

Ep 87: Pinot Noir, Pinot Clones and Spätburgunder with Anne Krebiehl MW



Janina Doyle 00:00:07 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just can not get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello to all you passionate and eager to learn wine lovers. Now this episode is perfectly paired with Pinot Noir, so go grab yourself a glass. This is a grape variety, so complex and nuanced with so much to discover and we are joined today by Master of Wine Anne Krebiehl, whose brain is what I would love to rummage around in for a day or two, the way in which he dives deep into every little subject of the wine world in is fascinating. And I think you're going to just linger on every word she says. She is a very talented wine writer who writes incredible long form articles. So for all of you wine geeks out there, you're going to want to Google some of them. And she's currently the chief editor of Falstaff. So you're gonna learn all about this wine magazine in print and online, her wine journey, her female wine inspiration as it is women's history month. But you do wanna hear her thoughts here. Um, I won't say anymore. And then we're gonna focus on Pinot Noir, Pinot clones, and as Anne is from Germany, Spätburgunder. So take a sip of your Pinot and let's go to the chat.

Janina Doyle 00:01:47 Now I start this podcast the way I always started. How did you get into wine?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:01:52 I did not grow up with wine because, um, I grew up in the Southwest of Germany actually in Baden, but not in the wine growing village or not, there was no wine in my immediate vicinity. And, um, my dad would only drink at the weekend and would have beer. And my mom usually wouldn't drink at all. And then, you know, when guests came, a bottle of liquor or something came out. And, um, for, for sort of, um, birthdays, my dad bought some local Baden wine, you know, but, you know, so there was, I didn't grow up in a winery household. Um, I grew up in a household or in a home and I had a childhood that was very much about taste and flavor because my mom cooked everything from scratch.

Janina Doyle 00:02:43 Oh, lucky you.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:02:45 And my parents, had a vegetable garden, but we were also totally outdoorsy kids. I mean, the seasons were alive to us and my dad always said, um, there's no such thing as the wrong weather, only the wrong clothes. And we really did go out in all weathers.

Janina Doyle 00:03:03 Here here. Love that.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:03:04 And you know, it was, it was kind of, we knew exactly the place where the first wild strawberries would be or go and pick Lily of the valley. And so this kinda thing where you are totally aware the smells and, you know, like, and, and I remember how, um, how attuned to, to different smells I was. This lovely thing of like, do you know the word petrichor, that smell of rain on dry earth? Or I remember we used to go and stay on a farm and in the morning, because it was a high altitude, the air would smell so different from our air at home and, you know, so I was always alive to these things.

Janina Doyle 00:03:45 Beautiful.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:03:47 And so flavor was always there. And then I was a very, um, careful little teenager, very risk averse. And so I was purer than the driven snow. I mean, I was, when I think back, I, it's actually terrible how naive and innocent I was.

Janina Doyle 00:04:08 Okay. Adorable.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:04:08 But then I spent, um, a year as an exchange student in the US.

Janina Doyle 00:04:13 Ah, okay.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:04:14 That is actually when I started drinking wine and I don't mean boozing. I actually never, um, it wasn't the sort of kind of student booze experience. No, it was just like, okay, there is this thing called wine and it's, and I actually started really enjoying that.

Janina Doyle 00:04:31 Okay. American wine? Were you drinking American wine?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:04:34 Yes. At that time it was American. It was mostly Californian and stuff that I could afford, because I was student

Janina Doyle 00:04:41 Of course.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:04:43 And then I came back, uh, to Europe and I was at a loose end because I just didn't know what to do and blah, blah, blah, and whatever. And then via various, another sort of time in Italy and another sort of zigzag path. I actually arrived in London with two suitcases and a rucksack.

Janina Doyle 00:05:05 Cool. I like that.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:05:07 Oh, totally. And, um, then it started very, very slowly because, um, I remember being on a camping trip and we had, um, the Sotheby's Wine Bible with us. It was sitting on the dashboard all the time. So there was kind of prelection for this, but this has been, you know, like you, you have the camping gear in the back and you stop at a vineyard and they allow you to taste and then you buy a bottle or two, because again, you know, student day camping trips. This was not kind of, um, this is not a well-funded time of my life, but it was fun, and I actually had a key moment and this was in the village of Tain-l'Hermitage, when we went to the shop of Chapoutier. Where they gave me two glasses of white wine. Um, they must have been Roussanne or Marsanne or something like that. I, at the time I didn't even know what was what, but they said, okay, so this is the same grape varieties, the same vintage, but these are old vines and these are young vines. And I thought you're having me on, that's not possible. They're so different.

