

WINE Talk: April 2015

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 53

Welcome to the April 2015 newsletter (even though today is the fourth day of May)!

There is lots of information in this month's edition especially about forthcoming natural wine events in Australia.

We are holding our first event for both the public and the trade in Hobart in two weeks, so have a look for the details below. There is also information about three other events, the Handmade event in Melbourne, the SoulfulWine event to be held at a still secret location in Melbourne in July and, of course, Rootstock which is to be held in November this year at CarriageWorks in Sydney.

We also have information on six new producers whose wines will be arriving in our June container along with many of our existing suppliers' wines.

We have five special packs this month and one secret one buried away in the depths of the newsletter. The first pack is a six pack of good value wines with three reds and three lovely whites for just under \$150! We then have a pack highlighting the grapes of the Jura. We have chosen 6 wines based on the six different grape varieties. There is also an article on the Jura later in the newsletter which explains more about this fascinating region.

We have assembled a six-pack of three different wines from Loire Valley producer Toby Bainbridge to highlight his winemaking skill. The fourth pack contains six wines all made with Grenache or made from Grenache and complementary grape varieties such as Carignan and Cinsault. And for white wine drinkers we have assembled 6 wines for a very good reason: "Because they are interesting"!

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.

Living Wines Facebook page

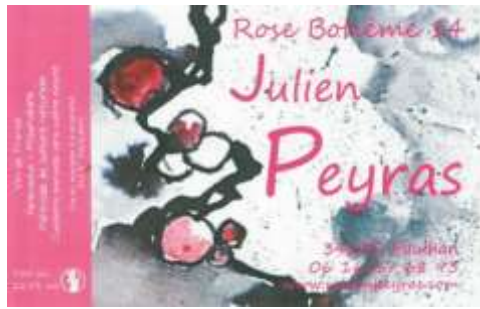


Although we have been very active on social media under our Foodtourist Instagram and food_tourist Twitter accounts, we have never got round to using Facebook. However we have now set up a page at:

www.facebook.com/livingwines

We would be very grateful if you could go to this page and “Like” it for us so that our message gets out to as many people as possible. We will be posting information about wines that we have tried, interesting snippets about natural wines and information about upcoming events such as the wine tasting in Hobart that is coming up soon.

Wines from new producers arriving in early June



By the time the next newsletter rolls around we will be close to receiving wines from a number of new producers from throughout France.

We have already written about Julien Peyras from the Languedoc whose stunning wines we discovered on our trip in September last year.

On the same trip we tried the wines of another Languedoc producer, Ivo Ferreira from Domaine l'Escarpolette, a number of times in some of France's best bars. We were initially very excited by the Le Blanc cuvée which is technically an orange wine (which will add to our small, but growing list of French orange wines) made from equal parts of Muscat à Petits Grains and Macabeo. This wine exhibits all the most desirable characteristics of an orange wine such as freshness, spiciness, colour and mild oxidative qualities. Some of the less desirable qualities such as extracted flavours and harsh tannins are noticeably absent.

But then we started coming across his red wines and these are exceptional. He has access to some very old vines of both Carignan and Cinsault and from these vines he makes the most amazing red wines with incredible minerality which are not big and jammy like many wines from this region. Instead they have an elegance and lightness that remind us of the wines of Axel Pruffer.

We have also been amazed by the quality of the Japanese calligraphy on the labels which is created for him by a close friend of the family. We will write more about this topic in coming newsletters.

Another newcomer with a lot of promise is a young producer from the same area, Olivier Cohen. He makes the most stunning rosé from his vineyards behind Montpellier and we are looking forward to it landing here at the same time.

We also travelled to the Jura recently and spent some time with Tony Bornard, the son of Philippe Bornard. He is now making his own wines as well as working with his father. He took us to his vineyards which surround the iconic Pupillin sign on the side of the hill outside the village. It looks a bit like the Hollywood sign in Los Angeles. Here he tends his vines of Chardonnay and Ploussard organically. His wines are delicate and very elegant and we also look forward to them arriving in Australia.

For some time now we have been enjoying the wines of Laurent Lebled from the Chinon region of the Loire Valley. Every time we travel to France we have enjoyed his wines, and in particular the great Gamay called Ça C'Est Bon! as well as his

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

excellent Sauvignon Blanc. We finally caught up with Laurent in France earlier this year and he agreed to supply us with his wines.

And we have one other new producer from the Loire as a result of our attendance at the Return to Terroir event in Melbourne earlier this year. At that event we met Laurence and Jean-François from Domaine les Grandes Vignes which operates from the Anjou village of Thouarcé (quite close to the vineyards of Toby Bainbridge). They use biodynamic practices in the vineyard and vinify without sulphites to produce wines from a number of the local appellations including Bonnezeau. Their work with the Cabernet Franc grape is exceptional and their Chenin Blanc wines are delicate and very elegant.

Wine of the month: Les Lendemain qui Chantent



Axel Prüfer is a very special winemaker. He tends his vines carefully using organic practices. His vineyards are high in the hills behind Beziers. They are quite remote with some being totally hidden in forests well away from farms that might use pesticides and herbicides.

