



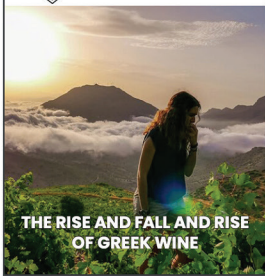
Cow poop and cosmic

calendars: — these are usually the first things that come up when talking about BioDynamics. Unavoidable to be sure, they are only the beginning of any look at this eclectic approach to farming. Organic certification can be granted by any number of entities worldwide and requirements vary greatly; but at its core it is a ban on synthetic chemicals and fertilizers. BioDynamic certification is another story. Organic at times—some. BioDynamic is a term owned by a body known as Demeter International, though there are one or two other certifying entities like BEEFEST who have split from Demeter over specifics. There are some variations in Demeter from country to country but it is a far more rigorous and holistic approach than what we commonly see labeled as organic.

passing knowledge of this complex polymath, but if you are looking for a rabbit hole to explore, the life and work of Rudolf Steiner is a deep one. His own writings are as dense and sometimes inscrutable as they are prolific. I wrote on everything from science to education to religion to architecture to dance, and created not just a scholastic of thought on each of those subjects (that still exist but actual schools) but there are about 1000 Steiner schools in 75 countries based on his theories, including three in New York City. He designed buildings and made sculptures. He created Eurythmy, a dance somewhere between ballet and modern dance that takes to express the actual sounds of music.



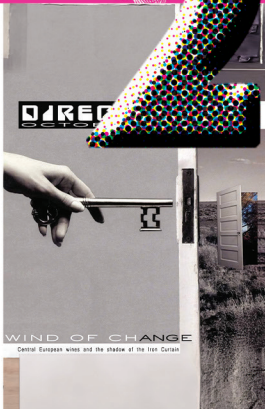
APRIL 2023



THE RISE AND FALL AND RISE OF GREEK WINE



July 2023



WIND OF CHANGE
Central European wines and the shadow of the Iron Curtain



FEBRUARY, 2023

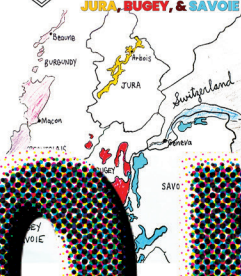
BIG WINES

What
talking
we say



May 2015

MIRA, RUGEY & SAVOIE



Enjoy the wines of



EMILIA-
ROMAGNA



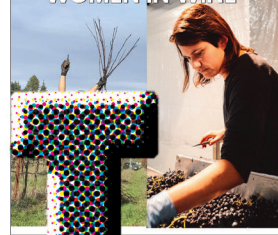
**DIRECT
PRESS**

PRIVATE PRESS: HOW SMALL GROWERS MAKE THE MOST PERSONAL WINES

NOVEMBER
2023

March, 2023

WOMEN IN WINE



JUNE, 2023

VIA DE SOIF - THE THIRST TRAIN

Apportez le culte qui saine les Vignerons.



ÉPAULÉ JETÉ



SEPTEMBER, 2023



Planting the Seeds: Natural Wine Originators

Have you ever considered joining a potato of the month club?

Me neither. In any event, there aren't many monthly subscriptions focused on a single agricultural product—aside from the Rancho Gordo bean club or the month when your CSA gives you only kohlrabi, for some reason. Wine, of course, is different. But its special status throughout the millennia is not simply because people like tasty alcoholic treats, otherwise we'd be running a flavored vodka club (this month: Pinnacle® Vanilla!). When we taste a wine that moves us, we want to know all about it. What does the vineyard look like? Who made it? Even superior shiitakes and exceptional cherries don't have us chasing down farmers with quite the same fervor. They rarely have us thinking about all the disciplines that wine intersects with: ethnobotany, anthropology, labor issues, economics, history, science, geography, etc. I don't find myself asking these questions about any other produce, really. I probably don't ask enough questions about the meat I consume.

