



WINE ENTHUSIAST - APRIL 2018

PINOT'S OTHER PLAYERS

Alsace

Pinot noir has been at home in Alsace since at least the Middle Ages. That shouldn't come as a surprise when you consider the temperate, sunny climate in northeastern France and the region's east-and-southeast facing slopes.

For a long time, Pinot Noir took a back seat. Initially, it was not considered a grand cru variety, and thus, wasn't necessarily planted in the best sites. Even today, it's Alsace's only red grape and accounts for just 10% of plantings in the region famed almost entirely for its unique white wines.

But Pinot Noir from grand cru sites is finally being recognized. The grape's champions planted it in great sites, lowered yields and showed its true potential. Although they're still being formalized and await approval, the Grands Crus of Vorbourg, Hengst and Kirchberg de Barr are likely to become the first Alsace Grands Crus for Pinot Noir.

Basic Alsace Pinot Noir has a rustic charm of its own. Many vigneronns still make unoaked, entirely fruit-driven versions for immediate enjoyment and high accessibility. These work well chilled and are light-bodied wines ideal for charcuterie or a picnic.

More ambitious producers craft elegant, noteworthy Pinot Noirs that can age and develop. In better years, they achieve aromatic depth without too much alcohol. Only a few are made in a truly international, barrique-aged style, and the best uphold their unique Alsace character of savoriness, vivid freshness and ethereal beauty, earthy beauty. It's definitely a region to watch.

93 MURÉ Pinot Noir - Clos St Landelin 2016

A beautifully pure top-note of black cherry sings on the nose, followed by scented peony and some cinnamon hints of oak. The palate is luminous, with insistent freshness and the purity of ripe dark cherry. This has both the characteristic lightness of Alsace and ample, magnetic and seductive depth. This wine is profound, but nothing weighs it down. Drink now through 2028 - Anne Kriebel