Janina Doyle 00:06:12 Wow. Ok.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:06:13 It was this experience that kicked off my curiosity. I, I never, in a way alcohol is part of wine, but it was never the chief attraction for me. Getting pissed was never the chief attraction. And I wish actually today that I wasn't such a bloody lightweight

Janina Doyle 00:06:30 Um, it does get in the way doesn't it. Anyway. Yeah, I know.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:06:37 It does. So, um, you know, we knew that wine was this beautiful thing that belonged to a place, but I just knew so little about it and this key moment kicked me off. And then I realized pretty soon after that wine is sort of the ultimate interdisciplinary subject and that it's infinite and it's like you can, you know, and, and so back in London, then I took wine courses, you know, the Christie's wine course, or at the Bishopsgate Institute, the wine course. And it was all a lot of fun, but a bit like weird. And then I discovered the WSET and that was the eyeopener, cause the WSET was like, aha, here is the structure and this is...

Janina Doyle 00:07:24 And very non weird.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:07:26 Exactly. But also structure, just, you know, like, okay, so this is how to organize this hugely unwieldy subject in my brain. And that, to me, because there is also a totally anal and anorak part of me, and that appealed and that combined with this, you know, I still remember the WSET tasting Sherry for the first time and thinking oh my, my God, what is this?

Janina Doyle 00:07:52 Did you like it? Now did you like it or not?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:07:55 Um, the very first time I just thought this is plain weird, but then of course, just like blue cheese, the first time you have stilton or an oyster, you think, oh my god. But then you're hooked kind of pretty quickly. And, um, so I guess that actually is an interesting aspect of it all. It's this. And, um, we are just publishing something about the, is how it tells you a lot about a person, whether they're open to tasting new things.

Janina Doyle 00:08:25 Okay.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:08:25 There has been this great curiosity, always. And the kind of, I, I used to describe it as a kind of pleasure junkiness, you know, you just think, okay, I am alive. I want to experience this. I want to know, oh, I want to see, I want to feel, and this kind of really rather physical and, um, visceral approach paired with a way of organizing the information in my brain. It's kinda something, what still, that still drives me today, you know?

Janina Doyle 00:08:59 Yeah. I love it. So that is the reason. And as you said, with wine, the journey and the experience and the knowledge, it never stops because when you think you maybe have got down the understanding of one region, some other unknown region starts coming up from nowhere. Our technology advances, our ability to analyze phenolics and understand the grape variety itself. I mean, it's just the, the subjects and the way we can go down this, this path is never ending right? It's beautiful.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:09:28 No, it's this, it was this kind of thing that is also quite overwhelming when you're trying to pass exams, because that remember looking at the syllabus of, um, paper, one of the master of wine program. Just that, it just says the physiology of the vine and you just think, excuse

me please, where do you want me to start? You know, and where do you, and even more importantly, where do you want me to end. And so it's actually once, because if you, if you did nothing else, you could just study, um, photosynthesis for the rest of your life or nutrient uptake. And you know, throughout all of this, you have an ever greater understanding and you sort of know what's what, but the more you, you understand, you know, and if I look at, at what the poor students have to do today, because I passed in 2014, I think, oh my God, I couldn't do this. And it's kinda, it's the only thing you learn is how little, you know, I know this is a cliché, but it's actually true.

Janina Doyle 00:10:29 It's true. Well, now tell me, obviously we mentioned, right from the beginning, you were born in Germany and all of this studying and your Master of Wine, you did in English. I mean, how was that to study in a second language?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:10:45 That, that actually has never been a problem because I, um, for some reason, I mean, I started learning English when I was 11 years old in secondary school. And for some reason I never needed to learn vocab. It just, I just read it and I knew it, um, by the same token, I've never managed to solve a quadratic equation. So...

Janina Doyle 00:11:06 So people shouldn't be too jealous. I love that. Just, not every talent

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:11:13 And also I have no sense of bearing. I get lost all the time, blah blah. So, but some reason language is that shoe that fitted me. And then I, um, carried on at 16, I did this, took me a year and a half or something, the Cambridge certificate of the English language. And then I did the Cambridge certificate of proficiency in the English language, which is actually a, a program or these our courses designed by, by Cambridge university, for non-English speakers to, to gain a certain level in English, in English language. And I loved it and I loved my teacher. She was the first intellectual woman I encountered in my life. She had a huge influence on me and I loved her and she taught us so well. And, um, then I left for the states and it was, I mean, for me, English never was a hurdle. And then I came to London in order to study literature, English literature. And so the, the language was never a hurdle ever. That was never a problem.

Janina Doyle 00:12:18 Okay. Well, I won't be asking you to give any advice to anybody else studying in their second language cause as we've already said, you got that one down?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:12:26 Well, I can, I can be because you know, once you become a Master of Wine, you also become a mentor for other students.

Janina Doyle 00:12:34 Okay. Yeah.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:12:35 Because you have been mentored and what you do is you give that on to other people. Because I was so traumatized by my tasting exam, I just said, OK, I can, I can help people.

Janina Doyle 00:12:47 Wait, why, why were you so traumatized? What happened?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:12:50 Because it is a traumatizing experience.

Janina Doyle 00:12:52 Studying and preparing your palate in advance or the actual 12 wine in front of you on that moment when....

