



Daniel-Etienne Defaix

With just 28 hectares of vineyard, 15th generation Chablisien Daniel Defaix may not be a significantly large grower, but he is running one of Chablis most respected and unusual houses. They do not farm organically, but Assistant Winemaker Alexandre explained that they do not use synthetic herbicides and spray only to treat symptoms, never as a routine preventative measure: "if you don't have a headache, you don't take an aspirin." Eighty small tanks allow them to vinify small lots separately. Winemaking is non-interventionist. Fermentation uses only natural ambient yeasts so can last six weeks or more, followed by ageing with batonnage (stirring of the lees) for 18 months for Chablis, and 36 months for 1er Cru. So currently their 2010 Chablis is on the market, and as for the Premiers Crus, well they are currently shipping 2002 and 2003 vintages whilst most other producers are a decade ahead. "We have the largest collection of old bottles in Chablis," says Alexandre, continuing "Our aim is to release the wine ready to drink, but also capable of very long ageing. The autolysis that occurs through the long batonnage creates glycerol which is a preservative." The result is some stunningly good wines.

Daniel-Etienne Defaix, Chablis Vieilles Vignes, 2010

92

Burgundy, France, Dry White, Cork

(2016) The nose has a wonderful leesy and gently Chaource nose, intense and rich with iodine and salt. The palate has a wonderful saline and lemon purity, long with dazzling purity and intensity.

£17.99 [Fraziers Wines](#) See all stockists on [wine-searcher.com](#)

Similar Wines: £15.01 - £25.00, Burgundy, Dry White, 91 - 95

Daniel-Etienne Defaix, Chablis 1er Cru Les Lys, 2003

94

Burgundy, France, Dry White, Cork

(2016) Harvest started 1st September, but two days of rain helped lift acidity in hot year. Intense, almost toasty notes, but a lovely floral lift too. There's a hugely silky saline character to this, an oyster note of salt and mineral ozone freshness, but weighty with ripe fruit at the core.

£26.67 [Millesima](#) See all stockists on [wine-searcher.com](#)

Similar Wines: £25.01 - £50.00, Burgundy, Dry White, 91 - 95

Daniel-Etienne Defaix, Chablis 1er Cru Côte de Léchet, 2003

93

Burgundy, France, Dry White, Cork

(2016) From a very steep, 38% gradient that is "all rocks." Fabulous nose, so much complex sulphide flintiness, so much intensity, floral edged and strongly fruity, but with that great mineral and brine freshness at the core.

£29.95 [Tanners](#) See all stockists on [wine-searcher.com](#)

Similar Wines: £25.01 - £50.00, Burgundy, Dry White, 91 - 95

Daniel-Etienne Defaix, Chablis 1er Cru Vaillon, 2003

94

Burgundy, France, Dry White, Cork

(2016) Another very stony vineyard where the soil is also rich in iron. Much more composed and reserved in some ways; more tightly wound with some green fig and herbaceous notes. Lovely extract and fruit sweetness, the apple core acidity plays against fine sweet mid-palate fruit. Lovely, elegant balance and huge length.

£27.50 [Millesima](#) See all stockists on [wine-searcher.com](#)

Similar Wines: £25.01 - £50.00, Burgundy, Dry White, 91 - 95

Daniel-Etienne Defaix, Chablis 1er Cru Vaillons, 2002

94

Burgundy, France, Dry White, Cork

(2016) A year of excellent balance, reputed to be one of the best for a Chablis. An open and attractive nuttiness to this, wax and buttery characters and silky texture. The palate has immense concentration and still that mid-palate sweetness and intense salt and lemons bite of acidity. Very long, serious and intellectual.

£26.99 [Fraziers Wines](#) See all stockists on [wine-searcher.com](#)

Similar Wines: £25.01 - £50.00, Burgundy, Dry White, 91 - 95

Daniel-Etienne Defaix, Chablis 1er Cru Côte de Léchet, 2002

95

Burgundy, France, Dry White, Cork

(2016) Has so much toast and butter, that creamy and leesy concentration and again slate and flint and some spice. The palate bursts with orange and bright citrus, almost peachy ripeness before the salts and dashing lemon acid cuts in. Salty preserved lemons giving such tang and bite, a touch of truffle and briar. Superb.

£26.67 [Millesima](#) See all stockists on [wine-searcher.com](#)

Similar Wines: £25.01 - £50.00, Burgundy, Dry White, 91 - 95

Daniel-Etienne Defaix, Bourgogne Rouge, 2009

90

Burgundy, France, Dry Red, Cork

(2016) Only sold from the cellars in Chablis, though a little does go to the USA. From 104 year old vines, a vineyard planted by Daniel's grandfather. Very pale, translucent colour. Fascinating, medicinal stuff with clove and spice and high violet and rose floral notes. The palate has a delicious umami freshness and savoury character as well as really fresh raspberry and cherry fruit and acidity. Superb stuff.

Similar Wines: £15.01 - £25.00, Burgundy, Dry Red, 86 - 90