

Now increasing under the guidance of a new generation – Veronique and Thomas Mure – the venerable Clos St. Landelin estate seems to be turning out wines of enhanced elegance, even if there is still a preponderance of residually sweet exemplars of their famous vineyard, whose reputation was based on a proclivity to ripen even in difficult vintages – vintages of a sort that have been virtually non-existent since 1987. The practice of quality-conscious viticulture (nowadays biodynamic) has had to change with the increasingly warm times. “When I was little,” notes Veronique Mure, “we were still always the last in the area to harvest; today, we are usually the first,” an approach whose wisdom one can surely taste in the most successful of the estate’s 2009s, wines that defy that vintage’s odds. In departure from long-standing (though never invariable) practice at this address, Mures elected to take precautions to inhibit both their 2009 and 2008 whites from going through malo-lactic transformation, although the former harbored scarcely any malic acid, and the 2008s, Thomas Mure noted, “were so low in pH they probably would have resisted doing malo even if we had desired it.” Due to time constraints, I did not taste any of the Mure’s negociant bottlings nor their by the time of my visit sold-out 2008 Cote de Rouffach offerings; and there are a few other holes as well.

2008 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Pinot Gris Clos St Landelin Vorbourg Vendange Tardive

Rating: **92** -

Drink: N/A

The 2008 Pinot Gris Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin Vendange Tardive is one of those representatives of its genre that can be served sans foie gras, since the scents of the latter are already uncannily present thanks solely to grapes. With that come scents and confitured, confectionary, yet luscious, creamy palate presence of peach and red raspberry preserves, apple jelly, and candied grapefruit peel. This weighs in at a mere 10% alcohol, and with more than enough sheer fresh juiciness to accompany the mouthwatering carnal and saline savor in a long, buoyant finish and to balance its sweetness. Expect 20 or more years of exemplary behavior.

2008 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Gewurztraminer Zinnkoepfle Vendange Tardive

Rating: **91**

Drink: 2011 - 2026

The 90 grams of residual sugar in Mures’ 2008 Gewurztraminer Zinnkoepfle Vendange Tardive are surprisingly buffered-out, and alkaline, stony notes signaled already in the nose help offer contrast and counterweight to the wine’s ennobled sweetness. Overripe musk melon, cinnamon, and faded rose migrate from the nose to a creamy, buoyant palate (even at 13.5% alcohol) while retaining welcome and surprising primary fruit juiciness in an intensely spicy as well as subtly saline and alkaline finish. Expect this to perform well for at least 15 years.

2008 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Pinot Gris Clos Saint Landelin Vorbourg

Rating: **89** -

Drink: 2011 - 2026

Smoky, meaty, saline, butcher shop-like aromas in the 2008 Pinot Gris Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin join with a sweetly-ripe, almost liqueur-like peachiness on an oily-rich palate. This certainly tastes of later harvest than its esteemed 2009 counterpart, and in fact weighs in at higher alcohol (something you won’t see often in comparing these two vintages), but it is also infused with a refreshing citricity (and measurably higher in acidity). The sense of sweetness as well as the acidity stick-out slightly disjointedly in the undeniably persistent, quite vibrant finish, though it is quite likely that over the next 12-15 years this will have some glorious periods, and its stocks of raw material are formidable.

2008 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Riesling Vorbourg Clos St Landelin

Rating: **89**

Drink: 2011 - 2026

Fresh apple, blueberry, and candied pink grapefruit rind are provocatively evoked in the nose of the 2008 Riesling Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin and the persistence of fresh fruit juiciness of apple and grapefruit lends vivacity to a lushly-textured, subtly oily palate. Nut oils and wet stone convey both enhanced richness and a firmer sense of underlying minerality in a long, bright finish. At 9.4 grams, here is the highest-acid Riesling I can recall at this address, and perhaps the highest in multiple generations. Follow it for at least 15 years. As the Mures concede, this probably one 2000 that – despite the tradition for this cuvee being late-harvested in style – would have benefited from a bit earlier picking

2008 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Gewurztraminer Vorbourg Clos St Landelin Vendange Tardive

Rating: **89** -

Drink: N/A

The 2008 Gewurztraminer Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin Vendange Tardive smells of rose petal, celery root, and cinnamon; then takes a very confectionary turn on the palate, with cinnamon candy, marzipan, and litchi backed by an overt sweetness that dominates the finish. There is an impression of formidable extract, but also of sheer bulk. This tastes significantly sweeter yet is analytically only marginally higher in residual sugar than the corresponding Zinnkoepfle. At the same time, there is not that wine’s welcomes sense of sheer juiciness. Veronique Mure opines that in comparison with Zinnkoepfle, Clos St. Landelin tends by its nature – other things being equal – toward a more massive impression and more obvious expression of any given level of residual sugar.

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Riesling Clos St Landelin Vorbourg Vendange Tardive

Rating: **92**

Drink: 2011 - 2031

The 2009 Riesling Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin Vendange Tardive signals its extreme ripeness by means of scents and luscious, glossy palate presence of soft melons, mango, and quince preserves. At the same time, pungent counterpoint is supplied by fresh ginger and citrus zest, while subtle salinity and a lovely, somehow cooling sense of high-toned herbal concentrate (mint, sage) helps render the finish invigorating (though simultaneously

soothing), as well as downright mouthwatering. This balance was captured in part at least, explains Veronique Mure, thanks to having included a charge of still juicy golden fruit along with a selection of fine botrytis. Look for at least 20 years of high performance from this polished liqueur of Riesling.

