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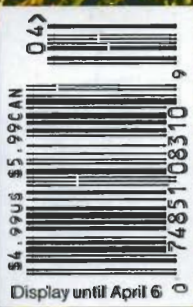
(Swiss wine, anyone?)

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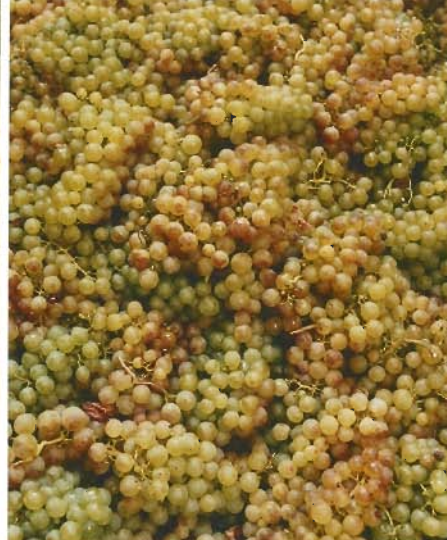




THE LAVAUX TERRACES ABOVE LAKE GENEVA YIELD FINE WINES.

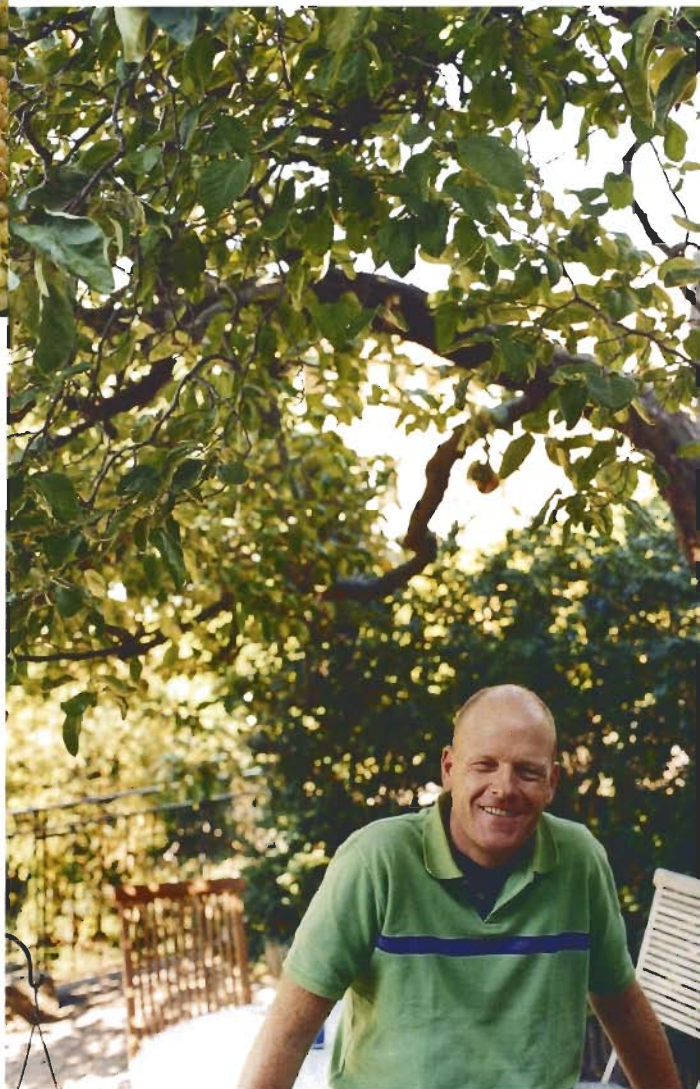
UNCORKING SWITZERLAND'S SECRET

BUT ONLY THE SWISS SEEM TO KNOW.



BY PETER JARET

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TARA DONNE



“You can see for yourself,”

Blaise Duboux says, gesturing over the edge of a low stone wall to a narrow strip of vineyard—just six rows of neatly pruned grapes—clinging precariously to the steep slope below. Beyond that, another tiny vineyard bordered by an ancient stone wall hugs the hillside, and then another, dropping straight down to the blue expanse of the lake. “I think you have to be crazy to grow grapes here.”

