

FRANCE: Jura

Around Arbois

Salins les Bains to Poligny

By Wink Lorch



The town of Arbois, decked out for the Fête du Biou, which takes place each September. © Wink Lorch



The map above does not cover the complete extent of this micro-region. On the left its position is indicated within the main wine region.

To see the locations for recommendations in this Guide, use the on-line maps. These fully clickable Michelin maps allow you to plot routes and print locations. This service is accessible only to Gold subscribers.

Unravel the mystery of the wines of the Jura

Naturé, percée, ploussard, voile – there's a whole new language to learn in the vineyards and cellars of the Jura, for France's smallest wine region is undoubtedly also the most complicated. To get to grips with these wines requires a steep learning curve, but the effort can pay off if you have a passion for unusual flavours, intriguing food and wine matches and spectacular countryside.

The little town of Arbois provides the perfect base to unravel the mystery of the wines of the Jura. Close enough to explore the *caves* of the vigneron in villages such as Montigny les Arsures or Pupillin, it is also the best centre to discover the handful of switched-on restaurateurs who have developed menus to partner these unusual wines. Poligny, one of the main crossroads to the Alps, is the centre of production for Jura's most famous cheese, Comté – the surrounding rolling hills, beyond the vineyards, are home to the attractive and sturdy Montbéliard breed of cows. Their cheeses just happen to make a perfect match for Vin Jaune, Jura's most celebrated wines.

Geography

The Jura, France's smallest wine region with around 1,600 hectares lies 80km (50 miles) directly east of Burgundy's Côte d'Or. The vineyards run northeast – southwest on the western foothills of the Jura Mountains. As in Burgundy, the soil is largely based on clay-limestone, but it is the outcrops of black, grey-blue, red and yellow marls, and the cretaceous fossil beds that form some of the highly prized vineyard sites of the Jura.

The northern part of the Jura, around Arbois has more clay and is more stoney, hence it is more suitable for red varieties. Considered by many to be a mountain wine region, in fact the vineyard altitudes are similar to those in Alsace, varying between 250m and 400m. However, the influence of the nearby mountains brings cold winters and leads in some years to untimely frost, hail or rainfall. The continental climate does bring warm and long summers and in most years a relatively late harvest, ideal for Savagnin, the classic grape responsible for Jura's famous Vin Jaune.

BASIC INFORMATION

● How to get there

The Jura is in Eastern France, south-east of Dijon, and north of Bourg-en-Bresse, close to the A39 Motorway. From the Poligny motorway exit 7, it is just 15 minutes' drive to Arbois. The TGV train line stops at Mouchard, just north of Arbois and trains take around two hours from Paris. The closest international airport is Geneva, which is just under two hours drive from Arbois.

● Useful information

Arbois Tourist Office,
Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, 39600 Arbois

Tel: 03 84 66 55 50 Fax: 03 84 66 25 50
Email: otsi@arbois.com
Website: www.arbois.com

Salins les Bains Tourist Office,
Place des Salines, 39110 Salins-les-Bains

Tel: 03 84 73 01 34 Fax: 03 84 37 92 85
Email: contact@salins-les-bains.com
Website: www.salins-les-bains.com

Vins du Jura,
Château Pécauld, BP 41, 39600 Arbois

Tel: 03 84 66 26 14 Fax: 03 84 66 10 29
Email: civj@jura-vins.com
Website: www.jura-vins.com

Route des Vins du Jura

Website: www.laroutedesvinsdujura.com

● Main appellations

Arbois

All styles of wine may be made in this the largest appellation in the Jura, in the northern part of the region, so here Vin Jaune, Vin de Paille and Macvin are AC Arbois as well as the usual reds, whites and rosés. It's worth noting that Chardonnays were traditionally made here in what we now think of as the 'correct' or modern method of winemaking: topping up the barrels. Due to its stonier, warmer soils, it is certainly the best appellation for the red Trousseau grape, and for the red (often pink in colour) Poulsard grape especially in the sub-appellation of Arbois-Pupillin. The best Savagnins are, as everywhere in the Jura, used to make stunning Vins Jaunes, though other styles are made too.

Côtes du Jura

Designated AC vineyard areas outside the Arbois appellation are labelled Côtes du Jura, and this appellation is also used for all styles of Jura wines, as detailed above. In this micro-region, the area covers vineyards north of Les Arsures, towards Salins-les-Bains, and south of Pupillin towards Poligny.

Crémant du Jura

Covering the whole Jura region and one of the nine Crémant appellations in France, producing white and rosé sparkling wines using the Traditional Method from any of the Jura varieties. The white sparkling wines must be from at least 2/3rd Chardonnay, and most are 100% Chardonnay.

Macvin du Jura

Covering the whole Jura region, this appellation is for white and occasionally red Vin de Liqueur, or fortified wine, matured in wood.

● Main grape varieties

Red

Poulsard

Also known as Ploussard, especially in the village of Pupillin, the self-styled world capital of Ploussard - this very pale red grape produces light reds and rosés, and is also a key ingredient for many Vins de Paille.

Trousseau

Related to the Bastardo of Portugal and growing in popularity in the Jura, but still with only 100ha grown in the region, its area of predilection is around Arbois, especially at the village of Montigny-les-Arsures.

Pinot Noir

Warmer summers in recent years and improved winemaking techniques have produced better results from this grape in many parts of the region, though historically it has done best in the southern part of the Jura.

White

Chardonnay

The most widely planted grape in the region, used for a wide range of styles. Increasing amounts go into making the sparkling Crémant du Jura, which has raised the quality level of the still Chardonnays produced.

Savagnin

Known locally sometimes as Naturé and part of the Traminer family of vines, it is a late ripener, and produces high acid wines, ideal to withstand years of ageing.

