

Wine Spectator



WineSpectator.com

Barbara Banke

**EXPANDING AN
EMPIRE AT JACKSON
FAMILY WINES**

**CALIFORNIA
CABERNET 2014
A CLASSIC YEAR
250 AT 90+**

**150 OUTSTANDING
GLOBAL VALUES
AT \$25 OR LESS**

Three Stars of Sauvignon Blanc

THE LOIRE VALLEY'S POUILLY-FUMÉ AND SANCERRE REGIONS HIGHLIGHT THE MANY EXPRESSIONS OF THIS WHITE VARIETY

BY EMMA BALTER

In northwestern France, the Loire Valley winds its way inland from the Atlantic Ocean, eastward through the picturesque towns of Nantes, Angers and Tours to the appellations of Pouilly-Fumé and Sancerre, which face each other across the river. Both are known for their whites made from Sauvignon Blanc, yet generally speaking, those from Sancerre are crisper and leaner than their richer, more generous counterparts in Pouilly-Fumé. Here are three producers leading the way for quality in the region.



Sébastien, Thierry and Romain Redde

Michel Redde

The Reddes have been a family of winegrowers in the Pouilly-Fumé region for 13 generations. In the 1950s, Michel Redde gradually bought more vineyards, eventually building a cellar and tasting room, called the “Moyneserie,” in 1966. Today, the two succeeding generations are at the helm. Thierry Redde and his sons Sébastien, 33, and Romain, 31, operate the 100-acre, organically farmed estate together. Sébastien joined in 2003 and handles the cellar; Romain came aboard in 2005 and focuses on the vineyards.

The vintners make a cuvée from a plot of Sancerre, but their real passion is Pouilly-Fumé and the expression of its varied *terroirs*. Their entry-level Petit-Fumé (which will soon be marketed under a new name) is a crisp, fruity Sauvignon Blanc from young vines, bottled three months after

harvest. Sébastien created the cuvée in 2004 after coming back from an internship in South Africa where he worked with this style of wine.

Their six other Pouilly-Fumé cuvées, however, are more serious. They see at least one year of aging on the lees, mostly in oak. Moyneserie is a blend of the four soils found in the appellation: the Portlandian limestone of Tracy-sur-Loire, the Oxfordian limestone of St.-Martin-sur-Nohain, the Kimmeridgian marl of Pouilly-sur-Loire and the clay with silex of St.-Andelain. It is aged in 60 percent stainless steel with the rest split between *foudre* and *demi-muid*.

The first single-vineyard bottling from the estate, Majorum, came in 1973, and is made from vines that are now 40 years old. Les Cornets, Les Champs des Billons and Les Bois de St.-Andelain followed, each focusing on one of the Pouilly-Fumé *terroirs*; these last three are aged entirely in oak.

In fact, the 2002 vintage was the last to see 100 percent stainless steel in the vinification and *élevage* at the estate. Sébastien explains that his grandfather was against oak. He and his brother, however, thought otherwise, and phased it in over time. “We wanted to do it slowly. We really wanted to work on this micro-oxygenation rather than the input of oak to disguise anything,” he says. “We want to highlight the characteristics of the *terroir* and the varietal.” His grandfather’s and father’s wines were richer in style, he adds; he and his brother are looking to make more precise wines.

The new generation has settled in comfortably. The brothers’ latest contribution to the estate is a small, silex-heavy parcel that they acquired in 2009. They originally bought 6 acres, but when they started the labor-intensive process of scouring the land to prepare for planting, they realized that the more they went up the slope, the more silex there was on the ground. They returned to the owner and asked to buy the rest of the plot. They now have 13.5 acres, 11 of them planted.

The vines are in a quarry filled with large chunks of heat-radiating silex. “It’s the Châteauneuf-du-Pape of silex!” says Sébastien. The resulting wine is the most mineral-driven of the range. It’s called Barre à Mine, or “crowbar,” named after the tool that helped them painstakingly form the vineyard. □