If he’s right, the Duboux family deserves some kind of award for inherited lunacy. For 17 generations they’ve grown grapes and made wine here, in the Lavaux terraces on the northern shores of Switzerland’s Lake Léman, also known as Lake Geneva, in an area enticingly called the Swiss Riviera. Duboux, a rangy, restless man in his 40s who’s wearing a blue baseball cap, a red knit shirt, and a silk scarf tied natively around his neck, traces his ancestral line directly back to the mid 15th century. Three hundred years earlier, the bishop of nearby Lausanne, looking for a way to earn more from his lands, assigned monks from the Cistercian order the task of developing these terraced vineyards.

Even then it must have seemed a crazy notion. A millennium before, when the Romans ventured into this region, they planted grapes on gentler terrain, the low-lying grade where the Rhône River enters and then exits Lake Léman. No one had thought to plant anything on cliffs rising so abruptly from the shore that even mountain goats would have trouble finding their footing. But with picks and shovels, the monks carved vineyard terraces into the rocky hillsides and erected stone walls around them. Grapes flourished on these south-facing hills, and since then winemaking has been the principal industry here. It’s not unusual to see a sign for a winery founded in the 1500s.

Yet despite this long history of winemaking, Swiss wines are largely unavailable outside the country. There’s one simple reason: The Swiss drink almost all of the 29 million gallons of wine

Blaise Duboux, above, has winemaking in his blood. His family has been tending vineyards in Switzerland’s Lavaux terraces since the 15th century. Top left, chasselas grapes, ripe and ready for harvest, are the region’s signature varietal.

PHOTOS: ASSISTANT PHOTOGRAPHER

produced in the country. (Total Swiss wine production equals only about one-twentieth of the wine produced in California.) A mere 2 percent of Swiss wine is exported, most of it to neighboring European countries. “When people think of Switzerland, they think of chocolate, of cheese, of watches,” Duboux tells me. “They don’t think of wine. Even in France, just over the border, I sometimes speak with people who are surprised to learn that we produce wine here.” Yet Swiss wines, including vintages produced in Lavaux, have been snapping up medals at some of the most prestigious international wine competitions, including the Concours Mondial de Bruxelles, sometimes called the Olympics of wine.

I discovered the well-kept secret of Swiss wines a dozen years ago, when I began traveling to southwestern Switzerland four times a year on business. Most of my time is spent in Lausanne, a city of some 120,000 people about 40 miles northeast of Geneva. Of course I’ve known about the terraced vineyards of Lavaux, which begin on the eastern outskirts of Lausanne. I’ve gazed out at them from the decks of the paddle-wheel steamers that crisscross the lake. I’ve seen the sharply angled vineyards and ancient stone walls swoosh past the windows of the local train that crosses the Lavaux terraces as it travels from Lausanne to nearby Montreux. “It’s one of the most beautiful places on Earth,” I’ve told friends, trying to describe the views of vineyards, the lake, the little towns of France on the opposite shore, with the snow-covered Alps as a backdrop.

But like many parts of Switzerland, the terraced vineyards are so picture-postcard perfect that their beauty seems enough in itself. I’d never felt the need to do more than admire them from afar. Then, not long ago, I began to hear rumblings that the area was changing. The Lavaux terraces had been designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2007. That surprised me. I’d always associated the designation with cultural sites in need of protection, something vineyards in one of the wealthiest places in the world hardly seemed to require. On a recent visit, I noticed the raw gash of a construction zone, with cranes looming in the middle of the vineyards. When I asked a local friend about it, she frowned and said it was somebody’s idea of progress. Now that the terraces were a World Heritage site, buses full of tourists were shouldering their way through the tiny medieval hamlets and along the one-lane vineyard roads. A tourist center was being built to accommodate the crowds.

The irony seemed too improbable to believe. Could the UNESCO designation, far from protecting the area, actually threaten to disturb its isolation and tranquillity? I decided on my next trip to take a closer look at the place whose beauty I’d come to take for granted.

ON A CLOUDLESS LATE SUMMER DAY, as remnants of morning mist float like apparitions over the surface of the lake, Patrick Fonjallaz steers his SUV along the twists and turns of La Corniche—the name, appropriately, means ledge—the ancient vineyard road that threads a narrow path across the Lavaux terraces. A bearish man with a brusquely friendly manner, he has invited me to sample

wines at the Fonjallaz winery in the small village of Épesses. His family has been producing wine there since 1552.