Wine sidesteps any such squeamishness. It allows us to pretend to be armchair *vignerons* as we discuss soil, rainfall, and manual labor from the comfort of our dinner table or a

nice restaurant. The fundamentals of great wine have changed little enough that it gives us a glimpse into a pre-industrial world, and however distorted these quaint romantic notions may be, it fuels our imaginations. I'm ok with that, as it opens the door for thinking about the work that is really behind this luxury, and about agriculture in general. Wine is one of the few things that forges a path back to an agrarian past and forces us to reckon with how that fits into the modern world. But while it has the potential to inspire deep musings on humanity, a glass of wine is still mostly a nice excuse to bring us together.

With Direct Press, we get an opportunity to talk about the craft and production of wine with a depth that isn't possible otherwise. The NY Times might have great wine articles, but you still have to track down the wines mentioned. Given that most of the wines they feature are, like the wines we prefer, not mass-produced, this is not easy. That means a wine club like Direct Press is often the most direct path from vineyard to table. Plus it's a unique platform for winemakers to get to tell their stories directly to the people drinking their wines. The responses we get from our members builds into a lovely feedback loop.

Here are a few of the members who had some things to say:

Barak Sered told us, "my favorite theme for the wine club was North

American hybrid varieties. It really opened my eyes to just how narrow a view of winemaking we get with the traditional 'noble' grapes and made me eager to learn more about the history of botany and viticulture."

"Direct Press 2 has changed how I enjoy wine," says James Rapoport. "It exposed me to high quality expressions with grapes and regions I wouldn't try without your recommendations. The bottles are also outside of the normal price point I drink at home, so each one feels like a fun little celebration. The [Cascina degli Ulivi] Nibio and [Caveau de Bacchus] Arbois were my favorites of the year. Thanks for the thought and effort that goes into the club. I'm excited to try some new wines in '24."

Michael Moss wrote: "Has Direct Press changed the way we drink wine? Direct Press has changed our lives. So insightful, probing, fun to read. We have a routine now: open a bottle, taste with our meager senses, and then read the Direct Press with the next sips and say, 'ah, of course,

that's what we're tasting.' We love just as much, if not more, the fabulous reporting on the wine makers."

Though we were genuinely open to hearing your criticism, flattery will get you everywhere, as they say.

This month's wines are a lineup of what you liked the most from 2023, and it's nice to see that one of our more challenging themes—Central Europe—is overrepresented here.

It's always a little bit of a dance to come up with a group of wines that are both delicious and educational, but the goal is to do what all of my favorite music, writing, and art does: connect with both the head and the heart. With wine, we get to hit the

stomach, too.

Thank you to everyone for voting on your favorite 2023 wines, and to being a part of the Direct Press community.

Cheers,
Jonathan



Ramon Jane Baudiili 2022
Penedes • Spain
Press 4 Mix/White

There's a strong movement of natural winemakers in Catalonia championing biodynamic farming, and Ramon Jané and his wife Mercè, are super involved in sharing experiences and furthering the understanding of such practices in their region.

The couple has two distinctive projects: the accomplished and beautifully composed wines of Mas Candi, a project focused on native Catalan varieties run alongside friend and fellow champion of biodynamics Toni Carbo; and their personal project bearing Ramon's name, featured here. In comparison, wine's under the Ramon Jané label feel a bit more irreverent, with a playful brightness and accessibility to the wines (some of this may be chalked up to the absence of added sulfur) but don't get it twisted: it takes a lot of trial and error to make wines that feel this breezy and effortless, and this commitment to natural farming and winemaking is a big part of this - finding purity and expression in simplicity.

