristics of each individual vineyard, unusual in a region known for blending. So, while he makes 6,500 cases per year (tiny to begin with), this is split into 12 different cuvées. Crazy, from a business point of view, but lucky for us drinkers, as it allows him to focus on (and us to experience) the unique terroir of each. Like this racy rosé that shimmers in the glass with salmon highlights, the beautiful rose-gold hue coming from a few hours of skin maceration. Called saignée, this practice is common in Provence but rare in Champagne, where most producers blend a still white wine with a still red to create rosé Champagne. The skin maceration gives the Œil de Perdrix more structure and intensity in a sleek, mineral-driven package. No sweet or bubble-gum flavors here, it is savory and herbal, with dried orange peel, citrus and red berries. Sort of an 'un-rosé' rosé Champagne. Pretty fabulous all around.

2017 Domaine Miolanne Vin de Pays du Puy de Dôme Intempéries \$20

Region: Chaîne des Puys < Côtes D'Auvergne < France

Grapes: Gamay

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming, volcanic clay-limestone soils; partial carbonic fermentation; vinified and aged in stainless steel, 20+ year old vines; 12.5% ABV

Winemakers: Laure Cartier and Jean-Baptiste Deroche

Couple Laure and Jean-Baptiste come from a history of organic viticulture and took over Domaine Miolanne a few years ago, converting the estate to full organics and now make a small amount of wine that takes the uniquely volcanic terroir of the Auvergne to a new level. Cycling fanatics take note: you might have heard of this obscure and sparsely populated French region – it's a regular stop on the Tour de France, because volcanoes make good hills for bikers to climb. While common in Italy, volcanic soil is a rarity in France, and most of the Auvergne is actually preserved as a regional park because of it. In fact, Puy de Dôme, a lava dome that is one of the youngest volcanoes in the Chaîne des Puys region of Massif Central in central France, was created by an eruption *just* 10,700 years ago. In fact, the last eruption happened in 4,040 B.C. Laure and Jean-Baptiste buy organic Gamay, known for expressing soil type, from a neighbor with vineyards on the slopes of the volcano itself. That volcanic minerality comes through loud and clear in this wine that balances carbonic Gamay lift and juiciness with stony minerality. Like drinking carbonic rocks, in the best way.

2017 Garganuda Valpolicella \$23

Region: Valpolicella < Veneto < Italy

Grapes: Corvina, Rondinella

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic + certified biodynamic farming; white volcanic mineral soils; aged in large oak casks then bottled unfiltered/unfiltered with 20ppm SO₂; 11.5% ABV; 291 cases

Winemaker: Stefano Menti

It's a story we hear often: the son and great-grandson of winemakers, Stefano Menti returns home to the family vineyard to make natural wines, on his own terms. Growing up he was riding tractors through the vineyard and helping dad with harvest, then left to study and work abroad for years. When dad summoned him back to help the failing business, Stefano agreed, but on one condition: no more of the conventional farming BS used by his father since the 70's. He went home, got rid of all the chemicals and returned to the hands-off methods used by his great grandfather. "The wine starts from the fruit," he explains, "It is essential that the fruit is as pure as possible". This light-bodied red smells like cherry-covered rocks, tastes like tart cherries and cloves and wet stone, with a pleasantly bitterness and bright acidity on the finish. Fantastic red wine for fish, especially with a classic Cioppino or other tomato-based fish stew.

2017 Haarmeyer Chenin Blanc 'Cresci' Borden Ranch \$24

Region: Lodi < California

Grapes: Chenin Blanc

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic farming, volcanic pink granite and quartz soils; dry-farmed, foot trodden then whole-cluster pressed in an old-school screw press; fermented in an old puncheon on the lees, no stirring; rests here for 55 weeks before bottling; unfiltered/unfiltered with minimal SO₂; 54 cases; 11.8% ABV