But first he’s offered to take me on a tour of the area so I can get my bearings. We set out from Lutry, on the western end of Lavaux, traveling east through appellations with names straight out of a fairy tale: Villette, Calamin, Dézaley, Saint-Saphorin. The Lavaux terraces cover a mere 30 kilometers, or just over 18 miles, along the lakeshore. Yet within that compact area some 10,000 separate terraces are enclosed by more than 248 miles of stone walls. Grapes grow everywhere I look. In some places the vineyards are gently inclined; in others they are stacked one almost on top of another, like stairs mounting the sheer cliffs. Rows of neatly tended grapevines sweep up from the lower ground and encircle medieval towers, monasteries, and fortified hamlets. Grapevines crisscross small backyards and climb the walls of centuries-old châteaux.

Despite a scale so small that you can view all of Lavaux from the deck of a boat on the lake, the region encompasses eight different appellations, each with its own unique growing conditions. Some consist of barely more than 100 acres. In the first area of Lavaux to grow grapes—the appellation called Dézaley—Fonjallaz stops the car so we can walk along one of the vineyard paths. He points out the white grapes hanging in perfect clusters from the vines, just weeks away from being harvested. “These are chasselas, the principal grape we grow here,” he tells me. Chasselas, also known as fendant, probably originated in Lavaux. They are used as table grapes in France and other parts of Europe. The Swiss are among the few winemakers in the world who produce wines purely from these grapes.

When I ask what the growing conditions are like here, in the shadow of the Alps, Fonjallaz repeats a bit of popular local lore. “We say here that the grapes are warmed by three suns. There is the sun itself. And then there is the sunlight reflected off the lake. And then there is the sunlight that is absorbed by the stone walls, which give off their heat in the evening. That is what allows us to grow grapes here.”

Agriculture everywhere tries to make the best use of the natural growing conditions, of course. But the balance of nature and human ingenuity achieves a rare beauty in Lavaux. Even the lane we follow, twisting its way along the rugged face of the slopes, possesses a grace that’s part natural, part man-made. “There’s a joke about why the road is like this,” Fonjallaz tells me. “It is because the original people had donkeys, and so they followed the donkeys.”

We arrive at Épesses, a cluster of stone and stucco buildings huddled so close together that traffic can move in only one direction at a time. The Fonjallaz winery is set among houses on the edge of the vineyards. First we climb down into the wine cave, where Fonjallaz shows me an elaborately carved cask made for an 1896 exposition in Geneva and a photograph of his parents and grandfather posing with Charlie Chaplin, one of the many celebrities who have made their homes along the Swiss Riviera. Afterward we walk outside again and settle onto a covered veranda on the edge of the vineyard to sample some of the family’s wines.

“We will taste only a few, because there are too many,” Fonjallaz says. But by the end of the afternoon he has opened nine bottles from the winery, ranging from light white wines made of chasselas to reds produced from another grape grown here and almost nowhere else, called *plant robert*. The name may simply be that of an early grower. But later I heard a more colorful story: that it came from the Italian word *rubare*, meaning “to pilfer or purloin,” because the vine had been stolen from a grower passing through Lavaux and then planted here.

One of his forebears could well have been the culprit. Fonjallaz is among the 13th generation in his family to make wine in the Lavaux terraces. As an American whose family tree gets sketchy just three generations back, I don’t quite grasp what that means until I notice the label on one of the bottles he’s opened for us to sample. There, by name, is each member of his distinguished lineage:

“The heritage is the ancient terraces and the stone walls,” Blaise Duboux says of the “Swiss Riviera” wine region. “But it is also the people working here now.” In September 2009, the grape harvest was in full swing in Duboux’s vineyards, opposite page, top. The steep terraces, bottom right, rise up above the road between Chexbres and Rivaz.



"WE SAY THAT THE GRAPES ARE WARMED BY THREE SUNS—THE SUN ITSELF, THE SUNLIGHT REFLECTED OFF THE LAKE, AND THE SUNLIGHT THAT IS ABSORBED BY THE STONE WALLS, WHICH GIVE OFF THEIR HEAT IN THE EVENING."



"WHAT MAKES THE WINE HERE SPECIAL IS THE SOIL.
YOU CAN SMELL IT IN THE WINE, A STRONG MINERALITY."