'Baudiili' is made from Xarel-lo and Parellada grown in Ramon's family estate. Vines between 10-25 years old, grown on calcareous clay soils. The vineyard is not tilled: true minimal intervention agriculture. Grapes are chilled then pressed into stainless steel tanks and fermented with indigenous yeasts and no additions. The wine is refreshing, breezy,

with a slight carbonation when first opened giving it some movement, and settling down after it's open for a few minutes. Salted melon, crunchy honeycrisp apple type fruit. The perfect aperitif and a safe bet to revisit on day 2. *Bruno Sant'Anna*

Jacz Laci Sagi Narancs 2021
Somlo • Hungary
Press 4 Mix/White

The enigmatic Jász Laci is making some of the most uncompromising wines in Somlo. Despite making some of the most exciting expressions of the region's intense volcanic terroir, his wines never get the Somlo designation. This is because Hungary's wine bureaucracy is even more hardheaded and antagonistic to natural wines than France's. Even though he bottles under the most basic Hungarian wine classification, the government still forces him to add sulfur to the wines, though he does the minimum and there is zero free sulfur in the end.

'Sagi Narancs' is Olaszrizling (aka Welchsriesling—not related to Riesling) that comes from a vineyard known as the 'Valley of the Fairies.' It spends three months on the skins and is a clear nod to the Georgian winemaking methods that Jász looks to for inspiration, though it ages in steel instead of clay amphora. Briny sea spray, orange pekoe tea, apricot and cumin notes all come together in a way that has a beautiful clarity. The texture and tannins are so fine-tuned, creating a delicious tension

between the earthy, spicy elements and the expressive primary fruit. The mix of freshness and complexity found here is really on another level, much like Jász himself. *Jonathan Kemp*

Presinger Puzsta Libre!
Burgenland • Austria
Press 4 Mix/Red

Claus Preisinger is a veteran of our wine club at this point, and for good reason. Claus was destined to be a winemaker growing up the son of a winemaker on the shores of Lake Neusiedl in the wine region of Burgenland, Austria. After studying at the Higher Federal Institute for Viticulture and Winegrowing in Klosterneuburg he set out for a few years to gain experience around the globe, after which he came back to his native Austria where he worked next to Hans Nittnaus, in the village of Gols.

During his time Claus started own wines at his crystalizing his Claus eventually expanded his focusing pri-grape varieties Zweigelt, Gruner Saint Laurent. His certified Biody-by Respekt Bio-biodynamic label Austria.

Claus eschews the vated yeast, and or zero doses of sulfur. He chooses to age many of his wines in amphora instead of wooden barrels to narrow winemaking down to the essentials of the grape and the soil.

Puzsta Libre! Is made of 60% Zweigelt, 20% St. Laurent, 20% Pinot Noir. The name derives from the several plots that the grapes come from around Lake Neusiedl where the soil is composed of Limestone and Gravel. The age of the vines ranges from 9-40 years. The wine is vinified in stainless steel, fermented with native yeasts, and is unfinned and unfiltered. The wine is aged for six months prior to bottling, half in stainless steel and half in neutral wooden barrels.



with Nittnaus, making his parents' winery style and vision. took over and family's estate marily on local Blaufrankisch, Veltliner, and estate has been namic since 2006 dyn, a well known in Germany and

use of any culti-only uses small

I had been seeing this wine around and initially dismissed it because of the bottle and label's resemblance to Coca-Cola's bottles. It wasn't until my recent visit to Copenhagen in November 2022 that I was able to track a bottle down, where the abundance of Austrian natural wine makes me wonder if they have anything but Austrian wines. Being familiar with Claus from our wine club I was immediately excited to share this with my travel companions. We were all very captivated with this selection. It was fun, light, and immediately quaffable. Reminiscent of fun unserious beaujolais or easy going Oregon pinot, with a slight more nerve and playfulness. This is serious summer juice!

This wine is possibly the pluckiest of the bunch with a tad bit more fruit and concentration. On the nose I was immediately enticed by cherry and strawberry notes, with a hint of rose petals and garden herbs. The crispness and crunchiness of the fruit is readily apparent here with bright and acidic cherry, a bit of salinity, slightly tart, and a bit of adult punch vibe. Definitely a great pairing for burgers, tacos, and picnics.

