

WINE Talk: January 2016

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 58

Welcome to the first Wine Talk newsletter for 2016. We are looking forward to a busy year ahead with the beautiful wines made from the exciting 2015 harvest starting to arrive over the coming months.

This month we have a short feature about one of our long-term suppliers Stéphane Guion from the Loire Valley. His wines often slip under the radar due to their low price, but they are very well-made wines made from Cabernet Franc. There is no special offer because the wines are offered at such a low price, but it is a good chance to buy a dozen which we will ship freight free.

We have seven special packs for you this month. We have decided to create a mixed 12 pack again this month with a 20% discount and free freight due to the amazing reaction to last month's special offer.

The rest of the packs have a 15% discount. We have a special Gamay 6 pack with wines from Beaujolais and from the Loire Valley. We are also featuring the wonderful sparkling wines created by "petillant naturel" specialist Les Capriades. We follow these up with a 3 pack of Magnums and a 3 pack of lovely Champagnes, all from the same producer but from different plots and made with different grapes. We also have assembled a pack of reds that are perfect for drinking chilled. Finally we offer a 6 pack of white wines that go well while sitting in the sun outside.

As promised in the last newsletter we have continued our survey of the places we go to in France to drink natural wines. This month we talk about the bars and restaurants in the Loire Valley that we enjoy visiting. Next month we'll visit the south and south-west.

The grape variety of the month is Menu Pineau, a native grape of the central Loire Valley which features in one of the sparkling wines in the Les Capriades' offer this month.

For a full list of wines currently in stock and their prices see:

http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Buy_wines.htm

There is a link to our order form for these packs and any other wines at the end of this newsletter. But there's no need to use the order form. Just send us an email listing the wines and/or packs you would like to order if that suits you better. We'll confirm the price by return email before processing your order.

Featured winemaker: Stephane Guion

This month we have a short feature about one of our long-term suppliers Stéphane Guion from the Loire Valley. Stéphane Guion is a quiet, thoughtful winemaker who only grows one grape variety, namely Cabernet Franc – the favoured red grape variety in that section of the Loire that runs between the cities of Tours and Angers.

Here you find appellations such as Chinon, Saumur, Bourgueil, St Nicolas de Bourgueil and Touraine where Cabernet Franc wines are revered.

Stéphane's domaine has been certified organic since 1967 so the soils are very healthy, vines are deeply-rooted and the fruit is exceptional. He lives simply and charges a very fair price for his wines, so we are able to offer them at a very reasonable price in Australia.

We love to walk in his vineyards and also to visit his cellars. He has one under his house and one in an extraordinary tunnel where limestone was painstakingly carved out of a nearby hill to build the houses in the village of Bernais hundreds of years ago. This tunnel is well over a kilometre long and is now used by the local winemakers to store their wine in perfect conditions.

The Bourgueil appellation only permits red wines and rosé wines to be produced and we only have a few cases of the 100% Cabernet Franc Domaine cuvée left so we thought it would be a good idea to make them a pack this month.

Here are some photos of the vineyard and the tunnel so that you can see where the wines come from.



Stéphane in his vineyard



One of the healthy vines in July with grapes on the vines



Approaching the tunnel



The entrance



Descending under the hill



Arriving at Stephane's cellar

The Domaine Guion Bourgueil Domaine Rouge costs \$18 a bottle. If you order a box of 12 bottles we will send it to you freight free. Total cost \$216.

Pack 1: January Mixed 12 Pack



We had such a good reaction to our Christmas mixed dozen with a 20% discount, we've decided to make it a regular feature (well – for the moment anyway!) In addition, we can ship it to most centres in Australia freight free.

There are some beautiful wines in this pack and it is a great way to buy a cross-section of our wine styles to help you explore the breadth of the styles of wines that can be classified as natural.

We have selected two sparkling wines (the first two), 4 white wines, one rosé, 4 red wines and one interesting sweeter style wine from South West France.

Jean-Pierre Robinot L'Opera des Vins Fêtebulles 2014 – Jean-Pierre Robinot is one of the great natural wine producers of France. His wines are complex, elegant and long-lasting. He manages to achieve longevity for his wines without using any sulphites. This sparkling wine is made from one of our favourite grape varieties, namely Chenin Blanc from the Loire Valley near the city of Tours. It is a beautiful sparkling wine.

Les Capriades Vin de France BCF 2014 – This fascinating sparkling wine from the doyens of pétillant naturels, Les Capriades' is made from three very obscure varieties of the Gamay grape, namely Gamay de Bouze, Gamay de Chaudenay, Gamay Fréaux. These are each teinturier varieties which means they have red flesh and produce red juice naturally unlike the vast majority of red grapes which have white juice and the red colour must be extracted from the skins by leaving the skin in contact with the juice for an extended period. The result is a beautiful, red sparkling wine which has a lingering, slight bitterness at the end which is nicely balanced by some residual sugar. It is only 11% alcohol and goes beautifully with dark berry and cherry desserts (and it's a colour match too!).

Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Cendrillon 2013 – It is wonderful to have this lovely wine in Australia again! It is made from 80% Sauvignon Blanc and 20% Chardonnay. Just 30% of the Sauvignon Blanc spent some time in old oak barrels to provide additional complexity. This is a fascinating wine for us. The first couple of sips mark it as an interesting wine but, gradually, it opens up in the glass to reveal a complexity that belies its price. These two grapes seem to dance together to form an harmonious, elegant and appealing drink.

Causse Marines Vin de France Dencon 3102 – Hailing from the Gaillac region in South West France this wine is made from a grape variety that had almost become extinct in this region until rescued by Causse Marines and some of their friends in the area. The grape variety for this wine is Ondenc which is native to the region. It makes a crisp, elegant white wine that we like very much. By the way, it is not permitted to put the vintage on the label for Vin de France wines so they helpfully provide a code for you.