FONJALLAZ DE PÈRE EN FILS
ÉTABLIS A ÉPESSES DEPUIS 1552

Pierre 1531–1600

Urbain 1572–1640

Simon 1610–1701

Antoine 1643–1713

Étienne 1680–1737

Pierre 1727–1825

François 1760–1842

Jean 1801–1872

Samuel 1834–1912

Gustave 1865–1923

Frédéric 1885–1958

Gustave 1909–1994

Patrick 1946

“That must feel like a heavy responsibility sometimes,” I say.

He nods thoughtfully. “Sometimes, yes.” But as he looks contentedly out over the expansive view, he seems like a man who deeply loves what he does.

We linger over the last bottle, a sweet wine called Passerillé de Lavaux made from chasselas grapes that are spread on racks for three months, pressed, and then aged in oak—a wine that won a silver medal in 2007 at the Concours Mondial in Brussels. Then Fonjallaz says, “I understand you are going to meet Jérôme Aké Bédà.”

I’m surprised he knows. But the Lavaux is like a very small town. News travels fast. Jérôme Aké Bédà is the sommelier at a well-known restaurant in Saint-Saphorin called L’Auberge de l’Onde. The place is famous, in part because Charlie Chaplin dined there once a week. (He lived in a neighboring village called Corsier-sur-Vevey from 1952 to his death in 1977.) A beloved Swiss songwriter and poet, Jean Villard-Gilles, was also a habitué. I’m hoping Aké Bédà might give me a professional perspective on the wine produced here. Fonjallaz tells me I’ve chosen the right man: “I would say he is one of the three best wine tasters I know.”

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, I take the local train from Lutry up through the vineyards to Chexbres, a town high on the ridgeline overlooking the Lavaux. From there, it’s an easy walk, zigzagging down through the vineyards, to Saint-Saphorin, where I’ve arranged to meet Aké Bédà. There are many ways to explore the area: by bicycle, by moped, on foot, or by car. But walking is the best way to get a

sense of the region. A 16-mile series of narrow lanes has been designated a vineyard trail, with signs along the way that describe each appellation, the grapes grown there, and the special characteristics of the wine. The local train stops at most of the small villages in Lavaux, so it’s easy to choose a starting point and then cover as much of the trail as time allows.

The vineyards I walk past, heavy with fruit, are all but deserted. Within a few weeks, when the harvest begins, these fields will swarm with activity. I’ve heard that some growers even bring helicopters in to ferry the grapes to the wineries. For now, nature is doing most of the work. The morning sun is already beginning to warm the air. Walking by a terrace wall, I place my hand on the stone and feel its warmth.

Saint-Saphorin’s 16th-century church presides over the dark red jumble of its tile-roofed houses, huddled against the rocky hillside. As I enter the village, I see two young mothers pushing strollers down a narrow cobbled street. I hear the sound of someone practicing a Bach suite on a cello in an upstairs room. It’s one of those moments—and they occur often in Switzerland—when the serene beauty of the place seems almost too perfect to be real. A little farther on, a different kind of music echoes in a narrow lane: a choir rehearsing in the church. L’Auberge de l’Onde faces the church. It’s perfect in its way, too: a classic Swiss auberge in a two-story 16th-century building with dark green shutters and an elaborate wrought-iron sign in front.

But Aké Bédà is not your classic sommelier, I soon discover. Originally from Ivory Coast, he came to Switzerland in 1989, when he was 27, to attend hotel school. Introduced to the local wines, he soon realized that he possessed an uncanny sense of taste. In fact, on the eve of a countrywide competition for best sommelier in 2003, he was called on at the last minute to represent a restaurant that had recently lost its wine expert. He won first place.

We sit down together at a wooden table tucked up against the stone base of the church. “What really makes the wine here special is the soil,” he tells me, pouring a white wine made from chasselas grapes grown in a vineyard just behind the church. “You can smell it in the wine, a strong minerality. In this particular wine there is a flavor we call *Pierre à fusil*.”

I know the term as gunpowder. Aké Bédà says, “Yes, but you can think of it also as the smell of two rocks being scraped together. It is that taste, that smell, that is prized in wines from Lavaux.”

