

GILBERT GAILLARD

THE FRENCH EXPERTS ON WINE

Géraldine Lefebvre-Lopez,
a winegrower
in Saint-Martin du Puy

**LEGACIES,
INVESTMENTS AND
SELF-INDULGENCE
BORDEAUX IS JUST
AS ASPIRATIONAL
AS EVER!**

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GILBERT & GAILLARD NEXT ISSUE AUTUMN 2018

Cover: Gilbert & Gaillard

EDITORIAL

– FRANÇOIS GILBERT –
Editorial Director



THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA LEAD THE WAY FOR IMPORTS

It has become a truism to say that the wine market has gone global. Fifteen years ago, 25% of wines were exported, now that percentage has risen to 43%, according to the International Organisation of Vine and Wine. And in this global market, two giants stand out clearly. First, the United States, which has become the world's leading market with imports totalling 973 million bottles, then China, a firm second with 639 million bottles. Increased consumption in both countries has ensured stability of sales worldwide, at a time when the European market is showing signs of running out of steam. French and European winegrowers obviously have a strong foothold in the two markets. Italian wines account for 323 million litres in the USA and French wines 140 million. In China, Spain sells 93 million litres. These three countries are the world's top three producers and exporters. For the past thirty years now, we have focused our work on the French wine regions and have been visiting the vineyards of Italy and Spain for ten years, writing articles in this magazine and tasting thousands of wines in order to award medals in our International challenge.

The direction that markets are currently headed dovetails exactly with the activities we undertake with French and European winegrowers who clearly need reassurance in countries where everyone wants to sell and where competition is stiff.

EDITORIAL

– PHILIPPE GAILLARD –
Editorial Director



ORGANIC AND BIODYNAMIC ARE THE FUTURE OF WINE GROWING!

Despite the popularity of organic and biodynamic wines, consumers still know little about them. So we thought we'd provide you with a short update! In Europe*, organic wine production shares common specifications and certification is subject to a three-year conversion period, followed by inspections by private bodies. Chemical pesticides are banned and the only authorised conventional product is copper sulphate to combat the onslaught of parasites such as downy mildew. In the winery, there are also numerous restrictions, particularly regarding the use of sulphur and heating the crop. Biodynamic wine can be defined as organic with an extra dimension. Winegrowers use preparations to promote biodiversity in their vineyards and intervene according to the movement of the stars. A case in point is pruning, which must be done on the waning moon when the sap heads down towards the roots. These techniques tend to be quite empirical but the basic premise is to maintain balance and plant vigour before being confronted with a disease which will need to be countered. The wines are more expensive to produce because of higher labour costs and lower yields, but demand is growing every year and the issue has now become a matter of public health. We now know that chemical residues are not only present in wine but remain in the soil for decades. Starting with our next issue, we will introduce a new section focusing on organic wines to showcase environmentally friendly wine production, which should eventually become the norm.

*For other producer countries, 5 have equivalents to European organic certification (Canada, the United States, Switzerland, New Zealand and Chile). The others (South Africa, Australia, Argentina...) must be certified by a European body (Ecocert in France, BCS in Germany, Control Union in the Netherlands...).

EDITORIAL

– SYLVAIN PATARD –
Editor in Chief



AFTER A RAINY SPRING, WHAT KIND OF VINTAGE CAN WE EXPECT?

After a period of intense drought in 2017, water resources have been significantly replenished this year across the French wine regions, including the South, due to a very wet spring which led to a national rainfall surplus of +22%. In Provence and Corsica, March 2018, for example, was the second wettest March in nearly 60 years. In the rest of the country, total rainfall is more inconsistent because of frequent thunderstorms with huge quantities of rain sometimes falling on very localised areas; occasionally, there were also unfortunately some highly destructive hailstorms like in the Blaye and Bourg areas near Bordeaux.

In Provence, rainfall records were broken in the spring with quantities totalling 289 mm from March to May. A similar scenario occurred in Languedoc. In Hérault, for example, rainfall from January to April averaged 540 mm. Roussillon experienced lower levels and did not benefit from sufficient rain, just like the Rhone Valley, but it should be enough to properly supply vines with water until the harvest. On the flip side, the problem of drought aside, winegrowers are now having to deal with disease pressure from mildew. Another major factor was last year's drought, which also delayed budburst and is a sign that the harvest will be later than in 2017. The quality of the 2018 vintage will be good, provided the sun shines in July and August.

When the Angel's share takes on another meaning

The 11th charity auction of outstanding Cognacs will take place on Thursday 20 September 2018 in Cognac, with chef Thierry Marx as patron.

It is organised in collaboration with the Artcurial auction house, whose wines & spirits department is a global benchmark in its field. As always, the event will attract collectors from around the world to the exceptional venue of the Hotel Les Chais Monnet. The proceeds from the auction will be donated in part to the Cuisine Mode d'Emploi(s) rehabilitation school created in 2012 by Thierry Marx, which allows former prisoners and particularly young people who have failed academically to re-integrate into society by learning a profession around cooking, free of charge. The second part of the proceeds will be given to the Fraineau Association in Cognac, which welcomes young people with mild and moderate disabilities with or without associated disorders. Twenty-two outstanding bottles and blends are donated by the Cognac houses and for the first time this year by the appellation's wine growers. Another new feature this year is that fifteen of the lots also include an experience for two in the Cognac appellation area, focusing on its terroir, its players, its professions and its flavours.



The lovely bottle donated by Hardy

Companies taking part:

Bache-Gabrielsen; Château Montifaud; Cognac de Luze-Maison Boinaud; Cognac François Voyer; Cognac Frapin; Cognac Meukow; Courvoisier; Delamain & Co; Domaine Francis Abécassis; E. Rémy Martin & Co; Hardy; Hine; Jas Hennessy & Co; La Maison Larsen; Louis Royer; Maison Bisquit - Dubouché et cie; Maison Ferrand; Martell; Merlet; Normandin; Mercier; Tiffon; Union Générale des Viticulteurs Cognac.

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DRINK RESPONSIBLY.

Alimentaria: A showcase for Spanish products

Alimentaria is a multi-faceted trade fair, presenting a vast array of foodstuffs but also wines in a dedicated hall.

Exhibitors are mostly Catalan although Spanish wine regions are also represented and offer a fairly precise vision of Spanish wine production with attendance by internationally renowned groups like Freixenet and Felix Solis Avantis. There are also some real little gems offering a perfect illustration of the quality of Spanish vineyard sites and the huge diversity of native grape varieties. Bodegas Murviedro and its Valencia wines, including labels made from the incredible Bobal grape variety, are just a few examples. Others include Vega Tolosa and its Castilla-La Mancha wines from the same grape variety, and the incredible white wines of Rias Baixas and Albariño by Pazo Pegullal. All of them an absolute joy!



Hervé Malnati, Sophie L'Homme and Sylvain Patard on the Murviedro Bodegas stand

Spirit tourism off the beaten track

This is not about taking a boat trip along the Charente but about diving into the heart of the Cognac region, and soaking up the atmosphere at Frapin, a family that has called Charente its home, amazingly, since 1270.

The story unfurls near Segonzac, in the heart of Grande Champagne, a prestigious growth proffering extremely long-lived brandies with a very fine floral bouquet. Throughout the year, Maison Frapin welcomes epicureans, enthusiasts and/or connoisseurs, keen to discover the region. The tour takes you through the firm's 8-century-long history and reveals its long-standing expertise based on artisanal distillation on the lees and ageing in hundred-year-old cellars. The visit ends in the cellar master's incredible tasting room where you can discover its range of Cognacs, with the exception of the exclusive bottlings.



Frapin, the archetypal Cognac

Visits in French or English, all year round by appointment only, Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.
Duration: from 45 minutes to 1 hour per group of one to 20 people per visit, €10 per person
Tel : +33 5 45 83 40 03 - visites@cognac-frapin.com - www.cognac-frapin.com



FOUR WINEMAKERS FOR SUMMER 2018

CHÂTEAU REAL D'OR

2017

Côtes de Provence

€ 9,90*

Stéphane DUMONTOIS
CAVAVIN GUJAN MESTRAS
124, Cours de Verdun
Centre Commercial Montjoly 2
33470 GUJAN MESTRAS
☎ +33 (0)9 67 79 61 49



CHÂTEAU OLLIÈRES

Prestige 2017

Côtes de Provence

€ 13,90*

Bruno GIRAUDEL
CAVAVIN GRENOBLE
10, rue Beyle Stendhal
38000 GRENOBLE
☎ +33 (0)4 76 47 27 06



CHAMPAGNE PANNIER

Brut Rosé

Champagne

€ 30,50*

Maxime GEFRIAUD
CAVAVIN PORNIC
78, rue Jean Moulin
44210 PORNIC

☎ +33 (0)2 40 82 46 95



CHÂTEAU AUZIAS

2017

Cité de Carcassonne

€ 4,80*

Nicolas MOREAU
CAVAVIN MURET
167, avenue Jacques Douzan
31600 MURET

☎ +33 (0)5 34 56 85 37



* Retail price including sales tax

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Legacies, investments and self-indulgence

Bordeaux is just as aspirational as ever!

Some of them are enthusiasts, others investors; some are just a tiny bit insane whilst others are looking for change of lifestyle or aiming to write another chapter in the family's history... All of them come from different backgrounds but ultimately their paths cross in the vineyards of Bordeaux.

What follows are 5 very different stories with wine as the common theme.

By Sylvain Patard

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



Géraldine Lefebvre-Lopez in her tasting room, where she likes to welcome private and trade clients

GÉRALDINE LEFEBVRE-LOPEZ: THE WILL TO SUCCEED

Obviously Bordeaux mostly makes the headlines when a prestigious chateau changes hands. There is, admittedly, a chasm between a vineyard in Entre-deux-Mers and a Médoc Grand Cru Classé, both in terms of financial value and reputation.

You would be wrong, though, to think that this could have made Géraldine Lefebvre-Lopez hesitate for one second. The story began in 1963 when the vineyard was established by her grandfather. There were three to four hectares of land used for mixed farming and wines sold in bulk; the first bottles would not be released until 1973. From 1980, the pace of life on the estate fastened with the arrival of Géraldine's father and uncle. The area under vine grew to 50 hectares and 85% of the wines were sold by the tank to negociants. In the early 2000s, Bordeaux was in the throes of recession and 10 hectares had to be uprooted. Géraldine began studying at the Montagne Saint-Emilion viticultural college and graduated with flying colours in 2003. She started her career in Saint-Emilion, but challenging times would mean that she would not be able not settle down. She then left for

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



The Lopez vineyards now cover 40 hectares in the Bordeaux and Bordeaux Supérieur appellation area and have been converted to organic

Spain with her boyfriend, «who is now my husband,» she says. They spent 4 years near Alicante developing a business of landscape gardening and installing irrigation systems in the region's many golf courses.

As the economic situation improved in Bordeaux, they decided to return, spurred on by the arrival of their daughter Jade. The year is 2009 and after taking over the company's marketing reins and developing exports so that low-paying bulk sales could be reduced, Géraldine was firmly at the helm by 2011. To say that she quickly made her mark on the property is an understatement. Today it sells 100% of its wines in bottles – all 260,000 of them under the Château Lagrugère and Château de l'Hermitage brands – and the 40 hectares of vineyards have been converted to organic. Also, exports account for about 80% of its sales with shipments bound for countries such as Brazil, China, Japan, Germany, Russia and the USA. So what are her secrets? She has two main strengths: unfailing energy and also an above-average sense of commerce and service. For instance, she developed an ingenious system of personalised labels which enables her to supply each of her negotiant customers with labels that they will not find amongst rival firms. The only cloud on the horizon is that a staggering 90% of the crop was lost in 2017. But as always, Géraldine showed her mettle and was able to produce 40,000 bottles of wine. She will also be releasing a wine with no added sulphites which she hopes to be able to sell with a higher price tag. She received 90,000 euros in compensation from her insurance company which is far from covering her losses, but most of all, her bank manager has complete faith in her.

She has no shortage of projects: she aims to hire one or two people who will, as she puts it, “be out on the tractor from the beginning of January to the end of December”; she intends to double the winery's footprint and to review bottling logistics so that they are more functional. At production level, she has no desire to expand but still needs more wines and is heading towards buying grapes – organic, of course – from 5 to 6 hectares of vines to meet demand. Her objective is to gradually build up inventories in addition to annual rotations, which would give her extra insurance in the event of more adverse weather conditions. As she explains by way of



In the cellar where Cuvée Jade (after her daughter) is stored in wooden cases like a grand cru

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –

a conclusion: «Obviously nobody wants this, but these extreme phenomena have become more frequent in recent years, so it is better to be prepared». You wouldn't expect anything less from the ever-resourceful Géraldine.

PETIT VAL: A TALE OF TWO WINE BUFFS

Petit Val is a completely different story. It is of course the name of a place and vineyard site, but above all it is the story of the type of encounter that can change the destinies of its protagonists. Jean-Louis Alloin, a businessman and epicurean with Beaujolais roots, is passionate about wine, particularly Saint-Emilion. When he and his wife Olivia met consultant and winemaker David Liorit, little did he suspect that it would lead to the discovery of this sleeping terroir, a gem buried in the north of the appellation area. He would, though, fall under its charm and acquire six hectares of vines where the sandy and clay soils produce very elegant wines. From then on, David would take matters in hand and set about creating an environment conducive to a thriving vineyard. This involved using sustainable wine growing techniques, planting cereals, introducing grass cover and preserving biodiversity by planting fruit trees, creating hedges and establishing hives in the vineyard. All of which, of course, had to be coupled with major investments in the cellars and the winery to provide the wine with the best possible conditions. There was also vineyard management by hand (and partly by horse), no insecticides, no weedkillers, manual harvesting, a refrigerated truck to protect the grapes from oxidation, selective sorting and single vineyard fermentations and maturation.

The result is two labels: Château Petit Val and Muse du Val. After the first vintage - 2014 - which was very successful, the two men nevertheless felt that the wine needed to be enhanced in terms of complexity. So they embarked on a new quest which was rewarded in 2015 with the acquisition of Château Béard with its limestone hillside vineyard and beautiful 40 to 50 year-old vines. The total area under vine rose from 6 to 12 hectares with a much wider array of soil types to work with. David could sense the potential of the site, which was highly complementary to the plateau of Petit-Val and worked with his team – most notably Pascal and Joël - to reveal



David Liorit is constantly on the look-out for new things, like the amphorae he has been using for several years



Jean-Louis Alloin and his wife Olivia with David Liorit, director of Château Petit-Val, in the centre

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



Dominique Befve, director of Château Lascombes

its qualities in order to produce an even more interesting wine. The result is perfectly illustrated in the 2016 vintage which is more fleshy and dense with very elegant tannins. The Château is already extremely charming and the Muse offers enormous potential and promising complexity which could soon earn it a place among the appellation's leading lights. This is the avowed ambition of Jean-Louis Alloin and his wife. Their next project is to bring wine lovers to Petit Val and they have plenty of ideas about how to achieve it, including permanent exhibitions (photos, paintings, sculptures...); educational workshops for children; and walking tours of the vineyard where each plot is identified by age, grape variety, rootstock, area and number of vines.

CHÂTEAU LASCOMBES: FROM CAPITALISM TO MUTUALISM

A change of scenery now, to the Médoc and one of the most prestigious wine producing villages in the world: Margaux. The director of Château Lascombes (2nd Grand

Dominique Befve in the vineyards of Château Lascombes



David Liorit in the barrel cellar at Petit-Val



The 2016 vintage displays remarkable fullness



The cellars at Château Lascombes, renovated by the former owner in 2001



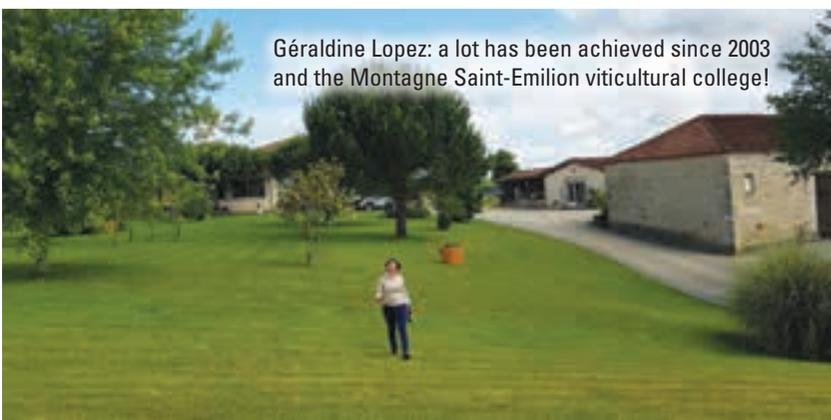
Laurent Cisneros in the grass-covered vineyards of Rouillac



In the 19th century, Château de Rouillac was owned by Baron Haussmann



Géraldine Lopez: a lot has been achieved since 2003 and the Montagne Saint-Emilion viticultural college!



COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



The ground floor houses a cellar complete with barrels and bottles, particularly large formats

Cru Classé), Dominique Befve, welcomes us to explain the recent history of this Médoc gem. He knew the former owners, Colony Capital, an American pension fund that bought the chateau from the English group Bass Charrington in 2001 and kept it for 10 years: “Colony Capital did not aim to make a living from Lascombes but to make a capital gain, which partly explains the resale after ten years”. Major technical work has thus been carried out since 2001, both in the vineyard and in the vat and barrel cellar. The ultimate objective was to improve the quality of the wine and raise its price tag in the Bordeaux wine market. This pure product of capitalism sold Lascombes to a mutual insurer, MACSF* in 2011 for around 200 million euros. Dominique Befve adds: “This is a very different investor profile. Mutual funds have statutory obligations to own assets and Lascombes is probably a long-term investment. This is a very good thing, both for the employees and for the image of the chateau and above all for the confidence it inspires in the Bordeaux market”. The new owners have kept the same teams and have the same ambition which is to take the wines of Lascombes to ever greater heights. Probably the biggest change is their intention to open the chateau up much more to the public. The pretty Chartreuse adjacent to the cellars was completely renovated in 2017 and has become a wine tourism centre open 6 days a week, with the ultimate aim of opening every day. As Dominique Befve points out by way of a conclusion: “A large part of the Médoc is now classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and we think it is our duty to play ball and welcome the tourists who make an effort to come and meet us”. And who would complain about that?!



Hervé Berland and his team are taking Château Montrose in a new direction

CHÂTEAU MONTROSE: WHEN THE ENVIRONMENT TAKES CENTRE STAGE

Saint-Estèphe, the northernmost appellation in the Médoc, is home to a few gems from the 1855 classification, including second Grand Cru Classé Château Montrose. We are welcomed by Hervé Berland, manager and director since 2012. The property spent many years in the hands of a famous Médoc family - the Charmolüe - and

*MACSF: *Mutuelle d'Assurance du Corps de Santé Français*

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



Hervé Berland, manager of Montrose, with Melissa and Martin Bouygues

was acquired in 2006 by Martin and Olivier Bouygues in a personal capacity through their holding company (SCDM), and not by the Bouygues group as is often thought. “This is a small nuance but it is important to specify it”, says Hervé Berland by way of an introduction. “Obviously it is a property asset investment but there is an additional dimension here. Château Montrose was their father Francis’ favourite wine and becoming its owner naturally has a special meaning for them”. This wasn’t their only Bordeaux acquisition. The neighbouring property of Tronquoy-Lalande was bought in the process, as well as - more recently - Clos Rougeard from the Foucault brothers in Saumur-Champigny in the Loire Valley in 2017 – and what a gem that is! At the beginning of the year, they even bought about twenty hectares near Barbezieux in Petite Champagne (Cognac) to produce a

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –

high quality artisanal brandy.

