

JEAN-BAPTISTE ADAM

Alsace Article & Reviews by Tom Hyland
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Alsace – The New Generation Speaks Out (Part One) **By Tom Hyland | September 9, 2019**

There is always a challenge for the new generation of wine producers, no matter where they live. Namely, how do we proceed in our work? Do we continue to make wines in the style our fathers and grandfathers did? Or do we implement a few changes to show our approach?

This is certainly true in Alsace, that lovely corner of northeast France, where some of the world's greatest white wines are crafted. But the younger generation has other issues they must address to stay relevant in today's wine industry. Namely, how do they get more consumers and wine buyers to take a look at Alsatian wines, which are criminally under represented on wine lists and retail shelves in America? Also, how do we compete with other white (and red, to a lesser degree) wines from around the world and make our wines better known and more attractive to younger wine drinkers?

Recently, I spoke with four of the newest generation of wine producers from Alsace: Jean-Frédéric Hugel from **Hugel**, located in Riquewihr; Laure Adam of **JB Adam** in Ammerschwis; Mélanie Pfister of **Domaine Pfister** in Dahlenheim, and Anne Trimbach of **Trimbach** in Ribeauville.



Laure Adam, JB Adam PHOTO COURTESY STEPHANIE TEUWEN

Interview with Laure Adam

Laure Adam, J-B Adam

Tom Hyland: What is the biggest advantage Alsatian wines have in the world of wine? What is their strongest identity?

Laure Adam: An incredible diversity between grapes varieties and terroir for a small region. Our strength is Riesling, the king of grapes varieties in Alsace, able to flourish on our terroir to create unique wines.

Hyland: Tell me about your production. What is your leading wine in terms of quantity?

Adam: 20 hectares of vines cultivated in biodynamic + purchase of grapes. Crémant d'Alsace represents 20% of the production, then Riesling, Pinot Noir and Gewurztraminer.

Hyland: Has there been much in the way of climate change over the past 10-15 years? If so, how? What must you do to combat the effects of climate change? Has climate change been helpful in any way?

Adam: Over the past 10 years we observe that the beginning of the harvest is earlier every year (more than one month compared to 10 years ago). The fact that we cultivate our vines in biodynamic help us a lot and then we adapt our vinification every year. The positive effect of this is for the Pinot Noir, the phenolic maturity and extraction is better than before (for example the 2018 Pinot Noir is very concentrated and very qualitative).

Hyland: How have your wines changed for the better over the past decade? Have you received comments from importers or consumers as to the style of your wines or Alsatian wines in general?

Adam: Our wines are much more concentrated, elegant and have a salinity that our clients enjoy.

Hyland: Alsatian wines are not as well known by consumers as other wines of France (especially Burgundy and Bordeaux) or as well known as wines from California or some regions of Italy. Why is that? Is the subject of Alsatian wines too confusing to consumers (too many varieties)? Is it because consumers don't know these varieties? What must the producers of Alsace do to change consumer awareness and improve sales? What must they do to have sommeliers show more interest in Alsatian wines?

Adam: We are a small region with an incredible diversity of wines, it is a strength and a weakness at the same time. In our domaine, we tried to simplify the understanding, for example we have a sweetness scale on the back label. Also we have a consistent style of wines for the past 400 years especially for pinot blanc, sylvaner and riesling which are dry every year!

Forbes Reviews by Tom Hyland – September 2019

“Sec Si” 2018

A blend of 70% Sylvaner, 30% Muscat. Appealing aromas of apricot, yellow peach and orange blossom. Medium-bodied with delicious ripe fruit, very good acidity and balance, this is quite tasty and works well on its own or with simple chicken or pork dishes. You don't think about this, you merely drink it! Enjoy over the next 1-2 years. **Very Good**

L'Auxerrois "Vielles Vignes" 2016

Auxerrois is a varietal planted throughout Alsace; it is typically used as a blending varietal. Deep yellow; aromas of dried pear, dried yellow flowers and a light brown herbs. Medium-bodied, this is quite dry, with good acidity and very good complexity. Not overly ripe or powerful, this is a nice wine to pair with quiche, paté or sautéed vegetables. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years. **Very Good**

Pinot Blanc “Les Natures” 2016

Aromas of apple peel, quince and Bosc pear. Medium-bodied, this has excellent freshness, very good acidity and a dry finish with subtle spice notes. This is a delightful wine that offers much more character than most examples of Alsatian Pinot Blanc. Enjoy over the next 2-3 years. **Excellent**

Riesling “les Natures” 2017

Aromas of lemon peel, lilacs and orange blossom. Medium-full with very good concentration. Lovely varietal character, good acidity and persistence; excellent harmony. Enjoy over the next 3-5 years. **Excellent**

Riesling Grand Cru Kaefferkopf 2015

Attractive aromas of yellow peach, apricot, kumquat and yellow poppy. Medium-full, this is beautifully ripe with excellent varietal purity. Impressive persistence, very good acidity and complexity. Precise and extremely clean - excellent winemaking. Delicious now – enjoy over the next 5-7 years, perhaps longer. **Outstanding**