

# ROCK JUICE WINES September 2018

## Girl Power! Celebrating the badass female winemakers of natural wine

*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).*

### NV Filipa Pato 3B Metodo Tradicional Rosé \$20

Region: Bairrada < Portugal

Grapes: Baga, Bical

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Biodynamic farming, 30-year-old vines planted on sand over clay-limestone; ferments in big barrel and stainless steel vats; minimal SO<sub>2</sub>; 11.5% ABV

Winemaker: Filipa Pato

Filipa Pato, daughter of Portugal's wine Jedi Master Luis Pato, worked alongside her dad for years, then channeled that experience towards making incredible, honest wines of her own. And judging by how fast we drained this bottle, it seems the force is very strong with this one. Her slogan is "without make-up", because the goal is to make wine that is honest, true and without all the tricks and additives available in modern winemaking. Take this pretty pink bubbly, which she calls '3B' (because, 2 grapes beginning with B from the region of Bairrada), a delicious and unpretentious brut rosé made from a blend of Bairrada's signature noble red variety Baga and the tangy, high-acid white grape, Bical. Let Filipa describe this for us— "*Raspberries and strawberries on the nose, the palate has the freshness and body of the Baga grape and the creaminess of Bical. She says, I believe that Baga and Bical in Bairrada are like the Chardonnay and the Pinot in Champagne. They need each other to make a balance*". Spicy and perky, with bright citrus and creamy red berries, this is a clean, fantastic (and affordable!) answer to all-occasion (and everyday!) bubbles.

### 2017 Domaine Julie Benau Picpoul de Pinet \$18

Region: Picpoul de Pinet < Languedoc < France

Grapes: Picpoul de Pinet

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic/biodynamic farming, gabbro soils, aged in stainless steel; méthode ancestrale; no added SO<sub>2</sub>

Winemaker: Julie Benau

The 16th century farmhouse estate in the Languedoc's coastal backwoods was purchased by Julie's parents in 1980. At first, they sold all their grape production to the local co-op, but when daughter Julie came back home in 1999, she encouraged them to start making some of their own wine as well. Fast forward 20 years, and Julie has not only taken over, but has made a name for herself with her envelope-pushing, often experimental, and always super low-intervention wines -- an anomaly in this big, industrial region, where vineyards grow along the lagoons that are home to zillions of oyster beds. Given that the word Picpoul itself translates to "stings the lip", you might guess that her Picpoul is bright and acidic, with lots of tart citrus and grass. But what sets it apart is the slight funk and salt on the nose, like a whiff of oysters just coming off the boat in the marina, and on the palate (iodine!), along with some unexpected flesh on the bones (ripe peaches and pears!). Sort of like a cross between Muscadet and a white Cotes du Rhone. Like Muscadet, Picpoul de Pinet is a natural choice for oysters and other raw delights (um, this bottle literally has a pen and ink sketch of an oyster on the front label). Though personally, I would drink it with just about anything that would benefit from a splash of lemon. Wakes up the palate in much the same way. Ditch the usual suspects and make this your new, go-to "crisp white wine". So much cooler.

### 2016 Valerie Tissot Poulsard \$24

Region: Arbois < Jura < France

Grapes: Poulsard

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: organic farming, limestone and clay soil, hillside vineyards

Winemakers: Valérie Tissot

Winemaking runs in the family with the Tissots, and Valérie & Jean-Christophe are the third generation to work their vines in the hobbit-like region of Jura, France. Jura is a hotbed for natural winemaking and there are lots of Tissots scattered about, (there are several in the small region) but *this* Tissot family is new to the market. The brother and sister team of Valérie & Jean-Christophe have just fully transitioned into the leadership role, where Valérie has taken the title of cellar master from her mother Françoise, who still sneaks in to taste! We love that the winemaking has passed from mother to daughter because it's rare and cool, and also puts a definitive feminine stamp on the wines. Pale and dusty mauve in color, the wine is surprisingly zingy and fresh, a cocktail of watermelon, cloves and earth, with subtle herbal and black pepper notes on the finish. It starts off a bit reserved but blossoms with air. Decant or pour in a big glass and let breathe first, then enjoy this light, spiced alpine juice, a perfect transitional wine for Pinot lovers craving something new.