● Main wine styles

Vins Jaunes

Literally 'yellow wine', Vin Jaune accounts for only about 2% of production and is by law released only 6 years and 3 months after the vintage. From 100% Savagnin left to ripen quite late, the grapes are vinified like any other white wine and then transferred to 228-litre Burgundian *fûts* of varying ages, never new. Importantly, the barrels are not topped-up during the maturation. On the wine's surface, a film of yeast forms, known as the *voile* or veil, similar to the *flor* yeast of Sherry. This grows over the years and protects against complete oxidation. Using regular laboratory testing and tasting, those barrels which won't withstand the ageing period are withdrawn, and these wines go to make white wines. One of the keys to the Vin Jaune ageing process is the storage location for the barrels, which contrary to most wine cellar storage, must be well ventilated and allow temperature fluctuations. After the 6+ years of ageing (and many producers leave their Vin Jaune for longer), the wine is bottled into the 68cl-clavelin bottle, the only one permitted of this size in the EU – its size is the theoretical amount left from a litre of wine after 6+ years' evaporation. The characteristics of this long-lived wine are a golden, very dry wine with high acidity and a pungent flavour that may be of walnuts, spices (ginger, fenugreek etc, which the French refer to as 'curry') and dried fruits. The sale price for a decent example starts at around €25 per bottle.

Whites

These vary hugely though all are dry, with relatively high acidity. Traditionally, a pure Jura Savagnin will have started life as a Vin Jaune but will have been withdrawn after two or three years of ageing (see Vin Jaune above). It therefore has some of the characteristic *jaune* or oxidative character. It is generally sold 3–4 years after the vintage. Some producers today make a Savagnin that is *ouillé*, meaning that the barrels have been topped up, and made in a non-oxidative, fresh style, also known as *floral*. These wines are worth seeking out, very food friendly with lovely fresh lemony flavours - they may have been oak aged or not, and sold from 1–4 years old. Chardonnays too may be made with or without oak ageing, some being very Burgundian in style, others more distinctly mineral. Chardonnay-Savagnin blends tend to have some oxidative Savagnin in the blend and are often labelled *tradition*.

Rosés

Rosés are dry and mostly from Poulsard alone, though Trousseau or Pinot Noir may be used. Some Poulsard wines are marketed as rosé, even if made as a red with a week's fermentation on the skins, because they are so pale.

Reds

Traditionally, the reds from the Jura are pale-coloured and lightweight, often not even oak matured and designed to drink early. Today, some producers are making more age-worthy reds, especially from Trousseau or Pinot Noir. Ageing may be in *foudres* or large oak barrels or in small barrels, rarely new. These wines can age well, from 3 – 5 years or more. Some blends are also made.

Sparkling wines

Crémant du Jura wines can offer excellent value for money. The majority are white and *brut*, with crisp, appley flavours and no or only slight yeasty character as they are mostly aged for the minimum 12 months on the lees. Rosés are mainly dry, light and fruity.

Medium and sweet white wines

Vin de Paille means literally 'straw wine' and these are made at varying sweetness levels, from medium sweet to lusciously sweet. The appellation requires a minimum of 14.5% alcohol and a minimum three years of ageing (with 18 months in wood). They are mostly made from Chardonnay, Savagnin and Poulsard, with occasionally some Trousseau. If red grapes are used, a slight pale mahogany or reddish colour is apparent. The grapes are picked early so that they are healthy with good acidity levels. They are then left to dry either traditionally in boxes with straw, or more commonly in small plastic boxes, usually in a warm attic area. The grape sugar increases up to a potential of 18–22% alcohol and the grapes are pressed towards the end of the year or sometimes as late as February following the harvest. Some very traditional Jura producers age the wines in oak without topping up so that they gain some oxidative character, others make a fresher style. Some producers have either accidentally or deliberately made sweet wines in the Vin de Paille style which do not reach 14.5% alcohol, because of high sugar levels and these must be sold under Table Wine or other designations such as the lengthy *moût de raisins partiellement fermenté issu de raisins passerillés* (partially fermented grape must from dried grapes).

Vins de Liqueur

Macvin is made by stopping fermentation by the addition of the local Marc (grape spirit); these are generally 18 – 20% alcohol, sweet and strong with a chocolate or nutty character. They may be drunk as aperitifs, with dessert or even cheese.

Food specialities

Poulet au Vin Jaune: chicken – if possible Bresse chicken, or a *poularde* (capon) cooked in a rich creamy sauce made with Vin Jaune and morel mushrooms. Drink with a traditional oxidative Savagnin if not Vin Jaune.

Truite au Vin Jaune: trout from the local streams cooked in a cream and Vin Jaune sauce.

Morteau/Mortadeau: quite strong-tasting pork sausages often cooked in wine heated over vine-cuttings and served with boiled potatoes and sometimes Cancoillotte cheese. They bring out the best in a red/pink Poulsard.

Comté Cheese: a large hard cheese, similar to Gruyère, considered by many in France as an ordinary cooking cheese (like Cheddar in England). When a real Comté Fermier, with at least 12 months ageing, is tasted in the Jura the flavours bear no resemblance to ordinary cheese – it has a lovely texture and a nutty flavour. It is a perfect match with Vin Jaune in particular, but also works well with any Savagnin or other oxidative white.

Other Jura Cheeses: Morbier is a soft, relatively mild white cheese with a blue streak, originally from ash; Bleu de Gex is a mild blue from the Jura mountains near the Swiss border; Cancoillotte is a soft, creamy cheese, often served with boiled potatoes and pork. All these cheeses work well with Jura Chardonnay or Poulsard.