Sylvain Bock Le Fruit de la Patience 2012 – This wine is made from Chardonnay that has been matured in old oak barrels for twenty four months - hence the name. Only 1000 bottles of this wine were produced from the 2012 vintage. This wine also displays intriguing floral aromas as well as anise notes. The old barrel maturation also ensures that the wine is clear and bright in the glass. This is an elegant, refined and compelling wine that truly benefits from the long maturation.

Marc Pesnot Vin de France Miss Terre 2014 – The quality of the wine is due to the meticulous vineyard work that even extends to hand picking the Melon de Bourgogne grapes only when they are ripe even if that takes a number of passes through the vineyard at picking time. The grapes are then totally destemmed and then fermented very slowly (sometimes 4 months, sometimes longer), before resting on the lees for up to six months. The vines for this cuvee are from 50 years old to 80 years old providing the wine with additional complexity. But there is a major difference to this wine and that is because Marc allows it to go through malolactic fermentation thus producing softer lactic acids rather than the more astringent malic acids. Marc chooses not to submit his wines to the Muscadet appellation even though they are grown in the right area for that appellation hence they are labelled as Vin de France.

Hervé Villemade AOC Cheverny Rosé 2014 – This delightful rosé wine is made from a blend of equal parts of Pinot Noir and Gamay which are crushed and fermented and matured in tanks prior to bottling. It is a blended wine as wines with the Cheverny appellation on the label, cannot be made single grape varieties. It is a fresh, lively wine that is perfect for drinking at any time of the year. These two grape varieties marry so well in the bottle. This is a great wine to have with a wide range of foods and is also perfect for sipping as an aperitif.

Jolly Ferriol Vin de France Jolly Rouge 2013 – This wine is made from Carignan (30%) and Grenache (70%) and is only 13% alcohol, unlike many wines from this warm area of France (Roussillon near the Spanish border). The grapes grow on schisty marl soil and the yield is low at 25 hectolitres per hectare. It undergoes carbonic maceration in tanks for 15 days after which the wine is transferred to old barrels for a minimum of 18 months. The result is a light, thirst quenching wine that can be served slightly chilled in summer. You will smell cherry notes when trying this wine. It has great mouth feel and the finish is very smooth with an almost Syrah-like spiciness on the finish.

La Paonnerie Coteaux d'Ancenis Simplement Gamay 2014 – This wine is “simply Gamay” as the label implies. It is made in the area between the cities of Angers and Nantes in the Western section of the Loire Valley. There are no additions at all, not even any sulphites which makes it a lively, fresh and very drinkable Gamay that is great for summer drinking. The wine is fermented in fibreglass tanks using the natural yeasts on the grapes and is neither filtered nor fined.

Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau La Vigne du Louis 2014 – Le Vigne de Louis is a Jura Trousseau that is pale in colour (like most Jura red wines) but has a vibrant freshness and hints of smokiness. It is matured in large wooden foudres and the fruit is sourced from vines that are approximately 25 years old. A small amount of sulphite was added to this wine when it was bottled. It has good structure, very good length and is quite juicy - hence is very drinkable. The vines lie on a south west facing slope thus catching plenty of sunshine.

Mylène Bru Vin de France Rita 2013 – The Rita is named after Mylène’s Andalusian grandmother and also St Rita the saint of desperate causes! The wine is made from 100% Carignan from 50 year old vines which is not unusual in her area because it is quite close to Saint Chinian where Carignan is revered. The grapes were hand-picked in the cool of the morning and placed in 10 kilogram baskets to preserve the quality of the fruit. The juice was macerated for approximately 20 days to extract the deep colour of this wine which then matured for 10 months in tanks before being bottled with a very small amount of sulphur this year. This is a beautiful expression of the Carignan grape and a wine that we love!

Dominique Andiran Vin de France Soyeux 3102 – Soyeux is a sweet wine made from 100% Gros Manseng, the same grape that is used to make many of the gorgeous sweet wines in nearby Jurançon. Dominique calls the wine soyeux because he found a reference to sweet moelleux wine in a book quoting Henry IV and the word he used was soyeux which is the French word for silky. The wine is made with a mix of just ripe and fully ripe, shrivelled grapes with concentrated sugars so that there is a nice balance of acidity and sweetness. This wine has undergone a light filtration because the natural yeasts in the shrivelled grapes are so strong that there is a chance of re-fermentation without the filtration. We think that this is a very exciting wine which can be matched with cheese or even rich liver dishes!

The RRP for this selection of 12 bottles of wine is \$473 but the pack price is \$378.40 including freight.

Pack 2: Les Capriades sparkling 6 pack



Pascale Potaire and Moses Gadouche are the dynamic duo who are behind Les Capriades one of the very few domaines in France that specialise almost exclusively in natural sparkling wines (called Pétillant Naturels) made using the Méthode Ancestrale technique.

To understand what they are doing and why it is so special we should remind you of the different styles of sparkling wine that are found in France. There are two key methods of producing a sparkling wine.

The first is called Méthode Champenoise if the wine is made within the Champagne region which lies to the east of Paris from just below the city of Troyes northwards to just above the city of Reims. Only sparkling wines made using this method from grapes grown in that region can use the term. The Champenoise method is to make a white still wine in the traditional way and then to add sugar and some additional yeast to the bottled wine and allow the wine to undergo a secondary fermentation in the bottle. The dead yeast in the bottle is expelled (a process known as disgorging) and the wine lost is topped up after the fermentation has completed. Therefore Champagne is the product and Méthode Champenoise is the technique for making that product.

