

# GEEKY WINES

## STOLPMAN VINEYARDS 2019 COMBE PET' NAT TROUSSEAU \$48

**COUNTRY:** USA  
**REGION:** CALIFORNIA  
**APPELLATION:** SANTA YNEZ VALLEY  
**WINE TYPE:** SPARKLING, NATURAL, MÉTHODE ANCESTRALE  
**VARIETALS:** WHITE BLEND  
**VARIETAL NOTES:** TROUSSEAU  
**FARMING:** ORGANIC, BIODYNAMIC



Rajat Parr and Pete Stolpman's esoteric collaboration is labeled "Combe" referring to the French word for a small sheltered valley within a vineyard. Sometime around 2010, Rajat Parr became convinced of the great potential for the pale red Trousseau grape on the Limestone soils of Stolpman Vineyards. These friends decided to partner to make a light red Trousseau and a Trousseau Pet'Nat. The first vintage for the Trousseau wines was 2014, and the two now have 3.5 acres planted to the varietal. This slightly sparkling wine is all the rage on the sophisticated restaurant scene.

### HOW DOES IT TASTE?

A fine, tingly mousse- tiny bubbles that linger up the glass. The wine's pale straw color and Champagne-like head make it hard to believe these grapes were picked from the same vines as the funky fun Trousseau Red. While totally unique to the New World, this bubbly deliciously fits the bill for any occasion demanding a sparkling wine.



## PAOLO BEA ARBOREOUS \$70

**COUNTRY:** ITALY  
**REGION:** UMBRIA  
**APPELLATION:** UMBRIA IGT  
**WINE TYPE:** ORANGE AND NATURAL  
**VARIETALS:** TREBBIANO UGNI BLANC  
**FARMING:** ORGANIC



One of the early success stories in the modern-day revival of skin-macerated white wines, Bea's beloved "Arboreous" originates from exceedingly old Trebbiano vines (up to 150 years of age) in the village of Spoleto, halfway between Bea's home village of Montefalco and nearby Trevi. A striking instance of non-standard training, these ancient vines wrap themselves around the trunks and branches of trees (hence the wine's name), growing and ripening high above the ground. Bea picks the fruit quite ripe and conducts an extended skin maceration (in the case of the 2014, 25 days), after which he leaves the wine on its gross lees for the better part of a year—a technique that nourishes the wine and ensures its ultimate expressive depth, but one which requires total confidence in the quality of one's raw materials. Harvest generally occurs during the first two weeks of October. The wine is left in contact with the skins for up to three weeks or more and is then aged in stainless steel tanks for at least two years prior to bottling. Sulfur is never added. Annual production is in the range of 3000 bottles. User's note: "Arboreous" must be served no cooler than cellar temperature to appreciate its full spectrum of aromas and flavors.

### HOW DOES IT TASTE?

The palate is chiseled, markedly tannic (though well-balanced), and driven by resonant acidity, with the marzipan and apricot notes echoing strongly. A rich orange wine, this wine rips of minerality and dried fruit. The perfect pairing for seafood or funky cheese, this will be perfect for those looking for a fun wine to spice up a meal.

## FICOMONTANINO 2018 GRANOMELO \$55

**COUNTRY:** ITALY  
**REGION:** TUSCANY  
**APPELLATION:** MONTEFALCO  
**WINE TYPE:** RED BLEND  
**VARIETALS:** SANGIOVESE, SAGRANTINO, MERLOT



Maria Sole Giannelli's farm is called Ficomontanino (roughly, "Little Fig Mountain"), a property her grandfather acquired in the 1960s as a place to produce olive oil and breed horses. Situated in the far southeast of the region near the town of Chiusi, Ficomontanino is administratively part of Tuscany, but geographically and spiritually it speaks to both Umbria and Lazio, both of whose borders are mere kilometers away. Having studied at Slow Food's University of Culinary Arts at Pollenzo, Maria Sole was inspired by the teachings of Rudolf Steiner and Masanobu Fukuoka to reimagine her family's vineyards as part of a larger ecosystem, and when she gained responsibility for them in 2014, she set about establishing a natural equilibrium on the property, incorporating biodynamic preparations, allowing vegetation to grow freely, and relying on only bare traces of copper-sulfate to treat her vineyards. She has gradually been refining her approach in the cellar as well, working toward ever more expressiveness via ever fewer interventions.

### HOW DOES IT TASTE?

'Granomelo'—a play on the name of the cru Melogranino from which it is sourced—is 100% Sangiovese from south-facing slopes of sandy clay and silt, planted 20 years ago by Maria Sole's father. For this cuvée, she employs a longer maceration of three weeks and uses only cement for the fermentation, then ages the wine a full two winters in the cellar before bottling it without fining or filtration. This displays a frank and mesmerizing purity of fruit, but with a greater sense of earthiness and a more tenacious cling on the palate; it's a union of sand-derived elegance and a certain wildness of spirit.



## DOMAINE VALENTINE ZUSSLIN NV CREMANT BRUT ZERO ALSACE \$30

**COUNTRY:** FRANCE  
**REGION:** ALSACE  
**APPELLATION:** CREMANT D'ALSACE  
**WINE TYPE:** SPARKLING  
**VARIETALS:** PINOT AUXERROIS, PINOT GRIS, RIESLING.  
**FARMING:** BIODYNAMIC



The ZUSSLIN Wine Estate upholds the same winemaking traditions established in 1691. The vineyards are located in the Southern part of Alsace in Orschwir on the Bollenberg, Clos Liebenberg (Monopole) and Pflingstberg Grand Cru hillsides. Since 1997, the estate is led solely by the principles of biodynamic viticulture in order to re-create a universe suitable for biodiversity. These principles encourage the expression of the soil and environment from Zusslin's three terroirs. A strict selection of their grapes in the vineyards and at the cellar gives to the wines concentration and elegancy. Thanks to the terroir, the acidity combined with minerality of their grapes bring depth and great length. The maturing of the wines is carried out on fine lees for a duration of one year to one year and half to express better balance and longevity. There is no interference in the natural process of fermentation and aging of the wines. The vitality, substance & moreover the energy given by the biodynamic viticulture, make Zusslin's wines worth enjoying and drinking.

### HOW DOES IT TASTE?

The wine is pure and intense and shows concentrated fruit with delicate brioche and some oxidative flor and iodine aromas. Full-bodied and rich on the palate, this is an elegant and complex, mouthfilling yet salty and refined Crémant with a long and structured finish. This is an impressive wine and reminds me somehow of the Jura and also Jacques Lassaigue in the southern Champagne region. Vinous and very, very long.