

Alice et Olivier de Moor

Visits

This visit with Alice and Olivier de Moor took place in June, 2012.



Words and photos by Jules Dressner.

After our relaxing weekend in Montpinçon, it was a 5 hour drive to Courgis, the small village where [Alice and Olivier De Moor](#) reside. Our visit started in the cellar, which is split two ways between an older, traditional underground room that only holds barrels, and a larger, more modern space with concrete containers, some fiberglass tanks, a lot more barrels and a recently renovated tasting room. We tasted through the 2011's, which were universally great. Stuff of note:

À Ligoter: A little R.S remained this year so they filtered it for the first time ever, just to try and see the results. Also a first, this year the bottle will feature a screw cap; the idea is that the cap will indicate that this early release is a [vin de soif](#), and meant to be drunk fresh and young. It is indeed all those things, and the first shipment will be arriving stateside sometime this month.

L'Humeur du Temps: is a blend of three parcels that are vinified separately then blended: *Côte de l' Etang, Les Envers de Côte Chétif, Les Goulots de Jouan.*

Bel Air et Clardy: As obvious as this may seem to some, the *Bel Air Et Clardy* cuvée is a blend of two separate parcels. From barrel, the *Bel Air* was crisp and precise with a rich finish, while *Clardy* was on the more mineral side, with pronounced acidity. When I asked Olivier why he chose this specific blend, he explained that the parcels are the same age and have complimentary soil types; ideally, he would use this technique make every cuvée (blending a bit of Rosette with the Chitry for example, so on and so forth[]), and that single parcel wines -which A.O.C's like Chablis encourage- don't always make the best ones.

Les Vendangeurs Masqués: this négoce wine is a blend of three sources the De Moor's purchase from, including the local up and comer [Thomas Pico](#). They all work organically.

As we tasted through, Olivier joked that he must be boring us with all (four) of his Aligoté cuvées. I personally love good Aligoté, and am always surprised when I hear of French disdain for grapes or regions that tend to be loved in the US; I couldn't believe how many people told Denyse that [Jean Paul Brun's 2010 L'Ancien](#) showed them that good Beaujolais actually existed at the party in Normandy. Duh! This topic got Olivier talking about Chablis and the myth that Chardonnay has always been the only grape grown here.

"There used to be Chenin Blanc, Dammery (local name for Romorantin), Pinot Gris and there are still some Sacy vines hanging around (Tressaillié in Saint-Pourçain). Gascon was also planted for red. This was only 200 years ago. I try bringing this up at council meetings and people don't believe me, but if you do your homework you can read about this stuff."

The De Moor's also made a red this year! It's called "*Le Rouge D'Etienne*", and is named after their first full time employee; at the time he was hired, Etienne had never made whites and the De Moor's had never made reds, so they helped each other out and therefore the cuvée is named in his honor. The grapes were sourced from [Vincent Thomas](#), and only 800 bottles were produced.

After the tasting, we got to check some vines out. The first stop was the aforementioned *Côte de l' Etang*.



It was very grassy.



This is one of the parcels that they've started using a horse on over the last two years.



Notice how much better of a photographer Olivier is... He is very happy with the results, and can't believe how much stuff the horse has been pulling out of the ground.

"I've been working this soil for 15 years, and when I saw all the stuff I was missing, I told myself I was really doing a terrible job!"

Next we checked out the *Clardy* parcel. It was a good time to compare and contrast Olivier's work with that of his neighbors, which he sadly he considers a "*abandonment of work*" on their part. Here's one of Olivier's vines:



And here's one of his neighbors just a few rows down:



As you can see, they use tons of herbicide, and tightly tie the vines together to ensure as little human interaction as possible. They also trim the shit out of the vines.

"They look like bonsai trees."

Olivier then explained how 20-30 cm of extra foliage changes everything, because they help the grapes ripen. 8 to 10 leaves above the highest bunches used to be the traditional way of knowing you had the right vine size.

"Slow maturation is what makes good wine here, and you need to do all you can to help this, not impede it."

After the vineyard visit, we hung out for a great dinner Alice cooked up for us, drank some Ganevat bubbles, Heredia Pineau D'Aunis, À Ligoter and Heredia Sparkling Gamay that naturally led to some fun conversation, hearty laughs and- at least in my case- a good buzz.