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Pinot Gris Clos Saint Landelin Vorbourg

Rating: **90+**

Drink: N/A

The 2009 Pinot Gris Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin - harvested September 10-11 - is scented and lusciously brimming with surprisingly fresh apple, Persian melon, and peach supported by subtle sweetness that was no doubt essential to warding-off any weightiness or warmth from alcohol. This is succulent and mouthwatering in a manner one doesn't often encounter from its grape and vintage, though its glycerin-rich oily texture is certainly familiar from other 2009s. Citrus rind, fruit pit, and peat offer piquant and pungent counterpoint in the finish. I suppose you could fault this for not displaying a lot of varietal typicity, but perhaps that's not such a bad thing in the context of its vintage! Veronique Mure believes this isn't showing at its best since recent bottling, and if that impression is correct, then all the more reason to acquire and audition some for yourself over the next dozen or so years.

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Riesling Vorbourg Clos St Landelin

Rating: **89** -

Drink: 2011 - 2023

Harvested only a few days after the corresponding Vorbourg lest the must weight become a problem, the 2009 Riesling Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin is glossier in texture and even more rounded and rich in its evocation of ripe Persian melon, pink grapefruit, and baked peach, yet at the same time it evinces a surprising and welcome sense of levity. Satisfyingly succulent in length and tinged with chalk, it should be worth following for at least ten or a dozen years.

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Muscat d'Alsace Vorbourg Clos St Landelin Vendange Tardive

Rating: **89** -

Drink: 2011 - 2021

The nearly all-Ottonel 2009 Muscat d'Alsace Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin Vendange Tardive smells of dried apricot and sage flower, vanilla and white raisin. It takes a decidedly confectionary turn on its subtly-oily, expansive palate, notes of cocoa powder and caramel joining forces with vanilla, mint and dried apricot. This gaudy, if aromatically recognizable representative of Muscat will probably keep for 8-10 years though not long enough for its sense of superficial sweetness to significantly back-off. (The Mures did not bottle any 2008 Muscat under their estate labels.)

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Pinot Noir Clos St Landelin

Rating: **(88-89)** -

Drink: N/A

From barrel, the Mure 2009 Pinot Noir Clos St.-Landelin smells and tastes of smoked meats, bitter-edged dark berries, and medicinal herbs, with spicy, toasty overtones from barrel. An underlying sense of crushed stone conveys a certain sense of austerity vis-a-vis the two less-expensive Mure Pinots of the vintage, but the tannins

are fine and the finishing fruit still satisfyingly persistent. This should remain handsome for at least a decade, based on how past installments have evolved. While these slopes were rendering seriously ripe and ambitiously-vinified Pinots already in the mid 1980s - and an experimental plantation of Syrah was approved in 2010! - it's a relief to find that even in a vintage as inherently generous as 2009 this wine harvested already on August 31 is neither overweight nor (at 13.8% to be exact) alcoholically challenged.

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Gewurztraminer Vorbourg Clos St Landelin Vendange Tardive

Rating: **88**

Drink: N/A

Mint, rose petal, and cinnamon in the nose of the 2009 Gewurztraminer Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin segue into a slightly soapy as well as glycerin-rich and unabashedly, nearly excessively sweet palate (at close to double the residual sugar of the corresponding Cote de Rouffach bottling). There is a tactile impingement of cinnamon to add slight counterpoint in the undeniably persistent finish, but also to generate some negative synergy with the wine's hint of alcoholic warmth. Perhaps this will live long enough to shed some of its superficial sweetness, and certainly for at least a dozen years, but I am skeptical that it will ever perform really brilliantly. It represented a very small lot, because most of the vintage's Gewurztraminer succumbed to some degree of botrytis and shriveling. I am normally loathe to offer a sort of evaluation of still fermenting, but I will note that from tank (at roughly 6% alcohol and counting), the 2009 Gewurztraminer Vorbourg Clos St.-Landelin Selection de Grains Nobles was unusually bright and already excitingly complex.

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Pinot Noir Cote de Rouffach

Rating: **88** -

Drink: 2011 - 2014

Pure cherry tinged with cherry pit and bittersweet medicinal herbs scent Mure's 2009 Pinot Noir Cote de Rouffach; then migrate to a polished, subtly silken palate whose faint toastiness from older barrels is nicely integrated into a satisfyingly juicy finish. This is one of those instances of which there are in my opinion sadly too few, where the vintner is satisfied to keep things simple and let Pinot indulge its natural inclination to charm in a way that no other red can. Enjoy this over the next 2-3 years.

2009 Domaine du Clos St Landelin Pinot Noir V

Rating: **88** -

Drink: N/A

Bottled at one year, the Mure 2009 Pinot Noir V delivers lovely dark cherry and fresh blackberry tinged with licorice, cinnamon, vanilla, and charred meat. Sweetly and spicily scented and both lush and firmly underlain by tannin, this could scarcely present more of a contrast to its Cote de Rouffach counterpart, though as in that wine, notes from oak - a strengthening of the vanilla and spice as well as the introduction of hints of toast and caramel - are attractively integrated into the finish without interfering with the flow of primary juiciness. This and its less ambitious, less expensive sibling are wines for very different dishes, though I personally favor the charm of the latter. Whether this will be worth following for more than a few years I hesitate to speculate.