

Savagnin is a dry white that natural wine lovers will adore.

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Story by Peter Bourne

There seems to be a buzz about savagnin from the Jura region. Where exactly is it? A tiny appellation of less than 2000 hectares, Jura is sandwiched between Burgundy in France and the Swiss Alps. It's cool and often damp, with wooded areas and grassy meadows where cows graze. The area is also known for its comté cheese. **What makes the wine so special?** Savagnin is a small-berried, thick-skinned grape that can be made into a floral, dry white wine or, more famously, vin jaune, which is aged in oak for a minimum of six years and three months. The barrels aren't topped up and over time a veil of yeast flor develops, giving it a nutty, sherry-like character. These complex, micro-oxidised savagnins are fêted by natural wine lovers. **Do we grow savagnin here?** Yes but only after a mishap. Vines imported from Spain in the early 2000s were thought to be the Galician grape albariño but, after DNA testing, turned out to be savagnin. Early adopters split into two camps; some pulled out their vines while others – including Stoney Rise, Gentree, Soumah, Amato Vino and BK Wines – embraced the happy accident. On the Mornington Peninsula, Rollo Crittenden took things further by crafting all the savagnin styles of the Jura. **Is it always labelled as savagnin?** The labeling can be a little confusing. Those marked ouillé have their barrels topped in the usual way, while savagnin sous voile are younger wines that undergo yeast flor ageing. Vin jaune, of course, has the mandatory six years and three months of yeast flor ageing described above. And the Château Chalon designation applies only to vin jaune produced in the Château Chalon sub-region. **What do they cost?** Local drops start at \$25 and range up to \$100; vin jaune prices reach \$500 and more. ↘

Koerner Balhannah Savagnin

Damon Koerner's savagnin is unfiltered so it's a touch cloudy with a pale bronze tone. Spiced honey and tangy mandarin greet the nose, followed by an energetic palate and a decisive finish.

2023 / Adelaide Hills, SA / \$38

Crittenden Cri de Coeur Savagnin Sous Voile

This take on vin jaune by Rollo Crittenden is a triumph. It smells of mahogany with hints of honey and white chocolate, and flavours of cumquat and toasted almond.

2019 / Mornington Peninsula, Vic / \$95

Bénédict & Stéphane Tissot Savagnin Sous Voile

Stéphane Tissot is a cult hero in Jura. His wine is light amber in colour with a bouquet of crushed apple and honey mead, lemon pith flavours on the palate and a long, firm, bone-dry finale.

2020 / Jura, France / \$160

Domaine Berthet-Bondet Château-Chalon AOC

The pale brass colour tells of its age, while a nutty, sherry-like bouquet confirms its maturity. There's a toffee apple and spiced honey bouquet with great power and persistence.

2015 / Jura, France / \$270