Main towns and villages

Arbois

This is the self-styled capital of the wine area, the real heartland of the Jura vineyards and a beautiful little town, famed for being where Pasteur grew up – you can visit his house (see 'Non Wine Attractions' below). There is a short, leisurely walk along the pretty River Cuisance signposted from the Maison Pasteur or the main church (Eglise St-Just), which can give you bearings on the town. It's an ideal base for visiting the region, though there is only one good hotel in the middle of the town. The centre can be explored in a short time on foot and is notable for having some excellent gourmet shops and two very good restaurants. Trap doors on the pavements indicate the presence of a wine cellar, usually for ageing barrels of Vin Jaune – well worth exploring if you get the chance. There are several wine shops, many owned by producers, so if you only have a short time, you can taste and buy right here. The best way to appreciate the true flavour of the place is to attend the Fête du Biou every September (see 'Local Events' below).

Salins les Bains

Today Salins is a sleepy town with one main street which used to be on an important strategic and religious route, guarded by the two forts towering on the hills above it. Once extremely important as a salt production centre it became a spa town in the late 19th century and thermal baths and spa treatments are still available today (see tourist office website listed above for full details). In the north of the wine area, it is not far to visit the vineyards of Arbois (indeed there are even a few vigneronns technically based in Salins).

Poligny

A town on a major crossroad to Switzerland and the Alps with the main road from Dijon to Geneva running through it, the centre can be very busy. As well as being surrounded by vineyards, it is also the centre for the production of Jura's most famous cheese, Comté, a hard Gruyère-type of cheese. The centre has some interesting buildings, notably the Clos des Ursulines, a cloister that is all that remains of a 17th century convent, but for a brief visit to the region, it is best to buy some cheese (see 'Specialist Shops' below) and move on.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Wine producers to visit

Domaine André et Mireille Tissot

Address: Place de la Liberté, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 08 27 Email: stephane.tissot.arbois@wanadoo.fr
Web: www.stephane-tissot.com

This domaine is run today by André and Mireille's son, the dynamic and innovative Stéphane (catch-phrase "*la vie est belle, n'est ce pas?*"). He has converted the 30 hectare vineyards to biodynamic farming and is an enthusiastic advocate of these methods. There is an exemplary range of wines from very well made Vin Jaune, through a selection of site-specific top-class Chardonnays, some of the most intense reds in the Jura, to sweet wines that may or may not be allowed the appellation Vin de Paille. The range can be tasted at their modern shop in the centre of Arbois, but they might let you make an appointment with one of the family at the winery in Montigny-les-Arsures where there is also a tasting room.

Useful information: Visits possible in the shop without an appointment. English spoken. Groups (maximum 25).

Jacques Puffeney

Address: Quartier Saint Laurent, 39600 Montigny-les-Arsures
Tel: 03 84 66 10 89

Reliable, classic range of wines produced in a cellar at the top end of the winegrowing village of Montigny. Bearded Jacques Puffeney is a quiet and serious character who repays getting to know. He is a great believer in the use of wooden *foudres* for maturation of both his Chardonnays and his reds. His Vins Jaunes are always superb due in part to a rigorous barrel selection process. Be warned, you will taste in his cellar which is small, traditional and cold, but it's worth suffering.

Useful information: Visits strictly by appointment only, every day except Public Holidays. French-speaking only. No groups.

Frédéric Lornet

Address: Abbaye de Genne, 39600 Montigny-les-Arsures
Tel: 03 84 37 45 10 Fax: 03 84 37 40 17
Email: frederic.lornet@clubinternet.fr

A tasting room and cellars in a converted old abbey make impressive surroundings in which to taste this reliable range of wines. Lornet is one of the few Jura producers to export regularly to the USA. As well as fine Vin Jaune and Vin de Paille, his Chardonnays and his Trousseau reds are well worth trying. To meet the man himself (who has plenty to say!), make an appointment – he also owns a domaine in Saint Chinian in the Languedoc, so he often decamps down there.

Useful information: Open every day. Groups welcome (up to 50). English spoken.

Domaine de la Tournelle

Address: 5 Petite Place, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 25 76 Email: domainedelatournelle@wanadoo.fr
Web: www.domainedelatournelle.com

A tiny establishment right in the middle of Arbois; Pascal Clairet used to run the regional Comité des Vins and knows the region very well. Strong views and a willingness to experiment (he makes some non-sulphur wines, as many do here) make it always worth a visit here, not least to meet his delightful wife Evelyne. Like Pascal, trained as an oenologist and passionate about the vineyards, she has also experimented with running wine and food events in their garden, matching the local wines to Asian-style cuisine. This has led to the opening of Le Bistrot de la Tournelle, during late afternoon and early evenings in summer outside and in winter inside. Here you can enjoy a glass of wine with a selection of light meals. Look out for their Poulsard red called Uva de l'Arboisiana and some fascinating Savagnins.

Useful information: Open every day except Sunday, but as always, it would be better to make an appointment. Groups by arrangement (40 maximum and a small charge is made). Some English spoken.

Domaine de la Renardière

Address: Rue du Chardonnay, 39600 Pupillin
Tel: 03 84 66 25 10 Email: renardiere@libertysurf.fr

Jean-Michel Petit's deep blue eyes draw all the women journalists to him (but surely the author would not be so influenced). A stalwart in the regional associations and promoting the wines of the region, his own small estate regularly produces some excellent Savagnins (especially Les Terraces, made in the fresh, 'floral' style) and terroir-specific Chardonnays. Every Saturday in June, he organises visits to the vineyards including explanations and tastings. Usually the most reliable producer from Pupillin.

Useful information: Visits every day by appointment. English spoken. Groups (up to 40 with a small charge).

