

The Wine Advocate de Robert Parker

Best of 2012 (extrait)

By any name, just as neglected

Whatever you call it, a once-prevalent Northern European cépage gets a bad rap for being better-known as a table grape (or, in Alsace, as an agent of German viticultural imperialism). But put the right genetic variants (of which there are many) in the right soil as well as the right hands and **Chasselas – a.k.a. Gutedel; a.k.a. Fendant – can render among the most distinctively and irresistibly delicious whites on earth.**

Where they're famous for Chasselas – the only place – is in Switzerland's Vaud, whose steep, towering terraces along the North Shore of Lake Geneva can in the best instances yield whites of distinguished subtlety. They are low-acid – usually undergo "malo" – yet leave you groping for mineral descriptors that do them justice, as well as for another glassful of something so instantly refreshing. The extremely insightful, articulate **Blaise Duboux** and his **2010 Dézaley - Haut De Pierre Vieilles Vignes** won't let me rest until a U.S. importer steps up to the plate.

Vaud veteran **Pierre-Luc Leyvraz** renders a single Chasselas bottling from a mosaic of parcels, committing a number of winemaking fashion faux-pas along the way. He showed me a remarkable vertical, so while you might want to look out for the vibrant and succulent 2010 that has recently been imported, I'll single out here the **2007 St-Saphorin Les Blassinges** whose silken amalgam of almond, quince, green tea, iris, and honeysuckle has haunted me ever since.

Back to the outskirts of Basel and **Hanspeter Ziereisen** (for more about whom, see under Pinot above) – one of the friendliest and most disarmingly honest wine growers I've ever (and had never) met – who, as it turns out, crafts Chasselas I could drink every day of the year. I realize that Heugumber (denoting his - far from! - "basic"), Ohrechübler (for Extra-Brut, *seven years en tirage!*) or Steingruble don't appetizingly roll off your tongue, but dip it into the **2010 Gutedel Steingruble** and tell me that doesn't astonish you for its wealth of herbal, floral, and mineral detail not to mention sheer guzzle-ability.

David Schildknecht