The chasselas grape is a perfect match for the terroir, he explains, because unlike other wine grapes it has very little characteristic taste of its own; its neutral flavor allows the abundant minerals in the soil—calcium carbonate, iron, magnesium—to give the wine most of its character. “Other regions in Switzerland also make wines with chasselas. But the very best are made here in Lavaux. And the very best of these are made in the Dézaley area, from the towns of Épesses and Villette, as far as Chardonne.” The wines we sample are light and brightly flavored. I’m impressed by how different each one tastes, despite the fact that they are all produced within a few miles of where we sit. When I ask Aké Bédà if he can distinguish wines made in the appellation of Saint-Saphorin from those made in the neighboring appellation of Dézaley, he says, “Of course. The minerals in the soil are different. The sunlight is different. In Dézaley there is a wind that comes in over the lake that refreshes the vines at night. Sometimes I am able to tell exactly what vineyard produced the grapes.”

While we taste another wine, one of the local growers walks by and stops to say hello. Learning that I’m from California, he tells me proudly, speaking in French, that the legendary California winemaker Robert Mondavi once came to Saint-Saphorin and stopped in at his winery. Afterwards, Aké Bédà says of our visitor, Jean-Claude Chevalley, “He’s one of the best chasselas makers in the area. Even if the weather is not good, he produces wonderful grapes.”

“What’s his secret?” I ask.

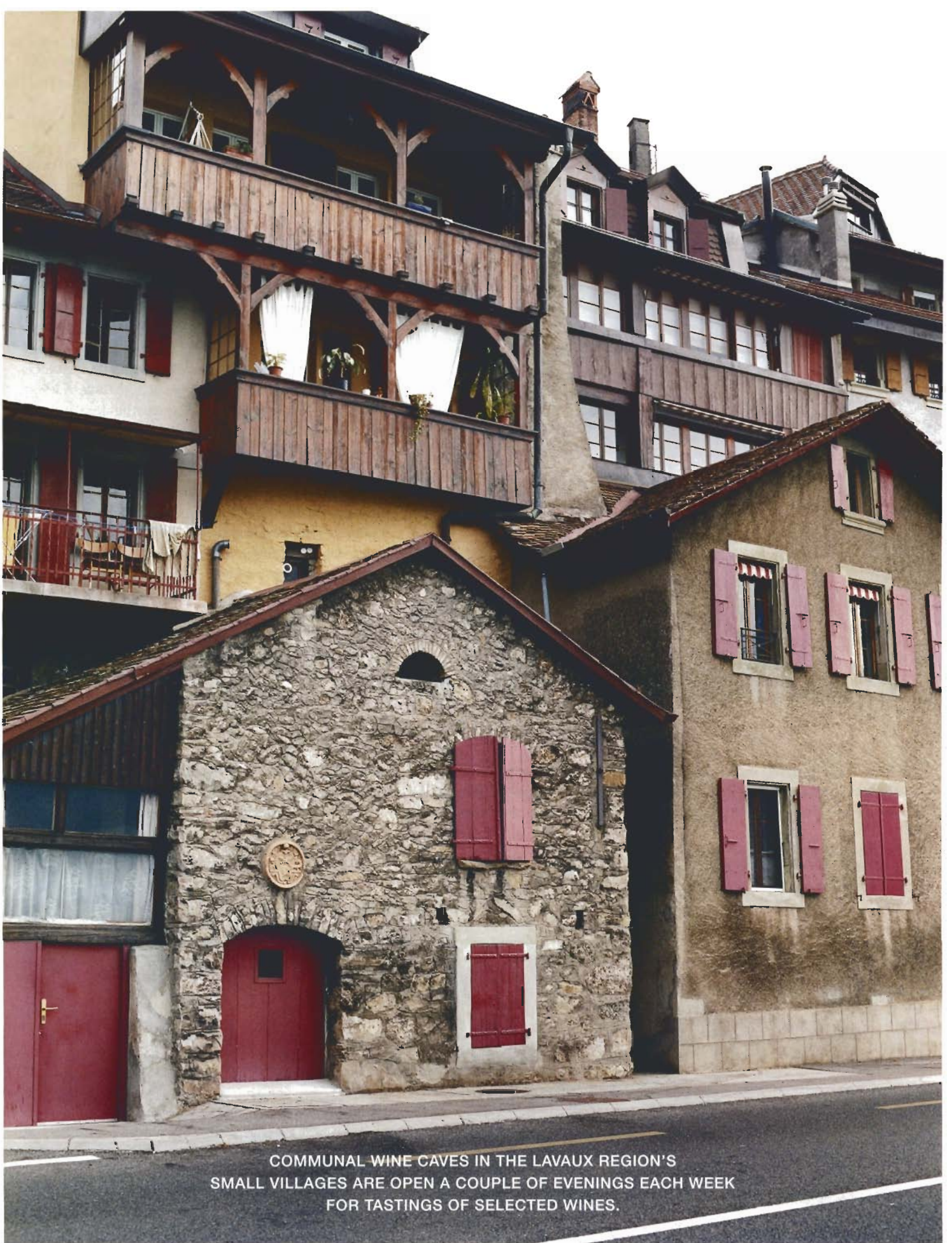
Aké Bédà shrugs. “Who can say? Knowledge. Experience. The particular kind of chasselas he grows. There are many different types. More than