Domaine Daniel Dugois

Address: 4 Rue de la Mirode, 39600 Les Arsures
Tel: 03 84 66 03 41 Email: daniel.dugois@wanadoo.fr

Daniel and his wife Monique, and latterly their son Philippe, run this mid-sized domaine extremely well and their wines provide a bridge between tradition and modernity. Unusually, with the core wines of the range, two vintages are sold concurrently, which makes for an interesting tasting comparison. Their Chardonnays and Trousseau wines are aged in large *foudres*, the best being aged for as many as three or four years, proving that that *foudres* can provide great depth and character to the wines without the oakiness. The Vins Jaunes are always excellent here too. Allow plenty of time for tasting.

Useful information: Sunday by appointment only – otherwise every day. English spoken. Groups (up to 35).

Domaine Jacques Tissot

Address: 39 Rue de Courcelles, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 14 27 Email: courier@domaine-jacques-tissot.fr
Web: www.domaine-jacques-tissot.fr

One of several related Tissots in the area, Jacques has a large (by Jura standards) estate and a big, green, rather ugly warehouse-like cellar (you will spot it from the viewpoints!) on the left-hand side of the main N83 road running north out of Arbois. You can visit his shop in Arbois or arrange to visit the cellar, which has a big tasting area for groups. Jacques is a man of infinite patience in explaining the region, and his son and son-in-law are following in his footsteps. The domaine offers a huge range of wines of a very decent quality. A very easy place to stop by and taste, where you will be assured of a warm welcome.

Useful information: Groups (up to 40) can be catered for by appointment with a small charge. English and German spoken.

Domaine Ligier Père et Fils

Address: 56 Rue du Pupillin, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 28 06 Email: ligier@netcourrier.com

Brothers Hervé and Jean-Pierre Ligier are quiet and serious about making a success of the domaine that they are gradually taking over from their father. They are proud of their modern cellars on the edge of Arbois, built just a few years ago, and have created a pleasant tasting area in the front. You will get good explanations here and a sound range of clean fresh wines, especially the Chardonnays.

Useful information: Visits every day except Sunday afternoon when appointments are preferred. English spoken. Groups (up to 60) accepted.

Domaine Rolet Père et Fils

Address: 11 Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 00 05 Email: rolet@wanadoo.fr
Web: rolet-arbois.com

Rolet is the largest single domaine in the Jura after Henri Maire, with around 70 hectares. The cellars are outside Arbois and tastings are only normally available at its shop in the centre of Arbois, close to the hotel-restaurant Jean-Paul Jeunet. Staff are usually knowledgeable and there is the complete traditional range of Jura wines on offer. The Crémants du Jura, especially Coeur du Chardonnay are particularly good.

Useful information: Every day without appointment. Groups accepted up to 50.

Domaine de la Pinte

Address: Route de Lyon, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 06 47 Email: accueil@lapinte.fr
Web: www.lapinte.fr

Moustachioed Philippe Chatillon looks after this large domaine with passion and has converted their substantial 20ha of vineyards to organic farming, with some biodynamic experiments. The imposing building below the Pupillin vineyards, just to the south of Arbois, is well worth visiting and there are always some exciting new wines to taste. La Pinte is one of the few domaines to have done some experiments with new oak ageing, not entirely successful in my view. However, they do have a larger than average area of Savagnin planted (half the area), and some of their wines made with long ageing of Savagnin in topped-up barrels (*ouillé*) are very successful.

Useful information: Visits every day. Appointments preferred. English spoken. Groups (up to 50 with a small charge).

Fruitière Vinicole d'Arbois

Address: Caves Château Béthanie, 2 Rue des Fossés, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 11 67 Email: contact@chateau-bethanie.com
Web: www.chateau-bethanie.com

This is the largest cooperative in the area (cooperatives in the Jura are named *fruitières* as are the cheese cooperatives). The standard of quality of the range is very decent, and sometimes some older vintages are offered. Their Crémants and Vins Jaunes are good.

Useful information: Open Monday – Friday. English spoken. Groups (up to 80). There are also two shops in the town open each day.

Domaine Henri Maire

Address: Les Deux Tonneaux, Place de la Liberté, 39600 Arbois
Email: deuxtonneaux@henri-maire.fr
Web: www.henrimaire.com

The main reason to go into this tasting room/shop is for the range of Vins Jaunes (including Château-Chalons) from various vintages that are available for tasting. Henri Maire – the largest domaine in the Jura, and also a négociant - has a large range of wines which can be of variable quality. However, the company has the resource of huge underground cellars in Arbois, and a policy to age its Vins Jaunes for longer than most producers (usually for a minimum of ten years instead of the usual six or seven). Another reason to visit is the recently opened museum above the shop, which can be visited on request. The museum has a fantastic collection of drinking glasses dating from the 17th to 20th centuries collected by the late Madame Marie-Thérèse Maire, wife of the eponymous Henri Maire who died in 2003. Their daughter, Madame Tarby-Maire, one of the directors of the firm, has put together this collection to honour her mother.

Useful information: The shop is open every day. English and German spoken. Groups accepted (up to 200!).

Places to stay

Hotel Restaurant Jean-Paul Jeunet

Address: 9 Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 05 67 Fax: 03 84 66 24 20
Email: jpjeunet@wanadoo.fr
Web: www.jeanpauljeunet.com

A decent 3-star hotel better known for its excellent restaurant (see 'Places to Eat' below), it is extremely well placed in the centre of Arbois. It has 12 mid-sized modern rooms in the main hotel that have been recently renovated and are nicely equipped. There are a further seven more large, old-fashioned rooms in Le Prieuré Notre-Dame, the so-called annexe (actually a classic French town house) about five minutes walk away in Rue du Vieux Château, overseen by Jean-Paul Jeunet's mother. The annexe is very quiet and there is a small walled garden in which to relax. The very good breakfast is served in the main hotel. Private parking can be reserved.

Useful information: Rooms: €85-€115 (in main hotel); €70-€100 (in the annexe); breakfast: €16; Parking: €10. Closed Tuesday and Wednesday (except July – mid-September). Closed all December and January.

