

## Trim Up With Trimbach Wines



Spring has sprung in Washington, and that means that summer is not far behind. It's time for the ritual of slimming down, trimming up and getting in a white wine frame of mind. And while your trimming up your body, you might as well trim up your wine collection with delicious and affordable wines from one of the oldest families in the business; Trimbach.

Located in the Northeast section of France, lies the legendary wine region of Alsace. Bordered along the western side by the Vosges Mountains and to the east by the Rhine River – which acts as the German boarder – the Alsace is the smallest wine region in France. But as the old saying goes, big wines come from small appellations – or something like that.

The area is prone to particularly hot summers and cold, crisp winters. In addition, the diversity of soil compositions – ranging from sand, granite, clay and marl – makes this region a winemaker's dream where some of the world's finest riesling, pinot blanc, muscat and gewürztraminer wines are produced.

So it's probably no surprise that one family in this region has been able to build a legacy few others in the wine industry have ever accomplished. It all started back in 1626 when Jean Trimbach began making wine in Alsace. Through the centuries, generation after generation took advantage of the wide-ranging terroir to secure the family's reputation for producing wines of distinction.

The climax came in 1898, when Frédéric Emile Trimbach entered his wines at the International Fair in Brussels and was awarded the most prestigious accolades by the panel of judges. The event literally catapulted Trimbach onto the international wine scene and the family name became synonymous with quality wines of Alsace.

Even through hundreds of years of dispute over the fertile region between Germany and France (the French regained control of the of the region after World War Two), the Trimbachs remained firmly in control of their vineyards, though the style of wines changed every so often, to suit the palates of the country who laid claim to the land at the time. A sort of détente through wine, so to speak.

Regardless of national boundaries, the incredible tradition of quality has passed from father to son for twelve generations over a period of six centuries. Today, the House of Trimbach is located in Ribeauvillé, France, where Hubert and Bernard Trimbach work together in the vineyards and winery where they oversee every aspect of the operation. The thirteenth generation, Bernard's sons Pierre and Jean, work beside their father and uncle to continue the tradition of producing quality Trimbach wines by focusing on their own unique end of the business. Pierre makes the wine while Jean is responsible for marketing and contracts.

This incredible family commitment has resulted in wines that are readily identified as a symbol of Alsatian excellence. Here are several of my favorite wines from the extensive family collection.

If you can't wait for summer to get here, then open a up bottle of the **2012 Trimbach Pinot Blanc**. It is a perfect white wine to chill out with. The pretty straw-colored wine has a lovely floral nose that includes scents of nectarines and lemon rind. The crisp flavors of apples, pears and honeyed-citrus make this a wine to pair with either grilled seafood or barbeque chicken. **\$14**

I recently had the **2011 Trimbach Gewürztraminer** at a dinner featuring Thai food and it was an excellent choice. It has a lovely nose of acacia and Lychee nuts. Ripe peaches, apricots and rose petals line the palate on a medium-bodied frame and the bright acidity kept the heat of the spicy fare in check with charm. **\$17**

Pinot Gris is one of the unsung heroes of versatile white wine. And the **2011 Trimbach Pinot Gris Reserve** is an excellent example of why. The wine displayed a wonderful bouquet of green melon and orange citrus blossom. Flavors of pear and crisp apple attacked the front of the palate while creamy flavors of apricot and ripe peach provide a memorable finish. It is extremely versatile and will pair well with a wide variety of shellfish and pork dishes. **\$20**

Of course, Riesling is the king of Alsace and when I think Trimbach, the **2011 Trimbach Riesling Reserve** is the wine that comes to mind. Notes of petrol and citrus on the nose lead to a firmly-structured wine that features flavors of citrus, peach and nectarine on a minerally frame. Not bad for a wine that has been made for over 375 years. **\$20**

If you have a sweet tooth, then do not miss an opportunity to pair the **2000 Trimbach Pinot Gris Vendages Tardives** with a fruit tart or poached pear. A remarkable late harvest wine, it offers a complex nose of apricot, honey ripe nectarine and fragrant orange blossom. The rich, viscous fruit of dried white raisins and dried apricots has amazing purity and concentration, with a core of vibrant acidity that keeps the flavors focused and in check. **\$40**

And lest you think that the Trimbach family only makes dry white wines, try the **2001 Trimbach Gewürztraminer Selection de Grains Nobels**. It is only produced in years when the harvest is absolutely ideal. The botrytized grapes (grapes that have been dehydrated on the vine by a prized fungus) are hand picked one by one. The resulting nectar is vinified into an-other-worldly sweet wine featuring lovely flavors of white nectarine, ripe white peach and honeyed pear with hints of lemon zest on the super-concentrated finish – which is kept amazingly light thanks to the abundant acidity. **\$175**