Lavaux winemaker Patrick Fonjallaz calls Jérôme Aké Bédà, opposite page, “one of the three best wine tasters I know.” Aké Bédà exercises his skills as sommelier at L’Auberge de l’Onde in Saint-Saphorin, left.



"This is a place where the old families still work as they have for centuries," says Blaise Duboux. This page, workers relax before returning to harvest Duboux's grapes. Hiking paths and a wine train connect many of the Lavaux villages, including Saint-Saphorin, opposite page.





COMMUNAL WINE CAVES IN THE LAVAUX REGION'S
SMALL VILLAGES ARE OPEN A COUPLE OF EVENINGS EACH WEEK
FOR TASTINGS OF SELECTED WINES.



Chasselas is the principal grape of the Lavaux terraces, but pinot noir, left, also thrives in Patrick Fonjallaz's vineyards. Opposite page, as the sun sets on a harvest day in autumn, field workers in Épesses enjoy the fruits of a previous year's labors.

a hundred. Bois rouge, fendant roux, giclet. You are going to meet Blaise Duboux, I believe?"

I am. Friends urged me to contact him. Duboux has the distinction of being from one of the oldest winemaking families here, going back even further than Fonjallaz's. "Blaise grows one of the oldest varieties of chasselas anywhere," Aké Béda says. "The wine it produces has a different quality as a result. You must be sure to try it."

ON MY LAST DAY OF TOURING THE VINEYARDS, Blaise Duboux picks me up at my hotel in Lutry. I have dozens of questions for him. But first I ask him to solve a puzzle for me. The Duboux family has been growing grapes and making wine here for 17 generations. Patrick Fonjallaz's dynasty goes back a mere 13 generations. Yet I've been told that Fonjallaz runs the oldest family business in Switzerland. Why doesn't that honor fall to Duboux's family?

He laughs and shakes his head. "To understand that, you must know something of our history," he says. The Duboux family began working in the vineyards here in the 15th century, when the region was part of the Holy Roman Empire and ruled directly by the bishop of Lausanne. In the 1500s, the Bernese arrived on their way to fight the Duke of Savoie in Geneva, establishing Protestantism in the area. The bishop and the Cistercian monks fled. Upstarts like the Fonjallaz clan arrived to fill the vacuum. But the Duboux family went on working the vineyards and eventually bought land and started their own wineries. Other families, the Fonjallaz among them, also became land-owning winemakers.

When I ask if there are any rivalries, Duboux laughs again. "There were often conflicts over inheritance and land ownership between old families. But that's ancient history," he says. At the moment, with the morning sun casting long shadows across our path, he's taking me for a walk through one of his family's vineyards in Dézaley, where he wants to show me something even older: the geology of the Lavaux terraces. The hillsides are crisscrossed with outcroppings of veins where the underlying rock, called *poudingue*, is ex-

The Villages of Lavaux Like its wines, the region's tiny villages and their inhabitants have their own distinct personalities. In Épesses, the villagers are known as Goats because, as one legend has it, a goat, bleating from the roof of the mayor's house, saved the town during a landslide in the 16th century. Saint-Saphorin's residents are nicknamed *Les Assassins*, or The Murderers, although no one can say exactly why. —PJ



posed. Made up of crushed stones held together with a kind of natural cement, this underlying rock base was created by retreating glaciers. The exposed strata form natural walls. The monks filled in the gaps with stone constructions. “Here you see the bedrock,” Duboux says, gesturing, “and here the stone wall begins, and here again the bedrock, and then the stone wall.”