If a sparkling wine is made outside the Champagne region using a similar method then the method of making is referred to as Méthode Traditionelle. The reason for this is that a winemaker in, say, the Loire Valley using the term Méthode Champenoise could give the impression that the wine was a Champagne which would not be correct. There are many names given to sparkling wines made using this method outside the Champagne region. The most famous is Crémant. There are eight Crémant appellations:

- Crémant d'Alsace
- Crémant de Bordeaux
- Crémant de Bourgogne
- Crémant de Die
- Crémant du Jura
- Crémant de Limoux

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

- Crémant de Loire
- Crémant de Savoie

These wines are all made using the Méthode Traditionnelle and also must be harvested by hand and adhere to maximum yield restrictions.

Méthode Ancestrale is an ancient technique for making sparkling wines which probably was first mastered in the Languedoc in the Limoux area. They are believed to have been made in this region since 1531 (where records from the abbey of Saint Hilaire confirm the production). This technique has been given more attention in a number of areas of France in the past ten years and the product of this method has been given the name Pétillant Naturel.

Wines made by this method see the fermentation process begin in tanks and then the wine is bottled before the fermentation is finished, meaning that the continued fermentation in the bottle sees sugar being converted into alcohol and carbon dioxide thus producing the bubbles and making a sparkling wine.

The main places where you are likely to find wines made using this technique are the south-west of France particularly in the Gaillac appellation and the Limoux appellation in the Languedoc. It is also used in the area just to the east of Lyon where wines such as Clairette de Die Tradition and sparkling wines from the Bugey Cerdon appellation are made using this method.

However the last eight or nine years have seen the fascination for single ferment sparkling wines spreading rapidly through the Loire Valley where the impetus began, into the Jura and the Auvergne then down into the Languedoc and Roussillon as well as the vast area of Provence.

So here are six of the best from the Loire from Pascal and Moses from Les Capriades. They've just arrived and would have been disgorged just prior to shipping. The four wines we have chosen here are all totally different from each other but give a fascinating glimpse of the complexity that is possible when clever winemakers turn their hand to single ferment sparkling wines.

Les Capriades Vin de France Piège à Filles Rosé 2014 (2 bottles) – The Rosé Piège à Filles in the 750ml bottles is a pale pink Pétillant Naturel which is a blend of organic Gamay, Grolleau Noir, Cabernet Franc and Côt grapes. The wine is made without any dosage (the addition of sugar) and also without the addition of any sulphur. It is possible to detect a tiny bit of residual sugar but it is at a level that makes the drink even more alluring. We believe that this is one of the finest examples of a Pétillant Naturel on the market! It's also Les Capriades' most well known cuvée.

Les Capriades Vin de France Piège à Filles Blanc 2014 – The Piège à Filles Blanc Pétillant Naturel is a blend of organic Chardonnay, Menu Pineau, Meslier and Sauvignon Blanc grapes. The wine is made without any dosage (the addition of sugar) and also without the addition of any sulphur. It is possible to detect a tiny bit of residual sugar but it is at a level that makes the drink even more alluring.

Les Capriades Vin de France Pynoz Rosé 2014 – The Pynoz Rosé is a new cuvée containing both Pinot Noir and the very rare Pineau d'Aunis. These are two of our

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

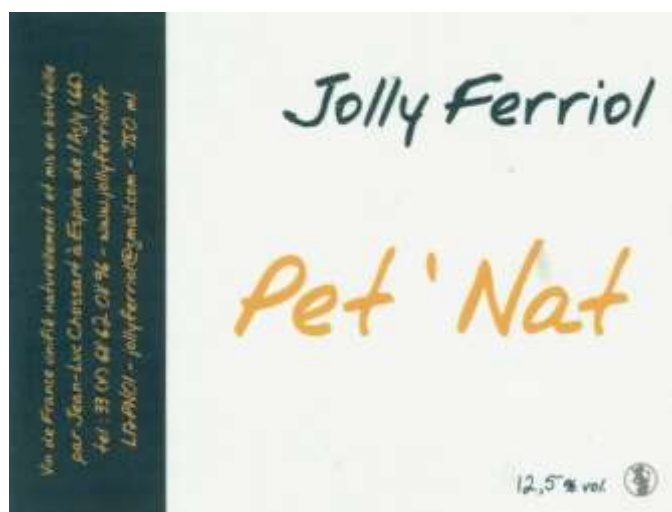
absolute favourite grapes so it is a big treat to have them in the same bottle. It's slightly more complex than the Piège à Filles Rosé, with a lovely lingering flavour and persistence. 11% alcohol.

Les Capriades Vin de France BCF (Teinturiers) 2014 (2 bottles) – The BCF is a fascinating version of pétillant naturel wine. This cuvée is made entirely of teinturier grapes (those that have red skin and red juice). This year Pascale and Moses have sourced some quite rare grape varieties, namely Gamay de Bouze, Gamay de Chaudenay and Gamay Fréaux (this is where the name comes from).

The wine is made with equal quantities of each variety. This is a truly lovely "Methode Ancestrale". It is a dark red sparkling wine which has a lingering, slight bitterness at the end of the palate which is nicely balanced by its residual sugar. It goes very well with dessert but is also very easy to drink on a shady terrace. 11% alcohol.

The RRP for this pack of 6 bottles of wine is \$276 but the pack price is **\$234.60 including freight.**

Pack 3: Magnum 3 pack



There is a certain magic associated with magnums. They say something about you if you take one to an event. They suggest generosity and magnanimity. They speak of good times! So we have assembled a pack of 3 magnums that are perfect for summer drinking.

