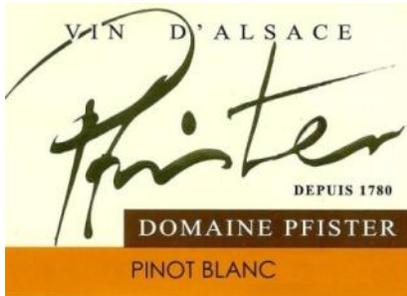


Domaine Pfister Bas-Rhin



Domaine Pfister began life in 1780 during our Revolutionary War. That seems a long time ago, until you learn that Pfister's village of Dahlenheim was favorably noted for wine production in the distant year of 884. A written record has survived, detailing how the village supplied wine to the Abbey of Saint Michel de Honan during that era. Dahlenheim was an important center of wine production throughout the Middle Ages as well. It's located due west of Strasbourg in the northern reaches of the Bas Rhin, (legally, a separate department from the Haut Rhin, and meaning, simply, lower down the Rhine River—but keep in mind that the Rhine flows north to the Baltic).

This is Riesling country. Up here the Vosges Mountains are not nearly so toweringly majestic, nor, correspondingly, so protective. The vineyards are not as shielded from cold weather as further south in the Haut Rhin, and this cooler climate, along with the abundance of limestone and thinner, less sandy soils, favors Riesling and makes for particularly elegant, mineral renditions of the wine. Mélanie Pfister makes two Rieslings, both entirely dry. One is tantalizingly full, rich, and earthy, while the other, the Grand Cru, makes you sit up with its petrol, its white flowers, and its bounding, razor sharp minerality.

If you like wines marked above all by purity of fruit, elegance, and character (to say nothing of reasonable pricing), you have come to the right place. Domaine Pfister farms forty parcels totaling ten hectares (twenty-five acres) of vines, twenty-five percent of which is in Riesling. Mélanie "officially" took over from her father with the 2006 vintage, but dad is far from retiring. He very proudly has got his daughter's back, and works the vines as hard as he ever did. He just no longer sweats the cellar work.

Leading up to that transition, Mélanie did internships at the following estates: Zind-Humbrecht (Alsace), Méo-Camuzet (Burgundy), Château Cheval Blanc (Saint Emilion), Château d'Yquem (Sauternes) and Craggy Range (New Zealand). It's worth considering that most aspiring winemakers would take it as a fine feather in the cap to be accepted into any *one* of those training programs, and Mélanie got into all of them. In 2005, she made the first Cu-vée 8, a blended wine that she had long envisioned and so named because she is the eighth generation Pfister to make wine at the domaine. Following the transition, the next big step she took came after the harvest in 2010, when she broke ground on a new cellar. She knows how she wants to make and handle her wine, and beginning with the 2011 vintage she has been able to do just that.

Apart from one Pinot Noir, all of Mélanie's wines are made and aged in tank. Indigenous yeast is preferred, but she reserves the right to use non-aromatic cultured yeasts in more problematic years when the risks of off-flavors are greater. The wines are normally fermented dry and bottled with a minimum addition of sulfur. Normally, 15 different wines are made each year with an overall production of roughly 5,000 cases.

About her family's style of wine, Mélanie wrote the following in 2012: *The house style appeared itself as the style of wine my parents and grandparents liked to drink: aromatic, well-balanced, rather dry style of wines. As a matter of fact, my grandfather used to say, "Finally, I am probably the one who drinks the most of my wines, so I craft the wines I like!" – no concession, he liked dry wines.*

The signature on the Pfister labels is that of Mélanie's great-grandfather.

<http://www.domaine-pfister.com/>