The system of walls, he tells me, is like a net thrown over the rocky terrain to keep the soil from eroding. “When you see it from above, from the air, this is exactly what it resembles, a net,” Duboux says. Because the topsoil is so shallow, the roots of the grapevines must push their way into the chalky subsurface rock, where they drink up the mineral-rich water that percolates down through the hillsides.

Pointing out another old wall built partly over a rocky outcropping, Duboux notices that a few stones have slipped—something he’ll have to repair soon, or the wall will eventually give way. Like most of the owners here, Duboux and his family do much of the work themselves. “This is a place where the old families still work as they have for centuries,” he tells me. It’s the reason the individual wineries don’t keep regular tasting hours, the way they do in California. Most days, the owners are working in the field or the winery. Instead, communal wine caves in each of the small villages are open a couple of evenings each week for tastings of a few selected wines. (During off-hours, however, if you knock on a cave door and someone’s there, you’re likely to be invited in for an informal tasting.)

In the afternoon, we drive to a small café in the little town of Chardonne to meet Maurice Neyroud. A small, wiry man with a shy manner, Neyroud is another grower and vintner whose family has been here for generations. He’s also the head of a local organization that works with UNESCO. “The



What to Drink in Switzerland

Swiss wines might not be well known outside of the country, but when you’re there, the choices abound. “Whenever I have friends coming to Switzerland, of course they want to know what wines to try,” says Jérôme Aké Bèda, renowned sommelier at L’Auberge de l’Onde. Here’s what he recommends from the country’s six leading wine regions. —PJ

NEUCHÂTEL AND THE THREE LAKES REGION

Pinot noirs reign supreme here, where the terroir is chalky. Also worth sipping: the local dry rosé called Oeil-de-Perdrix, which means “eye of the partridge.”

VAUD

Home to the Lavaux terraces, Vaud is known for white wines made from chasselas grapes. But they yield fine reds, as well, from such varietals as plant robert, gamaret, garanoir, and mondeuse noire, an old grape that is making a comeback.

GENEVA

Although recognized for whites made from chasselas and reds from gamay, Geneva produces wines from several unusual local grape varieties, including kerner and scheurebe. “Don’t miss them,” says Aké Bèda.

LAVAUX TERRACES

GERMAN SWITZERLAND

Seventeen wine-producing cantons here specialize in pinot noir and riesling-sylvaner. The best hail from the four villages in the canton of Graubünden that produce an unusually earthy, full-bodied pinot.

VALAIS

Switzerland’s largest wine-growing region, Valais is home to some 25 indigenous grape varieties. Look for petite arvine, which is very close to chenin blanc, and cornalin, a local grape variety that Aké Bèda describes as “capricious, like a pinot noir, but wonderful when it is just right.”

TICINO

The Italian-language region of Switzerland is famed for its distinguished merlots. In recent years, they’ve won top honors at international wine competitions. First-rate winemakers include Luigi Zanini, Guido Brivio, and Christian Zündel. Aké Bèda further cites Claudio Tamborini, Adriano Kaufmann, and Werner Stucky as top vintners.



Vacherin Mont-d'Or

Gruyère

Tomme Vaudoise

Swiss Cheese

Switzerland's wines may be a well-kept secret, but the country is synonymous with world-class cheese. Three outstanding varieties, produced in the canton of Vaud, home to the Lavaux terraces, can be found in specialty stores in the United States. Chef Andrew Wild of the Culinary Institute of America at Greystone, in St. Helena, California, describes what makes these Swiss cheeses special and suggests wines to serve with them.

Vacherin Mont-d'Or

This very soft cow's-milk cheese is produced in the foothills of the canton as well as neighboring areas of France. Vacherin Mont-d'Or is sold in round spruce boxes that impart a slight astringency and forest notes to the creamy flavor. Best sampled in late winter, Mont-d'Or pairs well with Champagne, sparkling wines, white burgundy, or California pinot gris.

Tomme Vaudoise

This soft, Brie-style cow's-milk cheese, which often has a white or reddish mold on its rind, has a strongly assertive aroma and flavor, so it goes nicely with fruity full-bodied reds like pinot noirs from the California Russian River valley or rich merlots.