But back to Montrose. At the time of the acquisition in 2006, Martin Bouygues mostly kept the existing teams at the château, but as a wise manager, he intuitively knew that it was best to place a skilled, local figurehead at the helm to establish the chateau's credibility. His choice of Jean-Bernard Delmas, a leading light in Bordeaux who worked for 40 years at Haut-Brion, was hard to beat and Delmas did indeed bring his credentials to the purchase. But in 2011 he suffered from ill health and had to hand over to none other than Hervé Berland of Mouton-Rothschild fame, a few hundred metres away. The new duo worked well and Martin Bouygues succeeded primarily in getting his message across, which is to produce the finest wines by relying on our own skills but also by looking at the world around us and drawing from it everything that can add a bonus to the business. Present-day issues revolve mainly around the environment and Montrose is aiming to be exemplary in this respect. "To date, we have converted 65% of our vineyards to organic and our aim is to be 100% organic in two years' time", confirms Hervé Berland. This is not just idle banter or a marketing gimmick but hard facts. "At the moment, for example, there is strong pressure from mildew due to very wet weather, but we will not go backwards and use systemic spraying, even if we are not yet in the process of applying for certification. Our overall approach can be summarized as follows: ensuring that the environmental footprint of our business is as small as possible". Preserving an irreplaceable terroir by using environmentally-friendly techniques – and producing top quality wines in the process – may seem self-evident. But despite this, mentalities are slow to change and awareness is far from being embraced by all. So Montrose's courageous decision should be hailed. Hervé Berland adds: "Recognition of the terroir will also make our wine unique and identify our genetic make-up which, by definition, is also unique. Ultimately, our approach is about anti-globalisation and anti-uniformity". It is also one that Martin Bouygues "supports 1,000%" Hervé Berland reveals to us.



By buying Montrose in 2006, Olivier and Martin Bouygues in some ways realised the dream of their father Francis



The magnificent vineyards of Montrose, alongside the Gironde

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



Laurent Cisneros at Château de Rouillac, surrounded by his wife and three daughters

CHÂTEAU DE ROUILLAC: A LIFESTYLE PROJECT

Laurent Cisneros is a real character. Spanish by origin, Charentais by adoption, he was born in Bordeaux and was an apprentice footballer poised to become professional at AS Cannes where he met a certain Zinedine Zidane. He finally became an entrepreneur and winemaker. As he says mischievously: "I didn't follow any curriculum - it followed me! I ended up with a two-year university diploma which was nothing outstanding but it allowed me to bounce back when the doors to professional football closed in front of me". He then joined the family company offering after-sales service on heating appliances created by his parents in 1963 while continuing to make an appearance on football pitches at weekends, particularly with the club at Angoulême which trained him and where he moved up into the national division.

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



Titan, the percheron at Rouillac tasked with tillage

As he was about to turn thirty, he bought his father's company and never looked back. From around ten employees he rose to 90 in 9 years with regional coverage across Poitou-Charentes and a view to going national. The European industry leader then contacted him and bought his company, which is when he rekindled the tiny flame inside him that was lit by his great-grandfather Tomas Cisneros, formerly a wine grower near Madrid. "I've had this desire buried somewhere for a long time, if not forever, and it was an opportunity to set off in search of a third life at last", he admits. He therefore went off to look for a winery in Bordeaux and after many ups and downs visited Rouillac. The deal was complicated, but he'd fallen in love with the property. «I said to myself almost immediately: this is where I want to be», he confides rather emotionally.

This is how the Cisneros family - Laurent, his wife and 3 daughters - moved to Château de Rouillac in July 2010. The work needed to restore, transform and re-energise the estate was colossal but the tireless contractor was not daunted. He wholeheartedly embraced his new life and committed himself with lorry loads of determination. From the start, he set up a seminar room to bring in companies, whilst also creating a shop and hiring qualified wine tourism help which he viewed as essential when you are lucky enough to be a stone's throw away from Bordeaux. In the vineyard, he recruited a technical director - Jean-Christophe Baron, still with him today - in order to regenerate the vines, which had been neglected. "We have planted more than 10 hectares in 5 years, with bearing hectareage now totalling 27 which is a viable economic model", Laurent tells us. «I have also committed the estate to environmentally-friendly viticulture as much as possible. We use 100% tillage, some of it with draught horses, in order to preserve soil life and we use grass cover. Rouillac now holds the HVE** level III standard as part of nationwide environmental recommendations. We are on the cusp of organic certification".

In terms of terroir, with its gravel from the Tertiary



The beautiful viewpoint from the barrel cellar at Château de Rouillac

**HVE: Haute Valeur Environnementale/ High environmental value

COVER STORY

– BORDEAUX –



Laurent Cisneros and his eldest daughter Mélanie who works with him at the Château

period, Rouillac is clearly focused on finesse. “That’s a good thing”, adds Laurent, “I don’t like over-wooded wines and our winemaker Eric Boissenot is of a similar mind, just like Sophie Burguet, our cellar master, from Burgundy”.

So much has been achieved since 2010 and it’s not over yet. Laurent has his sights set on the long term. As he likes to say, he is building a lifestyle project and not just making an investment. There is no shortage of projects, but as close to his heart as Rouillac are his origins, and he is seriously considering a return to his roots in the future, to the homeland of his ancestors. In fact, he has just reached the first step of what he had aimed for, and that is to produce a Spanish wine (from Rioja), which he will soon present with equal amounts of pride and emotion to his father. But it’s still a secret, so don’t let on!

An easily-recognisable varietal and marketing cue, Chardonnay must also be noted for its ability to demonstrate the inherent character of each vineyard site.



50 Shades of Chardonnay

It is the undisputed star of white grape varieties throughout the world. According to figures published by the International Organisation of Vine and Wine in 2017, Chardonnay thrives in 41 countries over a total area of 210,000 hectares. Native to Burgundy, this cross between Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc still accounts for over half the varietal range in its homeland, where its finest renditions are born. Each Burgundy appellation reveals a different facet of Chardonnay, either fat or dry, mineral or floral, brioche or iodine-driven - some of them encapsulate them all.

By Alexandra Réveillon

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates - Etienne Ramousse Images

BURGUNDY

– TOP WINE REGIONS –



In Chablis, sediment contained in soils dating back to the Kimmeridgian impart salinity and minerality to Chardonnay

When nonchalantly ordering a glass of Chardonnay, the lady at the next table to me at the pavement café was probably expecting a dry, mineral white wine, marked by aromas of white flowers and brioche. We may well ask for Chardonnay as we would a major brand of soda, this is no industrialised wine. Made from the most widely planted white grape variety in the world, its character changes depending on the soil where it grows. Nowhere displays this more potently than Burgundy. From Chablis to Mâcon via Beaune, Montagny-les-Buxy, Vinzelles and Saint-Vérand, each locality produces distinctive white wines which, whilst cut from the same cloth, manage to express their own personality.

CHABLIS,

A LEGACY OF THE KIMMERIDGIAN AGE

This array of personas owes much to the myriad soil types in Burgundy. In Chablis, Chardonnay is planted

BURGUNDY

– TOP WINE REGIONS –

on marl and limestone soils dating back to an era of the Upper Jurassic, the Kimmeridgian. The subsoil is 150 to 200 million years old and is composed of grey marl and layers of limestone particularly rich in fossils. It is not uncommon to find small oysters called *exogyra virgula* in the vineyards, bearing witness to the presence of a prehistoric sea. Over the millennia, this expanse of water gradually filled with minerals and sediments, which today form the wine region's different terroirs. "The ground is very rocky," explains Stéphane Brocard. More than ten years after starting up in Longvic, the negociant, who also matures his wines, produces 250,000 bottles of Chablis, Petit-Chablis and Chablis Premier Cru every year. "The terroir suffuses Chardonnay with notes of citrus fruits and flowers, coupled with beautiful minerality. There is tension and precision. I particularly like the salty notes on the finish, which give the wine consistency".

THE CÔTE DE BEAUNE, HOME TO EXCEPTIONAL WHITES

One hundred kilometres farther south, the Burgundian subsoil has a completely different appearance. Emerging from the collapse of the Saône plain 150 million years ago, the Côte de Beaune forms a geological millefeuille that stretches from the Côte de Nuits to the Côte Chalonnaise. The soils of scree, marl and brown limestone, dating back to the Oxfordian, Callovian and Bathonian geological eras, can reach depths of up to ten metres. The vines sink their roots into them to draw out character and finesse. The clayey marl and limestone soils that predominate in the southern part of the Côte de Beaune, between Saint-Romain and Cheilly-lès-Maranges, make the area a propitious site for Chardonnay. It yields white wines with golden reflections. Intense, ample and powerful, they show distinctive aromas of white fruits, flowers and fresh butter. The aptly-named "Côte des Blancs" is home to five of Burgundy's great wines, Montrachet, Bâtard-Montrachet, Criots-Bâtard-Montrachet, Bienvenue-Bâtard-Montrachet and Chevalier-Montrachet, all of them symbolising the quintessential qualities of the grape variety worldwide.



Stéphane Brocard, a negociant who matures wines in Chablis, aims to emphasise salinity in his wines



Chardonnay is both vigorous and high-yielding. Its only enemy is spring frosts which are a constant threat in Burgundy

BURGUNDY

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Wine growers can choose between casks or stainless steel to emphasise either the vanilla oak edge or minerality in their Chardonnays

THE CÔTE CHALONNAISE

Nestled between the Côte de Beaune to the north and the Mâconnais to the south, the Côte Chalonnaise stretches for 25 kilometres across Burgundy. Vineyards define a landscape made of rolling hills and slopes facing east and south. Connected to the north of the Massif Central, the soils date back to the Jurassic period and lay on a limestone bedrock. Sand, marl and flinty clay complete the geological profile of the wine region in the form of layers. While the less clayey soils are suitable for growing Pinot noir, the clay-limestone is particularly suitable for Chardonnay. The southernmost appellation in the region, Montagny, is totally dedicated to the white grape variety. "It is the only appellation in the Côte Chalonnaise to produce 100% Chardonnay," explains Françoise Feuillat-Juillot. Since 2004, she has been at the helm of the estate that bears her name. Every year, she produces nearly 80,000 bottles of Montagny and Montagny Premier Cru. These are fresh, lively wines which develop aromas of white-fleshed fruit. Their minerality accentuates their subtlety and elegance.

THE MÂCONNAIS, A LAND OF CONTRASTS

On the border with Beaujolais, the vineyards of the Mâconnais put down roots in brown limestone soils dating back to the Jurassic period. The north of the region, near Tournus, is distinguished by its clay soils. "These particular terroirs yield profound, ample and structured wines, with notes of ripe apricots", explains Nicolas Dewé, managing director of the co-operative winery Les Vignerons de Mancey. Five kilometres away, in the Mâcon-Cruzilles appellation area, Frédéric Touzot produces a Chardonnay at the other end of the spectrum. Ethereal and aromatic, it is marked by notes of citrus fruits and white-fleshed fruits which underscore its elegance and smoothness. "The vines grow on very chalky soils. They're so white you almost need sunglasses!" quips Nicolas Dewé.



In Mâcon-Cruzilles, Frédéric Touzot produces a Chardonnay that is ethereal and aromatic

NORTHERN CHARDONNAY VERSUS SOUTHERN CHARDONNAY

The fact that sunglasses are more useful in Mâcon than in Chablis hints at the diversity of Chardonnays from Burgundy. "We don't have the same climate", notes

BURGUNDY

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Françoise Feuillat-Juillot and her daughter Camille adjust their winemaking techniques to suit each Montagny Premier Cru so that sense of place can be maximised for each vineyard parcel

Stéphane Brocard. “In Chablis, we are still in the North of France. Here it’s cool in winter and summers are hot but not too hot”. Beaune’s temperatures are slightly further up the scale year-round, while Montagny-lès-Buxy basks in a temperate climate, characterised by cold winters and hot summers. “The difference in temperatures between the two seasons is quite high,” explains Françoise Feuillat-Juillot. Farther south, Tournus clearly marks the boundary between the northern vineyards and the first, southernmost plots. “The architecture in the towns attests to this climatic boundary”, comments Nicolas Dewé. “From Tournus onwards, flat roof tiles switch to rounded terracotta Roman tiles. The roofs are much less steep and blinds designed to prevent the sun from shining indoors start to appear”. The wine growers’ ability to understand their soil types and climate they bask in plays a pivotal role in the way they make their Chardonnays. “There has to be a good alchemy between the soil, the climate and the winegrower,” explains Stéphane Brocard. “Harvesting takes place over a period of one week to ten days. In recent years, harvests have been warmer, resulting in richer wines. In my opinion, there should be no hesitation in

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Nicolas Dewé is managing director of the Vignerons de Mancey co-operative winery

bringing them forward two or three days if the summer has been particularly hot. This enables us to retain good acidity levels without foresaking ripeness. If we wait, we get heavier, fatter wines that lose their Chablis character”.

TILLAGE,

A FUNDAMENTAL PART OF THE PROCESS

“The human factor remains the essential element”, stresses Françoise Feuillat-Juillot. “From pruning through to the harvest, and in the winery during winemaking and maturation, the winegrower chooses the character he wants to give his wine”. Stéphane Brocard admits that he favours stainless steel vats to preserve salinity and minerality in his Chablis, although he concedes that “in the first few years, when the vines are young, it is tempting to influence the wines to make them fatter and more oaky. After four or five years, the terroir resumes its role”. Nicolas Dewé agrees: “Young

BURGUNDY

– TOP WINE REGIONS –

vines have a more varietal side". The grape variety is bound to express itself more than in grapes from older vines, whose roots have had time to dig down into the soil and draw out its fundamental qualities. "Working the soil is particularly important", emphasises the managing director of Les Vignerons de Mancey. "Vine are lazy. They must be forced to put down deep roots so that sense of place can express itself".

ONE GRAPE VARIETY, ONE APPELLATION, SEVERAL PERSONAS

The age and depth of the roots are exactly what help Chardonnay cover a broad spectrum within a single estate. "In Mâcon-Cruzilles, wines produced from young vines are driven by citrus fruits like grapefruit. The old vines, on the other hand, produce wines with lots of elegance and finesse, dominated by aromas of white fruits such as peach", says Nicolas Dewé. At Domaine Feuillat-Juillot, each of the six Montagny Premier Cru wines have individual personas. One may show distinctive fat and an oaky finish, whilst another will offer up appealing roundness and suppleness. The Coères vineyard is planted to vines over sixty years old that yield a rich, upright wine with notes of white fruit, vanilla and marshmallow. "This is due to the terroir effect, aspect and the age of the vines", explains the winegrower, who adds: "Winemaking techniques are adjusted to suit each Premier Cru to maximise sense of place in individual plots".

CHARDONNAY, AN EASILY-RECOGNISABLE VARIETAL AND MARKETING CUE

In addition to the simple - yet so incredibly complex! - Chardonnay itself, Burgundy winegrowers seek to enhance the characters specific to each appellation, or even each single vineyard, when introducing their wines to their customers. "I emphasise the typical characters of Montagny and its terroir", confirms Françoise Feuillat-Juillot. Nicolas Dewé shares her viewpoint: "What is important is the appellation, whether that's Cruzilles or Mancey. Chardonnay is only a tool, a lever". Basically, Chardonnay is a cue that should not let us neglect the complexity and richness of white Burgundy wines.



Montagny is the only appellation in the Côte Chalonnaise to produce 100% Chardonnay



Over time, vines push their roots down into the subsoil to draw out quintessential sense of place

BURGUNDY

– TOP WINE REGIONS –



Young vines give Chardonnay a more varietal edge

OUTSIDE BURGUNDY

Although Burgundy is its birthplace, Chardonnay now flourishes globally, from Champagne to Languedoc via Chile, Australia and Oregon. Its yield capacity and vigour – virtually nothing affects it, with the exception of spring frosts – make it a popular grape variety. It lends itself equally well to still wines as to sparkling wines: Champagne makes it the most widely drunk grape variety on the planet. It would be an illusion, however, to believe that the great white wines of Burgundy can be cloned on other continents. New Zealand Chardonnay, for example, is more heady and fruit-forward. In California, almost continuous sunshine yields opulent wines, far from the minerality of a Chablis. Argentina and South Africa alike take advantage of their cooler climates to make wines more suitable for ageing. In this way, all these Chardonnay-based whites from the New World have developed their own typicity and are praised for their increasingly high levels of quality. This is an essential dimension if the prospect of standardisation is to be averted.



Côtes du Roussillon and Côtes du Roussillon Villages: Emblems of Catalonia

Formerly renowned for its dessert wines, Roussillon has successfully developed some remarkable red, rosé and white table wines. The two appellations, which can also feature village names such as Caramany, Lesquerde, Latour de France, Tautavel and Les Aspres, offer some incredible gems underpinned by an amazing array of vineyard sites. Despite the fact they are often below-the-radar, they can be truly delightful...

By Jean-Paul Burias

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates

ROUSSILLON

– REGION –



A vineyard between the sea and land

The wines of Roussillon encapsulate the charm of this beautiful region in southern France. The granite and gneiss sand, brown and black schist soils of the Agly uplands in the north-west and red and clay-limestone soils in the foothills of the Corbières reside comfortably together. In Les Aspres, the pebble-strewn terraces, siliceous clay and limestone-clay are home to outstanding quality vineyards. After a minimum of one year's ageing, the wines are generous and elegant with wild, spicy notes. All Côtes du Roussillon Villages with the exception of Les Aspres require at least two grape varieties to be blended. For the youngest Villages appellation Les Aspres – recognised in 2017 – there must be at least three of the authorised grape varieties - Syrah, Grenache Noir, Carignan, Mourvèdre and the fairly uncommon Iladoner Pelut. "Disease is not a major issue because the succession of wind and sun create a healthy environment", stresses Xavier Hardy, communications manager at the Roussillon Wine Marketing Board (CIVR). "Yields are low, very low in fact, due to water stress. Average rainfall in Roussillon should be between 500 and 600 mm but for the last three years it has been 350 mm". The Côtes du Roussillon and Villages appellations show distinctive freshness and elegance and have the privilege of being suitable for early-drinking or cellaring. As fresh, crisp wines they pair well with many dishes, which is an undeniable advantage in restaurants around the world.



André Gil ready to welcome his clients with his finest wines

DOMAINE DE LA PERDRIX:

A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF LES ASPRES

A visit to Domaine de la Perdrix offers a magnificent journey to the heart of a region, a vineyard site and a history imbued with art, culture and sharing. Here, time and work revolve around wine and the pleasure derived from quality. In the foothills of the Pyrenees, overlooking the Roussillon coastal plain, this exceptional estate grows 30 hectares of vines in Trouillas, in the heart of Les Aspres, 15 kilometres south of Perpignan. Refined, elegant and always impeccably balanced, these user-friendly wines offer a fascinating taste experience

ROUSSILLON

– REGION –



Virginie and André Gil, the owners of the estate

for a clientele of Epicureans. “This is true of both the white and red Côtes du Roussillon Joseph Sébastien Pons: the white wine delivers a rounded yet fresh palate marked by buttery and slightly toasted flavours, whilst the red is appealing due to its beautiful balance, round tannins and surprising freshness”, explains sales manager Gilles Guélé. “The two labels highlight the culture, the landscape with its rolling hills and plateaus and our long-standing expertise”. And what better invitation to try them?

DOMAINE DE VÉZIAN: BETWEEN LAND AND SEA

Set between the Mediterranean Sea and the 2,784-metre summit of the Canigou, Domaine de Vézian’s 30 hectares of vines cover the undulating terrain of Les Aspres. The poor soils derived from the erosion of the surrounding mountain ranges, the stony clay-limestone mixed with sandy clay provide an excellent basis for producing quality wines. They host a wide range of grape varieties: Sauvignon, Grenache Blanc and Gris

ROUSSILLON

– REGION –



Daily tasks at Domaine de Vézian

and Macabeu for the whites; Pinot Noir, Grenache Noir, Carignan, Cabernet-Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Marselan and Caladoc for the reds. This diversity paves the way for complex blends and characterful wines, such as the Tautavel, with its powerful, smooth mouthfeel and beautiful harmony. The Latour de France is extremely palatable and distinguished by its ageing potential, complexity and garrigue herb notes.

