



The Stuff of Dreams

A Krug dinner at Blantyre in the Berkshires proves magical.

RICHARD L. ELIA

Ann Fitzpatrick Brown, owner of Blantyre — a hundred-acre Tudor manor in The Berkshires — has carved herself a piece of paradise. It's a splendid Relais & Châteaux hotel (but small enough to be an inn) that's open all year round, receiving all the accolades it deserves from the best travel magazines. It's Edith Wharton country, a place where her fussy novelist friend Henry James would happily reside. The grounds are lush and manicured; the property is like a private park with magnificent gardens and croquet courts that invite investigation and play. Blantyre is imagination, a return to an earlier era, made romantic by quiet and slow time. Even when Blantyre is at full occupancy, guests would never know it. Ann Brown likes it that way.



Julie Cavil, Krug Winemaker

Blantyre is no fairy tale. It's paradise with a culinary Eden: the dining and wining are some of the best on the east coast, many would say anywhere, aided by a devoted culinary and wait staff — the very treasure of the place — that has military precision and courtly courtesy. Chef Christopher Brooks and Chef de Cuisine Arnaud Cotar, along with sommelier Luc Chevalier (whose wine cellar is perfect in its immensity), see to this. Blantyre is a creation molded into a vision of effortless good taste, tempered by grace.

It was fitting that Blantyre should invite another avatar of excellence to its doors for a celebratory wine dinner: Krug Champagne. There was a two-fold celebration at this event: the heralding of its new winemaker, Julie Cavil, an engaging

Blantyre estate photo: HARLEY MACKENZIE

FIVE SPANISH GEMS

BODEGAS RODA

"Winery of the Year"

—GUÍA PENÍN SIBARITAS

"A legend in the making"

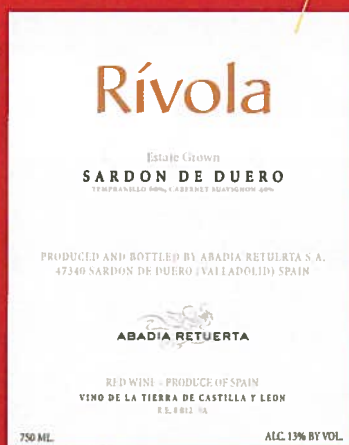
—ROBERT M. PARKER, JR.



ABADÍA RETUERTA

ANGEL ANOCÍBAR:
"Winemaker of the Year"

—INTERNATIONAL WINE CHALLENGE 2005



BODEGAS JULIÁN CHIVITE

"The Navarra region has staged a strong comeback in recent years driven mostly by one bodega, Julián Chivite."

—NEW YORK TIMES

"The top (and the biggest) name in Navarra is Chivite."

—DECANTER



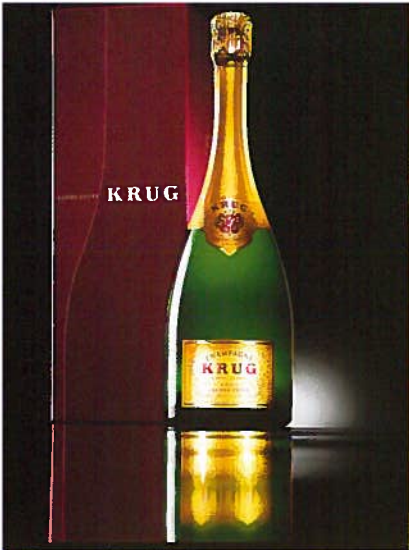
BODEGA DON OLEGARIO

"An elegant and very modern style crafted in a manner that demonstrates expertise in the expression of the Albariño grape."

—GUÍA PENÍN GUIDE

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Chef Christopher Brooks and Chef de Cuisine Arnaud Cotar,
along with sommelier Luc Chevalier . . . see to this.*

thirtysomething, and the first woman to hold the position that Henri Krug held for decades; and the introduction of its newest Champagne, Krug "Clos d'Ambonnay" 1995 Blanc de Noirs, a wine 13 years in the making. It is Krug's first new wine in 20 years. The new Krug costs \$3,000 a bottle, and only 3,000 bottles were made for the world. Blantyre and Krug spared no expense, however, pouring at least three bottles of Clos d'Ambonnay, accounting at this dinner for more than one percent of the wine. Blantyre is that kind of place; Krug is that kind of Champagne house.

