

Le Rocher des Violettes

Montlouis



"Across the river from Vouvray, the tiny appellation of Montlouis has been home to one of the most amazing and exciting wine revivals of modern France, and at least three Montlouis growers--Blot, Chidaine, and Xavier Weisskopf (of Rocher des Violettes)--are challenging the local qualitative pre-eminence of Vouvray."

David Schildknecht, The Wine Advocate #172

"I'd like to introduce you to one of the future stars of French viticulture: Xavier Weisskopf, whose first vintage was 2005. Born in Picardy, in northern France in 1979, Weisskopf studied viticulture and enology in Chablis and Beaune, then worked for Louis Barroul (Chateau St. Cosme) in Gigondas from 2001 to 2004 before creating his own winery in 2005. He wanted to make great white wine, felt the southern Rhone was too warm for the style of wines he wanted to make, realized vineyard land in Burgundy too expensive, and settled for the Loire the freshness of whose wines he admired and he found vines on slopes overlooking the Cher as well as splendid 15th century tuffeau cellars not far from Amboise.

They consisted of 7 hectares of chenin , 2 of red, including 1.5 hectares of cot (some of which were planted in 1891) and 50 ares of sauvignon blanc. Basically abandoned by two elderly vigneron, the vineyards were a jungle of ankle-spraining weeds and needed almost complete restructuring. Weisskopf chose to put his vines back into shape organically. Harvest is by hand, by successive passes through the vineyards; Weisskopf uses indigenous yeasts and ferments 90% of his wines in new or newish barrels, the rest in tank. (At first, he used Burgundy barrels purchased from Marc Colin but, after deciding they made the wines too 'oaky,' he has switched to 500 litre barrels.) Counting his Touraine AOCs and his Vin de Pays, he makes 11 cuvees, depending on the vintage."

Jacqueline Friedrich, www.jacquelinefriedrich.com (October 1, 2009)

2007 Montlouis Sec "Cuvée Touche Mitaine"

"Bright gold with a green hue. Poached pear, orange and spun sugar on the nose. Fleshy honeydew and pear flavors start off sweet but become nervier and spicier in the middle palate, picking up floral and tangy mineral notes with air. This intriguing wine delivers a suave blend of sweetness and spiciness that lingers on a very persistent, dry and disarmingly stony finish.."

91 points– Josh Raynolds, Stephen Tanzer's International Wine Cellar (May/June 2010)

2007 Montlouis Sec “Cuvée Negrette”

“Gorgeous almond, nectarine and white peach notes are laced with an alluring streak of ginger, followed by a long, pure, minerally finish. Ripe but chiseled. Seriously delicious. Drink now through 2014.”

91 points– James Molesworth, The Wine Spectator Insider (June 23, 2010)

2006 Montlouis Sec “Cuvée Negrette”

“From vines planted prior to World War II, and vinified in used barriques, Weisskopf’s 2006 Montlouis Sec Cuvée Negrette—which is the vintage currently on offer—will certainly not make one forget the superb 2005 (reviewed in issue 172) but is fascinatingly delicious nonetheless. Musky, animal scents mingle with quince, candied grapefruit and lime zest, lanolin, and brown spices in the nose. The effect of the barrels is quite evident, but to determine where varietal character leaves off and notes of wood begin is less easy to detect! The waxy texture here, along with the polished integration of oak, reminds me of white Bordeaux. Pungent herbal and citrus zest inflections contribute to a lingering, honeyed yet faintly bitter finish.”

89 points– David Schildknecht, The Wine Advocate #184 (August 2009)

2005 Montlouis Sec “Cuvée Negrette”

“From older vines and vinified in used barriques, Weisskopf’s 2005 Montlouis Sec Cuvée Negrette smells intensely of quince, apple, lemon, honey, lanolin and ginger. With a bracing rush of citrus and a pungent cut of ginger, apple skin and citrus zest, this wine enervates the palate, coating with a glossy concentrate of orchard and citrus fruits. Epitomizing the potential of Chenin to be dense yet refreshing and of Northern France’s chalky soils to yield mysterious underlying carnal as well as mineral broth character (poster child: Chablis) this Montlouis is not to be missed!”

92 points– David Schildknecht, The Wine Advocate #172

2005 Montlouis Demi-Sec

“Gorgeously perfumed with lemon, vanilla, apple blossom and linden flower. Juicy apple-y fruit and a suggestion of honey mingle with inner-mouth florality, and a long, somehow both invigorating and soothingly-smooth finish that incorporates crushed stone and a surprising note of apple wood-smoked bacon. I pitted this against generally wine-deadly beets and the combination was sensational.”

91 points– David Schildknecht, The Wine Advocate #172

“Off-dry in feel, this is well-defined, with a creamy texture carrying brioche, ginger, clementine and spice notes through a lengthy finish. Just a touch fluid in the end, holding it back from outstanding. Drink now through 2010.”

89 points– James Molesworth, The Wine Spectator (August 31, 2008)