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though the soil that is calcareous (clay and limestone) has subsoil that is generally Kimmeridgian, which is composed of millions of fossilized oyster shells from the Late Jurassic epoch. The age of the vines, the angle of vine orientation to the sun, and the differences in the subsoil, as well as the amount of oak used in vinification and maturation, results in discernible distinctions. In general, Chablis, which by French law must contain only Chardonnay grapes, is unoaked or lightly oaked. The largest apparent differences between the 2012 and the 2013 vintage offering can be summed up as follows: The 2012 is more austere, tightly wound, and better for aging. The 2013, on the other hand, is more precocious, fruit-forward, and ready to drink now, although these wines will age for five years for Premier Cru and 10 years for Grand Cru, or five years less than the 2012 vintage crus respectively.

Guests at the Blackbird food and wine pairing event enjoyed this wild salmon salad as a second course.



The vineyard at Domaine des Malandes.

A Symposium on Chablis and Food Pairings

ON APRIL 8, 2015, several friends and I attended a wine and food pairing event at Blackbird restaurant in Chicago. It was organized around the Chablis wines of Domaine des Malandes, a winery with which I have had little experience. The evening was organized by a Chicago wine company, Flickinger Wines. Flickinger deals primarily in what is known as the secondary market. Firms like this import wines from sources which pre-buy from well-known (as well as lesser-known) producers, often at advantageous prices to the consumer. In the case of Domaine des Malandes, there is no national importer, so Flickinger deals with a local intermediary who imports the wine. The net of all this is that I have now found a very good producer with favorably priced wines. For those of you who read my article on Chablis, you know that this is one of my favorite white wines.

The owner of Domaine des Malandes is Lyne

Marchive, who was our hostess for the event. She is absolutely charming and I was lucky to be seated by her for the dinner. She described the



Lyne Marchive, owner of Domaine des Malandes, and Jim Bryant.

Domaine as a family estate combining traditional winemaking with the best modern equipment. She attributes the finesse of her wines to the care and respect brought to the vinification process, as well as to the various locations of the plots. The differences in the terroir are apparent, even

Although we did not have the rarely imported Petit Cru, we did have the next level known simply as Chablis with the first course, which was a salad of baby lettuces with endive, pancetta, crispy potato, poached egg, and basil-dijon vinaigrette. The Chablis was the 2013 Tour de Roy Vieilles Vignes. The wine is from 62-year-old vines vinified 40 percent in oak and 60 percent in stainless steel and aged only in stainless steel. The product of older vines with a slight touch of oak increases its richness. The other two wines with this course were the 2012 Premier Cru Côte de Léchet (20 percent oak vinified from 35-year-old vines (my favorite) and the 2013 Premier Cru Montmains, also 20 percent vinified in oak and 100 percent aged in stainless steel, but from 62-year-old vines. All three wines went very well with the salad and the two different vintage characteristics taken together with the effects of the varying amounts of oak



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The patio at Blackbird restaurant in Chicago.

..... tive and educational. All three wines went well with the course and not surprisingly, my choice was the Vaudesir. It had a long finish due in part to the vintage, as well as the terroir of the vineyard, but also because it saw more oak in vinification (100 percent in 1- to 5-year-old casks). Notwithstanding the amount of oak, it did not seem very oaky on the palate, but had a long, rich finish which did not hide the minerality.

The third course was schmaltz-poached chicken roulade with hemp, apple, and crisp sauerkraut. The two wines paired with this were the 13-year-old 2002 Grand Cru Les Clos and the 2012 Grand Cru Les Clos. They were both fantastic wines from the same plot and from two great years for Chablis. The 2002 was a near perfect expression of the Chardonnay grape. It was rich in the mouth and perfectly displayed the minerality and flintiness of the Les Clos terroir. While both vintages were very, very good, I preferred the 2002. This did not surprise me because my wife and I drink a lot of Grand Cru Chablis and we almost always drink it between 10-20 years of age. The comparison of the two vintages, both excellent in quality, provided a good learning experience.

We finished with an unusual and complex dessert with our choices of whatever wines were left from the previous courses and to no one's surprise, the 2002 Les Clos was the overwhelming choice—all in all, a lovely and educational evening. A Vôte Santé! U



PHOTO: THOMAS BALSAMO

Barrington resident Jim Bryant is pursuing his passion and love of wine as an international wine consultant. This follows a 30-year career in senior financial and general management positions at two Fortune 100 companies. He is the owner of James R. Bryant L.L.C.; contact him at profwino@comcast.net.