### 2017 Ryme Vermentino 'Hers' Las Brisas Vineyard \$26

Region: Sonoma < California

Grapes: Vermentino

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming; gravel and sandy soils; whole cluster pressed and aged in a combo of stainless and neutral oak; bottled unfined/unfiltered with minimal added SO<sub>2</sub>; 285 cases made

Winemaker: Megan Glaab

NEW VINTAGE ALERT! 'Hers' is back with the 2017 vintage. In case you missed it last time: Ryme is a small Sonoma-based label from a young husband and wife team, Megan and Ryan Glaab (the name Ryme is, in fact, a combo of their names – RY + ME). They don't own any vineyards, but put a lot of work into forging vineyard relationships with organic growers from Santa Barbara to Mendocino County. Each is an accomplished vigneron in his/her own right. For years Ryan was the assistant winemaker at Wind Gap, before leaving last year to focus full-time on Ryme. And Megan, who got her enology degree from the University of Adelaide in Australia, where she was force fed all the tricks and tools for making standard-issue wine, has respectfully ignored all the conventional rules and instead forged her path towards low-intervention, mindful winemaking. She says she and Ryan are

driven by their palate, wanting to make the wines she has always loved to drink – high acid, low alcohol, mineral-driven wines that showcase terroir. Like the Vermentino of coastal Italy, which inspired this bottling. It's called 'Hers', because this is her expression of the grape – she and Ryan couldn't agree on the style for their Vermentino, so they each made their own. 'His' is more structured and tannic, with skin contact, while 'Hers' is bright and floral, with energetic green apple, jasmine and citrus notes, and a lovely salty finish. So pretty. Drink now.

### **2016 Tessier Grenache Fenaughty Vineyard \$30**

Region: El Dorado County < California

Grapes: Grenache

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Uncertified organic farming; high altitude vineyard; clay loam soils with volcanic debris and traces of granite; 60% whole cluster, lady foot stomped, then fermented and aged in neutral French oak ; bottled unfiltered/unfiltered with minimal SO<sub>2</sub>; 13.2% ABV; 122 cases made  
Winemaker: Kristie Tacey

The Tessier homepage, with a provocative image the 1965 film Faster Pussycat! Kill! Kill! and the Velvet Underground line, "Here she comes, you better watch your step," tells you a lot about Kristie. She is fierce, and not afraid to flex her power or her femininity. She's also incredibly smart. I mean, really smart, as in a former microbiologist who worked on the Human Genome Project. In 2006, she left the field of science for wine, but never lost the discipline, bringing that scientific precision and geekiness to her winemaking. She started her own project in 2009, working with a handful of family-farmed vineyards in NorCal. At first, she played it safe with more conventional California-style wines, but as she's learned grown more confident, she has moved over to the natty side. But first she is a scientist, so although the wines are made in a very low-intervention way, they are clean and precise. Like this Grenache, which somehow completely epitomizes the Sierra Foothills terroir. You taste volcanic rocks in every sip, along with lifted, somewhat tart, red fruit, black cherry and wildflowers. It's like cranberry nectar with a shot of elderflower liquor and a black rock rim. Keep an eye on Kristie, she's definitely a badass winemaker to watch.

### **2017 Unturned Stone 'The Hatchling' \$24**

Region: Potter Valley < Mendocino County < California

Grapes: Sauvignon Musqué

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming. Whole cluster pressed, fermented in concrete egg and stainless steel tank, 2-3 days skin contact, then rested 7 months in the egg before bottling. Total SO<sub>2</sub> 20ppm (that's not much!!)  
Winemakers: Erin Mitchell and Randy Czech