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:12:58 It's sitting the exam and it's like being, not having the confidence and just having a nervous breakdown and handing in empty pages and stuff like that. When you have no money, anyway, you are a freelance, you already know everything there is to know about tomato and lentil stew and you've gotta spend five grand on empty, you know, and hand in empty pages. That is a traumatizing experience. It is horrendous. Um, it is awful. And you know, if you are a self-effacing person, nobody can beat yourself up as much as you yourself.

Janina Doyle 00:13:29 Did you have to take your tasting exams several times then?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:13:32 Oh yes I did. And I tell you, I, I passed.

Janina Doyle 00:13:35 Yeah, yeah, tenacity.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:13:36 I passed with a help of a sports psychologist because...

Janina Doyle 00:13:42 Interesting.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:13:43 You know, if you're doing fine in the mock and if you, if you can point to a Petit Chablis in your practice sessions, you know, and then you, then you screw it up in the exam, then you, you know, at some point you realise....

Janina Doyle 00:13:57 It's mental right.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:13:58 That you're your own worst enemy. And so he really helped helped me. And um. So it's but back to the language. So I volunteered to mentor people for their theory exams because theory exams are about writing. And so there are like, to the tasting, there are various parts of it. Um, you need, you need to know your stuff in order to write the essay and to, in order to answer the essay. But even if you know your stuff and you can't communicate, you won't be able to pass. And so I have helped people who can write, but who don't know their stuff, these are the easiest to help because you just tell 'em sit on your ass and do some, you know, like do some research or ask some questions or just, you know...

Janina Doyle 00:14:45 Study more.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:14:46 Then there are people who know exactly, who know, who have studied and who know it, but who just can't say it. And these are the people I can help. I can coach them in how to write an essay, in how to cut out superfluous things and how to say what they really mean, because this is harder than you think. Um, you know, well, honed language is, is actually a craft. And as I know, I I've made my living as a journalist for a number of years. Now I'm on the edit, in the editor's chair. Boy, do I realize that how writing is a skill and a craft and an art. So, um, and the people who have the difficulty in expressing themselves, English sometimes is their mother tongue. So it's not necessarily about, of course you are at a disadvantage if it is not your mother tongue, but that is not necessarily the primary problem, you see?

Janina Doyle 00:15:45 Well, it's amazing that you actually probably have that. You've seen it from the other side, by speaking two languages and your life is words. So that's the one thing you can really help other people with. That's really interesting.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:15:58 Exactly. Yeah.

Janina Doyle 00:16:00 Yeah well, you talked about yourself being a mentor. You also talked about this wonderful teacher, this female teacher who helped you. As March is women's month. I just wanted you to perhaps highlight if there was any women, female winemakers, or previous Master of Wines that perhaps inspired you or acted as a mentor for you on your journey.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:16:21 Well, of course I can point to numerous, as every woman can. To numerous little pricks who make my life difficult or, you know, people who, you know, like men who are absolutely mediocre, but think the world of themselves and think, and they accord themselves the space. So of course I can talk about this, but it's not a pleasant subject, but I must also say for some reason I never seen myself, Oh, I'm a girl and this is a male dominated world.

Janina Doyle 00:16:57 No, that's great.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:16:58 I haven't thought about it that way. Um, and I must say I've experienced arrogance on the part of women as on the part of men. And that doesn't mean that I'm not a feminist because I am your staunchest feminist, and boy, do I see what is what, and now I also speak out and I see it. And so, have women inspired me, certainly this, this wonderful English teacher did because she was an intellectual and, you know, she smelt of Chanel perfume, and she was married to a professor and she was just so worldly. And I, you know, my, my upbringing was not worldly. My upbringing was you know...

Janina Doyle 00:17:44 You were picking beautiful vegetables from the garden.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:17:46 Exactly but, but you know, it wasn't worldly or mundane.

Janina Doyle 00:17:49 There was no Chanel.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:17:51 No, certainly not. And so she inspired me and I can also tell you what made a big impression is. I don't know whether you have ever seen this. And I certainly didn't live here when it was aired on television, but I got the DVDs later and that was Jancis Robinsons wine course.

Janina Doyle 00:18:12 Ah, I mean, you are not the only person to have mentioned that. I mean, I think Jancis Robinson, with the way she has spoken what she's done, the fact that she kind of started so much earlier than, than many of us, she definitely is an inspiration.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:18:27 And you know, the opening, the opening stretch of, of that wine course is Jancis walking in London, going to a tasting. And I, and I thought, how do you get that job? How do you get that job?

Janina Doyle 00:18:42 Ah, and then you were like, right, I'm gonna find a way to do that.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:18:46 And this is, it is kind of, um, so definitely in inspiration there. Absolutely. And also what I think is it's not necessarily male or female. It is kindness and acceptance and respect that people give you who know a lot more. And now I know that all of those people who really know their stuff aren't usually arrogant. It's insecure people who are arrogant.

Janina Doyle 00:19:16 I think you've hit the nail on the head there. Yeah.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:19:17 And you know, now I think, okay, you know, I feel sorry for you and you're a little Dick, so, you know.

