

vom Boden

reporting from quarantine
summer 2020 | issue 009



Germany 2019: a collection of things people are saying
about this vintage with some assorted commentary,
all dutifully written from quarantine

“...2019 looks to be one of the finest vintages ever in the Mosel and,
at the same time, quantities are low and some of the finest wines are simply rare.”
– Mosel Fine Wine, Issue 51, May 2020

“...one of the best vintages of the last 20 years.”
– Klaus Peter Keller



I hate vintage reports.

Or, more specifically, I should say I hate *writing* vintage reports. (I dig reading them, for sure.)

You'll note, to my embarrassment as a wine professional, that I've written only two vintage reports in the last seven years. I just sort of loath the dumbing down of something so wildly complex, the village-by-village accounting of rainfall and sunshine and harvest dates. As if the measurement of someone's sneaker tells you anything about how high they can jump.

The truth is that I present a vintage report to you now for two important yet purely sales-related reasons.

First: **I have it on good authority from multiple sources I trust that 2019 is one of the great vintages of this young century.**

Yes, I'm going to bold that previous sentence, sorry. Maybe the vintage is just good, or really good, maybe great, maybe very, *very* great – only time will tell. Unfortunately, I can't really offer that much insight as I missed, for the first time in over a decade, my spring trip to preview the vintage. In any event, I think the quotes above from Jean Fisch and David Rayer at *Mosel Fine Wine* and from Keller's vintage report are impactful. They should be at least.

Second, and this is more important maybe, but based on the paltry amount of wine I'm being offered by my growers,
I know this is a short vintage.

And while I know we've all grown numb to the "very limited!" and "buy now!" tag lines that are ubiquitous from retailers to importers and back again, at least for my small growers these tag lines are going to be painfully real for vintage 2019.

This is a vintage that, if you're not paying attention, will be gone before you realize it's here.

I don't think I'm often very pushy, but I would genuinely recommend being actively engaged if you want these wines for your cellar.

You can always email us at **orders@vomboden.com**
and we'll do our best to guide you to where
the wines you're looking for might be available.

the introduction

We should begin by stating the obvious: It's inane to attempt a "vintage report" when you haven't tasted much wine from said vintage. Yet this is exactly what I'm going to attempt.

Many of you will, I'm sure, expect nothing less from me. Inane is more or less my middle name.

Vintage 2019 is the first vintage in 13 years that I have not travelled to Germany to preview.

I hadn't felt great that entire week, nothing major, but a little cough, sore throat. I felt worse that day, March 3rd. Still, it wasn't terrible - probably more allergies than anything else (no, I did not have COVID - as far as I know - that's not where this story is going).

Things were starting to get a little hairy here in New York and the idea of being on a plane, coughing, didn't seem like a great idea. But it felt important to go. *I wanted to go.*

Bags packed, kids and wife kissed, I got in my Über for the airport, feeling more than a little nervous about the whole thing. At some point on that ride, I just knew... it wasn't right. Something wasn't right. I've always trusted my gut more than my intellect and so by the time I got to the airport it was an easy walk to the counter to cancel my flight.

I was back home before good old United 960 even left the gate.

Vintage 2019 becomes the first vintage in 13 years I have not travelled to Germany specifically to preview. It's disorienting. And I miss my friends.

It felt, *it feels*, surprisingly disorienting for me.

I was due to fly out on March 3rd - good old United 960 to Frankfurt leaving at 7:45pm - and, after lots of soul-searching and discussions with my growers and friends and family, I decided to go. After all, this "coronavirus" didn't seem to be much worse than a flu, it was a good story for the media but probably not a huge deal unless you were over 70 or on a cruise ship, so I reasoned...

...so we all sort of reasoned.



And thus, at this writing, I've tasted about 40 different wines from 2019, which is to say, not nearly enough to have much to say. This vintage report will be short of my own musings. But I have spoken with my growers. I have spent hours and hours talking with them, on the phone, on Zoom, emailing. If nothing else, this report will be a fascinating document regarding the limitations of intellectual knowledge when discussing an experience as raw, sensual, immediate and non-verbal as tasting wine.



a note on the photography

I have no new pictures.

Same as you, I haven't gone anywhere. So I've decided to use this journal as a way of documenting my seven years doing this whole vom Boden thing; a trip down memory lane if you will. Full notes on all pictures at the end of the journal.

the weather

While a village-by-village accounting of rainfall and sunshine is beyond the scope of what I want to do here, a basic overview is probably worth indulging in.

