

Molly's BOTTLE CLUB - January 2022 the crazy & fearless Fabien Jouvès

from: between the towns of Quercy and Cahors in the southwest French region of Occitanie - official region is Cahors, France

winemaker/ farmer: Fabien Jouvès

about: Fabien was born into a 'peasant family' (his words). His father grew grapes and made wine for the family plus had a full-time job and his mom had a kitchen garden so Fabien was raised around farming & winemaking. A perfect combination for this crazy, curious, overthinker! His curiosity and his desire to learn more about winemaking led him to take over the vines & small family cellar in 2006. And with that first vintage, Fabien began to explore being a vigneron.

SIDE NOTE: a vigneron is not just a winemaker! it is a farmer who makes wine - a person deeply connected to the land who also happens to create wine. We don't have the equivalent word in English which I find to be very interesting considering how separated we often are from the land here in the US.

Fabien refers to himself as an 'artisan vigneron' which he speculates is a way to reflect what he is trying to do.

Fabien is a wild, swirling bunch of energy with ideas and curiosity seeping out of every pore! He does not bow to convention in any way and is constantly seeking/ exploring. His partner and now a young daughter, have grounded him in some ways & the wines seem to have become a bigger part of his outlet for exploration. He does collaborations with friends and of course, he is making wine for his own label. The passion in his eyes is obvious all the time and never more so than when he picks up rocks in the vineyard to show you or dips a wine-thief through a bed of skins & seeds to gently retrieve the juice below. Letting it slide into your waiting glass, he analyzes the color and viscosity then laughs at himself. We analyze together and he comments on what he expects as it changes or what the vintage was like that year. Then he is on the next barrel or vineyard - I trail along trying not to get left behind and we're both grinning from ear to ear.

for the record, don't try to keep up on the drinking with Fabien - you'll regret it!

and now for the wines ::::

'Les Agudes'

grape(s): Sauvignon Blanc / Colombard / Chardonnay / Ugni Blanc

facts & random info: limestone clay hillsides provide a structure to the manually harvested grapes from biodynamically farmed young (20-year-old) vineyards (howz that for a run-on sentence?).

Fabien utilizes a combination of direct pressed grapes and whole clusters which are softly pressed to preserve the fruit. Fermentation occurs in stainless steel and some old barrels. This awesome golden nectar (aka Les Agudes) is then raised or aged in a mixture of vessels, both concrete vats, stainless steel and inert wood, to maintain a balance of richness and edge. This wine is unfiltered and unfiltered so cloudy is expected.

tasting notes: wow! crazy tonka bean aroma's with an underlying bright citrus. That first sip sings of tropical fruits - think pineapple and slightly underripe mango. With floral notes coming from the Sauvignon Blanc and zippy acidity from the Colombard, the ripe pear from Ugni Blanc and creamy notes from the Chardonnay, this wine is freakingly weird and soooo delicious!

pairing ideas: best pairing I found was snowshoeing on Stevens Pass with this wine in my nalgene bottle!

that being said, it was pretty damn delicious with a winter kale, apple & feta salad w/ S&P, shallot, lemon, EVOO dressing!! a lemon seafood pasta sounds pretty nice too - lots of butter & garlic!

'Haut Berba'

grape(s): **Petit and Gros Manseng**

facts & random info: Vincent Maysounave is a winemaker from Jurançon - a magical wine region nestled in the foothills of the Pyrenees. Only about 5 square miles, this tiny wine region is known for dessert wines made from Petit & Gros Manseng! The hidden secret "for those in the know" is dry whites also made from these grapes!!

Vincent & Fabien became friends and decided to collaborate to bring this stunning wine into existence! Cuz these grapes and definitely this region are not known for natural wines and they figured why not?!

Soil here is clay and limestone with loam

40+ year old vines

Vinified whole-bunch in stainless steel

Aged in neutral barrel for one year

tasting notes: I'm not sure how a wine can be dense, rich with deep structure yet be light on it's feet - crisp & dry with great acidity and balance - maybe it's a miracle! the constant tension of minerality, crispness & structure is blowing my mind!

citrus - ripe grapefruit, meyer lemon! d'anjou pears dancing with candied quince. And these whiffs of saffron and touches of quinine—this is not a wine for the faint of heart but I know you are all curious seekers so love it or not, this wine is blowing minds!

I'd also venture a solid, educated guess that this wine could age 5+ years!

pairing ideas: classically prepared seared foie gras (Fabien's rec)

pork loin with pear compote (Vincent's rec)

braised chicken with white wine and shallots - dinner in NYC

Grilled swordfish with mashed sweet potato

my partner LOVED it with rabbit & chicken livers from Off Alley which if you haven't gone, you really should try it!

Also and perhaps oddly - I absolutely loved this wine with the cacio a pepe pizza from Lupo

'YFMW'

grape(s): Jurançon Noir, Valdiguié, Merlot, Malbec

facts & random info: fondly referred to as 'YFMW', the name is another poke and comes from the fact that the jurançon noir and valdiguié were not currently allowed into AOC Cahors. When the AOC regulators told Fabien to eliminate them from this blend and rip them out of the vineyards, he responded by calling this wine a Vin de Table, bottling it in a non-traditional bottle and giving that famous poke (his sense of rebellion & humor strikes again!)

Plus that label - so hilarious!

50+ year old vines

all hand harvested

whole cluster fermented in concrete for a week or so

whole-bunch has a major influence on wine - giving it much more brightness and red aspects of fruit! A major flavor influencer, whole bunch fermentation

brings skins, seeds & often stems to the party - this allows a natural

preservative so little to no sulfur is needed. It also allows the grapes to ferment when ready - they literally ferment from the inside out - bursting forth!

aged in concrete vats and neutral barrels 6-months(ish)

bottled without any filtration then allowed to rest until he feels it's ready

tasting notes: so much blueberries, violets, blackberries and raspberries. Super fruit-driven but with structure, acidity and iron-minerality. A big hit of smooth, soft and juicy flavours with freshness to the tannin on the back palate. Crisp and defined. Joyous, vibrant, pure and fresh.

pairing ideas: I particularly like this wine on it's own! more like an afternoon sipper when you're in the mood for a red but not ready for dinner.

That being said, it went particularly well with a squash, black bean tamale from Frelard and even better with a cheese, asparagus tamale from Milpamasa (swoon!!)

'TVPAS'

grape(s): Malbec, Merlot

facts & random info: 'Tu vin plus aux soirées' comes from a French pun that basically means 'you are no longer welcome at this party'

like I said - Fabien is crazy and very funny! This wine and a few of his other wines have these names that are a direct and precise pokes at the governing bodies of the French government who give vigneronns like Fabien so much grief when they don't play by the exact rules. TVPAS is a sharp poke at the fact that some grapes are allowed then not allowed so how does a hard-working person keep up?

a blend of various soils on limestone hillsides (some clay in random parts of the vineyard)

25+ year old vines

all hand harvested

whole bunch fermentation in old barrel & concrete vats for roughly a week (a little more for one vat that was in a colder part of the cellar)

followed by 6 months ageing in the same tanks

Bottled without filtering or clarifying

tasting notes: Blackberry, currants and spice with a velvety round texture.

Earthy cherries and dusty strawberries jump into your mouth with joy - inviting a party?! it's lush tannins and balanced fruit/ acidity! The wine brings so much joy I really do wanna have a party!

pairing ideas: pepper crusted then seared steak!

gruyere, black pepper & potato tart with mustard green & dehydrated blueberry salad on the side (OMG!)