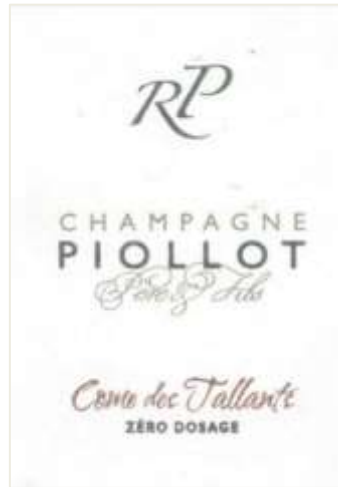
Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Rouge 2012 – This wine belies its humble Bourgogne Rouge tag. It is made from grapes picked from his vineyards around the village of Saint Aubin which is one of the emerging villages for both white and red Burgundy. About half of the grapes are destemmed and Julien intervenes as little as possible during the maceration so don't expect something big and punchy.. It is a silky Pinot with some elegance and structure. We like it a lot!

Jolly Ferriol Vin de France Pet'Nat 2014 – This Jolly Ferriol wine which is made in the Pétillant Naturel style and which goes by the name of Pet'Nat, is a beautifully savoury sparkling wine made from 100% Muscat, that white grape so beloved of the Languedoc and Roussillon. This one is a 50-50 blend of Muscat à Petit Grain and Muscat d'Alexandrie. The vines grow in schisty marl soils and the yield is very low at around 20 hectolitres per hectare. The grapes are picked by hand and then vinified naturally in vats for about three weeks. The wine is bottled before fermentation is complete to ensure that the wine is sparkling. The wine is disgorged after about 5 months in the bottle and then topped up to clear the bottle of the lees which form.

Le Temps de Cerises "La Peur du Rouge" 2014 – Axel Prufer can definitely be described as a low interventionist winemaker. This incredibly complex Chardonnay is like no other we have ever tried (except perhaps the amazing Chardonnays produced by Michel Gahier in the Jura). It is packed with minerality and is totally expressive of the limestone-strewn vineyard from which the fruit has been derived. Only a wine made from perfect fruit grown without sprays, irrigation and artificial fertilisers could possibly taste like this.

The RRP for this selection of 3 magnums of wine is \$250 but the pack price is \$212.50 including freight.

Pack 4: Champagne 3 Pack



We have put together three very interesting bottles of Champagne to demonstrate how different Champagne from the same region but using different grape varieties can be. The Champagne from Roland Piollet is eagerly sought-after on both sides of the Atlantic and we are very happy with the price of this wine in Australia. So this is a perfect way to discover the delights of Roland's Champagnes.

Champagne Piollet Cote des Bar Cuvée de Réserve Brut NV – When we first tasted this elegant Champagne we remarked on its beautiful light golden colour, the citrus aromas and the silky freshness on the palate and very good length. The base wine is made from Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Pinot Meunier providing additional richness. Further complexity is gained from using base wine from two different vintages to make the champagne. This is an ideal aperitif!

Champagne Piollet Champagne Cote des Bar Cuvée Come des Tallants – The Come des Tallants is a new cuvée from Roland Piollet and represents a step-up in quality in a range that was already very, very good. The parcel of land called Come des Tallants is less than one hectare and has direct southern exposure.

This champagne is a classic "Blanc de Noir" - a white Champagne made from a red grape variety, namely 100% Pinot Noir picked from old vines. This Champagne has small but persistent bubbles, a bracing freshness, and great length that you would be lucky to find in wines of twice the price. It is a perfect aperitif wine that can be used to break the ice at the beginning of the evening but it also pairs very nicely with a range of foods, especially seafood dishes such as crab and lobster.

Matched with smart new labels and the fact that there is not added sugar in the wine (zero dosage), we have here the perfect wine for a celebration at an amazingly good price.

Chambers Street Wines in New York are big fans of Roland's wines. They say of this release:

"The palate is finely chiseled with a nervy minerality, buoyed by a weighty concentration and a full aromatic range of wild flowers, which continues through to a finely pointed finish. A fantastic effort and Champagne from Roland Piollet!"

Champagne Piollot Cote des Bar Extra Brut Pinot Blanc Cuvee Val Colas Robin NV –

This is a special new cuvee for Roland Piollot made entirely from Pinot Blanc grown on his estate. The vines thrive on the slopes near the village of Polisot overlooking the upper reaches of the Seine River. The Val Colas Robin vineyard was planted entirely to Pinot Blanc by the Piollot family in 1955 using selection massale rather than clonal varieties. The vineyard is one of the best in Roland's care. It has wonderful exposure so the grapes ripen easily and the soil is based on limestone with a mix of red clay which provides the minerality that is so obvious in this very special wine.

This is a very elegant, savoury wine with lots of fresh fruit aromas and lovely, balanced acidity. It has a very fine bead and you also notice the light golden colour. There is a complexity in both the aroma and the flavour with lots spice and citrus notes and the intense minerality that we mentioned above. It is very rare to find a Champagne made exclusively from the Pinot Blanc grape, however once you taste it you will wonder why more producers don't do it!

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles of wine is \$202 but the pack price is \$171.70 including freight.

Pack 5: Gorgeous Gamay 6 pack



We thought it was time to feature the Gamay grape again! As more wines made from this grape become available we are all realising just how good the wines are. We wish that more producers in Australia would embrace it.

Of course, the spiritual heartland for Gamay is the Beaujolais region due to the decayed granitic soils there for which the grape has a particular affinity. But Gamay is also popular in other areas such as the Loire Valley and the Auvergne.

Terres Dorées Côte de Brouilly 2013 – The vines for this beautiful wine grow on the south-east facing slopes of Beaujolais known as the Côte de Brouilly where Jean-Paul Brun has two plots of 50 year old vines at around 300 metres above sea level. The slopes are covered with blue granitic scree - and the Gamay grape is known to thrive in granitic soils. It exhibits dark berry fruits and lots of minerality. The Côte de Brouilly is one of the ten cru areas of Beaujolais that produce the highest quality wines. This is a very exciting wine!

Terres Dorées Morgon 2013 – Morgon is considered one of the very best areas for Beaujolais. This cru is one of the freshest and liveliest wines from this area that we have tasted. You will love the cherry fruits along with the trademark spicy minerality as well as the strong structure that this wine displays.