Technically, the year begins in January and if the “winter season” was, in general, more or less overlooked in vintage reports even just a decade or two ago (“it was cold” or “it was colder”), in this new world the winter season is not as stable as it once was, neither in terms of temperature nor precipitation.

The cold is important not only as a signal to the vines to really shut down, to begin their restorative slumber. Severe or lengthy colds spells also do a good amount to destroy the eggs of insects, therefore reducing the pest population for the coming year.

More important perhaps is the precipitation: building up good stores of groundwater for the vines going into the spring and summer is key to resisting dry spells and droughts, both of which seem to be coming with more frequency and severity. And this is where 2019 begins: with very little precipitation through the winter. This is a big difference compared to vintage 2018, which was preceded by a fairly wet winter that ended up saving the vines through the hot and dry summer of 2018.

In spring 2019, the Mosel and surrounds seemed to be in a bit of a better place regarding precipitation than areas like the Rheinhessen, Pfalz and places even further south, like Baden and Swabia. Klaus Peter Keller said specifically that the Rheinhessen’s April, May and June were unusually dry, and the vines seemed stressed. When the rains finally came in July, Keller and the entire family exhaled. This rain was critical.

Flowering was more or less normal, which is what we call “delayed” these days, beginning around mid-June. Despite this more standardized timeline, the Saar still suffered some cold nights and frost damage in early May. For Florian Lauer, about a third of his vineyards were affected, reducing yields even before the growing season began.

Big picture: It’s fair to compare 2019 to 2018. Both are among the hottest years on record - according to NASA, globally speaking at least, 2019 is the second hottest year on record, second only to 2016, while 2018 is number five. Obviously global averages don’t account for country, region or village-specific details. For Germany, despite a heat spike in July, all in all 2019 was slightly cooler than 2018. But still, it’s fair to lump both 2018 and 2019 as warm/hot vintages.

As mentioned, some absolutely psychotic temperatures were recorded in Germany in July. Lauer tells the story in his vintage interview (go to vomboden.com/vbtv for all our grower vintage 2019 interviews, including Brand, Emrich-Schönleber, Julian Haart, Keller and Lauer) about returning from vacation in Provence, France. They left at 10am, with temperatures around 89 degrees Fahrenheit in Lac de Sainte-Croix, and drove roughly 500 miles north (a nine-hour journey) to the Saar. When they arrived home to the famously cool Saar valley, it was about 7pm and the outside temperature was 109 degrees Fahrenheit. This was the most extreme day, though the heat spike lasted about three days with temperatures at or above 104 degrees Fahrenheit.

While this heat spike may not have affected the signature, the style of the vintage (most growers stated the same opinion, that it was just too early, the grapes were too young), it did affect yields. The extreme sun could cause severe sunburn on the



afternoon side of the vines, essentially dehydrating the grapes so severely that they shriveled up and fell off the clusters. Lauer says about 20% of his crop was lost; Julian Haart lost a minimal 5%. In the Rheinhessen, Keller had lost about 10% of his grapes by the end of July 2019.

Interestingly, Keller talks about the sunburn in relatively positive terms. 2019 was a dry vintage, and this reduction of the crop relieved some of the pressure on the vines. The vines could in essence now focus their energies on fewer grapes.



Yet, as any winemaker will tell you when you try to nitpick about the weather in June and July, the real character of the vintage has most to do with the last month or two, somewhere between August and November, depending on harvest times. And this is where we get to the crux of the matter: The biggest differences between vintages 2018 and 2019 began to show themselves in August.

In 2018, the heat of June and July pushed into August, further stressing the grapes, pushing ripeness levels up and acidity levels down. August 2018 included not only warm days, but very warm evenings and nights. The exact opposite was true for 2019: August was much more gentle, with cooler temperatures, some critical rain and some very brisk nights, with temperatures dipping down into the high 40s Fahrenheit. Keller says all this was critical for the acidities, for shaping the eventual grip and structures of the wines. He said you could taste the difference from 2018 to 2019 already in August, in the grapes. It was obvious.

The 2019 harvest was also much different than the 2018 harvest. In 2018, it was, literally, a walk in the park: perfect weather, dry with sunshine for weeks and weeks and weeks. Now, it may have been a *long* walk in the park – Florian Lauer says it was exhausting, harvesting for well over six weeks – but you could do whatever you wanted, when you wanted. 2019 was exactly the opposite: the rains came, in some places maybe less overwhelming, in other places maybe a bit trickier, but nothing extreme. For the most part, the smaller estates could handle it without any major issues.