Janina Doyle 00:19:25 Oh, you're fantastic. Okay, good. That was a fantastic summary on that subject. Now I wanna get back to your writing because you have obviously written for years as a journalist, as you mentioned, and you've been contributing editor for pretty much every wine publication out there. However, since last year, you've taken on the role as Editor in chief of Falstaff International. So this is the place for wine drinkers who love the finer things in life and food and travel. So, I mean, that's a huge responsibility because you are basically, you've taken something that was actually in German and now it's a whole publication in English as well isn't it? So tell me about this.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:20:10 Well, um, it is a huge challenge and, um, last year I started in January, 2021 with this new gig, and, um, when I look at 2021, I, it was just a blur and the learning curve was so steep, and it still is. So Falstaff has been around for more than 40 years. And, um, at the term of the millennium, it was bought by Wolfgang Rosam, who is an Austrian, uh, PR guy. And now this sounds like somebody's vanity project, but it actually isn't. It's a business with bells on. He, turned it into the biggest lifestyle publication in Austria. And then in 2010, they entered the German market. And the Germans were of course, very sniffy about this Austrian publication sort of entering their market, but they had left the ones best selling gourmet magazine, well behind. And then in 2014 they entered Switzerland and, uh, German speaking Switzerland. And then I was contacted in 2020 by Mr Rosam. And initially I thought, okay, is the 21st century. And he wants to start a print publication. And I thought, hang on for a minute. And we had very frank conversation. And then, um, we didn't speak for like two months and then he called me again. And then we had a very, very open and long conversation. And in January I started, you know, so we are using some content that has been published in German and we are translating it, but we are actually commissioning an awful lot ourselves. And it is actually exciting to be able or to, to be at a project where you can help shape something. And, um, the nice thing is that, yes, I'm a wine person, but if you look at the strapline and it says: Falstaff: wine, food, travel. And sadly, I cannot claim ownership of that lovely phrase because Rosam coined it. He said, it's the Holy Trinity of wine, food and travel. Cause somehow you can't take them apart. And before we started, we did a lot of competitor analysis. And of course you see that there are why wine magazines that have a foodie bit and a travel bit. There are travel magazines, but they hardly talk about wine, sometimes about food. Then there is food and travel, which is of course self explanatory, but most food based publications also leave wine in the shade. But you know, so in the wine world, people generally care about flavor and they care about their food and they know how to cook. And if they dunno how to cook, then they certainly know how to order in a restaurant. And what is really funny is how many absolute experts of food are out there who then buy some kind of really non-descript bottle of wine. So we think that with Falstaff, yes, it is about buying, but there's also food and travel. We want to absolutely hold that Trinity high and cater to all equally. That is what we want to do. And this is how we hope these are the people we hope to capture. It goes back to this kind of curiosity and hunger for life and openness. That's what we want to do.

Janina Doyle 00:23:34 Wine, food and travel. Literally is my life, it's the three things that I love more than anything. So I think you, this is actually hitting the nail on the head, having a, a magazine and coverage dedicated, as you said, equally to the three most beautiful things on this earth.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:23:54 Pretty much.

Janina Doyle 00:23:56 Oh, dear. Beautiful. Everybody listening. If you don't know about Falstaff, go across to online, there's the real publication. And I actually have to say, you know, you mentioned like,

oh, what are you doing? Having a real magazine? Is it, is it worth it? But Kindle of course has become so popular, but there's nothing better than holding a book in your hand. You know, the Kindle so handy, great for holidays, blah, blah, blah. But both me and my partner have actually lost our enthusiasm for reading so much more because of the Kindle. And then when we get a book in our hand and we feel it and the texture and it it's just a much more enjoyable experience.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:24:35 And, you know, everybody has got some sort of, kind of weird habits. My habit is to have magazines and to cut out little pictures that I like. Cut out recipes that I like. I'm like, I feel like I'm such a 20th century woman and you know, I'm so married to print and to the glossy page. And, um, I'm, I'm like you, I like, I like to hold the magazine in my hand. I, um, like the smell of books, but I'm clearly talking as a, I'm not born digital. And so I wonder whether this is to do with age or whether it is just to do with preference. I don't, I can't answer that, but I know that for me, it's a huge difference to hold something in my hands and flick through it and keep the page open, or then, you know, cut out something that I like and pin it up on my Pinboard or keep, I actually have a recipe folder. And you know, so I'm because I'm organized and I'm terrible and I'm ridiculous, but you know.

Janina Doyle 00:25:38 I can totally imagine that you have a recipe folder. I imagine you have a folder for many things.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:25:44 I have. Yes. Yes.