If you were one of the many fans of The Stowaway (featured last fall) from our friends Erin Mitchell and Randy Czech, you'll be stoked to hear about the latest addition to their portfolio – The Hatchling. It's 100% Sauvignon Musqué (a clone of Sauvignon Blanc) which is distinctively aromatic and results in a heady mix of lime blossom, coriander and fresh lemon grass in the glass. The golden in color is luxurious to look at and the brief bit of skin contact softens the mouthfeel just enough - it feels like silk going down the throat. Rich on the palette with pleasant acidity and a touch of balancing bitterness, it shows a spicy side of Sauvignon with kumquat, honeydew and savory spices. The vines are farmed organically by Luke Miller, who owns the Vecino Vineyard in Potter Valley. Luke farmed the organic McFadden vineyard next door and saved his money for years to buy this plot. It's a super unique and delicious wine that seems perfect for this time of year when harvest flavors collide with late summer grilling. Sausages, roasted butternut squash, bring it on!

### **2016 Valerie Tissot Rosé Poulsard 'Clown' \$19**

Region: Arbois < Jura < France

Grapes: Poulsard

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: organic farming, limestone and clay soil, hillside vineyards  
Winemakers: Valérie Tissot

Winemaking runs in the family with the Tissots, and Valérie and bro Jean-Christophe are the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation to work their vines in the hobbit-like region of Jura, France. Jura is a hotbed for natural winemaking and there are lots of Tissots scattered about, (there are several in the small region) but *this* Tissot family is new to the market. The brother and sister team of Valérie & Jean-Christophe have just fully transitioned into the leadership role, but Valérie is the cellar master (taking over from her mother, Françoise, who still sneaks in to taste!) This rosé of Poulsard, called 'Clown' aptly has both a fun and serious side. The color is beautiful salmon-y pink and pale onion-skin highlights. Super clean and juicy from start to finish with zesty lemon notes, white strawberry, and slightly cooked rhubarb. Hints of sagey underbrush take us straight to the French coast, and the bottle age – this is the serious part – really allows this last bit to integrate fully. This is your pizza, picnic lunch and rosé all day wine! (Also, that label though. Loving the playful clown!)

### **2017 Uphold Rosé For the Women \$17**

Region: Sonoma + Mendocino County < California

Grapes: Aglianico

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming; mixture of clay-limestone, galets roulés and sandy soils; 6 months aging in used barrels, then 4-month natural fermentation in bottle; minimal added SO<sub>2</sub> at bottling only  
Winemaker: Megan Glaab

Wines for a cause tend to be a tough sell for us wine geeks, mostly because the cause tends to lead, with the wine coming second. But this one is from our friends, the super talented Megan Glaab and her husband Ryan of Ryme Cellars in Sonoma, who make a delicious rosé that we want to drink, first and foremost, and bonus – they donate all proceeds to organizations that support women's rights. In 2017, believing that social progress cannot be left to its own devices, Megan and Ryan decided to become greater agents of positive change, using their crazy wine skills to raise money. And we can't think of a better way to support an important cause than imbibing this juice, fresh rosé, with a coppery, herbal tang matched by bright pomegranate and zingy acidity. Drink up, for the women!

### **2016 Nathalie Banes 'La Saoulée' Beaujolais \$26**

Region: Beaujolais < Burgundy < France

Grapes: Gamay

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Uncertified organic farming; high-altitude vineyard with limestone/red clay soils; fruit is destemmed then xx 4 months in huge, old wooden casks; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with no added SO<sub>2</sub>; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Nathalie Banes

Nathalie Banes is relatively new on the Loire's natural winemaking scene. 2015 was her first vintage. Previously she worked with Xavier Benier (famous in the Loire for his unsulfured, super-natural wines) and her boyfriend is Julian Merle, another fantastic natty Loire producer. But she wanted to do something different with her own project, so she's bypassing the traditional fermentation method of Beaujolais (carbonic) and going the traditional Burgundian route to make more serious, less glou-glou wines. She has a small vineyard that she farms herself, organically, in Southern Beaujolais (south of Brouilly). Let us count the ways we love this wine. First, it's called 'La Saoulée', which means "the drunkard" in French - a nod to Nathalie's younger party days. She sounds like a ton of fun, I'd like to hang out with her. Second, as much as I love (I mean, MEGA love) carbonic wines, this one is not, intentionally -- Nathalie destems and presses, producing a deeper, darker and more serious wine than her carbonic brethren. Yay, more ways to enjoy Gamay! And finally, while this wine is bursting with the juicy joy inherent in Gamay, it's also got a savory, spicy and floral side with bright, peppery flavors, making it so perfect with fall food.