I've written this a hundred times, but I'll keep writing it: The smaller estate has the massive advantage when harvesting during more challenging weather. They can react quickly. Julian Haart, with only five hectares, had 15 people helping with the harvest. With this many people, and this scale, you can do nearly anything. You can be very, very precise. And you can taste this precision in the wines.

We'll talk more about this below, but the 2019 vintage seems to offer a wide range of wine styles. With a warm growing season and then rains beginning in October, growers had to know what they wanted *and they had to act quickly*. People will talk generally about how "the top" wines are great but maybe the lesser wines



missed the mark because the vintage moved too quickly. At the small estates, you're going to find more top wines. It's that simple.

Nearly across the board,
all the growers seemed really happy with the harvest...
there was just a real, genuine satisfaction.

Overall the vintage was a bit too wet to make many of the grand “stickies” from 2019, the BAs and TBAs. So, with some exceptions surely, you'll see the vintage maxing out at about the Auslese level.

Most of the top estates started their harvest around mid-September, similar to 2018. The low levels of precipitation through the year kept the berries relatively small and, again, the loss of some grapes from the sunburn helped to open up the clusters, making them a bit more resilient to the humidity and potential rot. Many of the clusters also showed a great diversity of ripeness: green-golden to yellow-golden. Such a range of ripeness can bring a fascinating complexity to a wine, weaving together a more diverse tapestry of flavors.

It's a well-known secret that most of Egon Müller's great TBAs have some very under-ripe grapes mixed in with the overripe and botrytized grapes; this is where the wines get that uncanny energy and lightness, matched to such exoticism. Obviously, we are not talking about such extremes, but this range of ripeness may explain some of the fascination of 2019.

Nearly across the board, all the growers seemed really happy with the harvest. I would say no one was freaking out, there was no grand hype-machine already pumping up expectations. There was just a real, genuine, happiness and satisfaction. Keller said, after pressing everything and getting it into barrel, he thought this could be a good to very good vintage.





(vintage) comparisons, considerations and conundrums

The vintage-comparison game is always amusing. I love to make fun of it; I can't help consistently falling back on it. It's both ridiculous and useful; we're just going to have to resign ourselves to that.

Philip Lardot, Ulli Stein's trusted number two and a gifted Mosel winemaker himself, says that 2019 reminds him of 2015 and 2017, though not as structured and shut-down as 2015 was on release. Julian Haart told me the same exact thing: so two votes for 2019 as a hypothetical love-child of 2015 and 2017.

Keller has been thinking about 2019 as 2017's "bigger brother," with similar low yields, high extracts and the rigorous structures that mean the best wines should make old bones. Keller, with a little sparkle in his eye, also carefully compares 2019 to the hallowed 2001 vintage. Keep in mind, for Keller, comparing anything to 2001 is like comparing something to Muhammed Ali, or The Beatles, or Nina Simone, or Bach, or Picasso, or whatever your "unquestionable great" is.

For Keller, comparing anything to the 2001 vintage is like comparing something to Muhammed Ali, or the Beatles, or Nina Simone, or Bach, or Picasso or whatever your "unquestionable great" is.

Frank Schönleber was both the most hesitant to say anything about the vintage and the only one who mentioned 2009, which I find kind of revealing. As we'll mention, 2019 is a warm vintage, and the fullness or roundness of some of the wines may lean in that direction.

Ulli Stein and Florian Lauer both referenced 2012, one of those

amazing little vintages that gets overlooked sometimes for no obvious or apparent reason, when thinking of comparisons for 2019. I asked Florian, "What is it specifically about 2012 that reminds you of 2019?" He responded: "What I think is the character of 2019 is absolutely classical... you could frame it in boring terms, it's not extreme in this direction, it's not extreme in that direction... but after 15 years of making wine, I now consider these types of vintages the great ones, because they are so 'normal.'" Keller made a similar comment, talking about how "everything is in full harmony" with vintage 2019.

These are fascinating comments, I think. I mean, on the one hand I don't know that I've been ever imported wines about which the growers are so giddy, so obviously thrilled. And yet, Lauer's saying it's "just normal!" Maybe this says more about how far we've come from normal, that a return to normal feels exceptional, irregular – decidedly *not normal*.