Gruyère

One of Switzerland's best-known cheeses, Gruyère is produced in several regions of the country, including Vaud. Gruyère comes in many different styles, from young and creamy to nutty and even slightly crunchy. Good pairing wines include sherry, white burgundy, Alsatian-style pinot gris, pinot noir, and any light zinfandel. —PJ

idea of becoming a World Heritage site had support from almost everyone in Lavaux," he tells me, speaking in French. "Everybody was saying yes. It was our chance to show to the world the beauty and culture and history."

But, I ask, isn't there a risk that too many visitors will spoil the place? "It's true, we are not ready to receive them," Duboux admits. "Two weeks after the designation, tour buses were trying to come through the villages. You've seen the road. It's almost impossible for them to turn around."

The challenge, says Neyroud, is to welcome tourists without disturbing the area's tranquil beauty, its close-knit communities, its slow pace. After just four days in Lavaux, I understand what he means. When Duboux had taken me on a drive through the vineyards, he appeared to know everyone we passed. While Jérôme Aké Béda and I had sat outside chatting in Saint-Saphorin, half the village seemed to stroll past, waving and saying hello. "The heritage is the ancient terraces and the stone walls. But it's also the people working here now," Duboux says. "We must be so careful to preserve their way of life."

Part of the plan is to encourage village residents to open bed-and-breakfasts and small hotels in existing buildings, gradually increasing the number of accommodations. But the truth is, many visitors only have the time and inclination for a quick tour to see the vineyards, snap a few pictures, taste a little wine, and be on their way. The new visitor center, called the Lavaux Vinorama—the construction site I'd seen in the hillside—is being readied for them. Large enough to accommodate tour buses, it will offer local wines, information, and a film that recounts a year in the vineyards.

Both Duboux and Neyroud are optimistic that the center will enable them to welcome the world and still preserve the Lavaux. Later that afternoon, taking one last walk down through the vineyards, where the golden chasselas grapes, catching the sun, seem to glow from within like stained glass, I find myself fervently hoping they're right. Many places have tried to strike that balance. Not all have succeeded.

There are reasons to be reassured. Earlier in the week, I'd asked both Patrick Fonjallaz and Blaise Duboux how families had been able to hold onto the businesses through so many generations. Both described enlightened policies in Switzerland that encourage such continuity. For instance, if only one sibling wants to inherit and run the family business, low-interest loans are available to help pay the others their fair share of its value and keep the business intact. But they also described less tangible reasons. The families here have deep roots and an abiding love for Lavaux and its long history. Fonjallaz and Duboux have young children of their own, and they both hope their kids will take over. Naturally, they insist that their children will have to make the choice themselves.

"I don't want to steal their lives," Fonjallaz told me. "If they decide not to continue the business, the tradition will continue in another way."

Duboux also said firmly that the decision would be his children's to make. But he couldn't help reciting, even for a visiting journalist, the many reasons why they should continue the long tradition. "In a business like ours, we do everything ourselves," he said. "We are the growers, the winemakers, the managers of the business. We do the marketing. We do the bookkeeping. So if I may say, there are all kinds of opportunities for them, no matter what they are interested in."

We'd paused, just then, to look out over the steeply terraced vineyards to the view of mountains and lake. When I wondered aloud if he ever took this extraordinary beauty for granted, he was quick to say, "No, no. I am aware every day that it is one of the most beautiful places in the world, all these terraces made by the monks. And by us," he added, "because we've been working through the centuries to keep them up. I am the 17th generation. I was born into this. It's nothing I did. My responsibility is to pass it on to the 18th generation." **A**

PETER JARET has written about food and health issues for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Health*, *Hippocrates*, and other publications. He is the author of *Nurse: A World of Care* and lives in Petaluma, California. Photographer Tara Donne is profiled on page 8.

As the 2009 harvest draws to a close in Lavaux and the crush begins, the wooden parts of a wine press get an end-of-the-day wash down in Saint-Saphorin.

THE CHALLENGE IN LAVAUX IS TO WELCOME TOURISTS
WITHOUT DISTURBING THE AREA'S TRANQUIL BEAUTY,
ITS CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITIES, ITS SLOW PACE.