Janina Doyle 00:25:47 Yes. I can totally get that. But also when I go on holiday and I go to the beach, I don't, I, I do not wanna take my Kindle cause I wanna go in the sea and I don't want somebody to nick my Kindle, whereas taking a magazine is perfect. It's there, you put it on your towel. No, one's gonna take it. I think there's still a need for magazines.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:26:04 And it is actually really interesting if you, if you think the at conundrum at the heart of publishing, which is, which is true for books and which is true for journalism is that everything like everything is supposed to be digital, digital, digital, but the real revenue for magazines certainly is still in print. If there is revenue, it has to be said for, for most people. But the, the death of paper, the death of books and the death of print has been predicted so many times, and yet it hasn't died yet. And while, while people do have a shorter attention span, long form journalism, isn't dead either. And um, yes. We know for instance, at Falstaff that, um, 90% of our website is consumed on mobile phones and, and handheld devices. But when it comes to the magazine is a different, it occupies a different space in people's lives. The magazine means, okay, now I've made myself a cup of coffee or I've poured myself a glass of wine and now I'm going to sit in my sofa and I'm gonna take this half hour for me. And I'm going to disappear into this beautiful and glossy world. And, um, it's very different from consuming news or, or other journalism or whatever it is between two tube stops or, you know, um, in your lunch break on your laptop. Uh, so I think there is a space for books or magazines. Absolutely.

Janina Doyle 00:27:32 Oh, now, interesting. You mentioned just them that the long format articles they're still around and you've, I mean, you have written some incredibly detailed and informative articles and there is one that I saw that is on Pinot Noir clones and cuttings. And people, you can find this in The World of Fine Wine. So let's get to a bit of education here. I would love you to, in not too complicated a format. Uh, talk to me about why is there so many Pinot Noir Clones and why do people talk about Pinot Noir clones? And yet they don't talk about, I don't know, Cabernet Sauvignon Clones or Sauvignon Blanc Clones. What's the obsession with Pinot Noir Clones?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:28:15 Well, what's the obsession with Pinot Noir you might ask? That's an even more interesting question. So what, why do I write about this? Because this is a number of years ago that I wrote about this and I will be forever grateful to Dr. Neil Beckett, who, um, is the editor of *The World of Fine Wine*. A kind of spiritual home for me and who lets people write in depth about a subject. Why did I write articles like that? This clonal article is because I was in California at Arnot-Roberts and we tasted this wine, this Pinot and I was just kind of blown away, you know, really moved. And then we were talking about this and then, he said, oh yes, and these clones, how in how in California, there are certain plantings that have then kicked off certain genetic selections that are referred to by the original vineyard, like the Calera or the Martini selection or blah, blah, blah. And you know, then it was, this was to me held up as a kind of true California expression of Pinot. And of course, you know, the romantic in me wants to believe this kind of, ok Pinot goes out into the world, but makes itself at home. And you know, and then, and then other people say, oh, you know, I planted 777 and this is why now it is far more Burgundian than when I still had German clones. And you just think, okay, what is this all about? And so I, I just wanted, it was, it was entirely driven by curiosity. And so I wanted to find out. And so I found out about, okay, who actually developed clonal selection. And then you have to go into the history of wine growing. What happened with the devastation of Phylloxera? And why are there clones? Because viticulture was in such dire straits and so much grape material was virus. If you think that a vine is a perennial plant, you plant it once, you have to wait years until you get a yield and then you might do back breaking work in that vineyard. But you may actually end up not having a harvest if things go wrong. If they is a virus or if you are not cold resistant or if you are not, there's so many things that can go wrong. And this is the case in so many regions in Europe, especially after Phylloxera, people had planted stuff that wasn't fully *Vinifera*. Yeah. So it was actually a help or a, a, um, an attempt on the part, of the, um, official wine growing research stations to come up with things that would ensure yields. So the people who, you know, for those thousands of wine growers everywhere in Europe, because we know Europe's wine industry is incredibly fragmented. So people wanted to have vines they could plant and actually have a harvest and not starve, because that was the reality. And this is how these things came about, how clonal selection was developed. And this was developed by somebody in Germany, in the 19th century, and then they carried it on. And then it was the research stations in, in Switzerland that did very similar stuff. And about Pinot Noir, I just wanted to find out who started this. And then I got, you know, correspondence between the Prussian estate domains and the ministry in Berlin telling them to do clonal selections and stuff like that. And it's just fascinating, but also then realizing that, okay, you might have one of the same clone of Pinot and you planted into a different places in three or four or five different places and it'll look different. So what for years people thought was a huge genetic variety are merely epigenetic responses of a particular clone. And so it's, to me, this is endlessly fascinating. And you know, and then doing proper research, you, we see, aha. Does this make sense? And if this person is saying, standing there in his vineyard amidst his vines and we've just tasted this amazing Pinot, or whatever, and then he talks about clones. Does he actually know what he's talking about? Or does he just repeat hearsay? Yes. And some people just know so much. And I remember I wrote a little follow to that clonal article and I spent time with Jean-Baptiste Lecaillon who's, the Chef de Cave at Champagne Louis Roederer. And we were just in the trial vineyard because Roederer have done their own clonal selections of, of Chardonnay, Meunier and Pinot Noir. And it was just wonderful just to spend time with such a visionary and such a scientist, and to just be there and look at two different kinds of Pinot leaves and, and, you know, just these things fascinate me. And it's wonderful to be able to report on them

Janina Doyle 00:33:01 And talking of clonal selection. Does it preserve biodiversity by having lots of different clones in your vineyards?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:33:09 Well, if you have, if you just plant one clone in a vineyard that is not biodiverse, and we also now know that this is not very resilient, so, um, what people now actually do, and this is often reported as being a massal selection. Because people say, oh, we planted the massal selection fin, or très fin, um, or supérieur, um, from France and we bought our massal selection in Burgundy. When in fact there is the ATVB, which is an agricultural agency of, um, of the Burgundian grower association, and what they do, and what they have done for years is that they have identified vines and they have then taken cuttings, propagated them, observed them. And, um, the good ones have become registered clones. However, they're never sold as a single clone, but in a mix. Yes. And this is sold as, uh, Pinot Noir fin, très fin, supérieur.