Michel Guignier Vin de France Mélodie d'Automne 2014– This is a light, ethereal wine that gradually engulfs you with waves of flavour from the purity of the fruit in this wine. Michel often makes a lighter, fresher wine which he macerates for only 6 or 7 days in the concrete vats rather than the longer 10 to 15 days for his more structured wines such as the Fleurie. The method of fermentation involves whole bunches being placed in the concrete vats and carbonic maceration allowed to commence. The weight of the bunches, however, means that some juice will escape and begin alcoholic fermentation at the same time which is why we say it is semi-carbonic maceration. As with all of Michel's wines, there are no sulphites added at any time.

Domaine de la Garrelière Vin de France Gamay Sans Tra La La 2014 – This wine is made from 100% Gamay and is fermented naturally without the 'help' of commercial

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

yeasts. It is fresh, lively, full of flavour and, above all, delicious. Good for drinking anytime, anywhere. The joyous label captures the essence of this wine. The French would call this a 'gouleyant' wine, meaning that it is gluggable or smashable.

Terres Dorées Moulin à Vent Les Thorins 2013 – This Moulin à Vent comes from a special parcel of vines called Les Thorins which lies very close to the famous windmill that gives this appellation its name. The vines are older and the terroir is considered to be superior to much of the area. Wines from this parcel are well known for their power and concentration. This is a beautifully structured wine with beautiful tannins that will allow it to last for a considerable time.

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Gammes en May Rouge 2014 – The Domaine Saint Nicolas Gamme en May is a light, refreshing and delicious pure Gamay red wine. It is great for summer drinking served slightly chilled. This vintage was not filtered, which gives it a meaty texture that belies its apparent light juiciness. Thierry Michon does not always make a pure Gamay, but the quality of the fruit in 2014 was, again, exceptional. This wine represents excellent value for money at this price. The closure is DIAM. Because this wine is very natural you might find quite a bit of sediment in the bottle - but it doesn't matter, this wine is really, really fresh and delicious.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$222 but the pack price is **\$188.70 including freight.**

Pack 6: Reds to drink chilled 6 pack



This year is definitely going to be the year of drinking chilled reds. As we wrote in our last newsletter, the temperature that most reds are served in Australia is too high. They need to be served at around 16 degrees Centigrade but certainly not at 30 degrees which was the temperature of a red we were served in Brisbane last year. So we have assembled 6 red wines that are lighter in body and that would benefit from a half hour or so in the fridge before opening.

Nicolas Carmarans IGP Aveyron Maximus Rouge 2013 – The Nicolas Carmarans Maximus is a fresh, vibrant red wine that sees 16 days of carbonic maceration to ensure the freshness and flavour that you expect from a wine made using this process. The 2013 vintage is definitely the best yet! It is lower in alcohol, lighter, fresher and more elegant than before. But flavour has not been sacrificed. The wine is made from Fer Servadou (also known as Mansois) which is local to the region around the Aveyron and then in an arc down to the area around the town of Gaillac which is just north of Toulouse. This wine can be drunk as an aperitif or matched to quite a wide range of foods.

Laurent Lebled Vin de France Ca C'est Bon 2014 – This wine is an incredibly juicy, smashable Gamay but with depth and elegance wrapped up in a fine package of flavour and length on the palate. This is a perfect wine at a great price for a wine that has been made with such care and dedication with such beautiful grapes. It is perfect to drink slightly chilled. Laurent does not add any sulphur to his wines!

Sylvain Bock Vin de France Neck 2014 – This young, red wine is a blend of two different parcels of Grenache Noir. Both parcels are on a mix of limestone and basalt soils with one parcel having 50 year old vines that are pruned using the gobelet method and the other 30 year old vines. The grapes were put through carbonic maceration to produce a fresh, vibrant and exciting wine that will have good aging potential. It was named after the old volcano in the Ardèche where the vineyard clings to the lower slopes. Sadly, we're down to the last case of this delicious wine.

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

Domaine Les Grandes Vignes Groslot Rouge 2014 – This red wine is made from one of the most interesting grape varieties in the Anjou region, namely Grolleau Noir. It is very savoury, very pure and has great length. The vineyard is very healthy with clay and sand soils supplemented by lots of fossil shells that add minerality to the soil. The healthy soils are also a result of the biodynamic methods used to tend the vines and the soil here.

Hervé Villemade Cheverny Cuvee Domaine Rouge 2013 – This vintage was an interesting one in the Loire. The quality of the grapes was very good but there were not many of them! As such Hervé was not able to make his prestige cuvee called Les Ardilles, so all the fruit went into this cuvee. An assemblage of 50% Pinot Noir and 50% Gamay, the grapes are sourced from each of his red grape vineyards including Les Ardilles. However, the quality of the grapes that did survive was excellent! It is a funky, fresh, flavoursome wine with a compelling liveliness that shows off the two grapes perfectly. This is also the last case of this wine.

Le Temps des Cerises Vin de Table Avanti Popolo 2014 – Avanti Popolo is a lighter style of wine when compared to Axel's Fou du Roi. Named after a revolutionary Italian cry of 'Forward People' this wine made from 100% Carignan looks quite light (also only 11% alcohol) but has very good depth of flavour. Axel is a fastidious winemaker. This wine has had nothing added to it and nothing removed so no filtering, no fining, no added yeast and no enzymes or sugar. The vines grow on granitic quartz soils and the minerality is pronounced.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$190 but the pack price is \$161.50 including freight.

Pack 7 – White wines for summer slurping 6 pack



We have put together this little selection of 6 white wines that are perfect for knocking back in the sunshine this summer.

