

## Fat Rat JANUARY | 2016

### 2011 Gombaude-Guillet Pomerol | Bordeaux, France

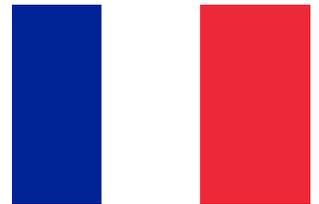


In the heart of the Pomerol plateau, on the Right Bank of Bordeaux, the vineyards of Château Gombaude-Guillet have been a family property for so long that the current generation doesn't even know when they were first acquired. The Bélevier family was already well established as *vignerons* in Pomerol and Néac when this property was passed down to Marie Bélevier as a dowry in 1868. The "château" itself, which was originally a café where the locals would gather for a drink after church services, was added to the property in 1922. Today, Claire Laval, Marie's great-granddaughter, runs the estate. Claire started her career as an agronomist, specializing in soils best suited for cattle, and had no formal training in viticulture. It is through viticulture, though, that she has refined her expertise in soil management, learning from her own work in the vineyards. Though the estate is already certified organic, she is now pursuing the more stringent requirements of biodynamics. Her dedication to the environment even extends to using local oak for the wines' *élevage*. Claire's reputation among her peers also speaks volumes of her capabilities and work ethic: in 1991, she and only one other woman were inducted into the *Confrerie des Hospitaliers de Pomerol*, a first in this traditionally all-male wine fraternity.

As a recently discovered jewel in the crown of Bordeaux, Pomerol does not have an official classification system, yet the standards set for the *vignerons* here are high. The château's vineyards are comprised of glacial gravel deposits and clay, and vineyard work is focused around soil health, low yields, and maximizing ripeness. Cover crops are planted between vineyard rows to encourage microbiological activity in the soil. No chemical or synthetic herbicides or fungicides are used, and Claire is also careful not to eliminate vineyard pests entirely, citing their importance to the vineyard's ecosystem. The vines average forty years of age and give naturally low yields. The wines of Gombaude-Guillet are classic reflections of Pomerol: rich and supple, with a deep gravel mineral structure. This *vin de garde* has all of the grace and finesse for which the appellation is known.

**Our Price: \$74**

### 2013 Johann Michel Cuvee Jana | Rhone, France



Cornas is the more elegant brethren to its other more powerful siblings of the Northern Rhone Valley. It is the smallest of appellations within the Rhone, and is made of 100% Syrah. It is the only grape planted within Cornas, and is most known for the amazing aromatics and refined flavor components that keep coming and coming with every wafting scent, and layer upon layer of changing flavors that don't ever quit!

Bigger and richer (than the *cuvée Tradition*), with notions of barbecue, smoke, bloody meat, plum and licorice, the 2012 Cornas Jana packs a serious amount of fruit into its full-bodied, voluptuously textured profile, yet never seems cumbersome or over the top. Count me a fan and this knockout Cornas excels on all accounts. Unfortunately, there's not much of it to go around. Grab a couple bottles if you can, and enjoy it over the coming 15-20 years.

93pts - Wine Advocate

**Our Price: \$90**