CHÂTEAU MONTANA:

TRADITION AND A RESPECT FOR WINE

Created in the 19th century, this traditional winery has been completely restructured since 1996. The vineyards surround the buildings over about thirty hectares in Les Aspres, south of Perpignan, between the sea and mountains on clay-limestone soils. “The hallmark features of our wines are suppleness, roundness and elegance”, explains estate owner Patrick Saurel. “In these outstanding vineyard sites, the only problem is low yields, due to the nature of the soils and the climate”. With its deep colour and complex, intense nose, the red Silencio displays beautiful complexity on the palate with round tannins and a velvety, spicy finish. Rich, balanced and complex, L’Astre blanc exudes clean aromatics mid-palate and lots of fat.

DOMAINE LAFAGE: HIGH STANDARDS

As you follow Roussillon’s northernmost river - the Agly - upstream, Catalonia’s vineyards gain in height. Rooted on black marl soils, the vines are buffeted by the strong northerly winds. It is here that Domaine Lafage seeks out the opulence and authenticity of Catalan grape varieties such as Muscat, Grenache Noir and Carignan. “We are unusual in that we have several different terroirs in Roussillon and therefore offer wines that mirror these differing origins and their characters”, explains owner Eliane Lafage. “These favourable conditions are accompanied by very high standards in the vineyard, winery and at the bottling stage. We seek to preserve fruit characters as much as possible in order to produce expressive wines showing intense, fresh aromatics, varietal expression – both for single varietals and blends



Views of Château Montana



Patrick Saurel, winemaker and owner at Château Montana, with his daughter Céline, who both run the estate



Eliane and Jean-Marc Lafage, owners of the eponymous estate

ROUSSILLON

– REGION –



Domaine Lafage's winery

– and beautiful balance combining freshness, fullness, lightness and presence on the palate”. The red Côtes du Roussillon Villages Les Aspres Léa (after her daughter) is memorable with its powerful nose, its perfumes of garrigue herbs and an elegant touch of ripe fruit and toast. The palate, which shows beautiful volume, lovely fullness and lots of concentration, ushers in a very persistent and elegant finish. A blend of Grenache blanc and gris and Macabeu, the white Grande Cuvée comes from a selection of the finest vineyards planted on marble and schist soils in the heart of the garrigue. With its delicate nose, its ample palate framed by beautiful vivacity and a freshness that is unusual for Roussillon, it offers lovely depth and all the complexity of a great white wine.

DOMAINE CAZES:

TWENTY YEARS OF BIODYNAMICS

Last year, Domaine Cazes celebrated 20 years of converting to biodynamics. A pioneer in its field, this household name, established in 1895, is considered a driving force in Roussillon's wine-growing landscape. In addition to its dessert wines, which are served in the world's finest Michelin-starred restaurants, it also

A view of the outside of the cellar door and the H. Leclair tower



Eliane and Jean-Marc Lafage

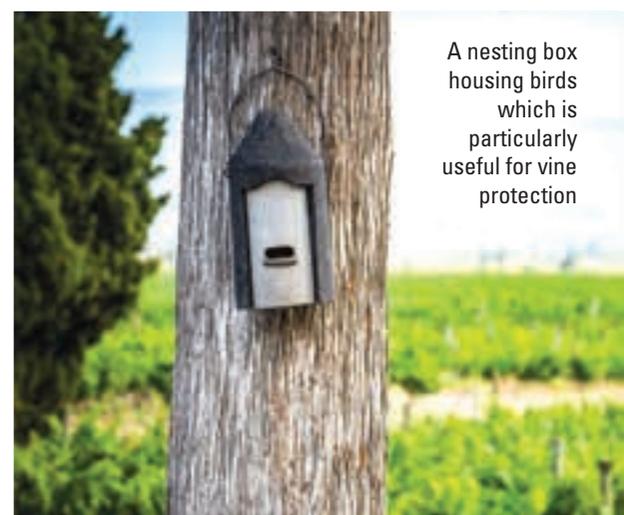
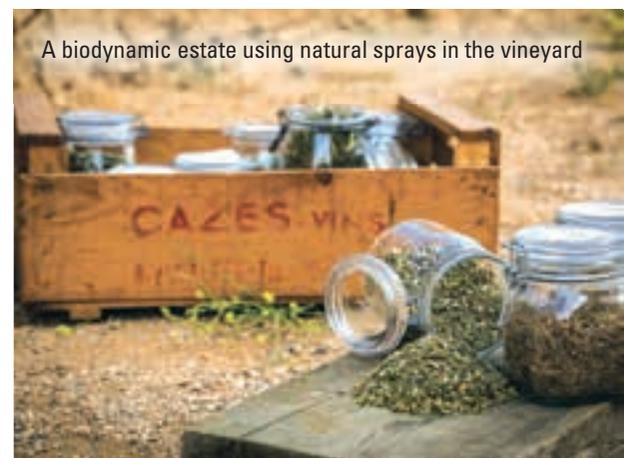


Emanuel Cazes helped convert the estate to organic and biodynamic as soon as he arrived in 1997



The entrance to Domaine de Vézian

A biodynamic estate using natural sprays in the vineyard



A nesting box housing birds which is particularly useful for vine protection

ROUSSILLON

– REGION –



Emmanuel Cazes, grandson of one of the estate's founders, in his winery

produces top wines in several outstanding sites in Roussillon, in Maury and Latour-de-France. Currently boasting 220 hectares, it has France's largest organic and biodynamic vineyard. Its vines enjoy perfect exposure and produce remarkable wines across the spectrum, including its two red Côtes du Roussillon Villages, Alter and Ego. Alter expresses itself wonderfully on the palate which is driven by notes of liquorice and leather coupled with a beautiful tannin structure. A subtle blend of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre with aromas of ripe red and black fruits, Ego has a distinctively rich, layered texture with delicate tannins.

There will always be a side to the wines that some consider as defects: too powerful, too much tannin presence, a heady array of aromatics... Despite that, the two appellations perfectly reflect the personality of Roussillon and are some of France's most successful terroir-driven wines.



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Provence rosés: The “top ten” of the year

In a few years, rosé has gained its pedigree as a full-fledged wine and broken free of its seasonality. Summer is still its high season, however, particularly under the magnificent sunny skies of Provence. Here are the region’s top ten offerings.

By Jean-Paul Burias

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates - Maxime Pietri - Haptag Media - Andrane de Barry

PROVENCE

– CHALLENGE –



Virginie Fabre, Guillaume Philip and their son Paul in the vineyards

In less than 30 years, rosé consumption has almost trebled in France and pink wine's popularity has spread beyond French borders, as shown by the constant increase in exports. Long viewed as simple fruity wines that needed to be served chilled to hide their possible defects, Provence rosé wines have undergone a sea change. The use of more efficient winemaking techniques, better control over refrigeration and particular attention paid to the choice of grape varieties, have paved the way for production of wines that now enjoy recognition. That's all the better because rosés account for the lion's share of regional output. Our assessments have singled out the 10 finest Provence rosés tasted this year.

DOMAINE DES DIABLES: MADE IN PROVENCE

This story is as beautiful as it is recent. In June 2005, Virginie Fabre and her partner Guillaume Philip entered the vinous spotlight. The two young graduates of an oenology and business school joined the estate created by Virginie's father in 1979, at the foot of the

PROVENCE

– CHALLENGE –



Jean-François and Christian Ott in their vineyards

mountain celebrated by Cézanne in Puyloubier, where they invented the 'Made In Provence' concept. Then in 2007, they created their own estate and released unique, eye-catching packaging. Medals and accolades have been showered on them, most notably their Made in Provence and Hydropathe labels. "We treat our rosé like a great red or white wine", explains Guillaume Philip. "We aim to achieve balanced alcohol, acidity and aromatic backbone in our pale coloured rosés". The result is Hydropathe Elite Rosé and Petits Diabls, which superbly encapsulate freshness, fruit and minerality. The wines are hugely successful and 60% of them are now bound for exports.

DOMAINES OTT: A FAMILY AFFAIR

Since 1896, rosé has been the Ott family's favourite wine, although the estate also boasts the ambition, talent and terroirs to produce whites and reds. "Rosé can and must be approached like the other colours", stresses Jean-François Ott, one of the estate's owners. "Our ambition is to make the best rosé in the world and we farm each vineyard site in a very specific way. It takes us over 500 hours of labour per hectare and per year to produce the finest fruit and requires countless details (tillage, pruning, debudding, leaf thinning)". The Ott family was never tempted to go down the chemical route. It shows deference to tradition whilst making the most of cutting-edge techniques that are respectful of the soils. The naturally pale Rosé Château de Selle displays distinctive finesse, delicacy, freshness and fruit without any bitterness on the finish. The refined and delicate Bandol Rosé Château Romassan pairs wonderfully with exotic cuisines.

CHÂTEAU DE BERNE: BORN IN BERNE

Admittedly Château de Berne was not the birthplace of rosé, but it has wholeheartedly embraced it. The high-altitude limestone soils impart fruit and freshness. The sunshine, rainfall and wind create conditions that are extremely conducive to wine growing. The 143-hectare vineyard mainly faces south and technical innovations combined with expertise have resulted in wines of now irreproachable quality, with hallmark aromatics for the Côtes de Provence so popular with connoisseurs, as epitomised by the Château de Berne Rosé. "Provence



Alexis Cornu, winery director and winemaker

PROVENCE

– CHALLENGE –



Sophie Denante and her brother Olivier Sumeire

is rightly perceived as the *crème de la crème* of rosés,” says Delphine Dubois, communications and marketing manager. “Of course, that has an effect on price points. Export markets are very important for Château de Berne because customers are looking for a brand, and that’s what we offer”. The estate’s wine tourism dimension conveys a strong lifestyle image, which is an integral part of quality. All of this is personified in the selection of rosé wines, including the elegant and impeccably balanced Grande Récolte.

SUMEIRE FAMILY:

WHEN ROSÉ BECOMES A LEGACY

Alongside her brother Olivier Sumeire, Sophie Sumeire Denante has inherited the expertise of her ancestors who have grown wine for eight generations on outstanding vineyard sites. Following vineyards that have been a feature of the local countryside since Antiquity, the Provencal road leads to Château Coussin in Trets and Château Maupague in Puyloubier. In the unique terroir of the Sainte-Victoire, clay-limestone soils coupled with

PROVENCE

– CHALLENGE –



Alongside her brother Olivier Sumeire, Sophie Sumeire Denante has inherited the expertise of her ancestors

a continental microclimate enhance the refined rosés, whose natural acidity and lovely layered character echo the nearby mountain. Great-grandfather Gabriel Sumeire came in search of the finest vineyard sites and acquired Château l’Afrique in Cuers, on the well-draining sand-clay soils of Pierrefeu in 1953. The estate’s racy, rounded rosés are marked by the nearby Mediterranean sea breezes and reveal aromas of citrus fruits like those planted in the estate’s grounds. “These two typical characters”, points out Sophie Sumeire, “remind us every day that Provence is rosé territory, and that there is something for everyone”. Here, the vineyards are meticulously farmed using sustainable techniques. Expressing sense of place is a single-minded objective, as is balance in wines like César à Sumeire, Coussin and l’Afrique. These rounded, indulgent, gourmet-food-style rosés make the perfect companions for grilled fish, Asian cuisine, and in the summer, barbecues or seafood, meat and vegetables cooked on a hot plate.

CHÂTEAU DU GALOUPET: AN OUTSTANDING LOCATION

Leaving the coastal road linking Hyères to Bormes-les-Mimosas, Château du Galoupet offers breathtaking views. The estate looks out onto superb scenery with salt flats in the foreground and islands on the horizon. Amongst the palm trees, olive trees and pines, the estate’s 165 hectares include 72 hectares of vines averaging around 25 years in age, ensuring character and assertiveness in the wines. A classified growth since 1955, it boasts an extremely wide-ranging array of soils, from clay-limestone around the château to schist on the hill. Accounting for 85% of production, rosés are by far the winery’s mainstay, complemented by reds (10%) and whites (5%). “The fruit is fermented by individual plots”, explains Gilles Bascle, technical and winemaking director. “The 36 plots each have their own tank so that precision blending safeguards the identity of the château’s Cru Classé label from year to year”. This light-coloured rosé with its silky palate gains its complexity from a series of aromas, whilst retaining faultless balance. Its structure makes it a suitable partner for elaborate dishes or a stand-alone wine for the aperitif.



Gilles Bascle, technical director and winemaker



Guillaume Philip in his vineyards



Domaine des Diabes



Jean-François and Christian Ott in their vineyards



Sophie Denante



A great barrel for wine tastings



A superb landscape with salt flats



Technical innovations combine with wine growing expertise



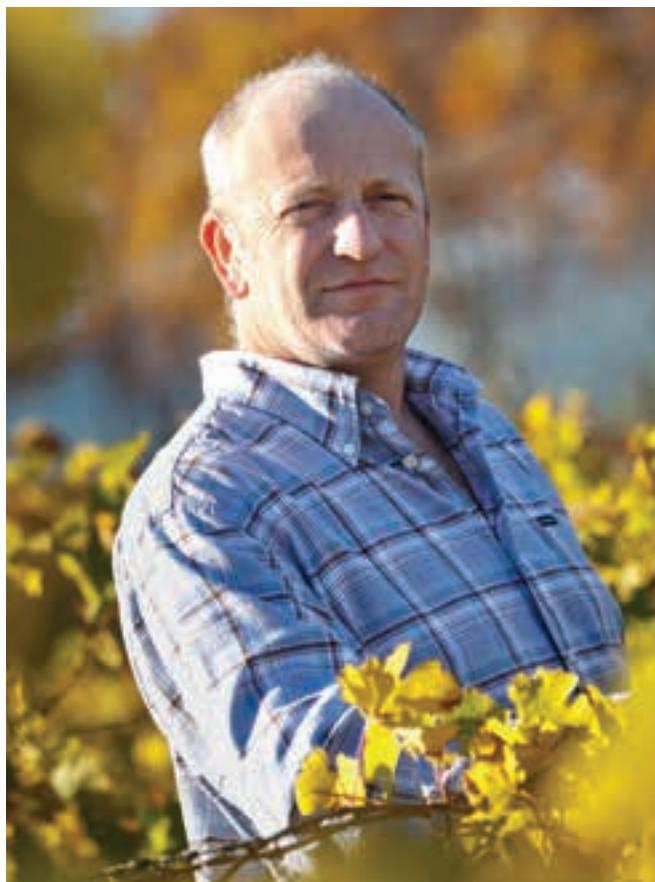
Gilles Bascle



Château Cousin in Trets

PROVENCE

– CHALLENGE –



Jean-Louis Sibran, “project manager” at Château Maïme

CHÂTEAU MAÏME: A GREAT ORIGIN

The Sibran Garcia family has kept its promise. About twenty years ago, it decided to create a family vineyard in the heart of the Côtes de Provence appellation. Combining audacity and the desire to aim for the best, the novice winegrowers moved to the foot of the Massif des Maures, where nearly two millennia ago Roman legionaries planted the first vines. The estate abounds in archaeological and religious remains, but above all it is home to an outstanding terroir. “We created the wine we were hoping to achieve”, explains winemaker and project manager Jean-Louis Sibran. “Year after year, we have nurtured each of our grape varieties on carefully selected plots in a way that allows their finest aromas to blossom”. Undoubtedly the most subtle interpretation of the terroir, the Origine label demonstrates its rich qualities by revealing a delicate balance of richness and complexity, and a long, rich finish. The result is a stunning tasting experience.

PROVENCE

– CHALLENGE –

CHÂTEAU DE L'AUMÉRADE: THE FLAGSHIP WINE

“Rosé has always been our flagship wine even if we produce very popular reds and whites”, says Henri Fabre Bartalli, director and owner of Fabre en Provence. “We were among the first to market Provence rosés in 1928. Our signature style epitomises our terroir and above all, our family”. The largest family vineyard in Var, the firm owns 550 hectares of vines in the Côtes de Provence area spread over several estates around Pierrefeu-du-Var, La Londe des Maures and Hyères. The two ‘Crus Classés’ châteaux, la Clapière and l’Aumerade, produce the ultimate wines for pleasure, as enjoyable to drink as they are difficult to make, due to the state-of-the-art techniques they require. The Fabre family has in fact always pioneered research and modern technology to give it complete control over the quintessential aromas of its wines. Its winery is fitted with modern and efficient equipment revolving around refrigeration and control over each grape variety and vineyard site. Among its lovely range of rosés, discerning connoisseurs will enjoy Seigneur de Piegros and the Marie-Christine label - whose bottle is inspired by cameo glass work by Emile Gallé – which will always be associated with famous lovers of exceptional and authentic wines.

CHÂTEAU SAINT-MAUR: EXCELLENCE IN PROVENCE

Located in Cogolin, 10 kilometres from Saint-Tropez, Château Saint-Maur sits in a memorable setting between the foothills of the impressive Massif des Maures and the Mediterranean Sea. Sheltered from the Mistral with good airflow, this 100-hectare estate including 70 planted to vines, faces entirely east-west. Opposite the historic chateau is a high-tech winery which blends in perfectly with the landscape due to the impressive perfection of its architecture. These cutting-edge facilities are a major asset for further upgrading the quality of the wines, which have become Provence benchmarks. The rosé L’Excellence is close to perfection, its meticulous blend of Rolle (5%), Syrah (25%), Grenache (40%) Mourvèdre (20%) combining sensual finesse with great elegance.



Henri Fabre Bartalli, managing director and owner



The pretty setting of Château Saint-Maur

PROVENCE

– CHALLENGE –



La Cadiérenne, the largest co-operative in the western Var

LES VIGNERONS DE LA CADIERENNE: ONE TERROIR, THREE WINE STYLES

The largest winery in the western Var, the Cadiérenne co-operative was created in 1929 by 37 local winegrowers. Today, the winery has nearly 300 members who farm approximately 600 hectares of vines. It offers a wide range of high quality rosés. With its pale raspberry-pink colour, the Un Terroir, Trois Expressions Mont Caume Rosé label beguiles the senses with its notes of red fruit and pomelos, and its compelling palate with beautiful aromatic persistence. A truly pleasurable drinking experience, it pairs beautifully with summer dishes, but also white meats and some cooked fish dishes. And all for under 10 euros!

CHÂTEAU DE BEAUPRÉ: A JEWEL IN THE CROWN

At Château de Beauré, rosé is a jewel in its own right, on a par with the estate's top red wines. Phanette and her brother Maxime Double, the guiding forces behind the property's quality approach to wine, select the grape varieties beforehand depending on the profile they seek to create in the wine. Grenache stands out as the leading grape variety for their rosés. "The harvest date is crucial", stresses Phanette Double. "We start harvesting at 4 am, at the coldest time of the night, to ensure cool grapes and preserve fruit aromas". The estate's, refined, elegant rosés carry a strong gourmet food connotation. Served in the finest restaurants, the Château Collection is partly fermented in barrels to maximise complexity. The Château Rosé is always a safe bet and a good compromise between an aperitif and food-style rosé. As the market expands, the profile and quality of rosés have been raised. "They are the perfect gourmet food partners for light, modern, sauce-free cooking that is proving so popular with female customers", points out Maxime Double. "Provence has become to rosé what Champagne is to sparkling wine. Its popularity can also help improve awareness and reach for our reds and whites".



