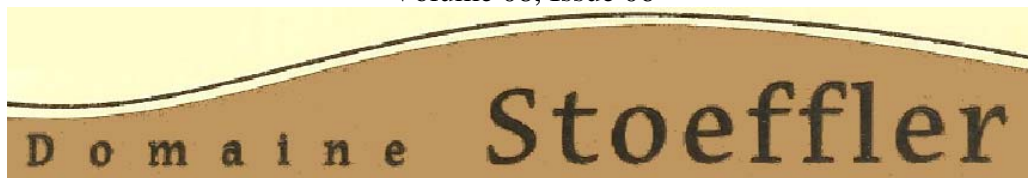


Selections



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AWESOME ALSACIANS FROM DOMAINE VINCENT STOEFFLER

The sleek TGV whisked us the two and a half hours from Paris to the centre of Strasbourg as we



started our quest for an Alsatian winery worthy of the Members of Arthur's Cellar Wine Club. A cab then shuttled us and our staggering collection of luggage (my back-pack and light suitcase included) to l'Arrière-Cour, a delightful, well-situated bed and breakfast that in a previous life had been a machine shop. It is now a thoroughly modern, restful sanctuary that frequently serves as a second home for a Member when the European Parliament is in session.

After depositing our bags (the services of a hardy young weightlifter would have been greatly appreciated – mercifully there were no stairs) thoughts naturally turned to lunch and that Strasbourgian staple, choucroute garnie. Choucroute garnie is a gigantic assemblage of sauerkraut bathing in white wine, sausages, various renditions of pork and an endless supply of wonderful local mustard to ease it all down. Perhaps our hostess, Sabrina Wells could recommend a suitable establishment for our assault? “Go to Chez Yvonne where President Jacques Chirac was a frequent diner”, she suggested. This sounded just right to us.

Chez Yvonne couldn't have been more perfect. It had all of the charm and ambiance of an old German wine house coupled with the care and attention to the menu and carte that only the French can bring to the table. I'll spare you the lip smacking details of our marvelous meal and the luscious 2002 Leimenthal de Wettolsheim Riesling from Domaine Barmès Buecher that went with it, but suffice to say it was wonderful. At the end, we struck up a conversation with the very knowledgeable sommelier and asked him to recommend three small, family-run Alsatian wineries that he felt made the finest wines in the area.



Armed with this information, we set off the next day on the Alsace Wine Route with its picturesque rolling hills and quaint villages in search of our Holy Grail ... a great Alsatian winery. First on the sommelier's list was Domaine Vincent Stoeffler located in the little town of Barr. We parked the rental car in a church lot and walked the short distance to the modest collection of buildings that is Domaine Vincent Stoeffler. We met Vincent and explained our mission. Soon we were in his tasting room (definitely a good sign) where he told us that he had thirty-five different labels (and even better sign). So, as we are perfectly orchestrated to do, Hélène started talking and I started tasting. I knew from first taste (an elegant 2005 Riesling Kronenbourg) that we were on to something exceptional.



Domaine Vincent Stoeffler

Vincent Stoeffler, a certified oenologist took over and combined his families' vineyards in 1988. Since then he has tended to his vines with loving care and has gained recognition on the world wine stages for his very special Alsatian wines. He cultivates his vines giving great respect to tradition, nature and modern science. The winery is certified organic. His are the epitome of terroir driven wines as the thirty-five labels, most from single plots of land attest.



Vincent and his two children

The [domaine](#) encompasses just under twenty-nine acres of carefully tended vines scattered throughout the Barr-Mittelbergheim and Riquewihr-Ribeauville areas. The vines are carefully pruned to control yield and ensure that only the best fruit reaches harvest. All of their grapes are hand-picked and then they are pressed whole, with a slow, moderate pressure and minimum manipulation. Moderate filtration ensures that the wine is not stripped of character. The wines are then raised on their lees in large oak casks, allowing aromas to develop and living yeast cells to act slowly on the wine over time.



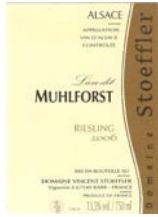
Two Domaine Stoeffler treasures!

Robert Parker cites Domaine Vincent Stoeffler as being an 'excellent' Alsatian producer which is supported by consistent top ratings by the European wine press including those by the prestigious Revue de Vin de France that has do so every year since Vincent took over in 1988!

The Wines of Domaine Vincent Stoeffler

It was a most difficult task coming up with a manageable selection of the exceptional Stoeffler wines for our wine club ... but as arduous as the process was, it was the least we could do for our Members. We settled on three Rieslings, two Pinot Gris (also known as Tokay d'Alsace) and a Gewürztraminer. While all three varietals are pleasures to drink in their youth, the Pinot Gris and Riesling age wonderfully for several years. Half of our recommended wines come from among the 50 Grand Cru designated vineyards of Alsace.

2006 Riesling Muhlforst (Lieu Dit) – (13.5% Alc. By Vol.) \$27/\$162 per case of 6



This light straw coloured beauty comes from thirty year old vines located in a single parcel of land in the Muhlforst area near Hunawhir. ‘Lieu Dit’ is a French term used to refer to the local, traditional name of a small area of land, usually defined by topography or history. The full aroma is one of pineapple, pear and a trace of honey which carry through in the mouth with a lusciousness that is most pleasing. This elegant, just off-dry wine is wonderful to sip on its own and would be a delightful companion for roast chicken and other white, lightly sauced meats. [Order](#) some now.

