ORDINAIRE

La Dernière Goutte Tisane de Bois

I passed by the shop yesterday to do some writing and other things. As is my habit, I grabbed whatever bottle in the fridge is living out its final hours after a lonely night, maybe an ounce or two of macerated Sauvignon Blanc, oxidized beyond recognition and destined for the sink. It's not the kind of thing we serve to paying customers, but I'm more than a little obsessed with this kind of wine—so flush with vibrancy and youthful confidence one day, and now sleepy and rotund, a bit melancholy but still beautiful. While others complain of "mousiness" and what not, I relish the decay. Yesterday, Cyril Vuillod's Tisane des Bois was just the thing. I poured the last drops—half juice, half sediment—into my glass and swirled it around. A vibrant bluish ruby flecked with dark shards of long expired grapes, the aroma reminded me of the old Beaujolais, the time before 2015, when Gamay made without chemicals consistently translated the pure unmediated essence of rain water and granite. A bit soft around the edges after a night in the fridge, it was easy for me to imagine it the evening before, bursting out of the glass, impatient to be drunk. Chill it. Enjoy.

-Bradford

Gearhead "Princess" Coufos Vineyard Syrah

Craig West is the lucky winemaker who gets to work with this pristine Syrah, from vines planted by Henry Coufos some decades ago, hidden high up in the foothills outside of Nevada City (photo is on the front cover). Everwild uses some of the Grenache, and Michelle and Daniel from Under the Table make a white wine from the eclectic mix of Southern French varieties; but, according to Michelle, everyone wants the Syrah. And tasting this wine from Gearhead, I can see why. Bright, peppery and floral but still amply juicy and fun. I wasn't expecting this to sparkle when I opened it, but it did, energetically (so make sure it's very cold!). Craig just bottled this a bit before fermentation was complete and it finished bubbling away in bottle. He then, laboriously, hand-disgorged each bottle. The bubbles make perfect sense—giving energy and zest to the dense, sappy fruit, in the mode of the best Lambruscos. I was reminded of Keats's

blushhful Hippocrene, With beading bubbles winking at the brim. And purple-stained mouth; That I might drink and leave the world unseen, And with thee fade away into forest dim.

An appropriate grog for Valentine's Day, though not in any classical sense. Beautiful yet fleeting, energetic but fragile. Pair with a lover or an ever-receding fantasy.

- Bradford

EXTRAORDINAIRE



Julien Pineau Sucettes à l'Aunis

This month we get to go on a little journey to the Loire valley. It's a silly hypothetical conversation I tend to have over and over with friends and other acquaintances in the natural wine world, and my answer isn't always the same, but if I had to choose one region from which I could only drink wines from for the rest of my life it would probably be here. Not to say that all of my favorite wines are grown on either bank of this long, presumably muddy river, but there's so much variety to be found between both reds and whites that I take some amount of solace in the idea that I'd always have an option to suit the occasion for my ever temperamental thirsts. I can hardly think of a vigneron who better exemplifies this versatility than Julien Pineau in Touraine. Working primarily with fruit from the historic and culty Clos Roche Blanche vineyard (you can look it up), he wields both red and white grapes expertly, coaxing energy and expression from Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin, Menu Pineau, Gamay, Cab Franc/Sauv, Cot and of course Pineau D'aunis, which is what we have in this bottle.

"Sucette" translates to lollipop and is a reference to a Serge Gainsborough track written for France Gall, the music video for which features a bunch of young women enjoying the titular candy. It's very clever and tasteful, I assure you. Cheeky reference/context aside, this wine is delightful. Not so much candied or confectionary, as the name may suggest, but a treat nonetheless. To me, this wine starts off drinking like pretty, but still rustic and crunchy Gamay with plenty of fruit and spice and then finishes with the dirt and pepper we've come to expect from this particular varietal. This is a red I'd be happy to drink on its own, but it would also be at home on pretty much any table with any fare: from a purposefully prepared banquet to the leftovers in your fridge that you may not even bother to reheat. Slainte!

- Daniel the Elder

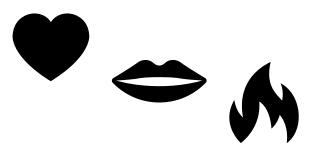
EXTRAORDINAIRE cont'd

Binner Si Rose

"Ecstasy" by Sharon Olds

As we made love for the third day, cloudy and dark, as we did not stop but went into it, and into it, and did not hesitate and did not hold back and we rose through the air, until we were up above timber line. The lake lay, icy and silver, the surface shirred, reflecting nothing. The black rocks lifted around it, into the grainy sepia air, the patches of snow brilliant white, and even though we did not know where we were, we could not speak the language, we could hardly see, we did not stop, rising with the black rocks to the black hills, the black mountains rising from the hills. Resting on the crest of the mountains, one huge cloud with scalloped edges of blazing evening light, we did not turn back, we stayed with it, even though we were far beyond what we knew, we rose into the grain of the cloud, even though we were frightened, the air hollow, even though nothing grew there, even though it is a place from which no one has ever come back.

Pair this blend of gewürztraminer, pinot gris, and riesling with spicy tuna maki. Happy Valentine's day < 3 - Michelle



ORDINAIRE WINE CLUB

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