Although as young and very fine as Clos d'Ambonnay is (concentrated, with superb color, rich tones), it hasn't the brilliance — at least not yet — of the "Clos du Mesnil" Blanc de Blanc 1996, a bubbly whose purity was ethereal, and whose honeyed, oak, coffee, and lemon flavors were the stuff that dreams are made on. The brilliance didn't stop there. Blantyre and Krug arranged for the Krug 1996 (which winemaker Cavil likened to the Krug 1928, the greatest vintage of the century), Krug Rosé, and Krug "Grande Cuvée" Magnum. The Krug 1996, the star of the evening (perfect balance of sugar and acid, brioche tones, lemony, immense and extravagantly long), was paired with Scottish Langoustines, morels, fava beans, and Chervil Krug foam, the

marriage of which prompted wine author Ed McCarthy to murmur his approval with "unbelievable, unbelievable." According to winemaker Cavil, the Krug 1996 brought "tears to wine author James Halliday."

Julie Cavil has no easy position. She's following a legend, Henri Krug, who along with other members of the Krug tasting team is by her side. Cavil makes it clear that "there is no 'new generation' at Krug. The wines we make are the same; there is no change, no gap." Cavil is happy talking about Krug, and pleased to be part of the Krug tradition and its 163-year history. She came to Krug via Moët Chandon, where she worked for four years. She interviewed for the Krug winemaker position in 2006, persevering through seven interviews, the last of which was with Remi Krug, Henri's brother, who came to the interview with a bottle of Krug and two glasses, with a simple request: "Make me dream about Krug." Cavil mentioned Krug's history, making allusions and relationships to wine and classical music, of which Remi is fond. He liked the dream. She is now in her third year.

In the past, the style of Krug Grande Cuvée — its house wine — has been unmistakable. There's grandeur, power, personality, oak, coffee, and rich

complexity. Of late, some wine writers are asking about the style as it is found in the newer 750 ml bottles of Krug Grande Cuvée arriving to these shores. Make no mistake: the wine is wonderful, and we purchased cases of it unhesitatingly. But to some the wine does not appear to have quite the gusto of older Grande Cuvée. We mention this to Cavil, who is hurt to hear it; her soft blue eyes momentarily glare at us. "There is no change in the Krug style," she says firmly. "As I said earlier, there is no 'new generation' at Krug. We uphold our tradition. It is made and aged as always — six years for Grande Cuvée and up to ten for Vintage. We are devoted to this tradition and style." Cavil is a romantic, and she can wax eloquently and poetically about Krug, as she did with Remi Krug. The thin, petite Cavil is Krug's new tower of strength, indomitable about its reputation, passionate about its future. "You try the Krug Grande Cuvée tonight," she says diplomatically, "there will be no difference." Peter Holt, who consults with Blantyre on wine, managed to have some Krug Grande Cuvée served from magnums. It was Krug the way we knew it with creamy coffee tones, power, length, finesse, and finish. Julie Cavil was right — there was no difference. ♀

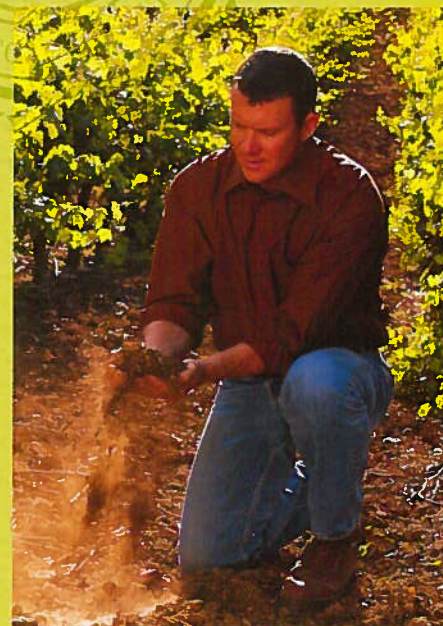
when you do what you love, people notice

89 POINTS

GALLO FAMILY VINEYARDS SONOMA
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3RD GENERATION
WINEMAKER



MATT GALLO
3RD GENERATION
WINEGROWER