



GRAPE VARIETIES

Doral

A young variety that has not yet conquered the world, but producers keep tinkering to bring out its best. Doral is a cross that was created in 1965 between Chasselas and Chardonnay. It is grown in small quantities around the country. It offers some of the higher acidity of a Chardonnay, but with the pleasant citrus nose of some Chasselas wines and, for growers, the advantage that it ripens early.



Tomorrow's best winemakers

The rolling hills of northern canton Vaud share bucolic soft landscapes with the area known as the Three Lakes region.

Several dynamic and excellent young wine producers who grow grapes on the shores of little Lake Morat (Murten in German) have been making a name for themselves since one of them, Christian Vessaz at Cru de l'Hôpital in Môtier, became the youngest member of the Mémoire des Vins Suisses, a by-invitation group that includes some of the country's best winemakers.

You can reach the town of Môtier in many ways, but in summer droves of tourists come by boat to walk in the hills, visit the lakeside wineries and have lunch overlooking the water and the town of Murten on the other side. Lake Morat is part of Switzerland's longest navigable waterway, from Solothurn to Neuchatel via Biel and Morat.



Fabrice and Stéphane Simonet are gradually taking over Le Petit Château, the family winery in Môtier, like many young wine producers in Switzerland. Fabrice works mainly in the cellar and Stéphane in the vineyard. They work closely with their still-busy parents. The sons are active members of Junge

Schweiz Neue Winzer, a group of wine producers under age 40 worth watching.

Father Eric's love of grape varieties is apparent in the 30 that he planted (Chasselas and Pinot Noir nevertheless account for 50 percent of the grapes), including Merlot grapes that are now more than 30 years old, unusual for Switzerland outside canton Ticino. The brothers convinced their father to try oaking one of the wines, and once he saw the result the family went from one barrel in 2009 to more than 50 in 2014. The wines sit in a fine new barrel room, quietly maturing.



The family invites clients to become vine leaseholders, "buying" a vine for 10 years. The owners pay a one-time CHF250 fee and receive a bottle from their vine each year. They're invited to learn how to care for a vine during



festive days on the lakefront where the family has a collection of sample grape varieties.

Opposite: Local wines on sale at the Caveau de Vully  
Top: Fabrice Simonet in the family's new barrel room  
Left: The Simonet family winery in Môtier



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Eyholzer Roter

Such a rarity that you'll find it at just one winery, Chanton, near Visp in Canton Valais. Two grapevines, some 200 years old, were found 50 kilometres apart, in Visp and Sion, by grape DNA expert José Vouillamoz. This is a very old Swiss grape grown on pergola-style vines. It gives a very dry wine of a startling bright, deep pink, with high acidity and notes of strawberry and violets. It pairs like a dry rosé with foods although it is technically a red wine. Chanton also makes a traditional Eiswein from this, which is its real claim to fame: it takes seven months for the wine to mature in barrel, far longer than average. The resulting wine, highly acidic, has notes of crème brûlée and dried cherries.