

BON APPÉTIT



BUBBLES FROM BELOW

An old stone quarry in Burgundy creates the ideal conditions for producing *crémant* sparkling wine

There is something special about sipping a glass of sparkling wine and feeling the bubbly, tangy flavours dance on your tongue. Champagne is the king of fizz, but its popularity has tended to overshadow the equally appealing *crémants*, produced in seven regions of France using the same methods.

One of the leading makers can be found just south of Auxerre, in the heart of northern Burgundy's wine country.

Set deep within chalky cliffs that rise from the River Yonne lie the Caves de Bailly Lapierre, which has been

producing *Crémant de Bourgogne* since 1972.

The cellars are in an enclosed medieval quarry that supplied stone for some of France's grandest monuments, including the Panthéon and Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, and Chartres Cathedral. Quarrying ceased in the early 20th century, but the opportunity to produce wine in such a setting was too good to miss.

The galleries, located 50 metres underground, are spread across four hectares and provide ideal conditions for making *crémants*. A natural temperature of 12°C and 80 per cent humidity enable the wine to age well, while the soft

lighting preserves the flavour and colour.

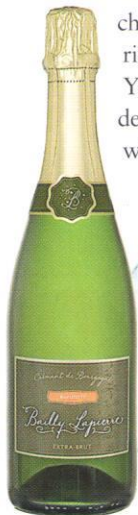
Out of these galleries emerge bottles that have sealed Bailly Lapierre's reputation. Most *Crémants de Bourgogne* are made

The seven *crémant*-producing regions are Alsace, Bordeaux, Bourgogne, Die, Jura, Limoux and Loire. All have AOC status.

with pinot noir and chardonnay grapes, but Bailly Lapierre's Réserve bottle is a blend of the *appellation's* four varieties: pinot noir, chardonnay, gamay and aligoté. Other vintages include the flagbearing Vive-la-Joie, which is left to age slightly longer than its other bottles.

Guided visits, complete with wine tasting, are available all year (admission €5) and tours of the surrounding vineyards are held from April to September.

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In 1975 the Bourgogne and Loire *crémants* became the first to receive *appellation d'origine contrôlée* status

GREEN TOMATO AND SORREL SOUP

Tangy green tomatoes and lemon-flavoured sorrel combine to make a deliciously refreshing cold soup, which is a perfect antidote to the summer heat. It can also be prepared with leaf spinach and a squeeze of lemon juice. The dish makes a great starter, with sourdough bread and butter.

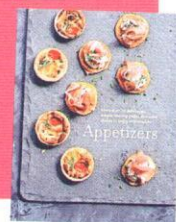
SERVES
4

INGREDIENTS

- 50g/2oz sorrel leaves
- 25g/1oz butter
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 500g/1lb 2oz green tomatoes, roughly chopped
- 600ml/21fl oz chicken or vegetable stock
- Salt and pepper
- 4tbsp plain yogurt, to garnish

1. Tear the sorrel leaves off the tough ribs and shred them finely.
2. Melt the butter in a heavy-bottomed saucepan or pot set over a medium heat. Add the shallot and fry gently for two to three minutes until softened, stirring now and then. Add the tomatoes and shredded sorrel leaves, and continue to cook, stirring often, for two to three minutes.
3. Add the stock to the pan, stir to combine and season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat, cover and simmer gently for 25 minutes.
4. Blend the soup until smooth, then strain through a fine mesh sieve set over a jug. Cool completely, then chill in the fridge for at least two hours.
5. Serve each portion garnished with a swirl of plain yogurt and seasoned with black pepper.

This recipe is taken from *Appetizers*, by Lesley Malkin, published by Ryland Peters & Small, priced £14.99.



PHOTOGRAPHS: PETER CASSIDY/RYLAND PETERS & SMALL