



VINOUS mars 2017

## Alsace: The 2015s and Late-Released 2014s

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### 91 MURÉ Sylvaner 2015 Steinstuck

Bright straw. White flowers, quince and minerals on the nose and in the mouth. Bright and juicy, featuring a minty touch to the orchard fruit and chamomile flavors. Long and with plenty of lemony zing on the bright finish. Lovely Sylvaner that is slightly richer than usual, much like the 2015 Sylvaner wines of other Alsatian producers and not at all surprising given the warm year. Almost always an outstanding wine, made from grapes grown on a very stony, gravelly site; think of this as Sylvaner for the Riesling lover. I don't think Muré gets enough credit or even recognition for being remarkably adept at turning out delicious, sneakily concentrated wines with this variety.

### 90 MURÉ Riesling 2015 Zinnkoepflé

Golden-yellow. Flinty and minty floral aromason the delicate nose. Bright, juicy and penetrating, displaying a saline, lemony nuance to the orchard fruit and fresh ginger flavors. Refined and precise; a linear, breezy mouthfeel neatly distinguishes it from Rieslings born on clay-rich soils, such as those from the upper reaches of the *grand cru*. The Muré parcel of Zinnkoepflé Riesling vines located on the lower slopes of the *grand cru*, which are in pink sandstone and almost devoid of clay, hence the daintier, more graceful wines made from grapes grown there. Véronique Muré pointed out just how different this *grand crus* wines can be compared to those of other *grand crus*, recalling that «at first, we didn't like our Zinnkoepflé wines. They were too different from the ones we had always made at the Clos Saint Landelin on the Vorbourg *grand cru*, and it took us a while to get used to them.»

### 92 MURÉ Riesling 2014 Clos St Landelin

Medium straw-yellow. Lemongrass and ginger complement minerally stone fruit aromas on the captivating nose. Then less mineral in the mouth, but rich and large-scale in the typical manner of the Saint Landelin, which is known for giving bigger, broad Rieslings. Finishes multilayered and long with bright lemony zing. The 2014 vintage was a generally though, cool one, but it turns out to have given many lovely Rieslings such as this one.

### 93 MURÉ Sylvaner Cuvée Oscar 2014

Luminous golden yellow. Super-ripe but remarkably fresh aromas of mango, lemongrass, beeswax and orange marmalade. Bright, juicy and dense, but lively acidity makes this rich, ripe wine very light on its feet. Finishes long and vibrant, displaying a lovely lemon and chamomille zing.

This tastes medium-dry; it has the residual sugar of a frankly sweet wine (46 g/L residual sugar) but the total acidity is such (8,5 g/L total acidity) that it tastes almost dry. The Cuvée Oscar is one of Alsace's most underrated wines. It's an absolutely unique, complex, concentrated version of Sylvaner, matched only by Ernest Burn's SGN-like efforts with the variety.

### **91 MURÉ Pinot Noir V 2015**

Deep ruby-red. Knockout nose of red cherry and smoke, then even smokier on the palate, where bright acidity really highlights the flinty, smoky nature of the bright red cherry and raspberry fruit flavors. Long and mineral on the finish, which offers lingering notes of graphite and violet. Is there perhaps just a twinge of bitterness on the back? This is utterly irresistible already, but I'd cellar it for at least a couple of years to see if it softens further (perhaps losing that hint of bitterness in the process). Muré is the recognized quality leader when it comes to Pinot Noir in Alsace; the «V» in this wine's name stands for *Vorbourg*, a *grand cru*, so that full name cannot appear on the label as Pinot Noir is not allowed *grand cru* recognition by current Alsace law.

### **92 MURÉ Pinot Noir 2015 Clos St Landelin**

Deep ruby-red. Red and dark berries, graphite and herbs on the nose. Lovely freshness contributes to an impression of sleekness and lifts the bright small berry flavors. Still reticent and compact, this is more closed and austere than the *Vorbourg*, but it is also a much more complex wine and ought to develop splendidly. Due to the relatively hot 2015 vintage, Thomas destemmed only 40 percent of these grapes in an effort to preserve acidity (the stalks contain potassium, which tends to precipitate tartrate salts).

### **90+ MURÉ Gewurztraminer 2015 Zinnkoepflé**

Good full yellow. Ripe, perfumed aromas of peach, grapefruit jelly, cinnamon, nutmeg, clove oil, and rose petal. Light and lively but intensely flavored, displaying a piercing aromatic quality and solid grip to the flavors of minty tropical fruit and spicy aromatic oils. Dense but very light on its feet in the typical Zinnkoepflé style of Gewürz. Finishes with delicate notes of lemongrass, rose water and violet, but also just a touch astringent. Yet another in a long line of refined, lemony Zinnkoepflé Gewürzes; this *grand cru's* complex terroir is the beauty who dominates the opulent beast that Gewürz can potentially be.

### **96 MURÉ Muscat 2014 VT Clos St Landelin**

Pale golden-tinged straw. Extremely perfumed, intense aromas of lemon custard, lavender, vanilla and rose. Then bright and long, showing an exceptional acid-sugar balance. Finishes long and penetrating with nuances of crushed grapes, resin and minty orange oil. Truly lovely, this is a rare wine for Muré and Alsace in general; Muscat's thin skins normally make it hard to produce sweet late-harvest wines (though Alsace wine lovers know Muré especially has a long history of success with this variety and wine style). This is one of the best young Alsace Muscat Vendanges Tardives I have memory of, and that's saying something, because I've had a few.

### **90+ MURÉ Gewurztraminer 2015 VT Schulzengass**

Bright golden yellow. Delicate aromas of grapefruit, lime and rose. Then surprisingly rich and sweet, offering tactile flavors of mango and papaya complicated by cloves and cinnamon. The finish is long and luscious. The Schulzengass *lieu-dit* is not especially well known, but is characterized by clay-calcareous soils that are deeper and more fertile than others farmed by Muré, and so yields here can be higher if the vines are allowed to do their own thing. The name itself means the «road of the mayor», as the mayor of Rouffach once used it to travel to the nearby town of Westhalten, which he oversaw before it became autonomous.

### **97+ MURÉ Riesling 2015 SGN Clos St Landelin**

Bright golden yellow. Penetrating aromas of marmalady botrytis complement ripe mango, crystallized ginger, saffron and peach nectar. Rich, dense and vibrant; lovely, harmonious acidity frames rich, sweet flavors similar to the aromas. Touch very sweet, this has enough total acidity to stay light on its feet. Truly outstanding wine. The grapes were harvested October 10-15 and roughly 85 - 90 percent of the berries were hit by noble rot. A work of art in the making.