And then – and this was independently reported at unrelated times by a number of growers I was speaking to and texting with – there was the inexplicable phenomenon in the cellar in which everything just got better.

You may recall this line from Keller, above, in discussing the vintage 2019: Immediately after harvest "[KP] thought this could be a good to very good vintage." Yet, Keller continued in our discussion: "But after fermentation, in December and January, I thought this could be very good or even very good plus... and then tasting again in February and March, the wines gained in structure and intensity without being heavy, they



showed a playful elegance... I now think with 2019 we are talking about a very, very, very good vintage."

Philip Lardot randomly texted me at one point: "2019 never really felt like an amazing vintage during the year but the wines just keep over-performing."

I don't really have anything wildly insightful to say about this, I just find it kind of fascinating: the slow, almost imperceptible growth of the vintage from good harvest, to great wines, to then, potentially great, *great* wines. Maybe I just like that fact that as much as we think understand about viticulture and fermentation and wine, we obviously don't understand all that much. I like the fact that the growers themselves can still be surprised, bewildered, amazed.

This is, of course, what makes the whole damn game so much fun.



random notes and thoughts of questionable consequence

As much as the greatness of the 2019ers may have been a bit startling to the growers, there are some key points in the year that we can use to explain a bit of the mystery - specifically the cool fruits the vintage can show, the suprising acidities and the high extracts.

First, although 2019 had this crazy, three-day heat spike in July, all in all it was a cooler vintage: less sunshine hours overall when compared to 2018, cooler average temperatures and, finally and most importantly maybe, a cool to cold-ish August.

It might not be incorrect to think of vintage 2019 as "*the house that August built*." August, with its cool days and even cooler nights, preserved the grapes' acidities in a way that the growers likely didn't expect. It provided the vintage with the energy it needed, at the last minute, while everyone was distracted by vacation, or prepping for the harvest.

As per the high extraction and the wines, well, it is both easy to explain in the vintage and to taste in the wines. With frosts (at least in the Saar), sunburn, and then the overall lower yields one would expect after a bountiful vintage like 2018, the 2019ers come to us with a good amount of stuffing.

As stated, I've only tasted about 40 or so wines from maybe 10 growers, so take these comments with a good dose of salt, but these two points - acidity and extract - obviously always in the context of ripeness, seem to define the vintage in many ways.

On the one hand, if your extracts get very high, you need the acidity even more to provide that definition, that energy and cut. If you don't have that acidity, you lose your balance and the



wines, while flaunting depth and layers, may begin to feel a bit too chewy, a bit gooey, or, yikes, heavy and soft. I haven't tasted enough of the wines to have experienced any of this, but I sense that could be an issue. This is a ripe vintage, don't forget, and I can't help but believe some of the wines are going to be a bit clumsy and heavy. I wouldn't just go out there buying willynilly.

Yet when the wines do match up the extract, *that power*, to an equally bracing structure, well, then you're in for a show. My gut is that these are the wines that are making some people think of 2001 - these are the wines generating the hype, maybe deservedly.

It should be said, too, that extreme finesse and clarity, that mineral-water style of wine, is also here in 2019. Whether the product of picking very early, of younger vines, of cooler sites, all this I don't know, but I have had a few wines of lean, gossamer elegance, where the expected heft and density of 2019 is just not there. Maybe they are the exception and not the rule, but they are out there in vintage 2019.

The "basic" wines seem to have a good amount of variation in style, depending on what the grower wanted to express, their vision and touch, the vineyard, vines, etc.

The low-yield truth of the vintage means some wines are quite chewy while others seem very airy and elegant. Stein's 2019 "Blauschiefer," for example, is a dense, structured, power-house of a wine. Marry the low yields and high extract of 2019 with very old, ungrafted vines (this "basic wine" is made from 70-80-year-old ungrafted vines, which is crazy) and you get a bruiser of a bottling - dense, chewy. This is a cutting, incisive dry Riesling you can drink with a steak. Honestly, I've drank two bottles of it over days and I love the wine - for me it has plenty of the acid needed to counter the heft of the vintage. But

it is not an easygoing, drink-me-and-forget-me sorta wine, which its price may lead you to assume it is.

Lauer's wines - I've tasted only the Feinherb (off dry) "Barrel X" and the dry-tasting "Senior" - have a similar punch. Again, they are not lacking for acidity, but they are textural wines, grand wines. Similar to the Stein, they seem to drink like grander (read: more expensive) wines than they are.