Winemaker Phanette Double at work

Chignin vineyards near Chambéry. In the background,
the Belledonnes mountain range



Savoy

A feat of viticulture

The local winegrowers say it themselves: wine enthusiasts are often unaware of the conditions in which Savoy wines are grown.

The defining features of wine growing here are not so much about the harsh climate or high elevations, but rather the topography.

Vineyards are planted on steep hillsides, making access difficult.

By Armelle Baillon-Dubourg

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates - Syndicat régional des vins de Savoie

Eve Hilaire - Studio des 2 prairies

SAVOY

– DISCOVERY –



Apremont vineyards located in the village of Apremont

Can you say you know the wines of Savoy if you have only ever tasted them? Obviously this is an essential part of the process, but discussing with a winemaker the specific conditions in which the wines are produced, at the foot of the Alps, is also a must. As is discovering that alongside Apremont, which spearheads wines from this French wine region, is an extensive range of growths shaped by the expertise and determination of passionate people.

The vineyards of Savoy extend over 2,200 hectares, mainly in Savoie and Haute-Savoie, but also in Isère and Ain. About 16 million bottles are sold each year, divided between four protected designations of origin (Vin de Savoie, Savoie Roussette, Seyssel, and since 2015, Crémant de Savoie) and some twenty geographical indications. On top of this array of growths is a broad range of grape varieties, an undeniable marketing bonus. No fewer than twenty grape varieties, two thirds of which are white, are permitted in production specifications.

NOT JUST WHITE GRAPE VARIETIES – RED TOO!

Jacquère, by far the most widespread white grape variety, covers half of Savoy's area under vine, whilst the second most common, Altesse, accounts for just 10%. These are followed by Chasselas, only grown in Haute-Savoie, Roussanne, Chardonnay, Aligoté, Velteliner, Molette blanche and Gringet.

More surprisingly, the Savoy reds account for a third of production. They include typical Savoy grape variety Mondeuse plus Gamay and Pinot Noir as well as Persan, one of the region's heritage varieties, and Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon.

What makes this extensive varietal range unusual is not so much the altitude or the climate, but the fact that they are planted on slopes that can be very steep. This makes the use of machines difficult - impossible even in some places - and vineyard management is therefore labour-intensive.

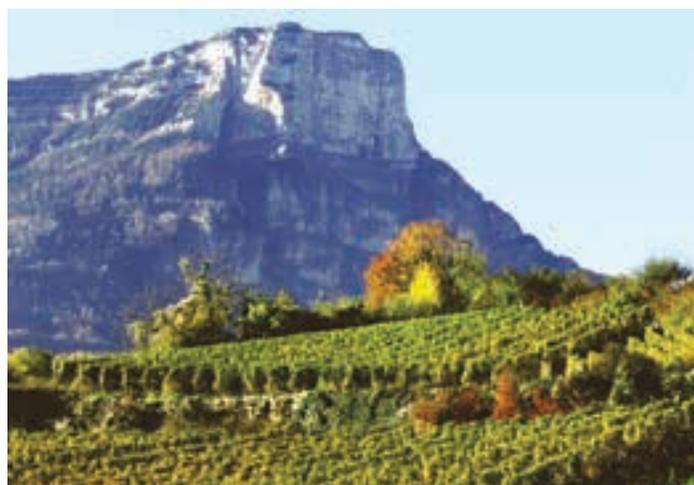
"Local winegrowers encounter more problems related to landform than climate", confirms Michel Quenard, chairman of the regional Savoy wine organisation. "We are often considered as a mountain wine region but this is not so as our vines are planted at a maximum elevation of 450 metres, whereas mountain vineyards are typically located at elevations of 700 or 800 metres. Yes this is Savoy, but not the winter sports resorts it is famed for, and ultimately, there is no more snow here than in Burgundy! Our major handicap is that our vines are situated on steep inclines with gradients of up to 60% or even 70% in the steepest areas. But it is important to remember that this is a long-standing wine region with propitious vineyard sites patiently shaped by wine growers".

HEROIC WINEGROWERS

These topographical constraints allow Savoy wines to be part of the Centre for Research, Environmental Sustainability and Advancement of Mountain Viticulture (CERVIM), an international organisation based in Italy, which specifically promotes and safeguards "heroic viticulture" and organises an annual "extreme wine" competition.



Michel Quenard, chairman of the Savoy regional wine organisation



Maison Philippe Viallet has vineyards beneath Mont Granier



Philippe Viallet, owner of Maison Philippe Viallet in Apremont

“This is land that has always been home to vines and that produces quality wines”, says Alexis Cote, winemaker at Maison Viallet in Apremont, Savoie, which groups together the Maison Philippe Viallet and Les Fils de René Quenard brands. “But it is true that people do not necessarily realise the reality out in the field. Our 70-hectare vineyard is planted between 350 and 450 meters above sea level. The access roads to our vineyards are sometimes so steep they have to zigzag. Sometimes we have to spray our vines using cannons, a process adapted to steep inclines. When I go to other vineyards and people talk to me about hillside vineyards, to me they look small. The land looks flat! Here, vineyard management is very challenging. On the 16 hectares at Fils de René Quenard, for example, everything is done by hand”. Samuel Neyroud, owner of Domaine Saint-Cassin, which extends over 5 hectares in Desingy, Haute-

SAVOY

– DISCOVERY –



Samuel Neyroud, owner of Domaine Saint-Cassin in Desingy

Savoie, concurs: “There is no denying that we have to contend with disadvantages. First, mechanisation is very difficult. The gradients of my slopes are between 25 and 45% which requires light machines, weighing no more than a ton, otherwise they won’t climb. The problem is that this type of machine is not mass-produced, it is a rare and therefore expensive product. Caterpillars are extremely expensive too. I have to pick my grapes by hand, but unfortunately in Savoy, we have trouble finding labour”.

“Similarly, soils in sloping vineyards are quite poor in nutrients”, adds Samuel Neyroud, “so vines produce less, leading to lower yields than on the plains”. In the vineyards of Savoy, it is estimated that one third of winegrowers harvest less than 100 hectolitres per year, and the average yield per hectare is around 60 hectolitres.



Gilbert Perrier and his sons at Domaine Jean Perrier et fils in Les Marches

VERY AFFORDABLE WINES

Despite the challenges facing the wine growers of Savoy, these are barely reflected in the price of the wines. Much to Gilbert Perrier's regret. Both a producer and merchant, he owns the Jean Perrier et Fils estate in Les Marches, Savoie, and is current chairman of the organisation that represents merchants maturing their wines in the Rhone-Alps region. "Savoy is more labour-intensive than Chablis", he claims, "and yet our wines are no more expensive. People don't take into consideration the work and costs involved. But we are not about to give you a sob story!"

Samuel Neyroud agrees: "When you plant on hillsides for example, the cost of development is significant. Mounds have to be flattened, access paths made, and spaces or «headlands" left at the end of the row so that machines can turn. The soils must also be stabilised, but without bringing in or removing soil, because we

cannot change either the geography or the geology of the soil. All this obviously has a cost”.

“Saying that, by planting on slopes, our vines enjoy excellent exposure to the sun’s rays”, he continues. “The finest aspect is south/southeast: it offers good exposure during the day and the sunrise dries the dew and drives away moisture, thus reducing the risk of diseases. Our soils also have good filtering capacity with gravel, which facilitates runoff. All of this is good for vines”.

A RELATIVELY MILD CLIMATE

The location of the Savoy wine region, between lakes and mountains, also creates many micro-climates. A perfect illustration of this is at Château de Ripaille in Thonon-les-Bains, Haute-Savoie. “Our 20 hectares of vines are planted 350 metres above sea level on the shores of Lake Geneva”, says Paule Necker, owner of the estate with her husband Louis. “What sets us apart is that we are located on a peninsula of the lake. Our vines are therefore high, but on flat ground. Mechanisation is feasible, and we benefit from a microclimate due to the nearby lake. Here, we have almond trees and umbrella pines that are not found elsewhere. We also have less risk of frost”.

Most of Château de Ripaille’s wine is made from Chasselas grapes, usually served as table grapes in the South of France. “But in Haute-Savoie, it develops less sugar and produces an early-drinking wine”. Snow does not impress Quebec-born Paule Necker, but as she points out, it is not an issue anyway. “On the peninsula, if we have snow, there is no more than 10 cm and it only lasts for a few days. When we look in our archives, however - the estate was established 120 years ago - we see that in the coldest years, harvesting could take place at the end of October. Nowadays, it takes place at the beginning of September”.

Climatic hazards are becoming a source of concern for Savoy winegrowers. “By trial and error, we found the right grape varieties for the soils”, points out Gilbert Perrier. “So our vineyard management is nigh-on perfect. But it is undeniable that the climate



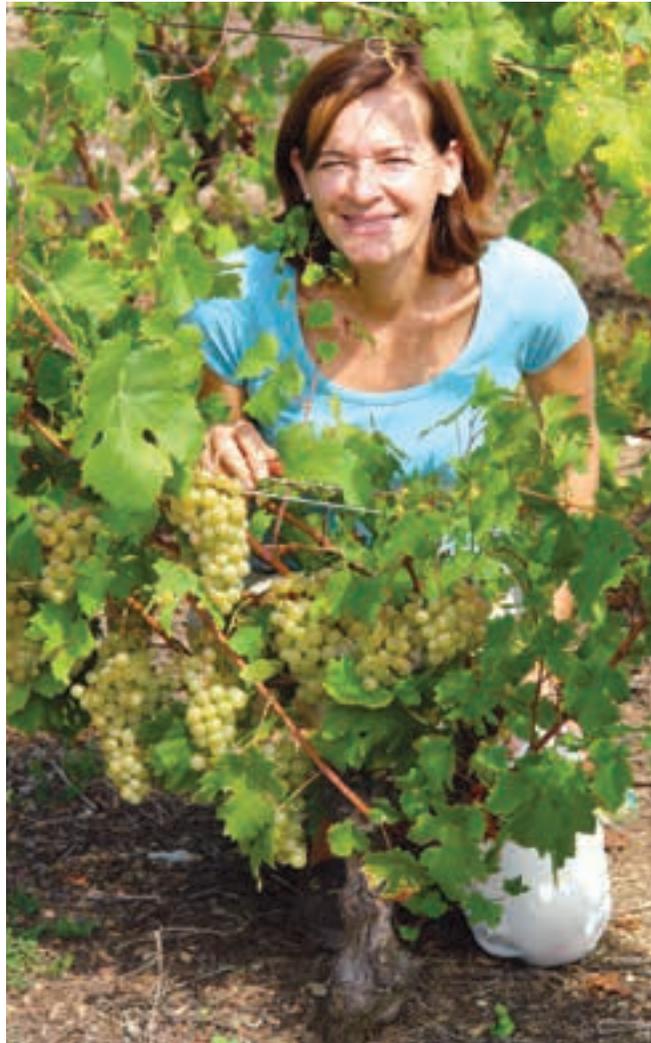
In the Chautagne area, north of Bourget lake



Jongieux vineyards in the village of Jongieux

SAVOY

- DISCOVERY -



Paule Necker, owner of Château de Ripaille in Thonon-les-Bains

has changed and the harvest takes place increasingly early. Twenty or 25 years ago, it was October, now it's early September, late August even. The climate is very up and down and we can experience frost when vines are at their most fragile, which was not the case previously. Then there is the issue of storms. From now until the harvest, they will be a constant threat. A storm can wipe out an entire vineyard in a flash, as happened recently in Bordeaux. We are not safe from anything, but consumers are not aware of all this". Faced with global warming, the industry is considering expanding the appellation area and planting vines up to 500 metres above sea level; the temperature drops by 0.6° every 100 metres of altitude.

SAVOY

– DISCOVERY –

Most Savoy wine is drunk in France, but also in North America, Northern Europe and Asia. The nearby ski resorts, which welcome tourists from all over the world, are also captive markets. Samuel Neyroud likes to say that he “exports a lot at home”, due to visits from the Belgians and Dutch who have become loyal customers over the years.

EXPERIMENTAL WINE GROWERS

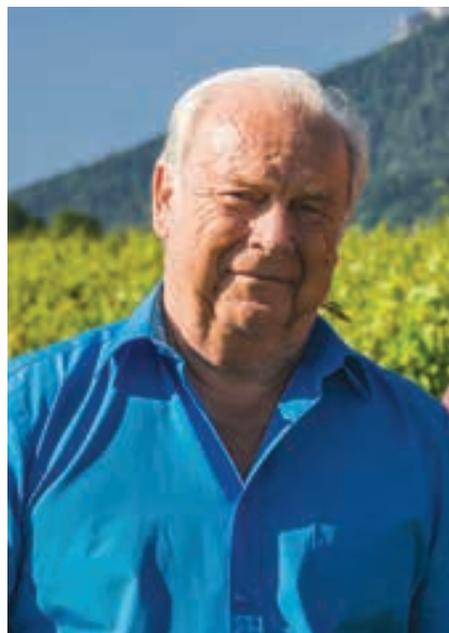
Samuel Neyroud at Domaine de Saint-Cassin is delighted with the change in mentalities within the industry. “Many of us want to diversify and innovate”, he says. “There are changes compared with the previous generation: in times past, some growers produced a lot of wine, sometimes to the detriment of quality. Jacquère is naturally high-yielding, but can sometimes produce diluted wines”. Many winegrowers are rediscovering heirloom grape varieties, including Persan, an ancient red grape variety from Savoy which is attracting renewed interest in the region, and they are experimenting. Samuel Neyroud recently planted 800 Gewurztraminer vines. “The variety is not permitted in our production specifications, so I will market it under the Vin de France label. I also planted 800 Malvoisie vines, an old local grape variety that is similar to Pinot Gris from Alsace”.

The new Crémant de Savoie appellation has already recruited a strong following, endorsing Savoy’s expertise in producing wine. “It is our very own champagne, but to satisfy demand, we need to produce more”, says Gilbert Perrier.

In the meantime, the Savoy producers we interviewed are unanimous: you must pay them a visit! “The scenery is stunning”, says an ebullient Gilbert Perrier. “That’s what people who come here admire the most. As an introduction to our beautiful region, I suggest you watch the Tour de France bicycle race which is broadcast virtually all over the world – we are one of its major stages. Once you have watched it, there is absolutely no doubt that you will say to yourself: “I have to go there one day!”



Saint-André lake at the foot of Mont Granier



Gilbert Perrier at Domaine Jean Perrier et fils



Corsican wines: Winning the authenticity game hands down

Wine growing dates back to Antiquity and the island the French call the ‘Isle of Beauty’ is no exception. Six centuries BC, the Greeks referred to the wine of Alalia (Aleria) as one of their favourite tipples. The Romans would soon follow suit, celebrated poet Virgil mentioning the qualities of local wine - ruby colour and pleasant to the taste. We decided to go and see for ourselves.

By Sylvain Patard

Photographs: Gilbert & Gaillard - Courtesy of the estates

CORSICA

– TERRITORY –

Corsica is big so it's best not to hang around! After arriving in Bastia at 10:50 am, our first appointment is in Patrimonio early afternoon. Patrimonio is the oldest Corsican appellation (1968). Its Nielluccio-based reds and Vermentino-based whites begin their journey on the slopes overlooking the Gulf of Saint-Florent, protected in the East by Cap Corse. The village of Patrimonio belongs to Corsica's schist region in the North-East of the island.

VERY FEW CLAY-LIMESTONE SOILS

Geology most certainly offers an explanation for the wines' organoleptic qualities. This is one of the rare wine growing areas in Corsica with clay-limestone soils, in addition to schist and granite. It is also characterised by widespread use of Nielluccio (at least 60% of blends) which produces structured, powerful reds. In terms of white wines, Vermentino is the undisputed leader, as is often the case, due to the fact that it is perfectly suited to the climate and local geology. The appellation is a bastion for wine growers and boasts around 35 estates. We chose Orenga de Gaffory and its 50 hectares of vines, soon entirely organic, planted on various micro-sites, across 5 localities of the 7 in the appellation area. Clay-limestone is the predominant soil type with schist outcrops, pure clay, pebbles and alluvial soils. The result is staggered ripening dates which make winery management less stressful and offer interesting blending possibilities. The wines are full-bodied, aromatic and chiselled with a real personality; restrained use of wood adds a lot of distinction to the wines. This is a perfect illustration of the appellation style.

OFF TO CALVI

La Balagne, with Calvi as its capital, has long been a privileged holiday resort due to its beaches, its villages tumbling down the sides of the neighbouring mountains and its exceptional annual sunshine record. From a climatic point of view, moderation is key with very little frost and strong winds keeping the grapes healthy. The wines owe their very genuine characters to the harshness and intransigence of the granite sand soil interspersed with layers of clay or silt, amongst which vines are often



Philippe Rideau, winemaker and cellar master at Domaine Orenga de Gaffory



Philippe Rideau with his partner in wine, Piotr Nowicki, head of vineyard management

CORSICA

– TERRITORY –



Etienne Suzzoni with his son Paul-Antoine: the next generation is already in place at Clos Culombu

scattered in small plots. Our schedule includes a visit to Etienne Suzzoni's Clos Culombu and its 55-hectare estate with views to die for. This description is perfectly mirrored in the wines and what strikes us from the outset is the great purity of expression with a saline touch, especially in the whites and rosés, which imparts a lot of class. The wines show restraint and the vines are farmed sustainably. The Ribbe Rosse, a red blend with equal parts of Saccarello and Nielluccio, has that little something extra with its lovely smells of spice and undergrowth. This is undeniably a stellar estate.

HEADING FOR THE EASTERN PLAIN

Backed by the East-facing rocky ridges that climb over the two northern thirds of the East coast, the varied soil types here create an infinite diversity of vineyards. The vast majority of them extend over the uplands overlooking the eastern coast, more or less from Bastia to Solenzara, on the island's only plain over nearly 80 kilometres. This is where the largest vineyards planted to high-yielding

CORSICA

– TERRITORY –



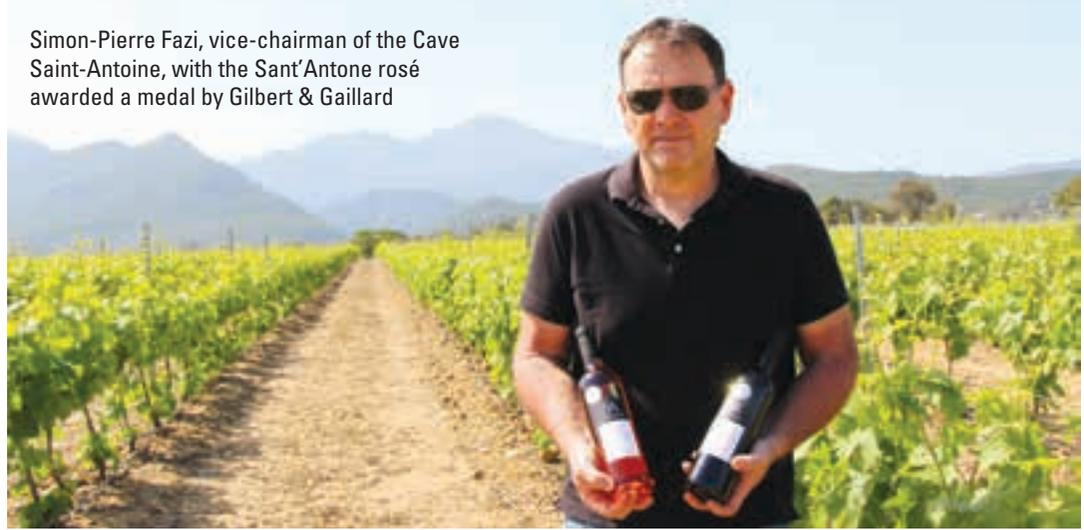
Gaël Keck, the winemaker and Guy Mizaël chairman of the Vignerons Corsicans winery

grape varieties were established in 1960. But this is also the appellation area, Vin de Corse, where most vines were grubbed up and the restructuring plans were the most ambitious. The soils have distinct profiles: recent alluvium, sandy marl and even a little tufa (limestone of sedimentary origin). The soils are well suited to most of the local grape varieties - Vermentino for the whites; and Nielluccio, Sciaccarello and Grenache noir for the reds and rosés. This extensive region is home to large co-operative entities that are now fitted with cutting-edge technology and produce wines of a very high standard. We gave them a visit, starting with the Vignerons Corsicans winery in Borgo. This is one big family with just 60 member growers farming 1,300 hectares of vines and five estates (Domaine la Villa Angeli, Lischetto, Pasqua, St Antoine and Château de Rassignani) marketed under their own names. These reside comfortably alongside well-known brands such as Terra Nostra. The winery's reputation, however, is based on its varietal wines, spearheaded by Pinot noir and Chardonnay.