Jeremy Hernandez

Strekov 1075 Fred X
Strekov • Slovakia
Press 4 Mix/Red

Strekov 1075 is the winery of Zsolt Sütő, a former pumpkin seed farmer turned natural winemaker philosopher. He is located in the town of Strekov, in southwest Slovakia, where 90% of the population is of Hungarian descent, including Zsolt. It's a region that is a crossroads of culture, changing hands politically from the Hungarians, Austrians, Ottomans, Czechoslovakians, Nazis, and Communists until their independence in 1989. In some ways it's not surprising so many have fought over this territory, with its lush, rolling slopes and vineyards that are tempered by the Danube River and its surrounding marshlands.

Zsolt's philosophy is centered around the trust and faith that is needed to make wine without sulfur. "I had a barrel that was borderline flawed, I felt it coming," he says. I also knew that a tiny bit of SO2 would spare me the risk; but if I added it, I'd never know the eventual outcome – maybe the wine would manage to take care of itself. In the end, I think this search for truth is my ultimate fuel. No matter how unflattering or potentially painful, I think we should always seek the truth and face it."

'Fred' is his basic table red, but it's much more than a basic wine. It's a snapshot of this warmer corner of Pannonia, a wine with soul and zero pretense. A non vintage blend of Alibernet (a cross between Alicante Henri Bouschet and Caber-

net Sauvignon), Dunaj (cross of Blauer Portugieser and Sankt Laurent), and Portugieser, from 2021 and 2022. It's a juicy, grippy red with blueberry, violet, and peppercorns. Zsolt says the F in Fred stands for "friendly, fresh, but also f–ing good red."

Jonathan Kemp

Texier Chat Fou
Rhone Valley • France
Press 4 Red

When you taste with Eric Texier, you're guaranteed two things: incredible wine, and zero bull\$#*%.

He doesn't want to be a part of a "scene," and he's been known to take shots at other winemakers when he feels like they are lying about or otherwise disrespecting the craft. He's a winemaker's winemaker—endlessly reinventing, experimenting and recording the results. He wants more than great wines; he wants to push conversations forward and nudge people to become better stewards of the land and better winemakers. He was a PhD nuclear engineer before switching to wine-making, which he did without any family land or real experience. He uses his science background in order to know how not to add things to his wine, however.

In the case of Chat Fou, it had been official Côtes du Rhône for many

years, even as a lighter take on the style due to his inclusion of white grapes like Clairette. But starting in 2021 it is simply Vin de France, as he decided it was too much of a pain in the ass to keep fighting with the AOC over how light the color was. At this point he has enough of a following it doesn't matter, so it really just proves how out of touch the AOC is.

The 2022 is as fire as ever, with a blend of 50% Grenache, 30% Cinsault, and 20% Clairette aged in

concrete with no sulfur until bottling. Silky and fresh, with plums, violets, and fine blueberry-skin texture. For a wine that is 'too light' for typical Côtes du Rhône, it has more weight and depth than you would think, with

a long, satisfying finish. Chill it down, pair it with almost anything. I so wish I could pick up any bottle of random Côtes du Rhône and have it taste like this.

Jonathan Kemp & Matthew Hawkins

Nestarec Youngster
Moravia • Czech Republic
Press 4 Red

Milan Nestarec may be the name on the wine label but his wines are more than the sum of one person's efforts to make authentic Moravian wine. Milan's winemaking journey began



Claus Pressinger

as far back as he can remember. Due to wine's presence in his family's daily lives Milan knew he was destined to be a winemaker. Born in the biggest wine growing village in the Czech Republic where every family made enough wine for their own consumption, his family's foray into professional winemaking came after they were returned a plot of land that was seized by the the Communist regime during the Velvet Revolution in 1989. This prompted Milan's father, Milan Sr. to pick up seasonal vineyard work in Germany. Through the connection of the German winery they were able to purchase second hand equipment to ramp up their production and continued buying small plots of land one at a time. These acquisitions and increased volume of wine production led to Milan's father entrusting him with all winemaking decisions at the age of 16.

