

# LA TOUR SAINT-MARTIN

Menetou-Salon

Loire

**W**e become so accustomed to a litany of qualitative “buzz words”: “low yields,” “barrel-fermented,” “unfiltered,” “ancient methods.” When was the last time an importer tried selling you wine with the following description: “fairly large yields, machine-harvested, given squeaky-clean vinification in large, temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks utilizing commercial yeast strains, and bottled after fining and filtration”? Well ... one just did!

We self-proclaimed experts and quality fanatics think we are *so* smart. But, in the words of German wine importer Terry Theise, “the wine has the last word.” And the *wine* produced at the merely four year-old domaine of Albane and Bernard Minchin is absolutely glorious, however “politically incorrect” its methods may be in the context of an import portfolio that celebrates artisanal and sometimes downright reactionary values.

Menetou-Salon is an appellation unfamiliar to many French wine lovers, let alone to Americans. Yet it’s been in existence since 1959. And don’t forget that its famous neighbor, Sancerre, didn’t get started with Sauvignon Blanc until the present century. That being said, I doubt that even Morogues, a village on the Sancerre border and the only one entitled to have its name prominently featured on a Menetou-Salon label, has the terroir to support wine on a qualitative par with the *best* of Sancerre. But it comes darned close and at a lot lower price.

Henry Pellé, the long-time mayor of Morogues and its best-known grower, was the Minchins’ mentor. They’re already surpassing him, with wines vinified in a spectacularly-restored stone barn in the tiny hamlet of Crosses, far from their Morogues vineyards. Here are perfumed, frisky, penetrating, distinctive Sauvignons as well as (defying the odds!) succulent tank-raised Pinot Noir at amazing prices.



## Menetou-Salon - Morogues

Varieties: *Sauvignon, Pinot Noir*  
Total acreage: *14 acres*  
Average production: *3,000 cases.*  
Vinificatory highlights: *temperature controlled vinification in stainless steel*