Christophe Paitier, director and winemaker of Les Vignerons d'Aghione



Simon-Pierre Fazi, vice-chairman of the Cave Saint-Antoine, with the Sant'Antone rosé awarded a medal by Gilbert & Gaillard



Marc Imbert (Domaine de Torraccia) genuinely loves his island and its terroir



Etienne and Paul-Antoine Suzzoni with their uncle: the family means everything



Nicolas Sanseigne, Simon-Pierre Fazi and Sylvain Patard in front of the Gilbert & Gaillard medal-winning rosé from the Saint-Antoine winery

Today Pascal Albertini and his 3 children, including Alexis, manage Clos d'Alzeto



Gaël Keck makes all the wines in the Vignerons Corsicans range



Philippe Rideau vinifie les 50 hectares de vignes bientôt entièrement bio du Domaine Orenga de Gaffory

CORSICA

– TERRITORY –

We encounter the same spirit at the Aghione winery where director and winemaker Christophe Paitier welcomes us. Here there are only 12 members but 800 hectares of vines and three consistent soil units. The seaside with its sandy soils help the wines retain freshness and is used primarily for rosé wines. This is also the earliest-ripening site. The second, with its richer clay soils is closer to the mountains and more often the source of its whites and light reds. The third vineyard site, at the foot of the mountains, has leptilite soils (a green metamorphic rock) and is unique in that it is located right on the fault line between northern Corsica and its schist soils and the south with its granite. These colder, later-ripening soils are the birthplace of its premium Vermentino and Nielluccio wines. Aghione's Domaine and iconic brand is of course Casanova, available in all three colours, from the rosé Tendance (Sciacarellu) to the red Premium (Nielluccio), not forgetting the Muscat.

Still in Ghisonaccia is the Cave de Saint-Antoine. It boasts 360 hectares under vine and 20 co-operative wine growers. Its vines are located in the foothills, on soils that are a little cooler than beside the sea at an elevation of a hundred metres. Nielluccio accounts for approximately 35%, Sciacarellu 20% and Vermentino about 15% of the varietal range. However, only 30% or so of its wines are labelled under an appellation. The winery's rationale focuses more on colour and 70% of its wines are rosé. It offers an interesting range of wines supplying the catering industry and supermarkets in Corsica and on the mainland. Noteworthy Vin de Corse rosé wines include the Roi du Maquis, Sant'Antone and Domaine Mielino.

We have now arrived at the Vignerons de l'Île de Beauté winery. Chaired by Christian Orsucci, it is based in Aléria and has 70 winegrower members spread over 1,600 hectares between Vescovato and Ghisonaccia. It is the island's largest wine company, located a stone's throw from the sea on the eastern plain with its uninterrupted views. Each vineyard is monitored throughout the year by a team of professionals and over 50 people work at the winery outside harvesting to support the winegrowers. The wines are top quality, particularly the Domaines range (Casabianca, Petroni and Vettricie).



The vineyards of Domaine Casanova, carefully nurtured by the chairman's son, Paul-Vincent Casanova



Christian Orsucci, chairman of the Vignerons de l'Île de Beauté winery

CORSICA

– TERRITORY –



Marc Imbert is rather proud of what his father Christian has achieved at Torraccia

WHERE IT ALL STARTED!

Now for a complete change of scenery - Domaine de Torraccia welcomes us to Lecci. Be warned, this is a place of legend! It was here that Christian Imbert - whose son Marc greeted us - cleared the scrubland, square metre by square metre, to plant quality native grape varieties against the advice of almost everyone. In doing so, he promoted the rebirth of the entire Corsican wine industry. This is the Porto-Vecchio Corsica appellation area, one of the island's most boutique. Bearing vineyards are mainly confined to Porto-Vecchio, Lecci and Sainte-Lucie de Porto-Vecchio, perched on hillsides turned towards the sea. Buffeted by the wind, the vines grow on arid granite sand, conducive to vine growing but also producing diminutive yields (on average 38 hl per hectare). The reds are generally blended from Nielluccio, Sciaccarello and Grenache, and the whites almost exclusively from Vermentino. The estate crafts angular, excessively aromatic wines with a strong personality that never succumb to fashion. The estate range is very well made, like the Oriu labels reserved for island grape varieties.

FIGARI HERE WE COME!

The age of this vineyard stems from the Roman's early interest in this southern region. It extends from the foothills of the Alta-Rocca to the beaches of Figari and unlike its neighbours, the appellation has a relatively harsh climate because of the high winds in the area surrounding the Gulf. Domaine de Tanella illustrates this perfectly. In 1975, Jean-Baptiste de Peretti della Rocca took over this family business established at the end of the 19th century in Poggiale. Covering 57 unbroken hectares, the vineyard is rooted in granite sand, clay and stones. The nearby sea 3 km away helps keep the vines healthy due to the beneficial maritime winds, enabling Jean-Baptiste to switch to sustainable wine growing. Today, with the support of his daughter Alexandra and son Marc-Aurèle, he produces wines that display both finesse and character.

The precise and elegant 2017 white Alexandra Prestige label (100% Vermentinu) is one of the estate's great successes just like its 2017 rosé Marc-Aurèle (100% Nielluccio).



Alexis Albertini in the vineyards of Clos d'Alzeto where he lives

CORSICA

– TERRITORY –



Jean-Baptiste, Alexandra and Marc-Aurèle in the vineyards at Domaine de Tanella in Poggiale

AJACCIO AND ITS VINE-CLAD SETTING

The present-day AOC Ajaccio, officially approved in 1984, extends over approximately 240 hectares and 12 localities dotted around the Corsican capital. Vines here enjoy an average of 2,750 hours of sunshine per year, a national record. However, the high summer temperatures are moderated by the nearby sea, an important thermal regulator, just like the mountains which promote rainfall. Most of the bearing vineyards are planted on tiers of granite slopes which offer poor soils with good drainage where vines thrive. This is Sciaccarello territory, a varietal which accounts for 60% of the blend and imbues the reds and rosés with character. The whites are made entirely from Vermentino, the iconic Corsican grape variety which achieves its finest expression on the island. Clos d'Alzeto, on the slopes of the Cinarca Valley, is one of the highest wine estates in Corsica (500 m). This 42-hectare estate has been run from father to son by the Albertini family since 1820. The vineyards face South and East on deep sandy-granite, sandy, stony and clay soils. Respect for the environment is an absolute priority here and no herbicides are used. The red Prestige (2015) from Sciaccarello vines over 35 years old and 20% Nielluccio is a real gem in terms of typicity. It shows at its best in the pretty Sari d'Orcino cellar with its breathtaking views out over the vineyard!



Tasting Soave

Veneto's flagship still wines: Amarone and Soave

Along with Prosecco and the newly-born Pinot Grigio delle Venezie appellation, Amarone and Soave represent Veneto's flagship wines. They have carved out a place for themselves not only in the local economy but also for the image of Italian wine abroad and its communication strategies. In the case of Soave, it has even ignited the volcanic trend and proven the ageing potential of Italian white wines.

By Irene Graziotto

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates

ITALY

- REGION -

With over 91,000 hectares under vine in 2018 and 80% of grapes aimed at the production of Dop wines – up 11% on 2016 – Veneto is the Italian region with the highest production of Dop wine. The top ten Dop wines by volume include four Veneto appellations: Prosecco, in first place, Conegliano Valdobbiadene in fourth place and Soave and Valpolicella ranked 8th and 9th.

VENETO RANKS FOURTH FOR GLOBAL EXPORTS

By September 2017 Veneto accounted for 35.5% of Italian exports and 8% of global exports, thus ranking fourth worldwide with turnover of 2 billion euros. In 2017, three quarters of regional production was centered between the provinces of Treviso and Verona. Driven by the success of Prosecco, white grapes continue to increase and now account for almost 80% of the total, featuring Glera, the grape used for Prosecco at the top, followed by Pinot Grigio and Garganega, which is used for making Soave and the lesser-known Gambellara wine. As for red grapes, the most widely grown varieties are Merlot and Corvina, the latter being the primary grape for Amarone. Valpolicella is now the third major red Dop, after Montepulciano D’Abruzzo and Chianti. This year, both Amarone and Soave celebrate their 50th anniversary. With half a century behind them, it is time to assess how these two appellations have developed over time, shaping the reputation of Italian wine abroad.

SOAVE, THE FROG PRINCE

Soave is one of the appellations that has changed the most in the last ten years. Once believed to be just a simple, floral white wine to be drunk young, the Soave Consortium has proven how Soave can actually be listed amongst the great Italian white wines, with age-worthiness and the ability to develop a complex aromatic identity. This awareness and quality performance are the result of intense work started in 1995. Aimed at creating a zoning map of the Soave cru, research has provided a better understanding of soil composition, casting light on volcanic wine potential. With the “Volcanic Wine”



The Soave Preview



Valpolicella

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Arturo Stocchetti and Sandro Gini, respectively former and recently-elected chairman of the Soave Consortium

project gathering volcanic regions all over Italy, year after year Soave has been fuelling what has now become a mainstream trend, thus attracting the interest of the public and finally showing up at the Institute of Masters of Wine in February 2016. Soave might be considered to be the first white Italian appellation to have undergone such an intense transformation. As a consequence, consumers can now choose between delicate young Soave or more intense old-vintage Soave Classico, some of which are oak-aged such as the Soave Classico Monte Grande by Prà aged in casks or the Contrada Salvarenza Vecchie Vigne by Gini aged in barrels. This has ultimately contributed to dismissing the idea that Italian white wines are unable to age for long, raising the bar of the whole category, along with noteworthy whites from Alto Adige, Friuli, Marche and Campania. This is not a minor revolution for Italy, a country once considered the homeland only of great red wines.

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SOAVE, A CLASSIC ITALIAN WHITE WINE

Nowadays, Soave stretches over 7,000 hectares and accounts for 50 million bottles, 80% of which are exported to 70 different countries worldwide. The role of Soave as a symbol of 'made in Italy' is old news. "As a matter of fact, it was the first Italian wine to be awarded the title of 'typical wine' in 1931", points out Sandro Gini, one of the best-known producers and newly-elected chairman of the Soave Consortium, "and in the 1970s it already stretched over 6,000 hectares". The strong connection between the local population and viticulture is proven by the fact that almost each family owns a small vineyard parcel, as was common in the past. The average area under vine is slightly more than 2 hectares for each of the existing 2,870 wineries. This partly affects price competitiveness but is balanced by a strong terroir-driven approach "propelling quality instead of quantity", underlines the team at Casarotto winery. At Canoso, they believe excessive production of Garganega back in the 1980s partly ruined the image of Soave while acknowledging how right now Soave is experiencing a second renaissance. Both Giovanni Bartucci, chairman and shareholder at Canoso, and business partner and winemaker Massimo Meneghello are witnesses as to how "the revival can be noticed, especially in open-minded cities such as Milan". The singular socio-economic profile of Soave has led to some special endorsements too. Already recognised as an "Historical Italian Rural Landscape", Soave is now Italy's first candidate for recognition by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) as a GIAHS (Globally Important Agricultural Heritage System).

THE VOLCANIC SWING

Zoning mapping has identified 33 different 'crus' including both volcanic and limestone areas. Giacomo Giordano, brand ambassador for Villa Mattielli where they produce Campolongo Soave Classico Doc from volcanic soil, believes the work carried out in Soave has allowed producers from all over Italy to "rediscover their heritage and is a great communications tool". At Casarotto, they have experienced how the word "volcanic" catches consumers' attention when speaking



The team at Canoso



Soave Versus, one of the events promoting the appellation

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Roberta Roncolato, owner of Villa Mattielli, and brand ambassador Giacomo Giordano

about their Vigne di Fittà Soave Classico Doc. Giovanni Bartucci and Massimo Meneghello report how people are tired of semi-sweet wines and are now moving towards dry wines with a mineral profile – something that volcanic soil helps convey, as proven by their Fonte Soave Classico Doc. Volcanic soil results not only in saltiness but also in minerality, both of which help a lot when it comes to ageing wine, as demonstrated by the many vertical tastings which have taken place at the Soave Preview over the years. Whereas up to a few years ago Soave was drunk young, now consumers are also approaching older vintages – “but not with closed eyes”, points out Barbara Bertelli, one of the owners of Corte Allodola where they produce Terre di Vulcano Soave Classico Doc. “Clients are stunned when tasting some of our wines that have been aged for 5 or 6 years. They like aged Soave so much that they buy it. But if they do not taste it, they remain sceptical about Soave ageability”.

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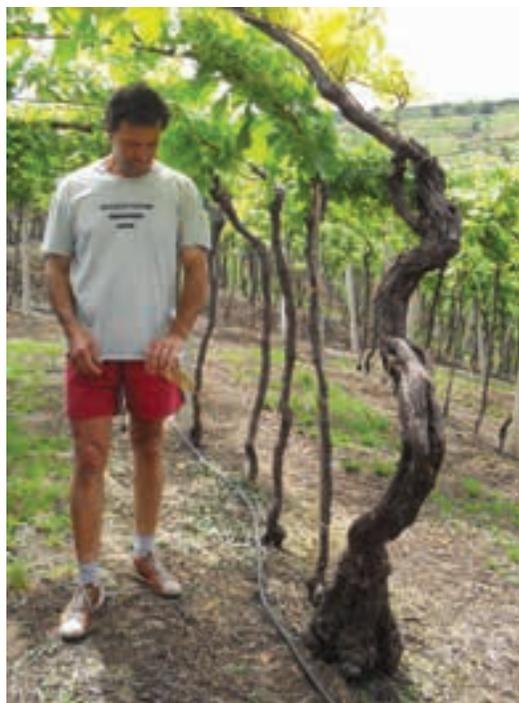
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UNCORKING SOAVE

Soave has more than a few tricks up its sleeve. A wonderful walled village itself with a medieval castle located 20 kilometres east of Verona, Soave is surrounded by rolling hills which can unexpectedly turn into steep slopes, as at Battistelle. Here, Gelmino and Cristina Dal Bosco and their daughter Gloria produce Roccolo del Durlo from century-old vines, some even un-grafted, thanks to volcanic soil which has protected the roots against phylloxera. In Soave, vines are mainly pergola-trained, an old system which has proved to be still useful nowadays against climate change, shading the grapes from sunlight and thus helping to preserve acidity and avoid sunburn. Acidity is also revealed by Trebbiano di Soave, another native variety traditionally used for the production of Soave along with recently-introduced Pinot Grigio and Chardonnay. Where Garganega exudes aromas of almond and blossoming white flowers, Trebbiano di Soave provides sapidity and body. Producers still blend the two grapes, as they do at Corte Allodola for their Terre di Vulcano Soave Classico Doc, whereas at Villa Mattielli they use both varieties for their Soave Classico Doc and only Garganega for Campolungo Soave Classico Doc. Only a few producers make wine using 100% Trebbiano – which cannot be labelled as Soave. Massifitti by Suavia and Turbiana by Filippi are two such rare products. Respect for the environment is another key factor in the appellation. In 2014 Soave introduced the Green Label certifying the sustainability of the whole appellation and attracting markets such as Scandinavia and Canada which are sensitive to the issue. At Canoso they have gone beyond this, producing a vegan wine, and this year they will let tourists take part in the harvest, believing that “understanding how our wine is made and wanting to buy it are part and parcel of the same process”.

TOURISM, A KEY FACTOR

In 2017 tourism increased in the area by over 30% with respect to 2015, partly thanks to a more tourist-oriented approach which has gradually promoted knowledge of Soave. “Foreign markets are increasingly interested in our products”, comments Giacomo Giordano, referring



Gelmino Dal Bosco next to one of his century-old vines at Le Battistelle



Gelmino and Cristina Dal Bosco of Le Battistelle winery

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Barbara Bertelli, one of the owners of Corte Allodola

to the markets where they export Soave and Amarone, topped by Europe and followed by the US, Australia and Eastern countries. “Valpolicella too has become an interesting destination for wine lovers, thanks to its multi-faceted personality featuring small, medium and big estates” explains Silvia Aldrighetti, in charge of marketing at Le Bignele in Marano, one of the five villages representing the Valpolicella Classica region. Data shows tourism increased by 55% from 2009 to 2016, twice as much as the regional increase. Barbara Bertelli of Corte Allodola believes this growth results from the collaboration between the Valpolicella Consortium, the Strada del Vino and tourist information offices. Together, they have increased not only tourism but also demand for local wine. Valpolicella has widened its offer and now provides the visitor with amazing estates, such as Villa della Torre, a 16th-century building completely restored by the Allegrini family, or brand-new buildings such as Albino Armani’s winery in Marano di Valpolicella. Visits to wineries play a crucial role, as Paolo Creazzi of Ca’ dei Maghi points out: “Whereas abroad, awards are crucial, at the winery the winning strategy consists of taking people around and spending time explaining the wine to them”.

VALPOLICELLA ROCKS

Valpolicella stretches over 8,000 hectares located north and east of the town of Verona. It increased by one third from 2005, overflowing from the Valpolicella Classica area and reaching the rest of Valpolicella and even Valpantena. In the last ten years, its identity too has undergone some important changes. The production of Valpolicella Ripasso has quadrupled whereas Valpolicella decreased and Amarone has kept growing at a steady pace. The total value of the appellation amounts to 600 million euros shared by almost 1,650 wineries, half of which are small estates, owning fewer than 2 hectares each. “Wine is one of the main sources of income for Verona. It is no coincidence that the town ranks top in Italy for wine exports”, comments Olga Bussinello, director of the Valpolicella Consortium, which is often carrying out promotional activities abroad. Later this year, the Valpolicella Consortium



From left, Angelo Aldrighetti, Luigi Aldrighetti and son Nicola Aldrighetti, owners of Le Bignele

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Paolo Creazzi of Ca' dei Maghi

will be in Poland and the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Switzerland, the US and, finally, Canada. Eight out of 10 bottles of the 62 million produced are exported. For example, at Ca' dei Maghi they export 70% of their production, mainly to Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark, with the latter “now shifting from a ‘Parker’ taste preferring heavily-oaked wines to a post-Parker taste, welcoming lighter, fruity wines where the vanilla does not cover the aromatic profile of the grape, thus allowing the typical cherry flavour to fully express itself”, explains Paolo Creazzi. Barbara Bertelli of Corte Allodola shares the same view: “There have been years when people loved heavy Amarone, now they look for a product able to convey the true Valpolicella soul: a paler wine exuding crunchy fruit aromas”.