Old World Winery truly perfected tIf you've had the opportunity to follow Milan's wines over the last few years you'd be hard pressed not to notice a gradual development of precision in his wines, which he attributes to his "essence over style" approach.

His youngster wines are all blends from estate organically grown fruit. The Youngster Red being a mix of Blaufrankisch, Cabernet Franc, Dornfelder. The fruit is all hand harvested, pressed, and spontaneously fermented from indigenous yeast in steel tanks. The wine is bottled unfiltered, unfinned with no sulfur

additions.

This is a youthful fresh drinking wine with just the right amount of structure and zip for a weeknight meal. With notes of beets, blueberry, cola, dark red florals and a dash of earth this is an extraordinarily versatile wine. This would be great with funky cheese and charcuterie, gamier meats, and mushroom dishes - exactly the fare these colder months will be calling for.

Jeremy Hernandez



Zsolt Sütő

**Filarole Fatto coi
Piedi
Emilia-Romagna
• Italy
Press 4 White**

Filarole translates to "a couple of rows, a small vineyard" in the local

Piacenza dialect, which is fitting as this is a very small-scale, family run operation. The estate was started by wife and husband team Barbara and Paolo Pulliero, who left the city to pursue a rural life and make pure expressive wines. They are self-taught and revitalized the old vines on their property that had been overgrown and neglected for years. These were the traditional grapes of the area: Malvasia Aromatica di Candia and Ortruga for the skin contact white wines, Barbera and Bonarda for the red wines.

Fatto Coi Piedi translates to "made with feet," referring to the traditional foot-stomping of the grapes they em-

ploy to make this wine. It highlights the striking Malvasia di Candia Aromatica, a grape variety found only near Piacenza. It is a thick-skinned, very aromatic grape, which turns out to be perfect for a skin-contact wine. The blend in this cuvee is 35% Malvasia di Candia Aromatica, 35% Ortrugo, 25% Trebbiano, and 5% mixed indigenous varieties. The age of vines is 50 years, on average..

The grapes are hand harvested in small crates, selected, then crushed, and fermented using only indigenous yeast. Maceration takes 21 – 30 days with frequent punch-downs. The wine is aged in fiberglass tanks until bottling in the spring. No fining, filtration, or added sulfur.

This is a bright and intense white wine with stunning aromas of white flowers, high-toned citrus, and a bit of spice. I found it to be quite saline, with a good amount of minerality, and tannins. This structure, concentrated aromatics, and length make it a strong contender for pairing with similarly complex dishes like saffron risotto, cured or raw fish, and spicy Asian dishes—particularly curries.

Jeremy Hernandez

**Desire Petit Melon a Queue
Rouge
Jura • France
Press 4 White**

There's nothing 'petit' about the passion — or the barrels — at this 3rd generation winery in Arbois-Pupillin now run by Damien and Anne-Laure

Petit. The domaine was started in 1932 by Anne-Laure and Damien Petit's grandfather Désiré Petit, who planted about 1.5 hectare in the Côte de Feule. Now the estate is 27 hectares, and was certified organic in 2019. Since 2008, Damien, who works the vineyard and makes the wine, has pushed more and more towards more natural viticulture and is also using Biodynamic preparations and methods in the vineyards. Organic fertilizers were abandoned four years ago in favor of soil aeration, herbs, and flowers.

To aid them in their efforts to work naturally in the cellar, they have some helpful friends and neighbors in Pupillin like Julien Mareschal of Domaine de la Borde; there's also the legendary Pierre Overnoy, who apparently instructed Damien to mix some Marc (grape brandy) with water to subdue some concerning fermentation issues in a barrel instead of using sulfur. Thanks, neighbor!