Yes, 2019 seems to be offering free upgrades. In the negative sense, this means we're likely going to have that "Auslese in a Kabinett's clothing" thing and GGs that have too much weight, flesh and alcohol. On the positive side, certain wines (like the Stein and Lauers I mention above), will just have more bang for the buck. I'll be tasting the complete range of Stein and Lauer wines in the coming month and will, obviously, report back on the full collection. For the moment, though, that's about all I can say.

On the other hand, the basic 2019 wines of Julian Haart and Weiser-Künstler (the "1,000L" and the Feinherb, respectively) are just as tense and nervous as Stein's and Lauer's offerings, yet they are slimmer too, leaner, more filigreed. As I said, vintage 2019, even with all that heft and extract, can be pulled and pulled into something very lean, clear, bouncy. It's like stretching an uninflated balloon so far that it almost snaps and the material of the ballon nearly disappears, becoming almost transparent.

I did get to taste the entire Weiser-Künstler collection and it contains both worlds. The Feinherb, as stated, is a live-wire of a Riesling, brilliant and cerebral. The Schlossberg Kabinett, the village-level dry Trarbacher and the Gaipfad Kabinett Trocken are psychotically vivid, lean, transparent - all three of these wines are the best I've maybe ever had from Weiser-Künstler (with the possible exception of the 2012 Gaispfad Kabinett



Trocken, time will tell there). These wines all showcase a slimness that belies the density of the vintage. On the other hand, the Ellergrub Kabinett, the Spätlesen and above, show more extract, more stuffing. They are compact and have sharp lines, fortress-like structures and great acidity - but there is no denying the punch they have.

I was also able to taste the entire off-dry collection of Daniel Vollenweider. There has been a good amount of behind-the-scenes buzz regarding his wines - many saying they were one of the top collections in the Mosel for 2019. Such early praise can be a bit damming sometimes - you set high expectations and then, well, high expectations are hard to meet. I can say, however, without hesitation, Vollenweider met and surpassed expectations. *It is a stunning collection.*

Vollenweider, for me, sorta flips my “two worlds of 2019” theory on its head, because of course if you can have something very dense *and* you can have something airy and clear, you can also have something perfectly in the middle. That’s where Vollenweider’s collection seems to have landed.

Vollenweider’s style has always been an almost dangerous-feeling balance of exotic opulence and incisive cut. His whole practice feels like walking on a very narrow ledge: a few inches too far one way, and you fall, a few inches too far the other way and you smash into the rockface. There is little room for error on the razor’s edge.

With vintage 2019 not only has Daniel been able to keep all the density and complexity and layers, not only has he been able to fit this same content into a narrower, leaner, more finessed architecture, but I have to say he also seems to have been able to change, slightly, the register, moving the center from the riper notes to cooler, more saline and mineral-driven flavors. I can say his Goldgrube Kabinett is mind-blowing: denser,

cooler, with even more of a nervous, polished, mineral-glycerin acidity. Holy hell.

For me, with scattered snapshots of the vintage from the few bottles I’ve tasted, I do seem to recall something of 2001, 2012 and 2015. Like 2001 and 2012, the 2019 vintage seems to have that perfectly measured push/pull, the harmony, the inherent and unquestionable balance in the top wines. For me it feels a bit more 2001 to be perfectly honest, at least in that slightly-more-oomph ripeness, matched to the slightly-more-oomph acidity. 2012, if it was overlooked, was maybe overlooked because it was, while perfect-ish, perhaps a bit quiet. *2019 does not seem quiet.*

The vintage also reminds me of 2015 in the depth of fruit, in the fullness some of the wines can have. While the vintage can have a good, muscular acidity, it does have ripeness too... and, as I’ve said, my best guess is that some of the wines are going to miss that balance because the ripeness will have outpaced the acidity. While 2015 seems to be living up to the early praise, some wines from this vintage must surely stumble a bit into the slightly-too-weighty zone.

But perhaps, when it really comes down to it, I’m most intrigued by the 2017 comparison, for the rather absurd reason that I still don’t understand 2017 at all. I mean, if 2019 has surprised the growers, why the hell can’t 2017 confuse me?

When the 2017ers first came out, I felt like a lot of the wines were a bit diminutive. I also felt like some of them were too dense, the weight of the extract perhaps a bit too much for the architecture of the wines, like an old stationwagon, loaded down with cargo, so that the bumper sorta grinds along the ground. But for 2017, any theory I could come up with was eventually undermined by a wine from the vintage. No matter what I tasted, I found myself confused, unable to write much.