Winemaker: Craig Haarmeyer

Craig Haarmeyer has no formal wine education or training, but we think he's making some of the most interesting and honest wines in California. His parents had restaurants and a wine shop, so he grew around the biz, and started fermenting anything and everything in

college. That evolved into helping out at a family friends' winery in grad school, then realizing he could make wine himself. He also slid slowly into natural wine making, he says, "because I made the modern wines for years and realized that those wines don't hold up, don't interest me, don't taste, smell or feel like the wines I grew up on. All of the wines I like to drink and admire are made with little or no 'winemaking'. Plus, for me it is important to achieve an aesthetic of natural beauty in everything I make, including wine." He makes tiny lots (as in one barrel of each) of 6 or 7 different wines each vintage, including a few different takes on Chenin Blanc. This, from the organic Palmero Family farm in the eastern district of Lodi called Borden Ranch, is our favorite. Super classic and wooly, with that Chenin chalkiness and acid, rounded out with beautiful white flower, wet stone, mineral and D'Anjou pear notes (the green, firm kind not the squishy, soft Bartlett kind). A fabulous winter white.

2016 Weingut Bercher Weissburgunder \$22

Region: Kaiserstuhl < Baden < Germany

Grapes: Pinot Gris

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic farming; volcanic soil, fermented and aged on the lees in large oak barrels; minimal So2 at bottling only; 13% ABV

Winemaker: Martin and Arne Bercher

Fans of white Burgundy take note, this is gorgeous German Pinot Gris gives you all the fruit, texture and minerality of a good Burgundian Chardonnay without the weight, premo or hefty price tag. Cousins Martin and Arne Bercher are the 10th generation of the family to run this organic estate in the Kaiserstuhl (a large volcanic mass that rises like an island out of the Rhine)

(https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6b/Wiki_Kaiserstuhl.jpg) area of Baden, between the Rhine and the Black Forest.

Pinot Gris thrives here, thanks to the warmer climate than the rest of Germany, and the extreme volcanic soils, producing lush and mineral-driven whites, like this classic Pinot Gris, which they call Weissburgunder. Amazing with food, but also has enough character to stand on its own. Drink now or age for a bit. Incredible value for the \$\$

2017 Káli Kövek 'Rezeda' Olaszrizling \$24

Region: Balaton-felvidék < Hungary

Grapes: Olaszrizling

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming; volcanic tuffa soils; using a 40 year-old press, the mostly free run juice is fermented in and aged in old Hungarian oak casks for 6-9 months; bottled unfiltered/unfiltered with minimal So2; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Gyula Szabó

His family had been growing grapes and making wine in this place for generations, but Gyula Szabó decided to take it to the next level and make wine to sell in 2009, starting with just 1.5 hectares. Gyula, who looks like something between a rugby player and barbarian warrior, works to the tunes of Iron Maiden and admits that he learned English mostly from watching 'Beavis and Butthead' and 'South Park.' We love him already. Focused on the Olaszrizling grape (no relation to Riesling) on the shores of Lake Balaton (where apparently great wine has been made since Roman times), the Káli Kövek wines are bright, aromatic and extremely minerally. Gyula calls this wine 'Rezeda', the Hungarian word for the perfumed Mignonette flower that grows all over the area, because Olaszrizling from these volcanic soils is floral and aromatic. There is also an appealing saltiness that balances said aromatics, along with a smooth, waxy texture that recalls Chenin. If you're up for something aromatic, weighty without new oak, and brimming with volcanic acidity, this one's for you.

2018 J. Mourat Roquin de Jardin Pinot Noir \$22

Region: Fiefs Vendéens < Loire Valley < France

Grapes: Pinot Noir

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming (EcoCert); volcanic soils with 35% quartz; de-stemmed, then fermented and aged in concrete; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Jérémie Mourat

An hour south of Nantes along the central coast of France, Fiefs Vendéens is the westernmost tip of the Loire Valley, just 20 km from the coast, resulting in a maritime influence from the nearby Atlantic that is unusual for Loire wines. The Mourat family has been in wine for a long time – first making wine on the Ile de Ré (along with salt) until the end of the 19th century, then as wine merchants, until Jean Mourat created the current estate in 1974. Son Jérémie joined him in '98, converting all of the family's 10 acres to organic farming. Today he makes several different cuvees, including his adorable 'Roquin de Jardin' (garden gnome) Pinot and Chenin bottlings, meant to be the fun everyday drinkers. And we could definitely drink this light, cheerful Pinot every day. It shows the stony, savory side of the grape that we rarely see in California – a pretty combo of tomato, oregano, cranberry and flinty rocks with side of earth.