Janina Doyle 00:34:15 Um, yeah. Those different levels. Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:34:17 Yeah? Uh, which have to do with, with yield. And there's no point in, in planting très fin, which is very low yielding in a kind of vigorous vineyard, because it's just counterproductive. But, you know, so just because it says, très fin, it's the best, but only for certain kinds of wine in certain places, you know, it's, the answers are never easy. So what actually happens is when people say, oh, I've, I've got this collection, every single vine in this collection is of an identifiable clone. It's just presented in a mix.

Janina Doyle 00:34:52 Okay. Interesting.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:34:53 You know this is not just, oh, um, this is a massal selection and we don't quite know what is what. No, it's an absolutely scientifically backed stuff and had to bought the, the selection fin, 10 years ago, it would've made, been made up of a different proportion of things from what it is today because they move on, they constantly adapt. They constantly identify and propagate and find out more. And, um, I find this fascinating. And so I think what the world has absolutely now clocked onto, especially in clonal selection, is that when these clones were selected, you know, because this is a, this is a process that takes years, it's incredibly slow, and so these things were selected. The French official selection started in the 1950s and so these were cooler years. And so of course they looked for grapes that would clock up sugar that would ripen at a certain time. They may have discarded the high acid clones or selections, or, you know, they may have chosen things for the preoccupations of their time, which was ripening and actually getting enough alcohol without having to chaptalize and stuff like that. These aims for selection are now no longer there, because now you want something that preserves its acidity, that is, you see?

Janina Doyle 00:36:15 Yeah, climate change presumably, is it fair to say?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:36:17 Yes. So you see the goalposts also move, but this is the wonderful thing that, that the plant adapts and has adapted. And, um, I earlier asked a question and I am now I'm going to answer it because you think, I said, okay, you asked me what is, what is the obsession with Pinot Clones? So, and then I said, no know what is the obsession with Pinot Noir? Because I've thought so much about this. And if you think that Pinot Noir is one of the very, very, very few grape varieties, if not the only grape variety that actually can be traced back in one place with an almost seamless history from those monastic days. Even if, if it wasn't the, the form of Pinot, it is now, it was an antecedent, or it was

its it's, it's sort of ancestors and pre predecessors. You know, you have, we know that Pinot evolved alongside us. And there is this huge cultural interaction between human and vine, between human and Pinot Noir. And I, of course, this is just opinion, but I think this is why Pinot moves us so much because it's been with us for such a long time, you know. It's, it's taken the edge of people's harsh lives for centuries and this is why it moves us so. I dunno, it's just conjecture.

Janina Doyle 00:37:44 No, it's beautiful to think that, to be fair. And you mentioned that we know exactly where it came from, where exactly do they trace it back to specifically.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:37:54 It's somewhere in Burgundy. And it was, you know, people called it by various names, Noirien and, but it, this is where it evolved. And this is where its heritage is. And this is also where you had a feudal and a monastic society where single site viticulture was born, where people, basically monastic communities, brothers and sisters, monks and nuns, saw it as an act of devotion to tend vines and make wine. So this informed their work in a way that we cannot imagine in this day and age.

Janina Doyle 00:38:36 And we talk about what it's come to be, I want to touch on Spätburgunder, which of course for anyone who doesn't know is Pinot Noir, uh, in its German form. So I think Germany is the third largest producer of Pinot Noir, right?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:38:53 It became the third largest producer Pinot now, sometime in the late 20th century. And this is actually, um, an interesting question, because if I start talking about German, the history of German viticulture will still be here tomorrow.