Remember when I confessed to being “embarrassed as a wine professional” for not writing more vintage reports? Part of that is simply a sign of my disdain for the genre. The other part of it is the fact that, for 2017 at least, I had no idea what to say.

As the 2017ers have evolved, much of my general confusion has remained; the cohesive thread of the vintage eludes me.

I will also say, however, that many 2017ers have come around to tasting, overall, clearer and cooler than I remember them being. I’ve had a number of wines whereupon first tasting them I wrote them off as “good enough but unremarkable” only to come back to them now and have them slap me in the face with their freshness and clarity. “I’ve been here the whole time, why weren’t you paying more attention you oaf!” they seem to scream at me. Fair enough.

I will also admit another strange fact of this confusing vintage I still don’t understand: it has produced two of the greatest young Rieslings I’ve ever had (Keller’s 2017 Petthenthal GG Auction and Stein’s not-of-this-earth 2017 Alfer Hölle “1900”).

How is this possible?

I have no idea. Which is, of course, exactly the point.

2019 I can't wait to get to know you.



But more importantly, I can't wait to see you all again - all my friends and growers in Austria, France and Germany. *I really missed you this spring.*

I know this too shall pass, the discouraging state of the world. Hopefully we will have learned something through all this shit. Maybe this most serious moment - environmentally, politically, socially - will be the motivation to change things for the better.

I look forward to toasting this change with you all. And you can be damn sure that as we raise our glasses I'll be shuffling my chair at the table right up to you, *well closer than six feet.*

notes on fotos

cover

This photo is from 2016, taken from the base of the famed Scharzhofberg vineyard, in the Saar valley, looking west. This is one of Egon Müller's parcels; the old, single-pole training style is classic Mosel-Saar-Ruwer.

page 2

Julian Haart standing in an upper parcel of the Ohligsberg vineyard, later afternoon, early spring 2016.

page 4, inset

Alexandra Künstler with bright smiling eyes, wearing a mask, delivering wines to the Trier restaurant Yong Yong, spring 2020. Photograph courtesy of Yong Yong.

page 5

Staircase to heaven in Weiser-Künstler's parcel within the Ellergrub vineyard, Mosel, early spring 2015.

page 7

Daniel Vollenweider, left, in the Schimbock with New York wine persons Amanda Smeltz and Jeff Taylor, spring 2015.

page 8, inset

Stephen Bitterolf, left, with Klaus Peter Keller and Pinot the dog, as a young

puppy, smelling G-Max, early spring 2014.

page 9

Jonas and father Matthias "Matz" Hild in the Obermosel at a visit early summer 2017.

page 10, inset

Jochen Beurer, the European BMX-champion turned bioD guru standing in his curated garden/vineyard of medieval grape varieties, summer 2018.

page 11

Ulli Stein and his dog Jupp, along with videographer and artist @ravingcave in Stein's Palmberg, early spring 2015.

page 13

Hans Josef "HaJo" Becker in the tasting room with his dog Birgitte, early spring 2015.

page 14, inset

One of Stein's cats, sleeping, unbelievably high up on a cabinet, in the tasting room at Haus Waldfrieden, spring 2016.

page 15

A traditional German breakfast with the brothers Brand, Daniel (left) and Jonas, (center, looking over his shoulder), summer 2017.

page 17

Olympia Samara and Johannes Hoffmann of Weingut Roterfaden, in the amazing and unknown terraces of Rosswag, Swabia, early spring 2018.

page 19

Barbara Öhlzelt, disregarding the "private way" sign to walk into the terraced vineyards of the Kamptal, Austria, early spring 2017.

page 20, inset

Alexandra Künstler and Konstantin Weiser working on "Alexandra's terrace" in the Ellergrub, early spring 2015.

back cover

Visiting Camille Migot (pictured right) in the Lorraine with my uncle Freddy (center), in spring 2017. These two are amazing people. Camille we already know as a soulful winemaker, the pride of Côtes de Toul. Uncle Freddy was, in his day, a competitive horseman and a balote champion (don't mess around with French card games). Today he is a serious gardener, an impressive chef, an obsessive connoisseur of food and wine (with an amazing Bas Armagnac collection) and, on top of all of this, in the year 2017 he still uses large, fold-out maps *made of paper*.

How amazing is that?



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