Château de Germigney

Address: Rue Edgar Faure, 39600 Port Lesney
Tel: 03 84 73 85 85 Fax: 03 84 73 88 88
Email: germigney@relaischateaux.com
Web: www.chateaudegermigney.com

Sumptuous Swiss-owned Relais & Châteaux hotel in a very quiet village about 12km north of Arbois. All that one would expect from a hotel of this standard and price, the staff are keen to share their knowledge of the local area and its vineyards. The restaurant (see 'Places to Eat' below) is commensurate with the hotel and they also run a more modestly-priced and popular bistrot, Le Pontarlier, just 400m down the road by the river, which is open every day in summer (8 June – 15 September), otherwise weekend evenings.

Useful information: Rooms: €125-€350 (suite); breakfast: €15 (packages with dinner offered, see website).
Closed all January.

Hotel Restaurant du Moulin de la Mère-Michelle

Address: Rue de la Cascade, 39600 Les Planches-près-Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 08 17 Fax: 03 84 37 49 69
Email: moulin@mere-michelle.com
Web: www.mere-michelle.com

Three kilometres from Arbois in a peaceful valley, this is rather a strange collection of buildings, including the main hotel building which was converted from an old mill, and a modern tower building with further rooms next door. The rooms are extremely variable, though 4-poster beds are a speciality – ask for a large room. The welcome is sincere. There is a small indoor swimming pool and a lovely 10-minute stroll takes you to an impressive little waterfall. The restaurant looks a little old fashioned, but both food and wine are very well selected and served.

Useful information: Rooms: €75-€175. Half-board offered even for one-night stays – check website for details.
Closed all January.

Hotel Bonjour

Address: 10 Rue Edgar Faure, 39600 Port-Lesnay
Tel: 03 84 73 82 97 Fax: 03 84 73 82 35
Email: hotelbonjour@free.fr
Web: www.labellehistoire.eu

This small hotel is part of a mini-complex named La Belle Histoire which includes the Café Edgar, where you have your breakfast. This 19th century inn has recently been converted with passion into a small, practical hotel by owners Dominique and Jean-Marie Raguin who, 30-odd years ago, got married in this very place. The village is steeped in history, which they will tell you all about, and down the road is the Château de Germigney where you may want to splash out on dinner. The nine rooms are all different, modern and, in the main, practical, but best to ask for a larger room if you like a good bathroom. They also have a *gîte* to rent if you come with a group and want to self-cater. Evening meals available occasionally – best to check.

Useful information: Rooms: €65-€85, breakfast: €5.80-€10 (Jurassien breakfast!).

Residence Hôtelière Charles Sander

Address: 26 Rue de la République, 39110 Salins les Bains
Tel: 03 84 73 36 40 Fax: 03 84 73 36 46
Email: residencesander@wanadoo.fr
Web: www.residencesander.com

Right in the middle of the small town of Salins Les Bains, this new hotel offers 14 spacious, modern studio rooms including bathrooms and kitchenettes. Breakfast is available but there is no restaurant.

Useful information: Rooms: €55-€75; breakfast: €7.50.

Hotel des Cépages

Address: Route de Villette, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 25 25 Fax: 03 84 66 08 24
Email: contact@hotel-des-cepapes.com
Web: www.hotel-des-cepapes.com

This hotel with 33 rooms is useful in mid-winter when most of the other hotels are closed. Aimed mainly at business people and groups, this is a modern two-star hotel that seems like a chain hotel, but in fact is not. It is a little like a relic of the early 1980s; however the owner and his staff are unfailingly helpful and polite. There is a big buffet breakfast and a basic evening meal/buffet available on weekdays. On the edge of Arbois, it has a large car park and is within easy walking distance to the middle of the town, where parking can be difficult at peak summer times.

Useful information: Rooms: €68; breakfast: €6.

Places to eat

Restaurant La Balance Mets et Vins

Address: 47 Rue de Courcelles, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 37 45 00 Fax: 03 84 66 14 55

This restaurant was opened in 1998 by the chef, Thierry Moine, with some help from a handful of forward-looking local vignerons, whose wines still form the mainstay of the wine list. The menu is innovative and modern, and the restaurant *formules* include the possibility of having different wines by the glass with each course to really appreciate how the local wines can be paired with food. The modernity of the menu does not exclude an excellent rendition of the Poullarde au Vin Jaune.

Useful information: Menus: €22-€55 (without wines). Closed Sunday and Tuesday nights, plus all day Wednesday (except July and August, when it is closed on Mondays). Closed one week at the end of June/early July and all of December and January.

Le Grapiot

Address: Rue Bagier, 39600 Pupillin
Tel: 03 84 37 49 44 Fax: 03 84 37 46 78

This simple restaurant perches just above the main street in the little vigneron village of Pupillin. Taken over a few years ago by a young couple, Samuel and Julie Richardet, it produces extremely sound and good value food in a very relaxed atmosphere. Service is very friendly and, as one would expect, the wine list supports a selected band of the best Pupillin growers. Ideal to join the locals for Sunday lunchtime, but do reserve.

Useful information: Menus: €16-€36. Closed Mondays, Thursday (out of the summer season only), Sunday evenings (except by reservation), all the month of January.

Hotel Restaurant Jean-Paul Jeunet

Address: 9 Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 05 67 Fax: 03 84 66 24 20
Email: jpjeunet@wanadoo.fr
Web: www.jeanpauljeunet.com

This two-star Michelin restaurant has drawn many people to visit Arbois. The rather grand dining room is slickly run as one would expect. The food puts an emphasis on seasonal products, often regional, used with inventiveness and style. This restaurant created the first really good wine list in the Jura, with page after page of Jura wines of all styles and many vintages. Stéphane Planche, the sommelier, and his team are willing and able to advise on getting the very best out of matching the local wines with the excellently produced food.