Marc Pesnot Vin de France La Bohème 2014 – Marc Pesnot makes some of the most interesting wines in Muscadet. He is also very well known in Japan where his wines have achieved cult status. This wine is made from the Melon de Bourgogne grape variety to produce an elegant, lively and exciting wine that is packed with flavour. The grape originally came from Burgundy where it was largely pulled out a couple of centuries ago to make way for the ubiquitous Chardonnay. Some (about 16 hectares) still remains in the area around Vezélay (we have a wine from there made with this grape produced by Domaine de la Cadette), but it is more likely these days that you will find it in Muscadet in the Western section of the Loire around the city of Nantes.

Hervé Villemade Vin de Pays du Val de Loire Sauvignon Blanc 2014 – This wine is a pure Sauvignon Blanc from Herve Villemade that is great for summer sipping. He does great things with Sauvignon Blanc and this wine is no exception. It is classified as a Vin de Pays because the Cheverny appellation requires that white wines are blends of Sauvignon Blanc and either Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc or Menu Pineau. This is an excellent wine for teaming with charcuterie, chicken dishes, fish and a wide range of vegetable-based dishes.

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Les Clous Blanc 2014 – Les Clous is a south-westerly exposed vineyard which was planted in 1980. It's been managed biodynamically since 1993. The 2014 vintage is one of the best yet. It is beautiful wine made from a mix of 60% Chenin Blanc and 30% of Chardonnay and 10% Groslot Gris in this vintage. Both the Chardonnay and the Grolleau Gris play a subtle but noticeable role in this beautiful wine that goes so well with food. Bottled in the spring following vintage after elevage in stainless steel and old wooden foudre, it's light and bright with a strong backbone from the Chenin.

Sylvain Bock Vin de France Faux sans Blanc 2014 – Faux Sans Blanc is a refreshing white wine made from two thirds Chardonnay and one third Grenache Blanc. Sylvain fermented and matured this wine in a fibreglass tank to ensure it remained fresh and lively. It is bottled in clear glass with a crown seal because it was bottled with 6 grams of residual sugar which will produce a faint sparkle in the wine making it a perfect aperitif wine.

Domaine la Paonnerie Muscadet Coteaux de Loire Rien que Melon 2013 – The Domaine la Paonnerie Rien que Melon is aptly named as there is nothing (rien) in the bottle except for juice from Melon de Bourgogne grapes picked from vines that are about thirty years old. There are no additions to this juice - not even any sulphur. It is a delightful wine that expresses the terroir from the vineyard which is on the banks of the Loire River about halfway between Angers and Nantes in the beautiful Loire Valley. The vineyards are at the eastern end of the Muscadet region and Jacques allows the wine to go through malolactic fermentation which is unusual in Muscadet and more like what happens in the neighbouring Anjou appellation. The grapes are crushed with a little time for skin contact and then transferred to tanks to ferment and mature for about six months before bottling.

Domaine Milan Vin de France Le Grand Blanc 2011 – This vintage sees Grenache Blanc, Rolle (the local name for Vermentino), Roussane, Chardonnay and Muscat Petit Grains used in the blend. The wine was raised in old barrels on the lees for twelve months. This is a beautiful wine that is fresh and lively now but will continue to change character and improve well into the future. It is an intense, elegant, refined, gorgeous white wine. This one is better suited to eating with food and is our official roast chicken wine.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$188 but the pack price is \$159.80 including freight.

BEYOND PARIS PART 2 – THE LOIRE

Some of our favourite places in France for eating well and drinking natural wines – Loire Valley

In the October 2015 issue of our newsletter we wrote about some of the places where we love to eat in France outside of Paris, including in Provence, the Jura, Burgundy, Lyon and the Auvergne. That issue is still available on our website if you're heading to any of those regions and are interested to read it.

One of us (Roger) said that the other (Sue) had to stop writing because the story was getting too long so we decided to divide it into several parts. This is Part 2, describing good places to eat, with natural wine of course, in the Loire Valley. Part 3 will cover Languedoc-Roussillon, Champagne and the south-west.

At some point in the near future we'll join all the stories together to make a single story on our [Foodtourist](#) website which we'll endeavour to keep up to date.

Une Ile - Angers

Most of the places in these stories are very casual but Une Ile is a serious restaurant, with a Michelin star. The cooking is classical and restrained, with lots of emphasis on seafood and regional vegetables. Having said that, it's the pigeon that we always eat here if it's available. What's particularly special about Une Ile for us though is the depth of its wine list. Like Le Repaire de Cartouche in Paris, it has an impressive cellar of aged natural wines. If you've thought that natural wines were just "vins de soif" and not cellar-worthy this is a good place to challenge those views. You are likely to find older vintages of Hervé Souhart, Maxime Magnon, Valette, even Overnoy, and from the producers we represent, René and Agnès Mosse, Dominique Derain and Philippe Bornard, and all at very reasonable prices (38€ for Souhart's 2007 Syrah on the wine list that's currently on their website).

The list is an interesting introduction to French appellations. It is divided broadly by appellation, beginning with all the wines that are below AOC status. They are mostly 'Les vins de France' but there are others, including 'Les vins de table français' and a section which will eventually no doubt disappear devoted to 'Les vins de qualité supérieure', which now only lists older wines from Domaine Saint Nicolas, from when the wines had the appellation VDQS (Les Vins d'Appellation d'Origine Vin délimité de Qualité supérieure). It's now an AOC.

All the producers in these earlier sections have a number in brackets after the name, which is the department number so, *Domaine Mosse (49)* shows the Mosses are in Department 49, which is Maine-et-Loire and based around Angers, and *Domaine de L'Anglore (30)* shows the l'Anglore is in Department 30 (The Gard).

Once you get past these sections there's no need to quote the department number because the origin of the wine is indicated by its appellation, as the example below

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

shows (and yes – weep at the prices, we do too!). Every French person reading these appellations would be expected to know exactly where they are from.