### **2017 Closserie des Moussis 'Virevolte' \$23**

Region: Haut Medoc < Bordeaux < France

Grapes: Merlot, Cab Franc, Cab Sauvignon

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified organic and Demeter certified biodynamic farming, 30-150 year old vines on sandy clay soils; whole-bunch fermented in tank, where it sits for a 15-day maceration (way short) then finishes fermentation in 500L neutral barrel to ensure completion of ML; bottled unfinned with a light filtration and no added SO<sub>2</sub>; 50 cases total production, 25 in the states

Winemaker: Pascale Chiome and Laurence Alias

A Bordeaux estate that was started from scratch by two women in 2008, one that is both certified organic and biodynamic and makes glou glou wines (that we actually want to drink on Taco Tuesday)? Rare and wonderful! This is not your daddy's Bordeaux – or Bordeaux producer! Partners in winemaking and life, Pascale and Laurence purchased their property in the Haut Medoc, with tiny parcels spread around the Haut-Medoc and Margaux, including 1 plot that survived phylloxera and is still thriving after over 150 years! Certified organic since 2013 and biodynamic since 2015, the ladies do everything themselves, with the help of two adorable Breton horses. The Virevolte (which translates as "twirls") does feel like it dances in the mouth, with fiery, spicy fruit and a velvety texture. And with no added sulfites, no extraction and a short maceration, you get the true taste of Medoc terroir, without the weight or tannins. This is so atypical for a Bordeaux that they didn't even try for AOC status, going straight to VDF designation. Which totally doesn't matter, as this wine fresh and pretty wine is meant to be enjoyed now, not put away in the cellar for some special occasion. As we always say, life is too short to drink shitty wine, crack open the good stuff every day!

### **2017 Lalalu Contra Costa Cabernet Franc \$23**

Region: Contra Costa < California

Grapes: Cabernet Franc

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming; sandy loam soils; fermented in stainless steel and aged in old barrel on lees; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with 30ppm added SO<sub>2</sub>; 12.5%

Winemaker: Laura Brennan Bissell

We love Laura Brennan of Inconnu and Lalalu, both staples in the Rock Juice rotation. She's a 2017 [SF Chronicle Winemaker to Watch](#) and working mama of three whose babies travel with her as she travels the US slinging her wine. All her wines have an elegance and balance to them, but this glou glou Cab Franc is a favorite. It's light, bright and crunchy, in a very early fall sort of way, with all of the warmth and joy of the midday sun and the freshness and promise of the late afternoon chill. There is cranberry, violet and the tiniest hit of jalapeño underneath, and of course that spicy tomato-leaf thing that can only be Cab Franc. Herbal and savory like V8 done right!

### **2016 Domaine Julie Benau 'Robot Cochon' \$21**

Region: Picpoul de Pinet < Languedoc < France

Grapes: Tempranillo

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Organic farming, sand/limestone soil with lots of fossils; semi-carbonic maceration; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with zero added SO<sub>2</sub>; 13% ABV

Winemaker: Julie Benau

Another wine from Julie Benau, a juicy, textural Tempranillo from the Languedoc. Fermentation is semi-carbonic, resulting in a vibrant, fruit-forward red that calls to mind grapey Beaujolais, but from the warmer south. Ummm, but why Tempranillo, a Spanish grape, in this coastal French region? Not sure. She just found some random Tempranillo vines growing on her family's property and ran with it. We're so happy that she did. It's a totally different beast from its Spanish counterparts, with sweet, herbal black fruit, plums and black olive in an exuberant package. Drink with Mexican food!