Useful information: Menus: €48-€128. Closed lunchtimes and evenings Tuesdays and Wednesdays (except July – mid-September when closed only lunchtimes). Closed throughout December and January.

Château de Germigney

Address: Rue Edgar Faure, 39600 Port Lesney
Tel: 03 84 73 85 85 Fax: 03 84 73 88 88
Email: germigney@relaischateaux.com
Web: www.chateaudegermigney.com

Fine dining, but with a Jurassien feel to it, where local products are used. A one-star Michelin restaurant, there is good attention to detail on both food and wine, with a very good selection, though prices are high. The dining room, which seems like a cross between a small ballroom and a large conservatory, may not be to everyone's taste, but is extremely light and airy. Down the road is their bistrot Le Pontarlier which offers a much simpler and lower-priced menu in a casual atmosphere with bright, red and white checked tablecloths.

Useful information: Menus (main restaurant): €39-€90. Closed Monday and Tuesday lunchtimes. Bistrot open only Friday, Saturday and Sunday except 8 June – 15 September when it is open all week. Both are closed in December and January.

Taverne de la Finette

Address: 22 Avenue Pasteur, 39500 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 06 78 Email: info@finette.com
Web: www.finette.com

One of several modest restaurants in Arbois, this large establishment is open all year round and has connections to the local wine négociant and producer, Henri Maire. It has a rather pseudo-rustic feel to it, but there is a wide-ranging menu of local dishes and it is certainly a reliable place to come for a quick lunch or a casual supper. It has the advantage of being open all year, and all day in high season. There is a large car park too and it can accommodate large groups.

Useful information: Menus: €16-€48. Open all year.

Les Quatre Heures du Crémier

Address: La Cave de Comté, 44 Grande Rue, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 09 53 Fax: 03 84 66 09 53

In the back of La Cave de Comté, the cheese shop and delicatessen (see 'Specialist Shops' below), there are up to six little tables in what could be described as a Jurassien snack bar (*les quatre heures* is a childhood expression for a snack or afternoon tea). A very small menu of simple, but hearty open sandwiches, salads and a couple of hot dishes are usually offered, together with a small selection of good local wines by the glass, half bottle or bottle. Just right for lunch in-between wine visits, especially if you are planning a big dinner in the evening.

Useful information: About €9 per dish. Open lunchtime only Tuesdays – Saturdays. Closed briefly in January.

Wine shops

Les Jardins de St-Vincent

Address: 49 Grande Rue, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 21 75 Email: jardinsstvincent@aol.com

Wine shop owned by Stéphane Planche, chief sommelier for Restaurant Jean- Paul Jeunet, and a passionate and knowledgeable ambassador for the region. Offers a selection of Jura wines from smaller growers with several wines usually open to taste. Wines from other areas are also available.

Useful information: Tutored tastings possible for groups.

Other interesting shops

Hirsinger - Chocolatier et Pâtissier

Address: 38 Place Liberté, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 06 97 Fax: 03 84 66 00 03
Email: contact@hirsinger.com
Web: www.chocolat-hirsinger.com

Third generation Edouard Hirsinger is one of the most famous *chocolatiers* in France. All the chocolates are made on the premises with some very inventive recipes and chocolate works of art and a visit to the shop is usually a hugely expensive experience. Just before Easter or Christmas, the offerings are simply jaw-dropping. A small museum is open by appointment and well worth a visit to learn about fine chocolate production.

Useful information: For the museum, a small charge of €3 per person is made to cover the protective clothing one has to wear – it is credited if sufficient purchases are made (hard to resist)!

La Cave de Comté

Address: 44 Grande Rue, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 09 53 Fax: 03 84 66 09 53

Primarily a cheese shop, hams and local sausages are also available, along with a range of local preserved goods and delicatessen items. Good advice given.

Useful information: Café at the back (see 'Places to Eat' above).

Coopérative Fromagère Arbois

Address: 1 Rue des Fossés, 39600 Arbois

A useful shop near Château Béthanie, where you can buy Comté and other cheeses produced by the cooperative. Very good value indeed.

Useful information: Open every day 08.00-12.00 and 17.30-19.30 (not Sunday evenings).

Fromagerie Vagne

Address: 5 Place Notre Dame, 39800 Poligny
Tel: 03 84 37 12 01 Fax: 03 84 37 09 12

Excellent cheese shop with a selection of some of the best Comté, matured for different periods in their own *cave*. Other local cheeses and foods also available, with plenty of advice given. There is another branch in Château-Chalon.

Wine related attractions

Musée de la Vigne et du Vin

Address: Château Pécauld, 39600 Arbois
Tel: 03 84 66 40 45 Fax: 03 84 66 40 46
Email: museevignevin@wanadoo.fr

A small museum where you can learn about the grape varieties of the Jura, as well as the methods of making the wines, in particular Vin Jaune. There is also the usual display of old vineyard and cellar tools.

Useful information: Open all year except January. Closed Tuesdays except in July and August. 10.00–12.00 (12.30 in July/August) and 14.00–18.00. Entrance fee €3.50.

Other interesting attractions

La Saline Royale - The Royal Saltworks

Address: 25610 Arc-et-Senans

Tel: 03 81 54 45 45 Fax: 03 81 54 45 46

Web: www.salineroyale.com

About 20km north of Arbois just over the departmental border in the Doubs, this collection of buildings is one of the major tourist sites in the area. A UNESCO Heritage site, the buildings were part of a grand master plan in the 18th century to create the 'ideal' town around an important saltworks built close to the forest as the wood was needed for the production process. The salt was piped down from Salins-les-Bains in underground wooden pipes. Today a museum, it is well worth a visit, partly to learn about the history of salt production and its importance to the area, but also to see the amazing architectural vision of one man's concept for 'ideal' living. There is a cafeteria and shop on site, but be warned, at certain periods it can be very busy with bus tours.