2017 Clos Marfisi Rosé de Nuit \$22

Region: Patrimonio < Corsica < France

Grapes: Niellucciu

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic/biodynamic farming; limestone soils; 20% saignée and 80% direct-press juice fermented in stainless steel; unfinned with low added SO₂ at bottling only;
Winemaker: Mathieu and Julie Marfisi

Brother and sister, Mathieu and Julie are fifth generation at the helm of this estate, having taken over from their father when both returned to Corsica from careers elsewhere in France. They never gave into outside pressure re. grape varieties or chemicals, so you won't find any Grenache or pesticides/herbicides here. The soils are virgin, having never seen a chemical – surprisingly rare on this island. Because everybody wants pale pink rosé from the Corsican wine factories (a color which, BTW, is often achieved by added a big dollop of So₂ directly to the wine at the end to lighten it up – gag!) But this wine is a great example of real rosé, pouring a bright pink in the glass, the natural hue that comes from the highly-pigmented Niellucciu grapes. While pink normally evokes summery images, this pretty baby is our go-to rosé this winter, brightening up many a Sunday afternoon with its crunchy red cherries, crushed seashells, herbs and sea salt, finishing with a good dose of minerals and bracing acidity. Fabulous with cheese, charcuterie, or hold for another year. Yes, a good rosé has legs and can hold!

2017 Kelley Fox Pinot Gris Ramato 'Maresh' \$28

Region: Dundee Hills < Willamette Valley < Oregon

Grapes: Pinot Gris

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming; own-rooted vines on volcanic soil; destemmed and foot-trodden (called pigeage) by Kelley each day for 14-16 days before the wine was pressed at dryness, then racked to a concrete amphora tank where it rested until bottling; unfinned/unfiltered with zero-added So₂; 12.8% ABV; 159 cases

Winemaker: Kelley Fox

We can't get enough of Kelley Fox's wines. In December, you saw her Pinot Noir, and now we're thrilled to get our hands on the last of her skin-macerated Pinot Gris (technically an "orange" wine, not rosé). Quick refresher on Kelley: after completing a B.S. in Psychology, with a minor in Biology and degrees in Biochemistry and Biophysics, Kelley got into the Biochem PhD program at Oregon State—yet never completed her doctorate. Instead, she made the decision to make wine, which she jumped into without formal training, learning on the job, working in the vineyards and cellars of the region. Her mentor was David Lett of The Eyrie Vineyards, one of Oregon's organic farming pioneers. Starting in 2005, she began work as the winemaker at Scott Paul while also starting to make her own wines, starting with the 2007 vintage. Fast forward to today, where Kelley Fox is definitely one of the under-the-radar Oregon producers worth watching, making wines that transcend the region and the stereotypes of domestic Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris. Kelley's annual production tops out at about 3,000 cases for all of her wines combined, and she doesn't intend to go bigger. Because it is so important for her to be hands on -- not only makes the wine, but does the farming herself, down to alchemizing her own bioD potions. Then she takes all that pristine fruit and 'guides it through its evolution in the cellar', as she puts it, without any intervention because she wants her wines to 'sing a song of a place and a time'. And this Pinot Gris, definitely sings the song of its place, Oregon's Dundee Hills, one of the most uniformly volcanic places in the US, created by a tectonic up-thrust. The volcanic minerality here is palpable. Here's how Kelley describes the wine, a skin-macerated Pinot Gris made in the Italian 'Ramato' style: *"It is a beautiful clear pink color and has far more complexity in the nose (roses, strawberries, and some exotic notes I can't articulate) and mouth than ordinary white Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio. It has more structure and power than the white, but drinks more like a rosé. It has a fine, silken texture and is delicious."* We couldn't agree more. Rock on, Kelley.