Bourgogne		
Bourgogne A.C.		
Domaine Cosnard - Les Egots	2012	70
Bourgogne Aigoté A.C.		
Alice et Olivier De Moor	2013	35
Bourgogne Chery A.C.		
Alice et Olivier De Moor	2013	45
Chablis A.C.		
Domaine Dauvissat	2009	50
Domaine Piffet Loup	2013	50
Alice et Olivier De Moor		
Bel Air et Clos de l'Amour du Temps	2012	100
L'Amour du Temps	2013	50
L'Amour du Temps	2012	100
Chablis 1^{er} Cru A.C.		
Domaine Piffet Loup		
Bulleux	2013	65
Baulegard	2012, 2013	65
Domaine Dauvissat - Le Forest	2008	70
Chablis grand Cru A.C.		
Domaine Dauvissat - Les Clos	2008	130

It's a list that's a pleasure to read with lots of surprises and even better to drink from.

This is a restaurant where you're expected to reserve even if it's not busy!

9 rue Max Richard, Angers. +33 2 41 19 14 48. www.une-ile.fr

Chez Rémi - Angers

Chez Rémi is one of the best value restaurants in France. At night, with cheese and dessert, the last time we ate here it was 36€ per head and the shorter version is 30€. There's always a small choice of three or four dishes for each course and we're sure that's one of the reasons it's so good. They choose to do a small number of dishes well rather than offer a big selection. You might find fricassee of asparagus, 8 hour lamb shoulder, terrine of chicken liver, roast pigeon, rum baba, and strawberry tart (but only if it's spring).



Charcuterie and a salad with flavour at Chez Rémi

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

The producers and provedores are proudly listed on the blackboard alongside the daily menu, with an indicator if they are certified organic (AB) and the knives are Perceval 9.47, always a pleasure to use. Loire winemakers are exceptionally well represented on the list (and at least one is likely to be there for dinner) but there's plenty of depth in other regions as well.

In a similar vein to Chez Remi, **Autour d'Un Cep** and **Le Bistrot des Carmes**, also in Angers, are both good restaurants, where the chef works with excellent produce and the wines are delicious. It's a town with plenty of good eating options (except on Sunday and Monday) and so one we always make a base when we're in the Loire. The owners of Chez Rémi also own Le Cercle Rouge (see below) and Saignant, a pretty impressive burger place in Angers (unless your benchmark is Mary's in Newtown, Sydney which it can't quite beat).

5 rue des Deux Haies, Angers. +33 2 41 24 95 44.

Le Cercle Rouge - Angers

Opposite Chez Rémi, no matter where you eat dinner, a night in Angers tends to begin and end at Le Cercle Rouge. The pace is slow – don't expect the guys behind the bar to interrupt their chat and smoke outside with regular customers just because your glass is empty. Just go with the flow and realise that this place is for everyone to enjoy, not just the customers. It's frenetic during the Loire wine salons at the end of January when some sort of force is needed to reach the counter but during the rest of the year it's easy to sit at the bar or take a small table and enjoy wine by the bottle or glass (always a good selection) with charcuterie and/or cheese.

Les Bec à Vins - Orléans

Read the stories about Les Becs à Vins, a wine bar that's partly owned by legendary natural winemaker Thierry Puzelat (to make sure he had somewhere to drink), and you'll think it's not really an option for dinner; that it's just for drinking and snacking at night. It's true that they make more of their weekday lunches but we thought we'd try dinner there for the first time last autumn, knowing we'd get great wine and could cope with just some charcuterie and cheese. In fact it turns out they offer a perfectly decent meal, along with some brilliant wines you really only expect to see in Paris or Copenhagen unless you're close by to where the winemaker lives (we drank Mito Inoue's Plume and Ganevat's Cuvée de l'Enfant Terrible Plousard).



Not a bad menu for a place that doesn't really do dinner!

There are few better ways to spend a night than drinking ethereal Plousard with soft-inside but crisp on the outside pig foot and frites. The charcuterie and cheese are excellent but we also ate a really satisfying tomato soup flavoured with North African spices and lamb. On offer also was eggs cocotte and an Asian-ish cabbage slaw. Not a bad dinner offering for a place that says it only takes lunch seriously! It's also one of those places where, provided you drink well, you'll make friends for life and you'll feel like moving to Orleans. 8 Place du Châtelet, Orléans. +33 9 65 16 64 09. www.becsavin.com

L'Herbe Rouge - Valaire

L'Herbe Rouge definitely falls into a destination-dining category. Valaire is not a place you're likely to choose to go to or even happen to be driving through for any other reason but it is definitely worth a journey. It is run by Cécile Argondico, who's Thierry Puzelat's wife (yes – his influence in the Loire is pervasive (he's also just become a partner in another new bar, in nearby Blois, run by vigneron Jeremy Quastana, called Les 400 Coups)). L'Herbe Rouge also has several gites upstairs which means you can stay the night and not have to drive after dinner. At lunchtime most of the customers seem to be vineyard workers and, of course they all know each other. And, while they work hard, they're not averse to playing hard either. It's a great place to soak up the sense of community and culture around natural wine.



Drinking an old bottle of Les Acacias on the terrace with Hervé Villemade

The wine list is a roll call of France's natural winemakers but there are plenty of wines made by friends in other parts of Europe, especially Georgia and Italy. The food is based on excellent produce. During our meals here we've especially enjoyed foie gras, sometimes alone, and sometimes with lentils, smoked herring with potatoes, faux fillet with frites, rice pudding with rosewater and raspberries, and in spring, a local specialty, acacia-flower beignets, which is served with coffee (flowers from the tree that gives Hervé Villemade's Les Acacias wine its name). Le Bourg, Valaire. +33 2 54 44 98 14. www.restaurant-herberouge.com



Foie Gras at l'Herbe Rouge



Springtime in the Loire – Acacias in flower bordering Hervé Villemade's Les Acacias vineyard.