AMARONE, THE VITAL RANGE COMPONENT

Amarone is the red wine from Veneto, outstripping the popularity of any other red from the region. Despite having been produced for the last 70 years – after a winemaker left his Recioto to ferment for too long, thus obtaining a dry product instead of a sweet one – demand

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Olga Bussinello, chair of the Consorzio Vini Valpolicella



Gian Paolo Buoso, co-owner and export manager at Fondo del Sole

for Amarone only started rocketing in the 1990s. Since then, its value has been increasing year after year, gaining another 10% in 2017. Amarone is made mainly with Corvina plus other native varieties, namely Rondinella, Corvinone, Oseleta – Molinara is no longer mandatory. Amarone is a full-bodied intense wine, exuding aromas of cherry and ripe stone fruit, with a balsamic finish characterizing the best examples. Quintarelli and Dal Forno are two of the most exclusive brands, along with Masi, Bertani, Tommasi, Speri, Zenato, Cesari, Tedeschi and Allegrini which has recently released Fieramonte, a brand new, limited edition Amarone. Fieramonte and Pasqua's Mai Dire Mai, released in 2016, offer evidence of how Amarone is a vital product whose quality is being ramped up by more and more producers, including Secondo Marco, Tenute Ugolini, Carlo Ferragù, the organically farmed Corte Sant'Alda and the brand new high-end selection Brolo dei Giusti by Cantina Valpantena. "A further leap towards improving the perception of Amarone would be the zoning mapping", believes Paolo Creazzi.



Franco and Marilisa Allegrini of Allegrini estate with the newly-released Fieramonte Amarone

A CRAVING FOR RIPASSO

As a matter of fact, Ripasso has become as popular, if not even more so, than Amarone. Yet the feeling is that Ripasso has not found its own identity. In fact, Ripasso is often described as a “baby Amarone” or a stronger Valpolicella. A communications issue that in the long term will somehow affect its success, believes many a producer. “Ripasso has been perceived in foreign markets as the link between Valpolicella and Amarone”, explains Marilisa Allegrini, in charge of marketing at Allegrini estates where they do not produce Ripasso. “What we are seeing nowadays is actually an interest for lighter, fruity wines such as our Valpolicella”. Not all wineries produce a Valpolicella, though. At Corte Allodola, for example, they prefer to make a red wine bottled as simply Rosso Igt Veneto, which foreign markets seem to highly value. The same appreciation has been witnessed by Gian Paolo Buoso, co-owner and export manager at Fondo del Sole, where they produce Amicore Veneto Igt. Last but not least, La Grola, Veronese Igt by Allegrini has been able to gain considerable recognition amongst consumers thanks to its drinkability and limited edition releases.



Vinitaly 2018, a lot more to offer than just Italian wines

With more than 4,380 exhibiting wineries from 36 different countries attending the 4-day event in Verona last April, Vinitaly is improving its appeal as an internationally-driven event, shaking off its reputation of a fair focusing only on Italian wine. François Gilbert and Irene Graziotto attended the exhibition and have this report on emerging trends.

By Irene Graziotto

Photographs: Courtesy of Foto Ennevi-Veronafiere

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Every year, the room is packed to the rafters

The 52nd Vinitaly made significant progress as far as logistics, content and the ability to establish cross-border dialogue were concerned. For example, Ian D'Agata (Vinitaly International Academy), Cathy Huyghe (Forbes US) and Donne della Vite (Italy) all discussed the increasing role of women in wine. With 128,000 visitors from 143 countries; attendance by accredited foreign buyers up by +6%; more than 50 events a day; and 15,100 wines on show, Vinitaly certainly offered a lot. Guided tastings featured wines from South Africa, Argentina and Ukraine as well as volcanic and cool climate regions. As for Italian white wines, experts are now highlighting their ageing potential – this key to interpreting Italian wines is gaining traction partly through the international volcanic trend which has turned the spotlight on appellations such as Soave, Fiano di Avellino and Etna Bianco, also reviving Marche's Verdicchio and wines from Friuli. Italian wine classes focused more on Italian native varieties than on international cultivars, featuring lesser-known white Albana from Romagna, white Pecorino from Tuscany

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and red Carignano from Sardinia. Vinitaly's attention to sustainability was confirmed by the ViViT and Vinitaly Bio pavilions and an opening for natural wines, with a guided tasting including wines from the Vin Natur association, which brings together European natural winemakers. Pinot Grigio delle Venezie, which made its debut, must also be included amongst the main news from the show. The comparative tasting of 69 samples suggested that Italy's biggest, brand-new Doc appellation including Trentino, Veneto and Friuli, is definitely raising the bar of Italian Pinot Grigio.

FRANÇOIS GILBERT MASTER CLASS: HONOURING CHAMPAGNE

By Sylvain Patard

Vinitaly – the clue is in the name – is exclusively dedicated to wines, mainly Italian, but also Mediterranean and from other origins with a total 35 countries represented in addition to Italy. The show is one of the season's pivotal events, in the same way as Prowein for example. One of the highlights is the Champagne Master Class hosted by François Gilbert, which has now become a classic. This year's theme was the diversity of the Champagne appellation, illustrated by the labels presented and tasted with attendees:

- Collet Brut Cuvée Vintage 2008 Collection Privée
- Gosset Grand Blanc de Blancs brut and Grand Blanc de Noirs extra-brut
- Jeeper Grande Réserve
- Michel Gonet Brut Grand Cru 2011
- Drappier Brut Grande Sèndrée 2008
- Collard-Picard Brut Cuvée Essentiel 2010
- Alexandre Bonnet Brut Cuvée Perle Rosée
- Nicolas Feuillatte Brut Grand Cru Blanc de Noirs 2008.

Champagne is undeniably an extensive wine region, boasting more than 34,000 hectares of vines divided between 320 localities and 278,000 different plots. The region is therefore home to an incredibly complex range of wines with endless possibilities offered by blending. This vinous symphony is constantly being recomposed by winegrowers and Champagne houses which illustrate to perfection the incredible diversity of the region's wine styles.



François Gilbert with the sommeliers tasked with serving the wines during his Champagne masterclass



Drink pink: When rosé rhymes with Italy

Once regarded as a minor wine, perhaps not even a drink, rosé has taken its revenge. Consumption is rocketing around the world and rosé has debunked many a myth, including that of being trivial, lacking in quality and identity, and suitable only for unsophisticated palates.

Rosé is indeed more than just a commodity without a geographical background.

In fact, the Instagram-driven wine trend is gradually drawing attention to the terroir through single-vineyard rosé and use of native grape varieties.

An opportunity that Italy has jumped at and where consumers can indulge their curiosity with different grapes, colours and styles.

By Irene Graziotto

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates

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Chiaretto Rosé pairs perfectly with pizza, pasta and freshwater fish

Everybody loves rosé. Like Prosecco, rosé has attracted the attention (and money) of a much wider audience than the erstwhile standard wine consumer. Rosé's unpretentious personality appeals to younger generations as much as it does adult consumers, both women and men – as the moniker *brosé* suggests. Success on Instagram has further boosted its popularity and now there are national rosé days all around the world, from the US where it is celebrated on the second Saturday in June, to France where they have created an International Rosé Day, and finally Italy where on June 22nd “Oggi rosé” (meaning “rosé today”) events took place all over the peninsula. This comes as no surprise. Rosé is an inclusive wine, suitable for every occasion, multi-national, multi-regional and... multi-tasking! It works at any time of the day – and night – with or without food, and it can be made basically from any red grape.

THE STRANGE CASE OF ITALIAN ROSÉ

At the moment, four countries account for more than three quarters of the world's entire rosé production: France (30%), Spain (20%), the US (15%) and Italy

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(10%). Since the beginning of the century, production of French rosé has experienced a double-digit increase. A rising trend has also been observed in the US and Spain, but – and this is quite surprising considering how demand for rosé is booming – not in Italy. Production, as well as consumption of rosé – or rosato as they say – has actually decreased since 2000. The situation is changing, though. More and more producers are driven by foreign buyers to make rosé.

A FOREIGN TWIST

This is the case of Lamberto Spacchetti, owner and winemaker at Cantina Colle Ciocco in Montefalco, Umbria, which he runs together with brother Eliseo. “We started producing our Brixio rosé three years ago, on the suggestion of two importers from the Netherlands and Germany. So far, it has been a success and next year we will increase production”. It was a foreign client too that suggested La Bollina, an estate in Gavi, Piedmont, add a rosé, reveals sales manager Mirko Sciutto. So, from 2015 onwards they have been producing Tinetta, from 100% Nebbiolo. Gian Paolo Buoso, co-owner and export manager at Fondo del Sole, has just started producing his rosé too, after one of his clients in Florida put in a request. His Nuvole rosé, from Montepulciano grapes, will be presented at the World Wine Meetings event in San Francisco at the end of June, just in time to benefit from the summer peak in rosé sales. In the US, rosé represents the fastest growing category, with an increase rate that reached + 50% whereas total wine consumption has increased by only 4%. The US represents one of the main markets for Italian rosé, along with Canada, Central Europe and Asian countries which do not seem intimidated at all by Italian rosé’s darker colour.

TRUE COLOUR

Provence’s lighter rosés have become trendsetters. So far, they have influenced many regions, causing a shift towards paler rosé. A trend sometimes also fuelled by external factors, such as the rainy 2014 vintage that led the Chiaretto di Bardolino appellation to adopt a paler shade. The shift, referred to as the “Rosé



Lamberto and Eliseo Spacchetti, owners of Colle Ciocco



True colour

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Luca Scapola, owner of Borgo Turrigo

Revolution”, has allowed Chiaretto, made on Lake Garda, to come up with a more uniform mantle with respect to its previous palette – ranging from a pale pink to a salmon to a cherry-red – and to underline its dry citrus aromatic profile. The paler trend has not been influencing all Italian producers, though. In fact, a darker colour seems not only to be appreciated but an actual winning strategy, according to Gian Paolo Buoso’s experience. “At first, my American client was taken aback by the colour but then he decided to buy it, maybe to diversify his range of French rosé wines” he says. Lamberto Spacchetti had similar feedback: “The intense colour of our Brixio rosé is only a problem for Italian consumers, whereas abroad it has worked as an eye-catching tool”. Luca Scapola, owner of Borgo Turrigo in Foggia, Puglia, keeps receiving positive feedback from buyers thanks to the fruitiness and intense colour of his wines. Elizabeth Gabay MW who is an expert on rosé and can be considered one of the first to have given the category serious consideration, approves of the decision. “We shouldn’t judge rosé by its colour” she recently stated, explaining that “seventy percent of the world’s rosés are pale and acidic and not much else”.

FRUIT-FORWARD WITH A CRISP ACIDITY: THE PORTRAIT OF ITALIAN ROSÉ

Elizabeth Gabay MW believes too many a winemaker picks grapes for rosé too early in order to “fulfill a recent high-end expectation of rosé: a pale wine with strong acidity, so it is refreshing” she explained to Wine Searcher in a recent interview. By picking grapes early – to retain acidity – and allowing only a short period of skin contact to avoid the colour darkening – “you end up with a flavourless wine” she points out, because “much of the flavour in wine comes from the skins”. An unlikely scenario for Italian wines which on average are intensely fruity and dry with crisp acidity. Long gone are the days when rosé was semi-sweet. Now the only products with a modicum of residual sugar are sparkling rosés, such as Rosato del Campanone by Cantine Lombardini. Its slight sweetness (10 grams per litre of residual sugar) balanced by gentle bubbles proves to be the perfect pairing for sushi, Cecilia Lombardini has discovered; she runs the family estate with her father Marco and sisters Chiara and Virginia. Rosato del Campanone, made with Lambrusco Grasparossa and Lambrusco di Sorbara grapes, also pairs with pizza and local dishes from Emilia Romagna. Like many Italian rosé wines, it is sold mainly in restaurants. Vurria, the organic rosé produced by the Di Giovanna winery in Sicily, is also sold mainly to restaurants in the US. “As a dry rosé from Nerello Mascalese, it has a personality that allows it to be a stand-alone wine for the aperitif or a food wine,” reveals Melissa Di Giovanna of the eponymous winery located in Sciacca, Sicily. “As a medium-bodied rosé exuding spicy and citrus aromas typical of the grape variety, Vurria can also be paired with Asian food or fried fish” she claims.

REVISITING TRADITION

Acidity plays a key role in Italian rosé, especially for those produced in Southern Italy. Italian winemakers started making rosé many decades ago, sometimes even centuries ago – the first Chiaretto di Bardolino dates back to the 19th century when Pompeo Molmenti started producing it. Five Roses was the first Italian rosé to be bottled and sold thereafter. That was in 1943. Over



Marco Lombardini founder of Lombardini Cantine which he runs now with his three daughters (from left) Chiara, Virginia and Cecilia



Gunther and Klaus di Giovanna, owners of the Di Giovanna Winery

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Matteo Santoemma of the Ognissole biodynamic winery

the years, Five Roses produced by the Leone de Castris winery in Salice Salentino, Puglia, has become legendary. It has shaped wine production in the area – Salice Salentino Rosato Doc is one of the most popular rosé appellations in Italy – and has opened up the American market. As a matter of fact, it was an American, General Charles Poletti, who towards the end of WW II before moving back to the US, placed a noticeable order for this rosé. Since then, consideration for rosé has risen amongst the local inhabitants and technology has definitely improved, allowing soft pressing and temperature control. Some producers have however reintroduced some old vessels, like at Ognissole, a biodynamic winery in Canosa di Puglia, where they have brought back the tradition of using amphoras. Matteo Santoemma of Ognissole underlines how many amphoras can be found strolling around the old ‘masserie’ or farms that were once the centre of agricultural production. “This is the reason why we decided to adopt them once again for the production of Pontelama, Castel del Monte Rosato Dop from Nero di Troia grapes”. Despite having started production in 2005, in 2017 they completely reviewed the recipe for Pontelama, fermenting and ageing the wine partly in amphoras, partly in cement and partly in tanks, before blending it.

BELIEVING IN QUALITY ROSÉ

A similar homage to tradition has been paid by the Di Giovanna winery, explains Melissa di Giovanna. “The first vintage of our rosé dates back to 2005. Looking at old photos, my husband Gunther Di Giovanna discovered that in the 50s people celebrated at wedding parties with rosé and decided he wanted to produce a great dry rosé. Back then, we were amongst the first”. Indeed, before 2007 not many wineries were producing ‘rosato’. Rocca di Montegrossi, an organically farmed estate located in Gaiole in Chianti, Tuscany, was one of them. “2007 was our first vintage. I have always thought Sangiovese had the potential to be vinified in a simpler version but with the same great character, thanks to its freshness and aromatic complexity” reveals owner Marco Ricasoli Firidolfi. Not an obvious choice for a producer in Gaiole in Chianti, the home of great reds. Etèl by



Marco Ricasoli Firidolfi owner of Rocca di Montegrossi

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Silvio Campatelli, agronomist at the Lornano winery



Pierantonio Fiorentino CEO of Cantina Fiorentina

the Lornano winery in Monteriggioni, Siena, is another 100% Sangiovese rosé. Agronomist Silvio Campatelli reveals how Etèl is warmly welcomed both in Northern Europe and North America because of the prestige of the Sangiovese grape variety. “Harvesting twice, in mid-September and mid-October, we manage to achieve acidity and intense aromas respectively. Grapes are then softly pressed” he explains. In the past, in Tuscany as well as in other Italian regions, they would have used another method, saignée or bleeding. It consisted of drawing off a portion of the must from a vessel where the juice was macerating on the skins. The portion drawn off, with a lighter colour due to the shorter contact period with the skins, was then fermented and sold as rosé. Sometimes, this technique was used to rebalance the must-skin ratio, when there was too much juice. This is probably one of the reasons why rosé in Italy is overlooked and considered as a “waste product”. Of course, in some cases saignée proves to be the right technique. For example, Lamberto Spacchetti uses it for his Brixio made from 70% Sangiovese and 30% Sagrantino, harvested and vinified separately. The result is a wine exuding intense red fruit aromas with a long finish.



Luigi Rubino and Romina Leopardi owners of Tenute Rubino

BEFORE ATTENTION FOR ROSÉ SPIRALLED IN 2007

2007 seems to have been the year when rosé caught consumers' attention worldwide. Cecilia Lombardini concurs: "We started making rosé 20 years ago but it was only a decade ago that demand started rising. For us, rosé was sort of going back to the future. In the past, Lambrusco was paler than nowadays, so our rosé reminded people of the Lambrusco they used to drink when they were younger". Luca Scapola recollects how 15 years ago, after some clients asked his family for fresh fruity red wines, they felt it was high time they produced some rosé. In 2007 they vinified their first rosé from Nero di Troia grapes, Calarosa. It was so successful that in 2016 they started producing another rosé from Aleatico grapes named Terra Cretosa Rosato. Galatina Doc Rosato by Cantina Fiorentino, located in Galatina, Lecce, is made from another symbol of Puglian viticulture: the Negroamaro grape. "Its intense fruity personality has won over many consumers, not only from Europe but also from Japan," reveals CEO Pierantonio Fiorentino. Tenute Rubino's project aimed at safeguarding Susumaniello started in the 1990s too. A native variety from Brindisi, Puglia, Susumaniello was gradually being abandoned in favour of more prolific grapes. Owner Luigi Rubino pulled off the challenge with Susumaniello and now produces Sumaré brut and Sumaré brut nature, two traditional sparkling method rosés aged for 24 and 36 months on the lees, and a Torre Testa still rosé.

ROSÉ OFF THE BEATEN TRACK – FROM NORTHERN ITALY

Rosé wines from unusual native varieties are definitely one of Italy's most interesting features. In Piedmont, consumers can have rosé from Nebbiolo such as Erpacrife, a traditional method produced by the eponymous winery in the Langhe region, or from Dolcetto, Brachetto, Bonarda and Barbera. In Liguria rosé production is very limited: NR. 1 by Lunae winery is a sparkling wine made from Sangiovese and Cilieggiolo. Moving east, Pinot Noir becomes the most common variety used for traditional sparkling method wines produced in Oltrepò Pavese, Franciacorta and Trentino. In Alto Adige, 'rosato' is usually made with Lagrein, as they do at Hofstätter, Cantina Tramin and Alois Lageder. Approaching Lake Garda, Chiaretto Valtenesi rosé from Gropello is produced on the western side whereas Chiaretto Bardolino producers use Corvina and Rondinella on the eastern shore. Recently, news of Prosecco Rosé Doc has spread – a project dismissed by both Conegliano Valdobbiadene and the Asolo Montello Consortium. In Friuli, examples from Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso can be found.

ROSÉ OFF THE BEATEN TRACK – FROM CENTRAL ITALY

Sure enough, Sangiovese rules across Tuscany: from Rosé by La Palazzetta in Montalcino to Illario by Fattoria di Magliano in Maremma, and from Obvious Rosato by Salcheto in Montepulciano to Cassiopea Bolgheri Rosato by Poggio al Tesoro on the coast. Sangiovese also rules in Romagna, Umbria, Marche and Lazio. In Marche, rosé from the intensely fruity Lacrima grape is also available. Abruzzi is the homeland of Cerasuolo d'Abruzzo, an appellation created in 2010 to enhance the category. Cerasuolo means cherry in Italian and it refers to the intense reddish colour of this wine made from the Montepulciano grape. Cerasuolo has become popular worldwide thanks to the efforts of wineries such as Emidio Pepe, Camillo Montori and Masciarelli. For those seeking a rarity, rosé made from Tintilia can be found in Molise.