Janina Doyle 00:39:09 Another podcast.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:39:11 Oh God. Yes. And, and it's so intricate and I don't even want to start getting into it all, because it's too, you then always in order to, in order to present the full picture, you have to present various elements of, of this, but it is partly German history that makes me think of Burgundy in the way I do, because where most of the German wine regions are, they are in the Southwest, um, along the River Rhine and, and its tributaries and those places were a theater of war. So you have the 30 years war, a devastating conflict where the population was decimated, where villages were led without anybody tending any vines. And then you had further conflicts and further conflicts. And so you have disruption. And if you know that, um, the 30 years war was about reformation and counter reformation. And so monasteries were burnt down, libraries were burnt down and who kept the records? The monasteries. And so you see there is this terribly interrupted history and the Germans keep trying to link their current Pinot Noir to some kind of ancient form of it. We know that the medieval warm period coincided with the expansion of monasteries in the 12th century. And so there were so many affiliations, especially of, um, Cistercian monasteries and Abbeys, and they all needed wine and they all needed, you know, sacramental wine. They all believed in this diversional idea. And of course they founded monasteries in Germany. And of course it's totally plausible that they would've brought Pinot Noir or whatever with them but there are no records. And if there are, which I hope there are, you know, they're slumbering somewhere, um, and are waiting to be discovered by some historian who actually also knows about wine. So this is, this is the thing that there probably has been a presence of Pinot Noir in certain pockets of German viticulture. But what is interesting is that German Pinot Noir has made such a, it's actually such a success story because it, it encapsulates what happened to Germany and the German wine industry over the past 40 years, it was a kind of a, a return to quality and

a return to a kind of self-awareness, and a return to wanting to express, which is special, despite a kind of legal framework that is just a pain.

Janina Doyle 00:41:57 Mm mm it's interesting. Now I just want to, for people who have now, perhaps just heard of Spätburgunder and realize, oh my God, this is Pinot Noir. What wine region in Germany do you think is key for Spätburgunder? Where should they go to, to try their first Pinot Noir? Their first Spätburgunder?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:42:18 Okay. There are 13 wine regions in Germany and Pinot Noir grows in every single one of them. It's, my favorites are more to do with style than they are to do with region.

Janina Doyle 00:42:32 For me, I've always just, or at least I've identified Baden, in the southernmost region to Pinot Noir. So, you know, I would always tend to look for a bottle saying Baden on it, but I dunno if more Pinot Noir is in, in the Ahr region or if that's just red in general?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:42:51 No, there is, there is more in Baden.

Janina Doyle 00:42:54 There is more in Baden. Okay.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:42:56 And, um, because the Ahr, Baden is a large region and the Ahr is a very small region. So just, just proportionally, even though much proportionally, much more of the Ahr covered in Pinot Noir than of, of, uh, Pinot in, in Baden. But of course there are many, many, many more hectares of Pinot in Baden than there are in the Ahr. But, um, those two places are definitely on the menu. So is Franconia and so is the Pfalz. So is Rheingau. So is even the Nahe, you know. It's kinda, um, it depends what you're looking for because there is this climatic aspect because the German wine regions cover four degrees of latitude. Then there is the soil. There are many, many places where you find limestone. Some, uh, Jurassic limestone, like in Burgundy, but mostly Triassic limestone, which is a bit younger. Um, then you have Pinot Noir on sandstone on red sandstone, say in Franconia. And that makes very filigree, very fine boned Pinot that I love and adore. Then there is Württemberg where you have sandstones as well and richer keuper, um, and again, some limestone. Then you have, um, volcanic formations in Baden. Limestone in Baden, Loess. We can go on, you know, but...

Janina Doyle 00:44:19 Yeah, exactly. I know. And of course I, like you said, we haven't got all week, have we. But what do you, is this, this is probably a really difficult question. Um, but of course, all around the world, people are comparing their Pinot Noirs to Burgundy. Can you summarize or put all Pinot Noir from Germany and compare it somehow to Burgundy in terms of flavor profile?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:44:48 No. And you see it's actually, and you know why I can't because...

Janina Doyle 00:44:54 Because you know too much? and it's too complicated? Yeah, tell me.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:44:57 What is Burgundy? Because there are, um, I dunno whether you tasted some of the, um, 2020 En Premiers. But there are people who make exclusively fine bone translucent poet Pinot, then there are people who make absolutely glossy, powerful and sumptuous Pinot. Then you are like, what is Burgundy? And this is the kinda fallacy that drives, that drives me nuts. Yes, I have to pass tasting exams, but this is exactly why they drive me nuts. And you can pass these tasting exams because the wines in these exams are chosen to what people think Pommard is, or Volnay is yeah? Or what Gevrey is, vis-à-vis Chambolle-Musigny. But then when you taste, is it actually, if people are entirely honest, is it always just so clear cut? And we all know like blind tasting, if it's not about finding

out, oh, what is this? And blah, blah. If you just want to blind taste, if you know, okay, these are all Pinot Noirs and we just look for how they taste like, without second guessing anything. Or winemakers play this game, where say, for instance, the German winemaker, five winemakers get together and have a blind lineup of their own Pinots and stick in one or two Burgundies. And sometimes A, they don't find their own wine or they don't find the Burgundy. And you could, you could say this about numerous, you know, about Chardonnay, you know? Um, so I don't want to simplify something and reduce it, when I know it is infinitely complex. I know I'm not helping. Especially wine students. I should be saying this is this, or this is that, but it's just so complex and it's difficult. There is a certain, there used to be a certain savoriness to certain German clones, which might also have to do, might have had to do something with under ripeness. Then I think soil, limestone and Pinot results in a certain mouth feel and a certain coolness. So for me, I'm, I'm, I have made these connections in my mind more about soil. But then, I, I know that some, a Sommelier who wanted to pass an exam, said to me, Anne, is German Spätburgunder like Volnay? And I think, please, this is, this, you can't, I know the answer he wanted, but it's just not possible to say that because then again, yes, we know what our ideal idea is of a Volnay. Mine is like Domaine de Montille, Taille Pieds Premier Cru, you know? My idea of Vosne-Romanée, my ideal of Vosne-Romanée is Premier Cru Les Malconsorts. But then there are lots of other Vosne-Romanée that absolutely are grown in this village and in this commune. And do they get close to my ideal? No. Is my ideal, everybody else's ideal? No. So I'm, I'm sorry. I actually can't answer the question.

