

FRANCIS BLANCHET

Loire

Pouilly-Fumé

Sooner or later, most importers seem to succumb to a dangerous temptation. Wanting to “cover the major appellations of France”, they give in to market demands and go in search of “their x”, where “x” designates whatever appellation is “missing”.

Pouilly-Fumé is a real pitfall, and I have tasted a multitude of awkward, rustic or downright aggressive Sauvignons whose only excuse appears to be their legal appellation and a knee-jerk market for it.

At Vintner Select, we’d like to think that we take the exciting wines where we find them. True, if the appellation is really obscure, I have made tough choices when confronted with more than one terrific grower. But I haven’t worried over “slots” for well-known appellations which I “can’t fill.”

Fortunately, when it comes to Pouilly-Fumé, we have Blanchet. His wines may not be quite as exciting as Didier Dagueneau’s at their best. But then, they aren’t so aberrant in style and price as Dagueneau’s, either. Every time I set out anew to explore more growers in this area, I return giving thanks for the balanced, ripe Sauvignon fruit and reliably firm minerality of Blanchet’s wine. High ripeness meets high acidity and extract in a mouth-watering melange of flavors; lush fruit and incisive mineral notes vie for your attention. Even when the crop has been especially short or the market pressures extreme Blanchet’s price has remained down-to-earth.

In fact, there is only one catch: the total quantity of wine under the best of circumstances is still small, most of it gobbled up by regular private customers. In the glorious 2002 vintage, Blanchet’s answer to my entreaties was to supply, along with the Vieilles Vignes cuvée from classic Kimmeridgean and Portlandian terroir,



a little bit of “Silice” (“flint” soiled). The comparison in terroir (as flavor!) is striking ... although only a few of you can make it given the quantities!

Variety: *Sauvignon*
Vinification: *In tank*
Soils: *Kimmeridgian and
Portlandian limestone;
Flint*

Pouilly-Fumé Vieilles Vignes

Pouilly-Fumé Silice