Chiaretto di Bardolino and Valtenesi Chiaretto are the two rosé appellations produced on the shores of Lake Garda



Piernicola Leone de Castris, owner of De Castris Winery



A vertical tasting of Girofle Rosé by the Garofano winery during the Radici del Sud event

ROSÉ OFF THE BEATEN TRACK – FROM SOUTHERN ITALY

Puglia, namely Salento, has a long rosé tradition. The most common varieties are Primitivo, Negroamaro, Nero di Troia, along with Aleatico and Bombino Nero. Nowadays, modern technology enables age-worthy rosé wines to be produced, as proven by the tasting at the Garofano winery during the Radici del Sud event when Salento Igp Rosato Negroamaro from 2011, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017 was poured. Rosé wines in Basilicata and Campania are made from Aglianico, the “Nebbiolo of the South” as the grape has been nicknamed for its elegant aromas and tannic profile. Mastrobernardino’s Lacrima Rosa, an Irpinia Rosato Doc, is a great example of rosé from Aglianico together with Costa d’Amalfi rosato by Marisa Cuomo. Librandi Cirò Rosato and Marinetto Rosato Calabria by Sergio Arcuri embody the character of the Gaglioppo grape, the main variety used in Calabria. In Sicily, on Mount Etna rosé wines are made from Nerello mascalese, sometimes blended with Nerello cappuccino, as is the case with Etna Rosato by Tenuta delle Terre. Conversely, Ariel by Theresa Eccher and Etna Rosato by Girolamo Russo are made entirely from Nerello mascalese, which exudes aromas of berries and has good acidity. Syrah and Nero d’Avola are used in the rest of Sicily, for example to produce Lumera by Donnafugata. Sardinia only produces small amounts of rosé right now, but Nina Rosé by Su’Entu winery in Sanluri, Cagliari, provides the inquisitive wine lover with a taster of the Bovale native variety. After all, rosé is more than just a commodity without a geographical background when it comes to Italian rosé.

Finca San Amedio: its unrivalled position allows it to grow excellent fruit



Albariño, the standard bearer of the Rias Baixas D.O.

The north-western part of the Iberian Peninsula is home to the Rías Baixas designation of origin which is synonymous with the Albariño grape. Admittedly, it is not the only grape variety allowed in this Spanish designation, but it is the most important and the most popular due to its notoriety on all five continents, to varying degrees.

By Santiago Jiménez

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates - Eduardo Apariz - S.L. Meaño -

Photos Rias Baixas D.O: Owner: Cava Regulatory Board (CRDO) Rías Baixas. Photographer: Xurxo Lobato.

SPAIN

– TERRITORY –



Adolfo Heredia, winemaker and manager of the winery, strives to produce top quality wines

Pontevedra and A Coruña are the two provinces in the Rías Baixas D.O. area where the Albariño grape is grown. The varietal is greatly affected by breezes coming off the Atlantic Ocean and it is grown, by and large, at average elevations of 300 metres. This does not preclude the presence of wineries such as Bodegas Vionta, whose vineyards lie between 0 and 200 metres above sea level, seemingly setting it at odds against the afore-mentioned detail, or Bodega Viña Cartín which is also below the average height. Other wineries, like Pazo Pegullal, comply with the average elevation with vineyards set between 300 and 400 metres above sea level, while others at the far end of the spectrum, like Pazo Pegullal, have vineyards between 4 and 15 metres.

The Designation of Origin includes five subzones: Valle del Salnés, Ribera del Ulla, Soutomaior, Condado del Tea and Rosal. Despite belonging to the same designation, each has characteristics that make it different from the next and unique; this is later

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reflected very subtly in the wines from each of their wineries.

The straw-coloured yellow, the floral and fruity aromas, an average to high intensity, freshness and balanced acidity are the characteristics generally associated with the wines of Rías Baixas. In addition to the well-known Rías Baixas Albariño wines, made exclusively from the Albariño grape, other styles of wine, which are a little different, are produced in this designation of origin and under the same label: Rías Baixas Condado do Tea, made in the same region with a minimum of 70% Albariño and Treixadura grapes; Rías Baixas Rosal with around 70% Albariño and Loureiro grapes, indigenous varieties of this geographical region; Rías Baixas Val do Salnés, whose wines are made from 70% or more of grapes of preferred varieties grown in the area, and likewise Rías Baixas Ribeira do Ulla.

If only Rías Baixas is stated on the bottle that is because at its core, it contains the authorised or preferred white grape varieties of the designation and can be produced, bottled and labelled in any of the five subzones of the region.

In the case of Rías Baixas Barrica (barrel) wines, the wine is kept for some time in oak barrels of over 600 litres during production. Rías Baixas Tinto wines, produced on a small scale, are made from red varieties produced in any of the authorised regions in the designation area. Finally, Rias Baixas Espumoso (sparkling) wines, the latest addition to the designation, are made from any of the varieties mentioned in any of the subzones and at the same time, must comply with established national and EU standards for quality sparkling wines. As regards the general characteristics of this wine region, according to the Rías Baixas D.O., the majority of the soils where Albariño is grown, “are poor in variable minerals, with sandy to sandy loamy soil and poor in nutrients”. This leads to low water retention and a tendency for the soil to dry out in summer.

During the ripening period, “the sun is not very high; there is lower rainfall and slight water stress”. These conditions cause the resultant wines to be generally



Outside Bodegas Vionta belonging to the Freixenet Group



A complete view of Pazo Pegullal's vineyards



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- TERRITORY -



Wine grower and winemaker Baltasar Tirado continues the family tradition

concentrated and aromatic with higher acidity, giving it its uniqueness.

Historically speaking, the Albariño grape has been grown in Rías Baixas for over a thousand years and has adapted well, despite the fact that no one knows its origins. There is some consensus that Cistercian monks were responsible for teaching local wine producers how to get the best out of this type of grape and maximise expression.

Today, according to data from 2017, approximately 4,100 hectares are planted to Albariño in Rías Baixas, divided between 22,000 plots farmed by 5,500 winegrowers. This demonstrates the fragmentation of vineyard distribution as well as an organisational structure that is intrinsically that of a smallholding. In other words, the average area per winegrower is less than one hectare, divided into 4 - 5 plots.

Canopy management in the region involves vine training. The system enables grapes to be grown at a

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Vine training at Pazo Pegullal - typical vineyard management techniques in the Rías Baixas D.O.

certain height above the soil, allowing other crops to be grown on the same plot; it promotes better use of sunlight and prevents the development of diseases which may occur as a result of high humidity in the region. But, as in almost all things in life, there are always exceptions – this is true of Bodega Viña Cartín where, according to winemaker Rosa Pedrosa, the system is not applied to its Santa Mariña vineyard.

Baltasar from Bodega Terras De Compóstela points out the characteristics of the vines: “The Albariño variety is very vigorous and productive with small clusters. The grapes are small and circular with a thick skin, the pulp is juicy with a lot of flavour and fruity and floral aromas.”

In recent decades, as the number of new vineyards has increased, winegrowers have introduced modern canopy systems, which are always high and adapted to the specific weather conditions in the area and the requirements of Albariño and other grape varieties grown in the area.

As mentioned previously, Albariño is the ‘Queen’ of the Rías Baixas D.O., so much so that it is estimated that over 95% of the varietal is harvested in this designation of origin. Other varieties of importance are Loureira and Treixadura which account for some 4% of production with other white varieties accounting for a very small percentage, and red varieties extremely marginal (accounting for 0.79% of total production).

So what does Albariño have that other grapes don’t? According to Bodega Vionta, “it is grown in a very wet region, with low yields, small berries and a very golden colour, and the juice is more golden than in other regions.” Charo Andrade from Bodega Pazo Pegullal emphasises the characteristics of the grape, which distinguish it from other varieties: “it exudes unique, intense fruity aromas, floral and herbal aromas; it has well-balanced acidity which gives it a certain longevity.”

The great majority of wines produced are 100% Albariño, and they are still wines. A smaller percentage of wines are blended with other indigenous grapes and authorised by the designation of origin. These are: White grape



Albariño is the grape variety par excellence in Rías Baixas



On the right, winery owner Ramiro Martínez and on the left, manager César Mendez

varieties: Albariño, Treixadura, Loureira (Loureiro blanco or Marqués), Caiño blanco, Torrontés and Godello.

Red grape varieties: Caiño tinto, Espadeiro, Loureiro tinto, Sousón, Mencía, Brancellao, Pedral and Castañal.

It is clear that, although the designation of origin has over a dozen indigenous Galician grape varieties, 'Albariño' is used as a label for wines from Rías Baixas. A large majority of the wines produced in Rías Baixas are made in the same style. "In general, there are few things that can differentiate some wineries from others. Perhaps what does distinguish them is vineyard and winery management; in other words, our working practice," says Rosa Pedrosa of Bodega Viña Cartín.

How are the designation wines distributed? According to data supplied by the Rías Baixas D.O. for 2017, wines complying with official production guidelines and eligible for the designation totalled 24.8 million litres, i.e. over 33 million bottles labelled as such.

SPAIN

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Rosa Pedrosa is the winemaker who works with great care to achieve maximum expression in her wines

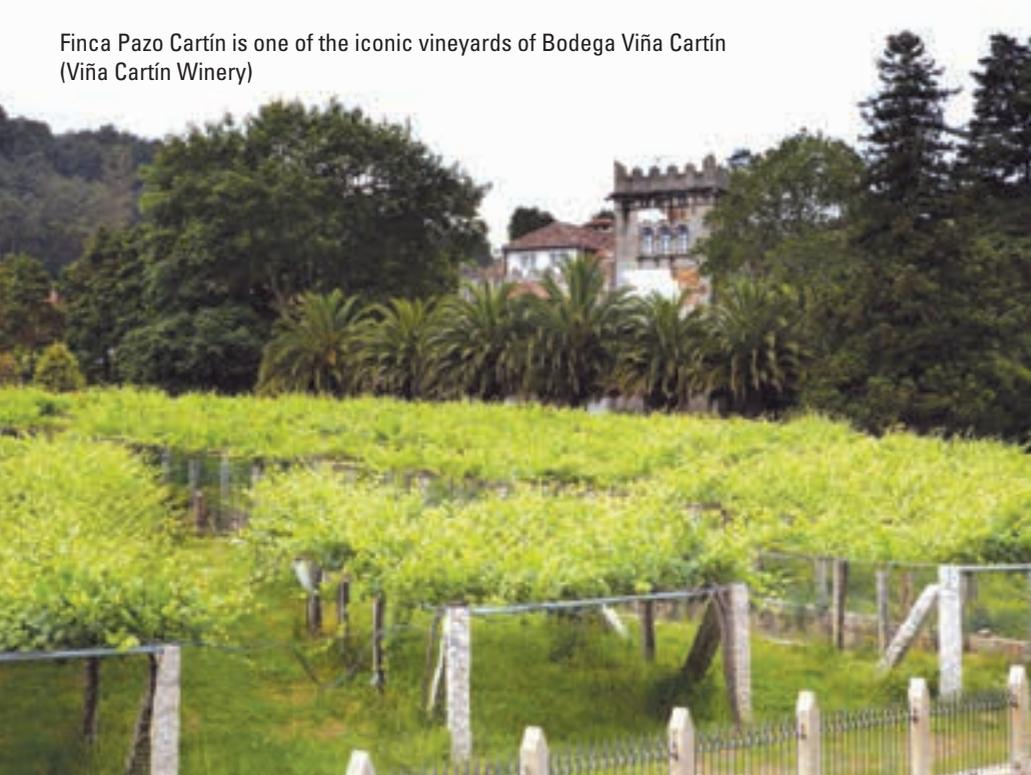
Almost 27% of sales are in export markets and the rest, a significant 73% is sold nationally, with many of the wines drunk in their homeland in the northwest of Spain. Translating these facts into litres, this means that a total 6.6 million litres are sold abroad in over 65 countries (i.e. over 8.7 million bottles). Obviously, the figures are averages. For example, at Bodegas Vionta, around 70% is indeed sold in the Spanish market, a percentage rising to 80% at Terras de Compóstela. By contrast, domestic sales at Bodega Viña Cartín account for no more than 55%.

Albariño wines are sold in more than 65 countries across the globe. The United States and the United Kingdom are the main markets and represent 60% of total sales. By volume, they are followed by Puerto Rico, Germany, the Netherlands, Mexico, Ireland, Switzerland, Canada and Norway.

So what is the future for wines produced in Rías Baixas? In terms of harvest volumes, 2018 is expected to be better than the previous harvest, with quality forecast to be good.

In our humble opinion and based on comments by the

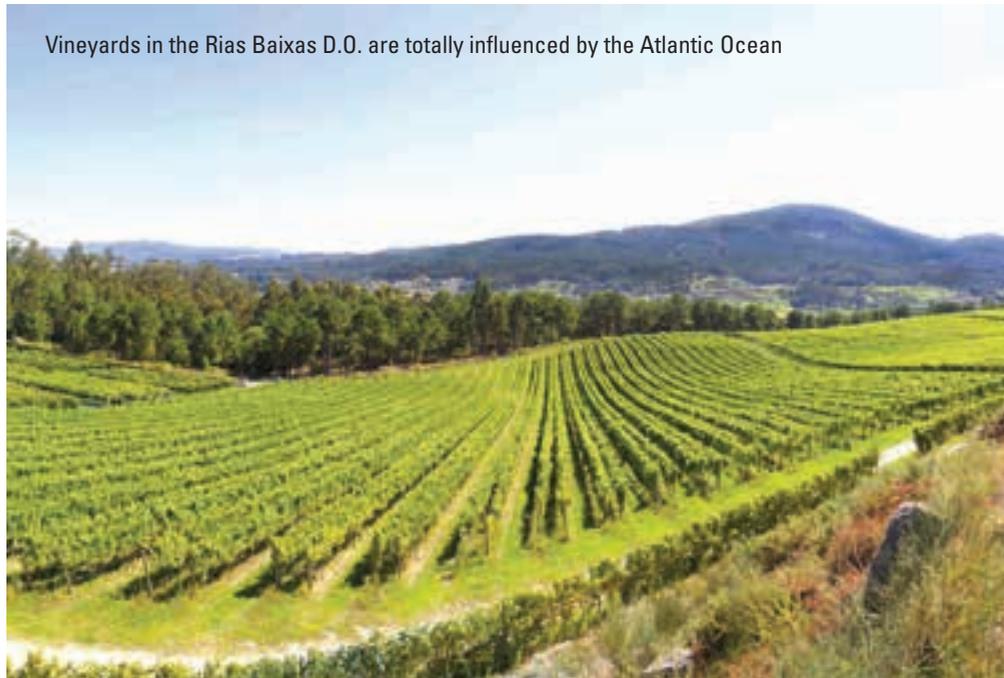
Finca Pazo Cartín is one of the iconic vineyards of Bodega Viña Cartín (Viña Cartín Winery)



The entrance to the gardens at Pazo Pegullal



Vineyards in the Rias Baixas D.O. are totally influenced by the Atlantic Ocean



Terras de Compóstelas: In the winery, technology and tradition combine to achieve the best quality



A magnificent view of the gardens at Pazo Pegullal



SPAIN

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Many vineyards in the Rias Baixas D.O. are practically at sea level

winery managers with whom we have been able to speak, wines of better quality are increasingly sought after and, with more new-generation winegrowers joining the fray, I am sure that new styles of wine made from Albariño and/or other varieties in Rias Baixas will emerge.

There are already wineries producing a wide range of wines which intend to make Premium bottlings from the 'Queen' of Rías Baixas: Bodegas Vionta has confirmed that it is already planning to do so. Others, like Pazo Pegullal, as its winemaker Charo Andrade says, "plan to plant an indigenous red variety to make red wines" in addition to presenting a new wine aimed at a younger target audience very soon.

Sparkling wines made from the Albariño grape have begun to emerge recently. As the author of this article, although I have not had the opportunity to taste any of them, I am sure that they will amaze us.



Grapes are nurtured at Solar dos Lobos as its greatest treasure

Solar dos lobos, a story to tell

Filipa Lobo da Silveira and her brother Miguel represent the third generation of this Portuguese family winery, located in the Alentejo region. The winery, as they like to say themselves, “is a story created out of stories and of many moments that should be told.” It is about a family and its team where the chapters are written daily.

By Santiago Jiménez

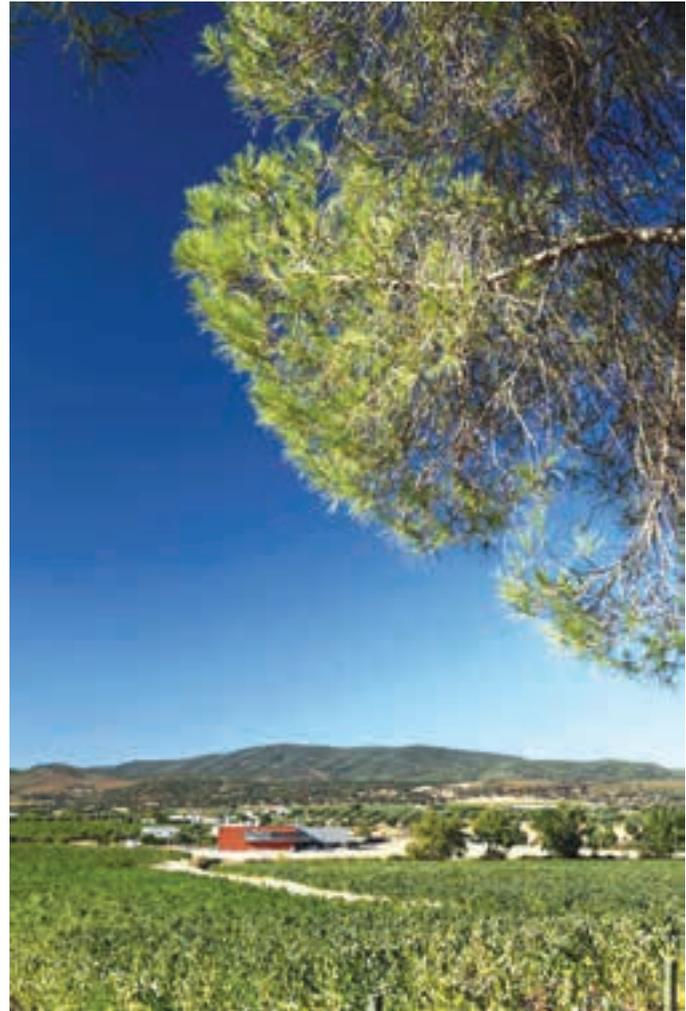
Photographs: Courtesy of the estates

LIVE FROM

- PORTUGAL -



An external view of the winery where Solar dos Lobos wines are made



The vineyard - where it all happens and the focal point of a passion for the land and respect for what it offers

Filipa and Miguel, together with three cousins, represent the continuity of a project their grandparents started. The history of the family, which is linked to the village of Alvito (Beja), has its secrets and traditions encapsulated in the coat of arms of the Lobos da Silveira family, the descendants of the first Baron and Marquise of Alvito of the 15th century. The coat of arms has five wolves, which strangely match the number of cousins who, in their day, have undertaken to continue the project their grandparents started.

A passion for the land and respect for what Mother Nature provides are the guiding

LIVE FROM

– PORTUGAL –

principles of this family and team who pour all their knowledge and dedication into the vineyard, which in turn is expressed through their wines.

They own 75 hectares divided into two vineyards: the cool-climate Herdade Vale d'Anta (25 ha), where they grow Touriga Nacional, Trincadeira, Aragonez, Castelão, Syrah, Cabernet-Sauvignon and Alicante Bouchet; and Arraiolos (50 ha), where the climate is warmer and more suitable for producing great wines. Here, they also grow the afore-mentioned grape varieties, as well as white cultivars such as Arinto, Sauvignon Blanc, Antão Vaz and Chardonnay.

Filipa recalls growing up “seeing wine made by her grandparents, who showed a passion for each plot they planted, and carefully tended and nurtured them”. It was her grandfather who introduced her to the world of wine when she was 14 years old. It was then that they gave her the first wine for her to taste. It was a red wine. She remembered thinking: “I will hold my nose. I don't think I will like it.” Her first impression made an impact, as she says: “I could smell aromas of violets, coffee and toasted sugar and thought... Wow!” Over time, she became attracted to the sensations exuded by wine... and still is today.