Case-Cailloux – Tours

Case-Cailloux is a charming bistro in the Loire Valley city of Tours. We are especially grateful to Herve Villemade for recommending this place because Tours is not over-endowed with great eating places that also serve natural wines. However, here the food is cooked with skill, the front-of-house service is charming and efficient and the wine list packed with heroes of the natural wine movement. As such, it has become our 'go-to' place on our annual visits to this area.

The corner location is easy to find and walking distance from the heart of the old town. The restaurant itself has a relaxed atmosphere and the customers are mainly regulars with a smattering of winemakers and wine merchants taking advantage of the amazing selection of wine available on the long wine list.

It is the sort of place where you can start with an aperitif of the delightful Domaine Mosse Moussamoussettes, move on to a Riesling from Alsace producer A&C Binner, luxuriate in a Fanny Sabre or a Cossard Meursault, sip on a Descombes Brouilly, match a main course to a Crozes Hermitage by Dard and Ribo and then ease your way through dessert with a Vouvray Moelleux made by Sebastien Brunet.



A selection of cheese at Casse-Cailloux

We have enjoyed dishes such as veal tongue with sauce Ravigote, roast pork shoulder with Noirmoutier potatoes, faux filet de boeuf with frites maison, a chocolate molleux and, of course, the cheese is excellent.

26 rue Jehan Fouquet, Tours. +33 2 47 61 60 64. www.casse-cailloux.fr/

Grape variety: Menu Pineau

Menu Pineau is a rare grape variety only found in the Loire Valley in the Touraine area (around the city of Tours) and near the town of Blois. It is also known locally by some producers as Orbois. It was mentioned in the survey of all the French vineyards conducted by André Jullien in 1824 as being a grape variety used in the Touraine district. His 1832 re-issue mentions Menu Pineau as being the most widespread grape variety in Vouvray!

In 1968 there was 1,455 hectares given over to this grape variety, but this declined to 270 hectares by 2006.

The use of this grape variety has been championed by three local winemakers, Thierry Puzelat, Claude Courtois and Pascal Potaire. Pascal and Moses from Les Capriades use it in their delicious Piège à Filles Blanc Pétillant Naturel and also the elegant Pepin La Bulle sparkling which spends two years on lees.

A paper published by the Organisation Internationale de la Vigne et du Vin¹ confirmed that one of the parents of Menu Pineau is the prolific Gouais Blanc.

It is a permitted grape variety for sparkling wines in the Touraine appellation under the name of Orbois Blanc. This is the official name given by the INAO. It can also be blended with Sauvignon Blanc in the Valençay appellation in the southern area of Touraine provided it doesn't exceed 30% of the blend. It is also recognised as a principal grape variety for Crémant de Loire. And it is still permitted in small quantities (5% or less) in the famous white wines of Vouvray where it can be blended with the more famous Chenin Blanc.

The leaf of this grape variety is quite distinctive (with the triangular tip) as can be seen from the photo below.

¹ BOURSIQUOT et al *Le Gouais, un cépage clé du patrimoine viticole européen*. Jan-Feb 2004, Vol 77 No 875-876



Photo courtesy: Vitis International Variety Catalogue

The Menu Pineau grapes are typified by tight bunches of quite small grapes.

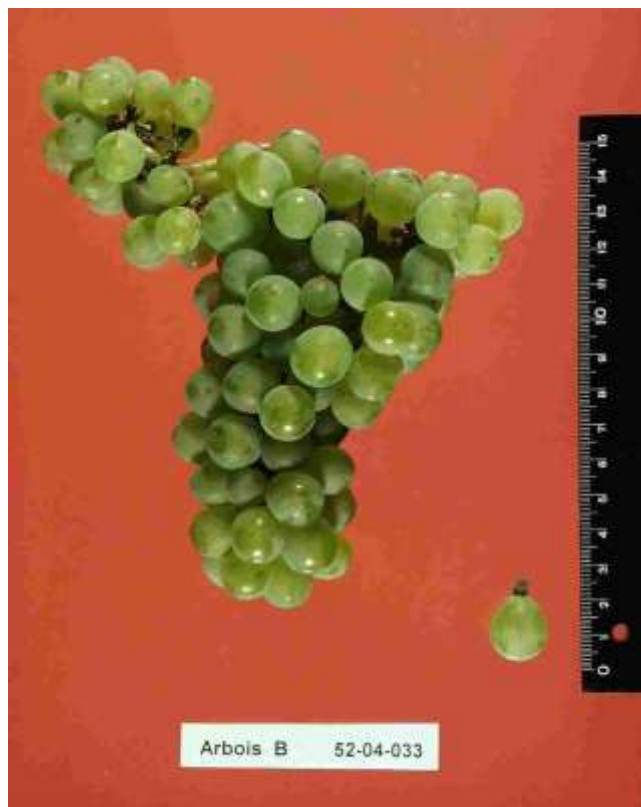


Photo courtesy: Vitis International Variety Catalogue

It is fairly rare to find a wine made entirely from Menu Pineau, however we sometimes have a *pét nat* from Hervé Villemade in Cheverny that is made from 100% Menu Pineau. Currently, if you want to try a wine with this grape in it, head for the Les Capriades pack in this newsletter (Pack 2) and you will see that one of the

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

grape varieties in the Piege à Filles Blanc 2014 is Menu Pineau. The Pepin La Bulle 2012 Magnum also has some Menu Pineau in the blend.

How to order

You can order any of these packs by sending us an email to wine@livingwines.com.au

Or for other wines you can use our order form or just describe the wines in an email.

http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Order_Form_Current_2015.pdf