Janina Doyle 00:48:11 No, I think that's fine. What I would say is I have found that with German Pinot, or, I should say Spätburgunder, it's getting a lot more concentrated now. In the past, perhaps because of the climate, it didn't necessarily have the, the body or the intensity. Um, would that be fair to say that, now...?

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:48:32 Absolutely fair to say, this has a lot to do with climate change, crop levels and a new kind of different clones, because the Germans continued with their clonal development. But not only the development of German particular clones, but also Germans going and actually planting quality material rather than a high yielding clones. Um, I wrote my MW dissertation about the emergence of quality or of premium German Pinot. So that's why I can say this. A lot of things coincided to then kind of become a, there were certain pioneers and then there was a critical mass at some point. And then there was a real turning point and whether we like it or not, Burgundy is the home of Pinot Noir. Will forever be a holy grail. And it is the place where people pay most for Pinot Noir. And the market is very, what people pay and how people value things, means how they get reported, how they get covered in the press, how they are listed in a, in a menu. You, you go to a, to a restaurant and find a wine list. Nobody will start with Hungarian wine or Slovenian wine, you know. So it's not because this is not any good, but because there is a history....

Janina Doyle 00:49:54 The history and the, the prestige that it holds.

Anne Krebiehl MW 00:49:58 Yeah, exactly. And, and we are all, none of us is really free of these almost indoctrinated things. Cause if you go to the WSET, what do you start with? Bordeaux, followed by Burgundy, followed by... You know, so, so there is a kind of hierarchical thinking is entirely informed by culture and the market and culture is of course history. But so, um, yes, the Germans reach critical mass at some point. And I said, yes, Burgundy will always be the kind of holy grail in the place where people look towards. But I think it is true to say for most people in the world who make Pinot Noir, yes, they will all have done one or more pilgrimages to Burgundy. But what they want to do is express their place,

their soil, their conditions for their Pinot, and they can, and most of them do and this is fascinating and beautiful. And the point with Burgundy is that the prices are so sky high because they're so little of it and everybody wants a piece of it. And then there have been, there has been a string of low yielding vintages. And then of course we know the year 2021 is disastrous because there was such great losses. So um, prices are now so high that people invariably have to look for alternatives and low and behold, there is this country that used to be too cool. And now it's almost getting too warm, but in many places, it's actually just right for Pinot. And now, whereas people used to fetishize every degree of Oechsle. Oechsle is the degree you measure the density of sugar in your grape juice. Um, the ripeness of your grape, you know, people used to fetishize this in Germany. And now you can ripen grapes every year. Now you look for freshness. Now you look for expression. Now you no longer try and say, oh, I have a Pinot with 14 and a half percent. No, you do everything to shade your grapes to, you know, this, this, this is actually it's, it's fascinating because for a long time nothing happened. Now so much has happened in such a short time. And now you can have incredibly beautiful and poetic Pinot Noir. I just think it's again about getting the wine and trying it and being open. Yeah. That's really what it is about.

Janina Doyle 00:52:31 Now talking of just giving these wines, Spätburgunder, a go, next week, Anne talks about the wine regions of Germany. It's not heavy. We kind of just duck and dive around some of the regions to know about. And we flirt with some of the lesser known ones. So you'll have a nice long list of varieties and regions to tick off. Now to finish off with a wine quote and who better, but to feature literally Burgundy's most powerful woman, some call her Burgundy's reigning grand dame, Queen of Burgundy. She is Lalou Bize-Leroy, involved in one business since 1955, formally at the helm of Domaine De La Romanée-conti as co-owner, and now steering the ship of Domaine Leroy. And with that, I found a quote when asked about her concept of winemaking or as a winemaker, she responded:

“There is no winemaking and no winemaker. We are guardians. We watch, we observe, we make some decisions, but it is the grapes that come first. They guide us. Our job is to look, observe and try to understand. This is our job, our role. Yes, we make decisions, but we don't really do anything.”

Pinot Noir truly is a magical variety. The heartbreak grape. And when respected and listened to, especially in its most spiritual home Burgundy, that's when the wine will speak to you. Thank you as always to those of you listening, please do make sure you're subscribed so you don't miss any future episodes. Share this podcast with your wine loving friends and do leave a comment. Especially if you're listening on apple podcasts. Have a great week. I'll meet you all back here next Monday. And until then, cheers to you.