In 2012, she focused 100% on the winery which “had already secured recognition for its quality”, but something was missing. That “something” was the marketing message on the label. According to Filipa, “the first label was made by the winemaker. He was excellent in his work, but he lacked skills as a designer”. So they designed a new image for the label where they aimed to tell their story, and managed to do so. ‘Solar dos Lobos’ means ‘House of the Wolves’, and they worked hard to tell the story of their family's coat of arms where a wolf irreverently goes in search of the best grapes which, in turn, go to the winery to produce the finest wines.



The bottling line, where the much-coveted Solar dos Lobos wines are bottled and labelled



The producer Filipa Lobo da Silveira (left) next to a member of her team



Stellenbosch Red Blends

Decades of historic greatness

Looking back over time, Stellenbosch red blends have always excelled as quality examples of this style. This region, especially the diversity of sites stretching from Simonsberg, across the Stellenbosch Hills, Stellenbosch Mountain and the Helderberg precinct, clearly has the elements to produce world class red wines. But the blends most often attract favourable attention, not only Cabernet-Sauvignon-driven but alternative varietal combinations as well.

By André Morgenthal

Photographs: Courtesy of the estates

SOUTH AFRICA

- STYLES -

It is indeed Cabernet-Sauvignon which champions these blends, with both older vintages from wineries like Meerlust, Muratie and Vriesenhof as well as more recent vintages from the same wineries, along with newer names like De Toren and Tokara. De Toren is one of these more recent brands with their first vintage of the “V” released in 1999.

When Emil den Dulk decided to make a lifestyle change in the mid-90’s by moving from Johannesburg to Stellenbosch, his vision to live on a wine farm included wine. One wine: a blend of all 5 classic Bordeaux varieties. At that stage De Toren would be one of the first to use all five in one blend. After careful research, the 20-ha farm was replanted accordingly, including the planned proportions for the final blend with Cabernet as the backbone. De Toren has recently converted entirely to organic farming practices.

The decision to produce such a precise wine came through very careful consideration, looking back historically at which varieties performed well over time in Stellenbosch. “History is an exact science”, says Cellarmaster and CEO, Albie Koch.

Jan Boland Coetzee’s opening line echoes this as well: “Cabernet-Sauvignon is quite at home in Stellenbosch, along with its blending partners”. Jan is a Stellenbosch wine veteran and acquired Vriesenhof, on the West-facing foothills of Stellenbosch Mountain, almost 3 decades ago. “Cabernet tends to ripen early Autumn which creates a typically Mediterranean climate and translates to a longer ripening season”, he continues. The days are shorter, nights longer, with cooling dew settling on the canopies. The season is changing with scattered rain promoting proper colouring resulting in an ideal ratio between water and solids in the berries.

The lower lying sites on the slopes of the Simonsberg, Stellenbosch and Helderberg ranges are well suited for these varieties, where these sites offer clay-rich, granitic soils, retaining valuable moisture for the ripening season during the warm afternoons. Despite the fairly dry conditions, the 2018 vintage was the coolest since 1997 in terms of daily average temperatures. In general, the quality is looking very good, with an average drop in volumes of 15%.



The de Toren Farm which has recently converted to organic



De Toren winemaker, Charles Williams

SOUTH AFRICA

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Jan Boland Coetzee, Vriesenhof's owner

BACK IN THE DAY

The early 80's saw the advent of red blends. Interestingly, Cinsault played an important role in blending, by at least 10%. Jan Boland relates how Cinsault was planted in between the Cabernet rows and harvested as such. Cabernet could not be handled on its own in the cellar, the pulp / pomace was too dense for the machinery (mainly the pumps) to push through and the Cinsault component added juice and lubrication.

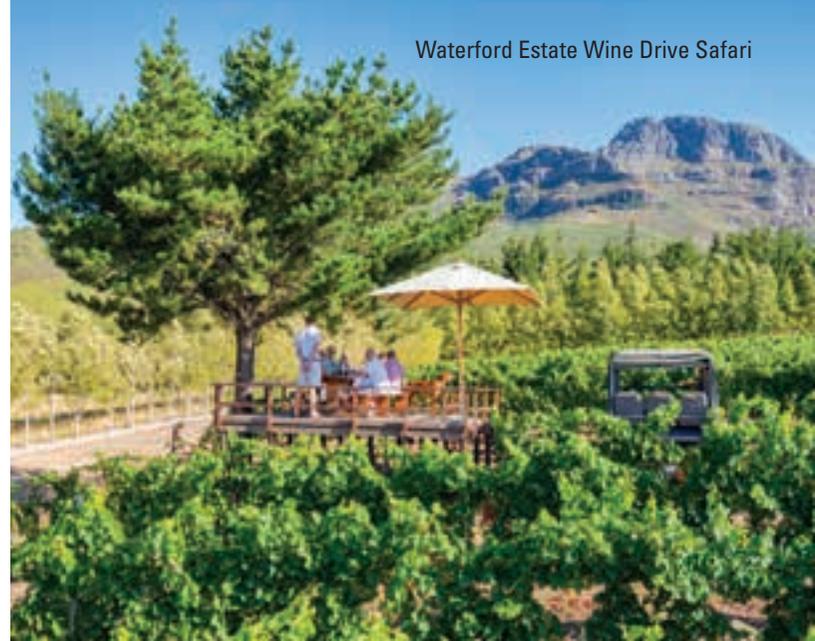
Initially only Cabernet-Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc were used for blends, while Petit Verdot only arrived in the late 80's when plant improvement started. No new plant material was released during Apartheid years. Availability post-Apartheid encouraged plantings and a wider range of varieties became available. For example, Petit Verdot was only planted at Meerlust in 2004, where a strong sense of place as an Estate concept is considered important to ensure individuality and quality. Estate wines in South Africa are grown and bottled on a designated parcel of land, in other words no grapes are bought in from other farms. Very similar to a Bordeaux Chateau and dissimilar to Burgundy.

But it was around the late 60's when Nico Myburgh of Meerlust travelled to Bordeaux to explore red blends and

Waterford Estate-David Van Schalkwyk (viticulturist, right), and Mark Le Roux (winemaker, left)



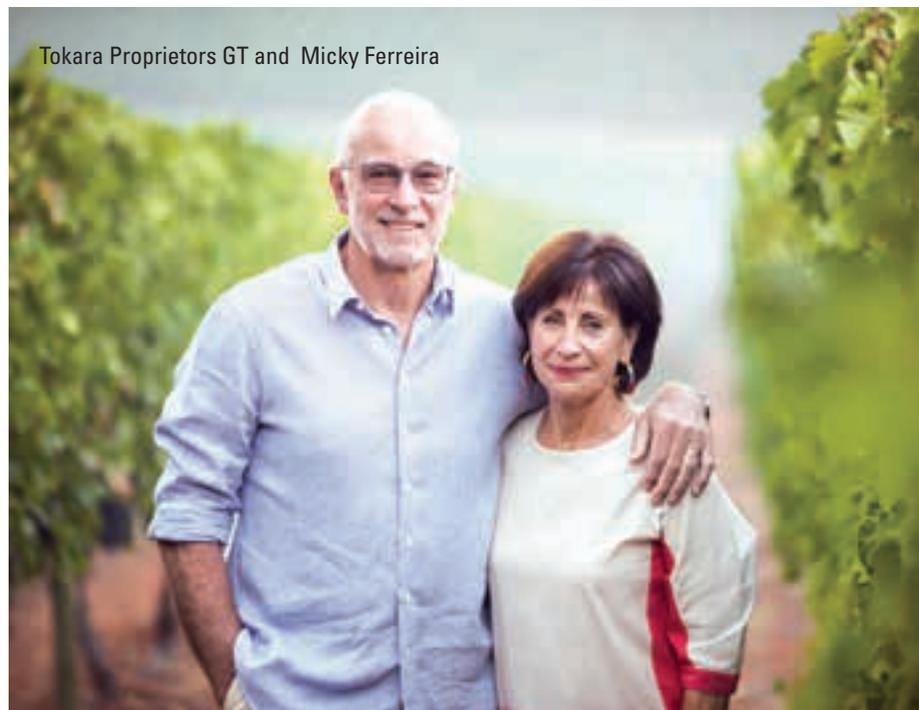
Waterford Estate Wine Drive Safari



Tokara Wine tasting lounge and restaurant reception



Tokara Proprietors GT and Micky Ferreira



Muratie's owner, Rijk Melck



Vriesenhof Estate



SOUTH AFRICA

- STYLES -



Chris Williams, the winemaker at Meerlust

returned with inspiration to recreate what he experienced. Not only did he recognize the soil and climate similarities between the two regions, but he also noticed the use of smaller format, new oak barrels. Wines were generally matured in 2,400 – 4,000L Foudres, so the idea of the new 225L barrique intervention intrigued him. However, there were reasons for not having barriques: trade embargos linked to Apartheid and the expense. He visited his bank manager, who responded: “Nico, if you believe in this, we can approve finances, but this is like crossing the Rubicon, there is no turning back and it better work”. They never looked back. Giorgio dalla Cia, then cellar master, crafted some of the most iconic South African red blends. More recently, then assistant and now current cellar master, Chris Williams is at the helm and mentions with pride the super-premium prices the 1978 experimental Rubicons reached at the 2017 Nederburg Auction, at R16000 per bottle. Some of the early wines matured in Foudres have aged incredibly well, to the extent that Chris re-introduced 12 Foudres (2,400-4,000L) for maturation to be used as a component

SOUTH AFRICA

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in the Rubicon, together with the barrique component.

One of the reasons Meerlust introduced blends, and single varieties of Merlot and Cab, is the diversity of soil types and aspects on the Estate, offering a huge variety of characterful wines to assemble the final blend, which is 4 varieties, including Cabernet Franc, but 25 different vineyards and about 100 individual separate cuvees making up the final blend.

One of the most historic wine estates in Stellenbosch has also been planning a red blend over decades. The Muratie Anselva van de Caab was initiated as a blend referencing the first owner, Lourens Campher, who brought Anselva from Cape Town where she lived as a slave.

Current owners are the Melck family, with Rijk Melck on the operational side. His late father, Ronnie Melck was a raconteur, loving life, art and wine. Long lunches turned into art, currently on display in the tasting room. He was a leading figure in the South African wine industry over several decades from the 50's to the 80's, shaping wine styles and revolutionising brand positioning. For example, in the early 1960's the largely made from Chenin blanc white blend, Lieberstein, was the biggest selling white wine in the world. His palate was legendary and he so impressed the Martell family who still owned the brand in those days, and their famous blender, Monsieur Chapeau, that South Africa was the country they gave permission for their name to be used on a brandy.

Almost on a parallel latitude and just East of Muratie on the Simonsberg, former banker GT Ferreira and his family had a similar goal with Tokara - to make a wine exquisite enough to rival the best in the world. After 20 years of dedication and most importantly developing the understanding of the incredible Tokara terroir, they launched their pinnacle wine, the 2015 Telos - only 1,000 bottles produced at a super premium price point. TELOS is Greek meaning the end result of a goal-driven process and is a blend of 92 % Cabernet-Sauvignon, 5% Malbec and 3% Merlot.

ALTERNATIVE VARIETAL COMBINATIONS

The "Cape Blends" moniker has different meanings. Cape blends have been manifesting themselves in red and white versions, the former when Shiraz was blended with Cabernet-Sauvignon, older vintages from Uitsyde being



Meerlust viticulturist Roelie Joubert



Stellenbosch red blends, let's hang our hat on that

SOUTH AFRICA

- STYLES -



Waterford Estate's Kevin Arnold (owner, left)
and Mark Le Roux (winemaker, right)

benchmarks as well as Rust en Vrede's Estate Wine. Pinotage blends started a trend and the Cape Blend category set off to create a new and interesting style, with Kaapzicht arguably one of the leaders here, along with Warwick.

However, one of the most interesting blends out of Stellenbosch is The Jem, produced at Waterford Estate, situated on the foothills of the Helderberg range. Managing director and cellar master, Kevin Arnold, has ample experience with vintages at Delheim (11 vintages), where he introduced the famous Delheim Grande Reserve and then Rust en Vrede (10 vintages). Waterford is a relatively young estate, established in 1998 with a very strong focus on being leaders and not followers, not only in wine, but wine tourism as well. The Jem is innovation and patience personified, another result of trials over decades. It straddles wine regions across Europe, with a blend of 42% Cabernet-Sauvignon, 20% Shiraz, 14% Merlot, 11% Cabernet franc, 4% Mourvedre, 3% Petit Verdot, 3% Barbera, 3% Sangiovese. Cabernet being the backbone again, the rest all add flavour and complexity.

Stellenbosch arguably forms part of the most beautiful wine regions in the world and given the history of particularly the red blends, tradition and innovation reside comfortably together in a dynamic symbiosis within a world class wine region.

Jane Fonda:

“WINE IS A WAY OF TELLING OUR GUESTS
WE APPRECIATE THEM”

Despite having celebrated her 80 summers, Jane Fonda shows no signs of ageing. To quote a lovely phrase by Roger Vadim, she is still as bubbly as a good bottle of Champagne! We met the American star.

Interview in Los Angeles by Frank Rousseau, our US correspondent

Photographs: all right reserved

You give the impression of always being in control, of watching every single protein or carbohydrate you eat. Do you ever let yourself go?

Of course I do! You know, there's nothing worse than frustration. Sometimes I treat myself to lychees with Martini, it's my little weakness! With time, I also feel much less guilty when I enjoy a big 1,500-calorie hamburger! Besides, you know what? It was in France, when I was Roger Vadim's wife, that I started to "enjoy life" a bit without feeling guilty for every spoonful I put in my mouth! It is better to eat good butter-cooked food in reasonable quantities than to snack all day long or drink soda when there's nothing better than a good glass of rosé to quench your thirst!

Twenty years ago, Roger Vadim told me, "Making love with Jane Fonda is like hugging a bottle of Champagne, she's so bubbly"

(laughs) He never said that to my face! I would have liked that!

Tell us more about wine and your relationship with wine?

The first time I came to France, I was a real novice about wine! To be honest, I was even novice at everything! (laughs). It was Roger Vadim who introduced me to the world of wine and so many other things. When he didn't have a book in his hand, he had a glass of red wine or a cigarette. We went out often and often invited people



STARS

– & WINE –



Frank Rousseau with Jane Fonda

over. Without being the focus of our conversations, wine played a large part in our discussions. You French have a certain talent for turning the spotlight on wine. I don't know if it's the articulacy of your language or your vocabulary but it's always interesting to listen to you. Even if sometimes you confuse us!

Do you have any examples?

Yes I do! One day Roger told me a wine had legs! I thought he was making fun of me! One evening before our guests arrived, he told me the wine had to be "brought up to room temperature". I said, "But why do you want to put it in our room?" That made him laugh... If I'm in Los Angeles and I meet a Frenchman, it takes me a few minutes to reopen the drawer where my vocabulary is stored and which I tend to forget. But everything comes back as soon as I arrive in Paris or at the Cannes Film Festival. Especially if I'm poured a nice glass of rosé!

So is rosé your favourite wine?

Yes! I like anything fresh. But I have to be very careful. When you have a cold drink, it slips down more easily. It's insidious! You can soon get tipsy!

Do you own a wine cellar at home?

Yes, but my partner manages it. Having a decent cellar is a time-consuming occupation. We like to honour our guests by serving them good wines. It is a way of telling them that we appreciate them, that we love them. But make no mistake, we are very hot on etiquette. And I'm not talking about the label on the bottle! I mean propriety and decorum. A woman should never serve herself a second glass, the man has to make sure her glass is not empty! Another rule of politeness is that you have to serve wine first to women, from the oldest to the youngest, then to men. I don't know why but I always get served first! (laughs)

Eighty years old and a dream physique – do you think wine has something to do with it?

I've always kept myself in good shape. I don't know if wine has helped keep me young, but it's obvious that wherever there's a notion of pleasure, it's good for your morale and everything else...

Simon Baker:

“I LIKE TO BE INTRODUCED TO NEW WINES”

The charismatic hero of the “Mentalist” is a surf enthusiast and proved it by directing “Breath”, a film about the sport. But there is another liquid that Simon likes to “slide” down his throat and that’s a good glass of wine. Like surfing, it also gives him thrills and spills...

Interview in Los Angeles by Frank Rousseau, our US correspondent

Photographs: all right reserved

You’re in Olympic shape!

Thanks for the compliment! But you might not have said that a few weeks ago. I went on a major promotional tour of Australia for “Breath”. I covered practically every province on the continent! Of course, every time I arrived in a town a small reception was given in my honour! It was fun, but the problem was everyone was trying to buy me a beer or wine! So the tour turned into a round! (laughs)

Let me reassure you: Serge Gainsbourg used to say that meat keeps best in alcohol.

That’s funny!

I read somewhere that besides surfing you have another addiction, a French one this time...

Yes, coffee with a dash of milk and Brie sandwich is a must! I discovered it during a stay in France, in Hossegor and just talking about it makes my mouth water! In the United States, when they serve you a sandwich, it’s on soft, sweet bread. Inside, they put tons of stuff. Mayonnaise, butter, turkey, gruyere slices, tomatoes, lettuce, eggs, sweet and sour pickles. Consequently, it becomes disgusting! During my many stays in France, I also learned to appreciate your different wines. The advantage of being popular in a country like yours is that people take good care of you! They give you the best, they try to serve you the best products. People say to themselves that you will be a sort of ambassador for their wines when you return home!

And is that so?

Actually, not really! When I’ve had a good wine, I don’t



STARS

- & WINE -



Frank Rousseau with Simon Baker

like to say what it is. I stay pretty vague. When I go to a friend's house, I don't want to be served the same wine they enjoyed at my place! I like to be introduced to new wines!

How can you keep a secret when the label is stuck on the bottle?

I always pour the wine into a decanter! Then it's not an issue any more!

And what is your best taste experience with a wine?

It was in Paris. I was invited to promote the "Mentalist". During dinner, the sommelier arrived with a wine that was about my age! I'd never seen anything like it before! When you are served a vintage that is over 40 years old, it is always a very emotional moment filled with anxiety because you are not sure that what is in the bottle has withstood the test of time. It was funny, I can still hear the sommelier arguing with the waiter because he had served me a salad. I learned that evening that you don't serve a salad with vinegar when you're honoured with an exceptional wine! You kill the flavours!

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Wines tasted and awarded medals are on sale on our e-commerce website
at cellar door prices

A screenshot of the e-commerce website interface. On the left, there is a sidebar with search filters: 'NARROW YOUR SEARCH' with dropdowns for Country, District, Designation, and Category; a search bar with 'Et: Bourgogne, Rhône...'; a 'Search' button; and a 'Reset filters' button. Below the search filters is a 'CUSTOMER SERVICE' section with a phone number '+33 (0) 1 30 80 13 73', a free call number '0800-1000', and the website URL 'www.gilbertgaillard.com'. The main content area shows '24 RESULTS' in a grid of six wine bottles. Each bottle has a circular medal icon with a number (86, 86, 90, 89, 87, 87) and a price tag. Below each bottle is the wine name, vintage, and a price in EUR, followed by an 'Add to cart' button.

Wine Name	Year	Price (EUR)	Medal
CHATEAU VIEUX MOUONAC	MILLESIME 2011	15,50	86
CHATEAU VIEUX MOUONAC	MILLESIME 2012	16,00	86
DI GIOVANNA	HELIOS ROSSO 2014	22,00	90
DI GIOVANNA	HELIOS BIANCO 2015	18,00	89
CHATEAU HAUT-GOLLON	MILLESIME 2013	17,00	87
CHATEAU SAINT ESTEVE	VOGNIER 2013	11,90	87

CHÂTEAU PETIT VAL



SAINT-ÉMILION GRAND CRU

L'ABUS D'ALCOOL EST DANGEREUX POUR LA SANTÉ. À CONSOMMER AVEC MODÉRATION.