2007 Riesling Kirchberg de Barr Grand Cru – (13.5% Alc. By Vol.) \$33/\$198 per case of 6



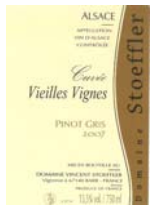
“Wonderful!” That’s my first note in my tasting book about this extravagant Riesling that comes from the family plot in the Grand Cru Kirchberg de Barr vineyards. The yield is a very low thirty hectolitres per hectare. One is struck by zesty aromas of pineapple, spiced pears, coconut and a hint of orange. In the mouth it is very round and full with a beautiful minerality and great length. The lovely acidity keeps this wine from being too sweet. Marvellous all by itself, this stunner will go brilliantly with most seafood, roast poultry and grilled white meats. [Order](#) some now.

2006 Riesling Schoenenbourg Grand Cru – (13.5% Alc. By Vol.) \$33/\$198 per case of 6



I thought the Kirchberg de Barr was the finest Riesling I had ever tasted and then along came this Schoenenbourg Grand Cru! I wouldn’t say it is better; but more feminine, even fuller and every bit as tasty. Once again the pineapple, coconut and spiced pear are prominent on the nose and carry through in the mouth where it is unctuous, well-balanced and just stunning. It too will go well with grilled white meats and roasted fowl and, of course, choucroute garnie. [Order](#) some of this huge, sensational Riesling now.

2007 Pinot Gris Vieilles Vignes – (13.5% Alc. By Vol.) \$29/\$174 per case of 6



This stunner comes from vines averaging over fifty years of age. It is a straw colour with glints of bright green. It has vibrant aromas of peaches, apricots, spices and a hint of smoke. In the mouth, it is opulently rich, full and dense with lovely acidity balancing the sweetness. It would go wonderfully with seafood in white sauce, chicken casseroles and oriental cuisine. I would give this luscious, pleasing young wine another year or so in the bottle before uncorking. [Order](#) some pure pleasure.

2007 Pinot Gris Kirchberg de Barr Grand Cru – (13.5% Alc. By Vol.) \$36/\$216 per case of 6



Foie gras! The second I tasted this magnificent, sumptuous wine I wished I had a bit of foie gras to accompany it – particularly the way Moustafa Rougabi prepares it at his very special BYOB restaurant, [La Colombe](#) in Montreal. This light yellow beauty has an aroma chocked full of peaches, apricots, honey and very hard to define spices. It is so refined in the mouth, yet full and round with a firm background of acidity. It goes on forever. It would benefit from another year or more of bottle aging to develop its underlying complexity. It is simply an unbelievably luscious wine. [Order](#) some now.

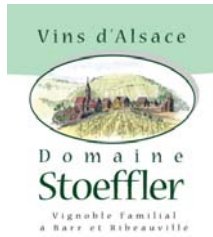
2007 Gewürztraminer Vieilles Vignes - (13.5% Alc. By Vol.) \$32/\$192 per case of 6



This is simply a divine Gewürztraminer! To sum up my impression of this wine I wrote ‘Smashing’ with several underscores. Light honey coloured, it has a perfumed aroma of lychees, grapefruit, roses, pineapples, flowers and exotic spices. These scents explode in the mouth where they leave a full, round and balanced yet elegant impression; definitely not overblown. It seems sweet, but isn’t thanks to a gentle acidity. [Order](#) some of this sultry treasure now.

Stoeffler's Alsatian Sampler – (13.5% Alc. By Vol.)

\$31.67/\$190 per case of 6



I would be more than hard pressed to select just one of these six beautiful Alsatian wines (heavens, it was nearly impossible to select the six that we did). Thankfully, Vincent came up with a solution to this delicious dilemma. He has created a sampler case of one bottle each of the six splendid wines. This is a truly glorious opportunity to try a **half dozen of the finest white wines we have ever offered**. If you never order another white wine from your wine club, we urge you to [order](#) the Stoeffler's Alsatian Sampler.

We plan to take your requests to the LCBO on **Thursday, January 8th**. Please note that our prices include one dollar per bottle handling fee.

We thoroughly enjoyed Strasbourg (we hear it is particularly enchanting at Christmas time) and the Alsatian Wine Route and highly recommend a visit there if you haven't already had the chance.



Would you like to visit the source of many of Arthur's Cellar wines? Does a relaxing week living on a luxurious Provençal country estate appeal? Do markets in quaint villages, visits to our vineyards, lunches in restaurants perched on hillsides or cantilevered over streams, gourmet dinners with a local flair and so much more sound tempting? You can with Hélène's tours of Provence



For Fall 2009, there are still a couple of choice bedrooms available for the week of September 5 to 12; the weeks of September 12 to 19 and 19 to 26 are sold out. See www.ofrance.ca for all the delicious details and be sure to click on "Our brochure" at the bottom of the homepage. Please contact Hélène for inquiries at hbuisson@cogeco.ca.

Soon to Emerge from Arthur's Cellar

Next will come the ever popular Côtes du Luberon from Château de l'Isolette, the lovely whites and reds from Domaine de Tara, the value-priced wines from Château Beauferan, the Wine Spectator featured Cahors from Château Famaey along with some new wineries - the terrific, value-priced Côtes-du-Rhône from Château Bosc la Croix and the excellent Coteaux du Languedoc from Domaine L'Aiguelière.

Member Feedback

Your feedback is greatly appreciated. It helps us improve our club and better respond to your requirements. Many of your suggestions have been implemented and we are working on several others. Thank you and please keep the comments coming (jaswalker@arthursellers.com).

For the wine club to be successful, we need as many wine buying members as possible – please forward this newsletter to likely prospects and keep those referrals coming.

Thank you and season's greetings!

Hélène and Jim

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