The Next Generation of French Winemakers

By LINDSEY TRAMUTA
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Wine may have always been a cornerstone of French culture and gastronomy, but today, the industry is experiencing a marked wave of change, driven largely by up-and-coming producers. Josh Adler, owner of the four-year-old Paris Wine Company, a Paris-based wine exporter with a special focus on young producers, says it's truly the golden age of winemaking in France. "You see people taking over family domaines or starting their own, despite the inherent challenges. On top of that, they're focused on organic farming and all natural wines."

In the spirit of sustainable winemaking, Adler organized the first Paris Wine Weekend, which will take place Oct. 7-10. From a kickoff wine-pairing dinner at the 11th Arrondissement bistro Yard to a portfolio tasting at Verjus for an entry price of only five euros, the weekend's events will spotlight the next generation of organic/biodynamic winemakers in France. Below, Adler shares some of the producers he's the most excited about, by region.

A bottle of Fleurie Folie from Yann Bertrand (right).
Courtesy of Paris Wine Company

Yann Bertrand (Beaujolais)

“Yann came back to his family domaine in Fleurie and completely revolutionized everything, taking inspiration from well-known producers like Yvon Metras and Jean Foillard. He works organically and with minimal sulfur and has quickly sold out of everything he produced since his first vintage in 2012. The wines are dynamic, energetic and really delicious. He has quickly catapulted to the top tier of Beaujolais producers, and is the most requested winemaker that we work with.”

A bottle of Burgundy from Marc Soyard (right), whose vineyard is called Domaine de la Cras.
Courtesy of Paris Wine Company

Marc Soyard, Domaine de la Cras (Burgundy)

“Marc Soyard has the opportunity to define a new wine region, since he is the only producer of Coteaux de Dijon — he won a city-run contest to earn the right to take over unused land for organic production — and he’s completely acing it. The wines have finesse and terroir — everything I’m looking for in good Burgundy.”

Julien Cécillon (right) runs his eponymous vineyard with his wife, Nancy Kerschen.
Courtesy of Paris Wine Company

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Julien Cecillon (Northern Rhône)

“Julien’s family has been making wine in the northern Rhône for seven generations. His uncle, the famous producer Jean-Louis Grippat, sold off all his vineyards when he retired in 2001 because no one else in the family was interested in making wine. After studying business management, Julien decided to change course and come back to winemaking, but started from scratch. He runs the winery with his wife where they make St. Joseph and Crozes Hermitage. Their reds are exactly what great northern Rhône should be: graceful and powerful, showing the very best of Syrah.”

Roland Piollot and Dominique Moreau of Champagne Piollot.
Courtesy of Paris Wine Company

Champagne Piollot, Roland Piollot and Dominique Moreau (Champagne)

"After three generations of traditional winemaking, Roland Piollot decided to convert all his 10 hectares of vines to organic farming, which means more expensive farming, the risk of lower yields, and the possibility of losing many of their existing customers. I'm amazed by their courageous decision to do what they believe is right rather than follow the easy path. The Champagnes are amazing and continue to get better each year. One highlight is the Cuvée Colas Robin, made from 100 percent Pinot Blanc (rare in Champagne), planted by Roland's father using the traditional selection massale method."

Wines by all producers mentioned in this story are available via pariswinecompany.com.

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