Useful information: Open all year (except sometimes closed in January for reparations). 10.00-12.00 and 14.00-18.00 (summer) or 14.00-17.00 (winter). Adult entrance fee: €7.50. Large groups can be catered for and guided tours are available.

Maison du Pasteur

Address: 83 Rue de Courcelles, 39600 Arbois

Tel: 03 84 66 11 72 Fax: 03 84 66 12 85

The famous scientist Louis Pasteur spent much time in Arbois, though it wasn't his main home. This little house by the river has been restored and Pasteur's private apartments and laboratory can be visited with a guided tour lasting 45 minutes. A fascinating visit.

Useful information: Open April to mid-October. Entrance fee about €6.

Events

La Percée du Vin Jaune

The most important wine festival in the Jura, La Percée du Vin Jaune attracts up to 50,000 people and takes place over the first weekend of February. It celebrates the release of the 'new' vintage of Vin Jaune (6 years and 3 months after the harvest). The main processions and ceremonies are a sight to behold and take place on Sunday morning. On Saturday and Sunday afternoons around 60 wine producers have indoor stands set up with wines to taste, though be warned, they can be very busy. Food stands and restaurants are available. There is also an auction of old vintages of Jura wines on the Saturday afternoon. If the weather is dry, the atmosphere is amazing (even though it may be very cold!). The festival is in a different town or village each year. Buses are laid on from car parks outside the village/town. In 2008, it will take place in the tiny villages of Agnès and Vincelles in the far south of the Jura.

Useful information: Details from Vins du Jura (see 'Essential Information' above). Entry charge usually about €10.

Fête du Biou, Arbois

On the first Sunday of September, if you come early enough in the day to Arbois, you will see a collection of well-known vigneron dressed uncharacteristically in suits and ties, some of them carrying tasteful bouquets of flowers. The main procession of the Fête du Biou celebrates the biblical story of the return of the Israelites from Canaan (the land of plenty) carrying the *Eschol*, a huge bunch of grapes. This is recreated by four vigneron carrying on poles a giant 'bunch' of grapes formed from linking together many bunches of red and white grapes, decorated with flowers. The procession goes from the Maison du Pasteur to the Eglise Saint Just. A church service follows, and then there are usually further processions celebrating the liberation after World War II. The result is a gloriously traditional and friendly event attended by what seems like all the citizens of Arbois. At midday a free wine aperitif is offered by the vigneron to all in the street.

Fête du Ploussard, Pupillin

Takes place every other year on the 3rd weekend of August in the little village of Pupillin - self-proclaimed 'Capitale Mondiale du Ploussard' (world capital of Ploussard) - in the hills a few kilometres from Arbois. There are wines to taste, food and family events. It alternates with the Fête du Trousseau below. The next one is in 2008.

Fête du Trousseau, Montigny-les-Arsures

Alternating with the Fête du Ploussard above, it takes place on the 3rd weekend of August in the village of Montigny-les-Arsures, just north of Arbois. The village is home to some excellent vigneron, and the Trousseau grape is at its best here. Wines to taste and food including a full meal designed to match each course with different Trousseau wines. The next one is in 2009.

Annual Vigneron Picnic

Across the Jura region, participating vigneron (sometimes collectively in their villages) provide picnic facilities (bring your own picnic!), wines and sometimes entertainment (jazz bands etc) on a middle Sunday in June.

● Drives

Arbois to Salins les Bains

From the Place Liberté in the middle of Arbois follow signs to Dôle and after 100m, as the main road bears left, go straight on signposted Montigny-les-Arsures on the D107E. Drive up through woodland and on your left you will see the vineyards of Les Corvées (which you will see on several labels) and the Tour de Curon restored by Stéphane Tissot (see also the Walk 'Chemin des Vignes' below). About 1.5km out of Arbois, fork right towards the 'Table d'Orientation'. Here is a good place for a view down to Arbois and the vineyards (best in the morning), and there is a picnic table. Go back down this road to the junction where you forked right, and continue through the hamlet of Vauxelle on the D249 to the middle of Montigny-les-Arsures, the Jura village with the greatest vineyard area. You can visit several producers here by appointment, or if you want to simply continue, bear right at the church remaining on the D249 Route du Vin to Les Arsures. Turn right onto the D105 signposted Salins-les-Bains, which you will reach in about 4km, after joining the D472 just before the town. You can either lunch in one of the several *brasseries* and *cafés* in Salins-les-Bains, or you can continue out of Salins, turning right on the D467 towards Pont d'Héry. You can have lunch either at the rather smart restaurant Le Relais de Pont d'Héry on the right a few kilometres outside Salins, or continue to Pont d'Héry to the more rustic Auberge du Comtois on the same road. To return to Arbois, either retrace your steps, or take the road back to Arsures, continuing to the junction with the main N83 where you turn left to Arbois.

Approximate distance: 30km without the restaurant detour.

Restaurants en route: Le Relais du Pont d'Héry, Champagny. Tel: 03 84 73 06 54 (closed Mondays and Tuesdays except in July/August).

Auberge du Comtois, Pont d'Héry. Tel: 03 84 51 44 43 (closed Wednesdays).

● Walks

Chemin des Vignes in Arbois

A leaflet is available from the tourist office for this walk, which is also signposted, but it is not altogether clear! There are some information panels along the route, also not particularly clear.

Relatively easy walk, but if wet, walking boots/shoes are useful.

