

4000 MÈTRES VIND D'ALTITUDE: BLANC DE MORGEX DE LA SALLE

SUSTAINABLE

4000 Mètre Vins d'Altitude is a project between PortoVino and the local Alpine, trekking gear wearin' enologist, Gianluca Telloi. Even though the Valle d'Aosta is one of the more traditional wine growing areas in Italy, extending back to Ancient Roman times, in the States we are just coming to discover this area (sort of like we saw in Alto Adige a few years ago).

So, from Gianluca, the native Valle D'Aostian himself, one whose veins coarce with wine instead of blood: the vision of the 4000 winery and consortium:

"With 4000, we wanted to bring attention to the altitude at which the vineyards are found, along with the heroic viticulture that takes place. The consortium works through the the catina of three local cooperatives [Gianluca is an enologist there] nestled between a group of mountains reaching 4000 meters, with Mont Blanc [14,692 ft.] being the most imposing. We've even included two of the

oldest Alpine guides to be part of this adventure of alpine air and heroic viticulture."

The cooperatives here are small and produce high quality wines from local traditions hundreds of years old. Although much less known than the Alto Adige, these wines hold many similarities : cool native grapes, high altitudes, zippy acidity, clean understated fruit -- and minerals that break dance. There are also a high percentage of ungrafted vines.

We are glee-filled to be the ambassadors here in the States: Alpine expeditions meet one of the most unique viticultural areas not only in Italy, but in the world. We've begun importing 4000 Mètres Vins d'Altitude: Vin Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle, we'll soon be bringing in the red wines of Enfer as well.

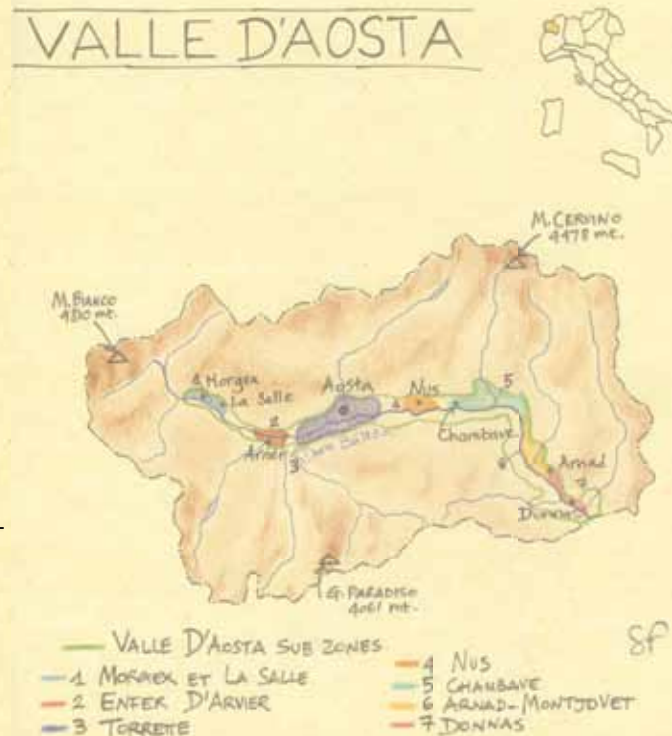
4000 Mètres Vins d'Altitude: Cave du Vin Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle:

Cave du Vin Blac de Morgex et delle Salle is a small cooperative made up of 90 members from the little Alpine towns of Morgex and La Salle. Most members have small bucolic vineyard patches, a few rows here and there. They tend the vines as a part-time hobby and as a full-heart calling -- to save a tradition on the verge of being lost. Sadly, lots of young folks went to the cities for work; hopefully, this is changing with the new guard lead by 30 somethings like Gianluca.

The vines are trained and protected by the ancient Roman pergola bassa, or low pergola, an Ancient Roman vine training system of arching trellised arbors connected by stones walls and columns. The stones retain the heat and protect the grapes; as does the ground (which is often made of stone as well). Climbing through these vine tunnels, ducking the hanging grapes, and making your way to the next stone column and foot path, is an intimate experience; it all becomes metaphysically intensified, when you glance up to see the soaring white capped mountains held the crystal-blue air. With the pergola so low, grapes are sometimes gathered by the men and women on their knees. Heroic viticulture: Alpine views; aching knees; and metaphysics.

But enough of in situ struggle and romance, what is the Prié Blanc grape? It's a rare native grape, grown only here, that gives delicate wines that are low in alcohol. There's a radiating - almost electric - presence of savory minerals and acidity, and the occasional mountain flower topping things off. These are not wines that scream for attention but they aren't exactly shy either.

- ALPINE VIEWS WITH THE HIGHEST VINEYARDS IN EUROPE
- ANCIENT ROMAN VITICULTURAL TRADITIONS; WINES UP TO 100 YEARS OLD
- THE NATIVE PRIÈ BLANC; SKIING WITH ACID AND MINERALS



SF

4000: BLANC DE MORGEX ET DE LA SALLE



Tasting Notes:

From vineyards extending to some of the highest in Europe, creeping up to snow line at 4000 feet. Racy acidity and edgy minerals; some flower notes on top; depth and precision of fruit (green apple and white peach).

Take off your skis

and whip out the fondue of Fontina pot!

Vineyard: Blanc de Morgex et de La Salle.

High altitude 900-1200 meters (almost 4000 feet). Quartz and Granite.

Vinification: Heroic hand picking (sometimes with snow!). Native yeasts; steel; minimum filtration; battonage of lees; 6 month bottle age before release.

Awards: 2009 Eric Asimov's Italian Treasures Under \$20.

4000 MÈTRES VINS D'ALTITUDE: VALLE D'AOSTA PINOT GRIS



Tasting Notes:

Sourced from an old vineyard at high altitude near Morgex. A little maceration on skins gives a gorgeous color. Classic pear and nutmeg notes but honed by minerals and an above average acidity.

For Pinot Grigio

Lovers and Haters: Odi et amo; quare id faciam?

Vineyard: Valle D'Aosta: Morgex; 700 meters; quartz and granite.

Vinification: Heroic hand picking (sometimes with snow!). Native yeasts; steel; few day fermentation on skins; minimum filtration; battonage of lees; 6 month bottle age before release.