### **Autour de l'Anne NV 'Wonder WomAnne' Rosé Petillant Naturel \$32**

Region: Languedoc < France

Grapes: Cinsault, Syrah, Grenache

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Certified biodynamic farming; whole cluster; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with no added SO<sub>2</sub>; 12% ABV

Winemaker: Anne Paillet

Anne Paillet worked in finance in Paris, until a bad car accident forced her to reexamine her life, at which point she ditched corporate life to make wine. She's married to one of the Loire's top natty producer Gregory Leclerc of Chahut et Prodiges (a Rock Juice fav), so she already knew the ropes. But Anne didn't want to make the same wines as Gregory, so she rented about six acres of biodynamic vineyards from a friend in Coteaux du Languedoc. She assists with the end of the growing season, then harvests the grapes (on the early side) and guides the fermentations, before trucking the wine back up to the Loire in bulk containers to finish Touraine style. Which is why her wines tends to be more similar to Loire wines than the Languedoc. The early pick avoids heaviness and high alcohol, and the Loire treatment leads to lighter, more terroir-expressive wines.

This is her wildly popular rosé pet'nat (it's allocated – we got one case!) We LOVE the Wonder Woman/Girl Power association, which totally fits the wine -- delicate and playful at first, then it hits you with the backbone of depth and power from the Syrah and Grenache. And the little girl in us still wants to be Wonder Woman, twirling around with that dope gold bracelet, unleashing superpowers to kick ass and save the world. And of course Diana Henry/Wonder Woman would his dark pink wine is dry and lightly fizzy, amped red and blue berries, earth, vibrant acidity, and no shit

**ADD-ON: 2017 Frank Cornelissen Etna Rosato Susucaru \$30**

Region: Mt. Etna < Sicily < Italy

Grapes: Malvasia, Moscadella, Inzolia and Nerello Mascalese

Vineyard/Cellar Stats: Beyond organic/biodynamic hands-off farming; volcanic soil; full skin contact for texture and territorial identity, malolactic fermentation fully finished; bottled unfinned/unfiltered with zero added So2; 12.5% ABV

Winemaker: Frank Cornelissen

If you're into natural wine, you've probably heard of Susucaru. But you've likely never tried it, because now that you've heard of it, it's impossible to find. This obscure, dark pink rose from Sicily's Mount Etna wasn't on anybody's radar until Action Bronson (New York chef-turned-rapper who's with a foodie show on Viceland called "F\*ck That's Delicious") came along and waxed poetic after discovering it at a restaurant in Sydney: "*I been waiting for this Susucaru all my life. I love this one.*" Then it blew up, going from unknown to top 20 most-searched-for wines on Wine Searcher almost instantly.

Made by Belgian Frank Cornelissen, a fierce supporter of natural wines, who farms his 64 volcanic acres in a totally minimalist way. As in, he even considers biodynamics too interventionist. He lets the vines grow as they wish, untrained, allowing Mother Earth "*in her various energetic and cosmic passages to lead the way, instead of deciding and imposing ourselves*", he explains. The approach is similar in the cellar, where he never adds or removes anything, and just lets the juice and natural yeasts do their things. This raw energy is apparent in the wine, which is radically alive, electric and super sexy. Vivid wild floral tones mix with notes of Campari and blood orange juice, yellow peaches, red apple skin and strawberries on the nose. With a lick of tannin and a backbone of minerality, it's really more like a teenage red. It breaks my heart knowing that this one bottle that I opened to write this note is the ONLY one I will savor this year. The only taste of this magic elixir to cross my lips this year. I seriously want to make out with this wine. Or maybe just make out drinking this wine. F\*ck That's Delicious! You're right Action, you're so right. But did you have to F\*ck it up for the rest of us? Couldn't we have kept Frank and his Susucaru our dirty little secret?? Sigh...

Now that you're salivating and thinking "I NEED this wine!", I must crush your soul and tell you it is nearly impossible to procure. Since Action shared his love for it, demand has gone through the roof, and now it is super allocated. One case for the entire vintage. That's all we got. Available as an add-on for Rock Juice Direct clients only.