Park near Château Pécauld (Musée de la Vigne et du Vin – see 'Other Wine-related Visits' above). You will see an information panel 'Borne 1' near by. Walk down the hill, past the schools on Rue des Ecoles, following the yellow walking signs. Continue straight over a crossroads on Rue Morel. You will see vineyards on the slope on your right. Continue on very quiet streets past a sign for producer 'Robert Aviet' and along Rue du Petit Changin. Just before the sign indicating Camille Loye (a legendary producer, now retired, but very well respected by Jura traditionalists with a selection of very old wines still on sale), turn right up a pathway along the side of the vineyard. The path then continues up the hill, fairly steeply. You will see one of the information signposts 'Borne 2' near here. The yellow signposting is a little vague at this point, but you need to go up over the wall (very easy) on your right, onto the upper track that takes you past 'Borne 3' and a tower, the Tour du Curon (very obvious), where you will see a steep vineyard, planted with Chardonnay vines and restored by Stéphane Tissot (see Domaine André et Mireille Tissot under 'Wine Producers' above). There is a signpost to 'Point du Vue', a viewpoint over the vineyards and town with some benches in woodland where you can have a picnic or take a rest. Once you've been there, you need to return to find a dozen steps going down on your left-hand side to the top of the vineyards. Keep walking along the top of the vineyards, past 'Borne 4' keeping just below the woodland. Eventually you turn left just below a wall and walk back on yourself following the track downwards and between the vineyards, back towards the town. The track becomes a paved road, and you turn left. You can take a detour up to a rather run-down modern *cabane* (vineyard cabin), up to 'Borne 5', but it's really not worth it. Turn right before some fruit trees and continue down the road. Then turn left and immediately right along Rue de la Tour Canoz. At the stop sign, turn left back towards Camille Loye's house. You then can retrace your steps to Château Pécauld or take the small detour shown on the leaflet.

Approximate distance: 2.5km

Approximate time: 1 hour.

Itineraries

One-Day Ideal Itinerary

Accommodation: Night before or night after in Hotel Jean-Paul Jeunet, Arbois.

MORNING

Visit 1: Domaine André et Mireille Tissot shop in Arbois

Drive on the small road out of Arbois sign-posted Montigny-les-Arsures. En route stop at a viewpoint marked on the right, involving a 5-minute climb up a hill. Great view of Arbois and the vineyards.

Visit 2: Jacques Puffeney in Montigny-les-Arsures

Drive back through Arbois to Pupillin

Lunch in Pupillin at Restaurant Le Grapiot

AFTERNOON

Visit: Jean-Michel Petit in Pupillin

Drive back to Arbois

Walk the Chemin des Vignes in Arbois

Shop at Hirsinger Chocolier

Shop at the Cave du Comté next door to stock up on cheese and local sausages

Visit Pascal et Evelyne Clairet, Arbois and a drink and snack if required at their Bistrot

Dinner at Restaurant Jean-Paul Jeunet or La Balance.

Two-Day Ideal Itinerary

Day One

MORNING

Shop in Arbois for picnic if required.

Visit 1: Domaine André et Mireille Tissot shop in Arbois.

Drive North out of Arbois towards Salins les Bains (see 'Drive' above).

Visit 2: Daniel Dugois en route.

In Salins les Bains either detour to Le Relais de Pont d'Héry or picnic nearby.

AFTERNOON

Drive to and visit La Saline Royale.

Visit Jacques Tissot en route back.

Return to Arbois for a walk around the town.

Visit Hirsinger Chocolate Shop.

Dinner at La Balance in Arbois.

Overnight at any recommended Arbois hotel.

Day Two

MORNING

Scenic drive to Poligny via the Cirque du Fer à Cheval – walk up to the viewpoint.

In Poligny either visit the Maison du Comté (Avenue de la Résistance – Tel: 03 84 37 23 51) or buy cheese at the Vagne Cheese shop (see 'Other Interesting Shops' above).

Drive to Pupillin.

Visit: Jean-Michel Petit.

Lunch at Restaurant Le Grapiot.

AFTERNOON

Drive up to Montigny-les-Arsures via the centre of Arbois.

Visit 1: Frédéric Lornet

Visit 2: Jacques Puffeney

Return to Arbois

Visit Les Jardins de St-Vincent wine shop for final purchases and ideas for next visit!

Dinner at hotel or at Jean-Paul Jeunet if not staying there.

Further reading

Jura Wines by Wink Lorch

www.wine-pages.com/guests/wink/jura.htm

Tom Stevenson's Wine Report

Annual Guide that gives the inside track on all the wine regions of the world. The chapter on the wines of Jura and Savoie is written by Wink Lorch.

Jancis Robinsons Oxford Wine Companion 3rd edition

The A-Z of all you need to know about wine and the vineyards of the world. All Jura entries were written and/or updated by Wink Lorch.

About the contributor

Wink Lorch

Wink is a writer and educator on wine, and is the owner and editor of www.winetravelguides.com. She divides her time between London and Chinillon-Le Grand Bornand, a mountain ski resort in the Haute Savoie department of France. After starting her career in the Wine Trade, in the past 20 years Wink has worked as an independent writer, editor and educator. She writes for Tom Stevenson's annual guide *Wine Report* on the wines of Jura and Savoie and is a contributor to Jancis Robinson's *Oxford Wine Companion*. Wink is also a keen presenter of wine tastings to wine clubs and corporate groups, and especially enjoys presenting wines from South America, another passion. Wink is a member of the Circle of Wine Writers (www.winewriters.org), and a founder member and former chairman of the Association of Wine Educators (www.wineeducators.com) in the UK.

When not working, eating or tasting/drinking wine, Wink indulges in skiing, mountain walking or listening to jazz and blues. She also rents out an apartment to holidaymakers in her beautiful Alpine chalet, see www.chaletbalaena.com.

Wink has a new baby blog, where you can read more about the creation of Wine Travel Guides, and her thoughts on wine and life. <http://winklorch.blogspot.com/>

To contact Wink with any comments about this Guide, please email winklorch@winetravelguides.com