2017 Etnella 'Attia' Chasselas \$27

Region: Mt. Etna < Sicily < Italy

Grapes: Chasselas

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic/biodynamic farming, 70-year old vines on black, rocky, volcanic soil; whole cluster press, bottled unfinned/unfiltered with no added SO₂; 10% ABV

Winemaker: Davide Bentivegna

High on the slopes of Mount Etna, Davide Bentivegna grows 4hectares of vines for his Etnella winery, alongside olives with which he makes three "crus" of EVOO, and fruit trees for his famous jams. Attia is Etnella's skin-macerated white wine, from 70-year old Chasselas grapes on his vineyard in Passopisciaro, spitting distance from mighty Etna's active lava flows. Savory and salty like the sea, this wine (technically in the "orange" category) is light-bodied, richly textured and full of character. Like all wines of Etna, you get an intense mineral concentration, but unlike most Sicilian wines (known for their warmth and generosity, like the Sicilian people) Attia is almost shy, without the alcoholic exuberance and lush fruit one typically finds on the island. Tastes a bit like crushed Sweet Tarts, sprinkled with chili and sea salt. Drink with sushi, crudo or practically any seafood.

2018 Cacique Maravilla Pipeno Pais 1L \$20

Price: \$20

Region: Yumbel < Bio Bio Valley < Chile

Grapes: País (aka Mission)

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming, no irrigation; volcanic soil; fermented in cement then rests in fiberglass vats before bottling; no

added SO₂; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Manuel Moraga Gutiérrez

NEW VINTAGE ALERT! Natural wine from Chile? Yes! Manuel Moraga Gutiérrez, who sports the long, wavy mustache depicted on this bottle's label, is the seventh generation of his family to work this vineyard in the small town of Yumbel, about 300 miles south of Santiago. His vineyards are on a type of volcanic ash soil, unique to the region, called *trumao*. His Pais vines, over 250 years old, were brought by his ancestors from the Canary islands and originally planted by his great-great-great-great-grandfather Francisco Gutiérrez, who arrived from Spain in 1766 and quickly earned the respect of the local Mapuche tribe, who called him Cacique Maravilla. Manuel, who has been farming his 30 acres biodynamically for 25 years, used to make wine just for his family to drink, selling off most of his grapes, but in 2010 started bottling wines to sell under the label Cacique Maravilla. Now we can all enjoy this lovely Pipeño, an old name for the simple local wine farmers used to make, which typically is vinified as naturally as possible (wild yeast, no additions of any kind, minimal sulphur), and bottled young, in big bottles. It was the dodgy stuff gauchos and farmers used to guzzle from a gallon jug, but now it's the juice cool sommeliers drink. And for good reason: herbal, rustic, smoky, slightly cloudy, earthy and dark-fruited, and joyously presented in 1L bottles. While it looks light, it has more structure and body than most of this genre. Savagely drinkable, and a total bargain. Drink with chili.

2016 Dolores Cabrera Fernandez 'La Araucaria' Tinto \$22

Region: Tenerife < Canary Islands < Spain

Grapes: Listan Negro

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic farming, 100-year old own-rooted vines planted using the unique 'cordón trenzado' (braided cord) method on volcanic soil; destemmed, with primary fermentation in steel tank followed by aging in old Burgundy barrels for 10 months; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with minimal SO₂

Winemaker: Dolores Cabrera Fernández

Dolores Cabrera Fernández is a longtime farmer working northern Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands, where wine-growing dates back to the Spanish conquest of the 15th century. The island is entirely volcanic, and in the Valle de la Orotava where Dolores' vineyards are located, soils are relatively young and acidic, benefiting from a fresh dose of volcanic nutrients from time to time with ongoing eruptions from the fiery Pico del Teide (3rd largest active volcano in the world). After selling her grapes, organic from the beginning, to larger producers for many years, Dolores started making her own wine in 2013. She works primarily with Listan Negro, the predominant grape of her region, sourced from 100+ year-old vines on the slopes of the volcano to make this savory and spicy chillable red. With exotic spices and rustic elegance, this charming wine reminds you of an old gentleman farmer, with dirt under his fingernails, dust caked in his hair and a passion for poetry. The flinty/stony mineral thing dominates at first, then you uncover layers of tangy plum, fig, chalk dust and black tea along with a certain salty character, dusty tannins and earthy rustic element.