Their Melon-à-Queue-Rouge is a Jura subtype of Chardonnay with its own character. Though Jura is known for nutty oxidative wines at times, this is 'topped-up' or ouillé, aged in demi-muid, meaning it is made in a more typical style for white wine. That doesn't mean it is missing that special Jurassic something. There's some subtle Comté rind here along with notes of popcorn, lemon oil, and a silky texture. Desire Petit is still one of the best values around and the wines get better every vintage. They are textbook examples, great for those who want to learn about the Jura;

they will not disappoint long-time Jura fans, either. *Jonathan Kemp*

Caveau de Bacchus Marnes Rouges 2020

Jura • France
Press 2

The wines of Caveau de Bacchus were very much not available in the US until recently. They are widely regarded by other winemakers as having the best Trousseau vines, full stop. However, many decades of selling from their cellar door meant that 95% of the wines went to private clients. As they begin selling more internationally, we are very excited to be able to snatch these up before the secret is out.

Lucien Aviet (nicknamed ‘Bacchus,’ if that tells you anything about his personality) came from a farming family and after returning from the military he took over the family farm in the early 1960s and began making wine from their grapes instead of selling them to the cooperative. Over the years he built up a reputation for making some of the most age-worthy and classic expressions of the Jura’s distinct varieties and styles. Despite his kinship with Overnoy, the wines are closer to Puffeney in style and poise. Lucien died in 2018 but his son Vincent has been making the wines for a decade or more now, continuing the effort to make wines in a manner he and his father saw as authentic, traditional Jura.

They are not wild and ‘natty’ but

they tell the story of the Jura, its history, and their unique vines in a way that is profound. And delicious. Authentic is a slippery term but I’m ok using that with the wines of Lucien and Vincent. If you want the real Jura, look no further.

The ‘Cuvée des Géologues’ is named for the geologists who helped the Aviet family decide where to plant Trousseau back in the 1960s. Destemmed and aged in large Alsatian foudre, it is a young wine now and will easily age and improve over the next 5-10 years. Even so, you can enjoy it now, though decant if you can: it’s not tannic, but more air will allow the subtleties to emerge. There is a really lovely tightrope walk between the sultry, darker tones of wet earth and black cherry with the more elegant, fine-tuned details. Boysenberry and red pepper flake notes add an important lift and overtone series to the wine. There is a long, haunting finish and a quiet, firm voice to this wine that rewards really sitting with it and letting it tell you stories. *Jonathan Kemp*

Tatsis Goumenissa 2009 **Macedonia • Greece** *Press 2*

Periklis and Stergios Tatsis are behind some of our absolute favorite Greek wines. They have been outliers and rebels in the wine world since the 1990s when there were only three or four others in Greece doing the kind of natural farming and winemaking they had committed to.

Organic from the start and Biodynamic since 2002, they are now making wines that are not only natural but ageworthy, complex, and hauntingly beautiful.

Goumenissa, by law, must be a blend of Xinomavro and Negoska, and this is a 50/50 blend. It spends one year in barrel but then is held back until they feel it’s ready for release. It’s not made in every vintage. The 2009 is the current release. It smells downright amazing: blueberry, cannabis, floral notes, sandalwood, and sage. There’s a beautiful mixture of primary fruit and tertiary, earthy flavors. The feral, wild side of the wine has been tamed with time in bottle, but there’s enough still there to keep things just a bit rowdy. Overall it’s in a fantastic spot right now so don’t hold back on opening this, but it will certainly continue to age nicely. It’s really hard to not compare this to old Nebbiolo, so keep that in mind for food pairings: wild boar sausage, black truffles, lamb chops, and hard cheeses are sure bets. This is a special wine, and the Tatsis brothers are nothing if not special characters in the current, changing world of Greek wine.

Jonathan Kemp



Lucien Aviet



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