

France Visits Artisan



Martine Saunier (click for larger image)

[Artisan Wine Depot](#) was kind enough to invite us to their tasting of [French wines imported by Martine Saunier](#). Several were impressive. None were flawed. Here's what the company website has to say about Ms. Saunier:

Martine Saunier was born in Paris. Although she lived and attended school there, she spent every summer vacation at her aunt's home in Prissé, near Mâcon. Her aunt owned a winery with approximately 10 acres of vineyards planted with Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

The winemaker lived in the farm next door with his wife and children. The pinnacle of the summer vacation was the harvest time. By the age of 10, Martine was fascinated with the preparation of the cellar, the wine press, the fermenting vats and, of course, being part of the harvesting team. The crushing of the grapes, malolactic fermentation, bottling, etc. were all part of her childhood.

When Martine moved to the United States in 1964, she started to look for some local California wines. In 1965, she drove to Beaulieu Vineyards, knocked on the door and was lucky enough to meet the great André Tchelistcheff. He told her in his good French that if she wanted good Pinot Noir, she had to go to Burgundy to get it! The seed was planted in her mind.

Our personal favorite was the **Bastide de la Ciselette 2016 Bandol Rose (Provence, \$24)**. Floral aromas with notes of strawberries greet your nose. The palate is more strawberries with a hint of melon. We enjoyed a bottle with dinner last night.



Bastide de la Ciselette

Also rated highly was the **Domaine Garnier et Fils 2015 Chablis (Burgundy, \$22)**. This is a classic French Chablis with wet slate and flint on the palate. The nose is fragile with floral notes.

The **Domaine Laporte "Le Bouquet" 2016 Rosé of Pinot Noir (Sancerre, \$20)** is about as good as a pinot noir rosé can be. In the past we have tasted a few rosés with the name **"eye of the partridge."** This wine deserves that title. The nose is red berries, tangerine, and white pepper. Light raspberry and strawberry palate. This wine confirms the fact that we are just not very fond of pinot noir rosé.

We also are not fond of sweet wine. The **Domaine de la Bergerie "Le Clos de la Bergerie" 2015 Coteaux du Layon (Loire, \$20)** is a late-harvest chenin blanc. The nose is fabulous featuring white peaches and pears. The palate, however, is overpowered by sweetness.

Among the reds, our favorite was the **Domaine Gilles Robin**

“Cuvee Papillon” 2015 Crozes Hermitage (Northern Rhone, \$23). Unusually, this wine was tank-aged. Plums, blackberry and hints of strawberries all give way to a mouthful of flavor featuring the usual French minerality and tannins.

Ms. Saunier knows her stuff. Thanks to Artisan for inviting us to this event.