2016 Bodega Vinificate Amorro Tinto \$23

Region: Cádiz < Andalusia < Spain

Grapes: Tempranillo, Tintilla, Palomino

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming; 20-30 year old vines on albariza soils (typical for the area, a combo of marl rock created by ancient sea sediments + clayey-loam), whole cluster, partial carbonic maceration; fermented and aged for 16 months in fiber tank, with Tintilla + Palomino co-fermented together; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with zero added SO₂; 12% ABV

Winemaker: José and Miguel Gómez Lucas

Andalucía is a very hot and dry region famous for Sherry (the fortified stuff that your great-auntie used to drink, and now is having a bit of a renaissance). The vineyards of Cádiz, with their stark white, chalky albariza soil, look like a moonscape. But brothers and local boys José and Miguel Gómez Lucas, both chemists and oenologists, believed that Cádiz had the potential to produce great unfortified wines – and more specifically, red wines, that were true to their land (red wines that were true to a white wine region) -- and the fresh stuff they actually wanted to drink in the heat. So, they started their own project, Bodega Vinificate, in 2011, renting vineyards and doing crazy stuff (for the region), like applying biodynamic and permaculture principles, picking early, doing short macerations and light extractions, experimenting with amphora, skipping the SO₂ add, etc. Their carbonic Amorro Tinto is unlike anything we've come across from Southern Spain. This is all-day *glou glou*, fresh and juicy with bright red fruit and cinnamon spice literally popping out of the glass, yet distinctly reflective of the place from which it hails – there is a distinct saltiness from the nearby Atlantic sea, and a chalky finish (from those super chalky albariza soils). Fun fact: in the local dialect, 'Amorro' means to drink straight from the bottle, hence the (adorable) label art -- which is so appropriate for this light and extremely gulpable red, which practically begs to be downed, with a slight chill, directly from the bottle.

2018 J. Mourat Roquin de Jardin Chenin Blanc \$19

Region: Fiefs Vendéens < Loire Valley < France

Grapes: Chenin Blanc

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming (EcoCert); volcanic soils with 35% quartz; de-stemmed, then fermented and aged in concrete; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Jérémie Mourat

An hour south of Nantes along the central coast of France, Fiefs Vendéens is the westernmost tip of the Loire Valley, just 20 km from the coast, resulting in a maritime influence from the nearby Atlantic that is unusual for Loire wines. The Mourat family has been in wine for a long time – first making wine on the Ile de Ré (along with salt) until the end of the 19th century, then as wine merchants, until Jean Mourat created the current estate in 1974. Son Jérémie joined him in '98, converting all of the family's 10 acres to organic farming. Today he makes several different cuvees, including his adorable 'Roquin de Jardin' (garden gnome) Pinot and Chenin bottlings, meant to be the fun everyday drinkers. Ridiculously cute packaging aside, we fell hard for this bright, edgy take on Chenin. More like Sancerre than the classic, wooly Chenin style, this one lights up with neon green and citrus notes and puckery acidity. A long, mineral finish seals the deal. Happy juice.

2016 Poggio Delle Baccanti Lacryma Christi del Vesuvio \$18

Region: Vesuvio < Campania < Italy

Grapes: Lacryma Christi del Vesuvio

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming; extreme volcanic soils; biodiversity in the vineyard, no chemicals used, hand-harvested; fermented in stainless steel, aged in used barrique, minimal sulfur added at bottling only; 12% ABV

Winemaker: Raffaele La Mura

The La Mura family has been making wine on the Sorrento Peninsula, on the slopes of the famous volcano, Mt. Vesuvio, since the 1950's. They work only with local varietals, and have made "a pact with the earth" to treat it with respect, a philosophy that supports their organic farming and low-intervention winemaking practices. This is their table wine, made of the Lacryma Christi del Vesuvio grape, which translates to "The Tears of Christ on Vesuvius". Italians -- in their typical dramatic fashion -- so named the grape after Jesus' tears which he shed at the foot of Vesuvius (not sure why he was crying at this particular spot), but that sparked the miraculous growth of the region's grapevines. Whatever the origin of the grape, it makes a delicious wine to accompany food (especially pizza and tomato-sauce based delights or anything grilled) and friends. Serve with a slight chill.