

The New York Times

## Diner's Journal

Notes on Eating, Drinking and Cooking

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MAY 7, 2010, 3:51 PM

### Tasting Chablis

By [ERIC ASIMOV](#)

I had dinner one recent night at [Apiary](#) with John Gilman, who writes the excellent newsletter [View From the Cellar](#), and John brought along some Chablis from [Patrick Piuze](#), a producer with whom I was unfamiliar. The wines were from the 2008 vintage, which I hadn't tasted yet. If you recall [how much I love Chablis](#), you would be correct in assuming that I was excited.

Mr. Piuze, it turns out, is originally from Quebec. He moved to Burgundy in 2000, and has worked with Olivier Leflaive, [Verget](#) and [Jean-Marc Brocard](#) before going out on his own. We knew that 2008 was his first vintage, and that he is a negociant who seeks out arrangements in which he can manage vineyards himself rather than simply buy grapes or wine. Beyond that, we knew very little.

Simply from tasting the green-tinged wines, it was clear that Piuze is not a proponent of using new oak. In the last 10 years, I've noticed far less evidence of new oak in Chablis, which is a great thing as oak flavors and Chablis do not mix.

The Piuze '08 Terroirs de Chablis was a village wine, and it had everything you can hope for at this level: crisp, bracing purity and freshness, and a sure sense of that distinctive Chablis tang. Drinking the wine, you can't help but think of oyster shells and minerals.

Another Chablis, from the premier cru Vaucoupin vineyard, was a step up in intensity and texture. Clearly, this wine had seen some time in older barrels, giving it a slightly richer texture than the village wine, with even more of Chablis's characteristic mineral aromas and flavors.

Finally, we tried two grand cru Chablis, one from Bougros and one from Les Clos. Both were superb, demonstrating their grand cru pedigree with proportional increases in richness and concentration from the Vaucoupin. The Bougros showed great mineral intensity, while Les Clos was more elegant, with a little more depth and focus. If you're curious, by the way, The [Winedoctor.com](#) offers an excellent [little explanation of the geography of the Chablis vineyards](#).

My first taste of 2008 Chablis was very encouraging. Of course it's way too soon for me to say much, but this minute sample of Piuze wines seemed to show a combination of the

mineral precision of 2007, which I loved, with the richer fruitiness of the 2006, which, without the clarity of '07, was less appealing to me. At this point, I'm going to keep my eyes open both for more '08 Chablis and more Patrick Piuze.

By the way, the food at Apiary, under Scott Bryan, who was the longtime chef at Veritas, is top-notch. Not surprising: I've been following him around for years.