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The White Burgundy to Buy Now to Get Around Trump's Tariffs

In this week's Top Shelf wine newsletter: vintages from Bhutan, an English sparkler, and Burgundy best buys that get around Trump's tariffs.



Hi, Top Shelfers, it's [Elin McCoy](#), your expert in all things wine—and, I'm very proud to say, one of *Decanter* magazine's [four female “trailblazers.”](#)

Last month I was in New York a lot where there seemed to be an unending stream of wine people launching new labels and vintages and staging winery anniversary celebrations in the city. For example: [Tenuta Luce](#), the first winery in Montalcino to blend sangiovese and merlot, held a kickoff tasting for its 30th anniversary worldwide tour. I highly recommend buying one of the vintages 2022, 2019, 2016, 2013 and delicious 1994.

But most of all, March in New York is Burgundy month. [La Paulée, the cult-like extravaganza](#) orchestrated by sommelier and wine entrepreneur Daniel Johnnes, drew dozens of winemakers who poured their sublime reds and whites for gleeful aficionados at the several-day event and in restaurants in Manhattan.

I've also been taking a hard look at Burgundy's whites, which have taken a back seat to reds in collecting and investing but now are getting new attention from investors. Where am I looking? The northernmost appellation, Chablis.

Why Chablis is booming and what you should snap up

Think of the edgy, minerally Burgundian chardonnays in Chablis as the new Sancerre, even though they're made from a different grape.

Yes, they've been around for ages in the US, but in 2023 the US became the region's No. 1 export market by value, a big increase—19%—over 2022. And that's in a world where wine sales are declining. At luxury retailer Benchmark Wine Group, owner Dave Parker says, "Our sales of Chablis in 2024 grew by more than a factor of three over 2023. Why? Chablis ticks all the boxes for [what people want today in a white wine](#)."

That means a lighter, very pure crisp style with freshness and acidity, the kind of food-friendly wine sommeliers embrace. Me too!



The taste of Chablis is unique. Fossil-rich Kimmeridgian limestone soil and a still-cool climate contribute to the distinctive gunflint smokiness and salty, steely flavors that remind me of wet stone and the briny scent of sea spray. Chablis is a chardonnay that's the opposite of those old-style buttery rich, oaky California examples, which are now way out of fashion.

And with climate change, Chablis has a slightly rounder, easier-to-drink profile than in the chillier past, especially in warm years like 2022 and 2023. The wines are ripe, fruity and juicy, but also lively, crisp and salty tasting. They epitomize that ubiquitous wine term "minerality."

My take? 2022 was a very, very good year, whether you're talking about Petit Chablis (the lowest level of quality) or the great grands crus (the highest). The wines taste good now and will age well too.

They're still excellent values as well, especially compared with prices for comparable Burgundy wines from appellations such as Puligny Montrachet in the Côte-d'Or.

So in March I eagerly spent some time tasting with Didier Séguier, the winemaker at the excellent William Fèvre domaine, which makes some 19 different cuvées. Of their 70 hectares of vines, 43 are grands and premiers crus. Last year the domaine was purchased by Domaines Barons de Rothschild, owner of Château Lafite Rothschild.

“Chablis is one of the areas with better wines than 50 years ago,” he says, “and that’s partly because of global warming. Harvests are earlier—in 2022 we started on the 29th of August, a month before we did 40 years ago. But we have a better and more regular climate today.”

The following vintage, 2023, is a year with a sunny disposition, generous and pleasurable, fruity and attractive. Séguier says the difference between the grands crus and lesser ones is less obvious.

However, 2024 was crazy—a disaster—because the region was slammed with hailstorms, frost, floods, rain and more. William Fèvre’s vineyards, hit three times by hail, produced only 10% of a normal year’s crop.

When I was in Chablis several years ago, it was December and snowing, with treacherous black ice underfoot. But the formerly sleepy appellation was beginning to hum with the energy and excitement of a younger generation beginning to take charge. According to a 2022 survey, 40% of the estate managers are under 40.

That’s partly why the number of estates farming organically has gone up. William Fèvre was an early leader. “The domaine has been organic for 20 years now,” Séguier says. “It takes five to 10 years to have an impact. Freshness increases.”

The wines—2022s and some 2023s—are in stores now, so no tariffs, and the price is right.

Six Top Chablis Buys

The most collectible names in Chablis are Raveneau and Vincent Dauvissat. Both are expensive (\$300 and up), so I've focused on ones costing less than those two icons.

2022 William Fèvre Vaulorent (\$89)



This is a small premier cru vineyard adjacent to a grand cru, so it has some of the same density and richness of a grander wine along with an intense savory quality and minerality that verges on a bright saltiness. Séguier only decided to put the name on the label in 1998.

2022 William Fèvre Les Clos (\$230)



This famous grand cru is always powerful, structured and intense, the kind of wine to invest in and drink years from now. About half the grapes come from old vines planted from 1948 to 1952. This vintage is citrusy bright and fresh, but also layered and deep.