This wine is made from a vineyard that is 450 metres above sea level where the soils are derived from granite and quartz.

The wine is made only from Grenache. Axel only makes this wine when the Grenache from this vineyard is exceptional – otherwise he blends it with grapes from other vineyards.

The recommended retail price for this wine is \$49. If you would like a bottle or two, remember that you can make up your own mix of 6 wines and we will give you a 10% discount and ship it to most major cities freight free.

Living Wines Tasting in Hobart on 16th May – Everyone’s invited



This doesn't happen very often but thanks to the generosity of our friends at Franklin, who've kindly agreed to host it, we're doing a tasting of our wines in Hobart on Saturday 16 May. The tasting is free (although, if you come, given you'll already be there, we'd encourage you to stay around afterwards and try some of the delicious bar snacks and wines on Franklin's list or even come in earlier for lunch). Anyone who's interested is welcome to attend so please invite your friends.

We'll open wines from a wide range of the producers we work with and include a couple of rarities that we don't generally open for trade tastings. If you've just dipped your toes into our portfolio or haven't even got your feet wet yet this is the event for you. It will be a chance to try some pet-nats (those highly drinkable sparkling wines made with just one fermentation), an orange wine, wines made with no added sulphites, wines from some less familiar appellations (such as the Aveyron, Gaillac, and, of course the Jura) and wine from some not so familiar grapes (including Negret de Banhars, Gringet and Romarantin). Some of the wines will be slightly wild and some will be more conventional. Oh and there will be plenty of familiar things too – Gamay from Beaujolais, the odd Burgundy, and some delicious wines from the Languedoc.

It will be an informal tasting with the same wines open right through the afternoon, although to be assured of trying everything we'd encourage you to come closer to the start time than the finish time. (Hint – 4:30pm is the packing up time so last arrival should be no later than about 4pm.)

Franklin, 30 Argyle St, Hobart. Saturday 15 May 2:30pm-4:30pm. RSVP not essential but you're more than welcome to let us know if you're likely to join us!



Handmade -24 May at The Builders Arms in Melbourne



We'll also be at Handmade, the one day wine party organised by Campbell Burton, sommelier at the Builders Arms and now also a wine importer, adding to the list of exciting wines made with no added sulphites now available in Australia.

It features some of Australia's most exciting wine makers and wines selected by wine importers who work with vignerons who share the same philosophy. It's open from midday until 4:30pm. You'll be able to taste wines, drink beer & coffee, sample food from the Builder's kitchen, and listen to cool music! Tickets are \$25 per person and available through www.handmade2015.eventbrite.com.au

SoulforWine – 5 July at a still-secret venue in Melbourne



The exact venue's not public yet but the date is confirmed and it's definitely one to save. So lock 5 July 2015 into your diary for what's promised to be one of the most amazing feasts Melbourne has ever seen, complete with a roll-call of many of

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

Australia's most exciting chefs. The excuse for this feast? A celebration of wines made without sulphites. The organisers are choosing wines from winemakers who only work without sulphites – i.e. they don't add sulphites to any of their wines, not just the ones that will be available on the night. We'll be there and so will the wines from some of the winemakers we work with.

Expect to see many wines from winemakers affiliated a group called **Les Vins S.A.I.N.S. (Sans Aucun Ingrant Ni Sulfite)**, which means wines with no added sulphites. Its members adhere to a charter which includes not adding any inputs, including sulphites, to any of their wines. There's much more to the charter too and it's not just technical – there's also a section called 'The respect for human beings' which talks in part about the adherents' relationship with their customers. You can read it (in English as well as French and other languages) on their website <http://vins-sains.org>.

Rootstock Sydney 2015 – 27-29 November 2015



Australia's biggest celebration of natural wines, Rootstock, is back again this year with a new date late in November 2015. It's at CarriageWorks again and promises to be bigger and better than ever. As well as public tasting sessions with Australian and overseas producers, it includes the Rootstock Night Festival, and Rootstock Food Market, featuring chefs partnering with producers of sustainable delicious food, and new pavilions for indigenous food, cheeses, Slow Food Australia, and coffee. The orange bar and sake bar will be back again, with more extended hours and there will also be many talks, panel discussions, with tastings, and even arguments.

Pack 1: Good value 6 pack



This selection of wines are those we consider to represent excellent value for money. They are all delicious wines.

Domaine de la Garrelière Le Rouge des Cornus 2012 – This lovely entry-level wine is made from biodynamic grapes grown on the Plouzeau's property about 35 kilometres south of the city of Tours. It is 100% Cabernet Franc and displays a silky smoothness that makes it a perfect quaffing wine, yet it is not a big wine therefore matches well with a range of dishes such as braises and roasts.

Terres Dorées Beaujolais Cuvée Première 2013 – The Jean-Paul Brun Cuvée Première is released under the Beaujolais appellation and is 100% Gamay. Jean-Paul do not use the common carbonic maceration technique so widely practiced in Beaujolais. Instead he uses Burgundian methods of destemming and maceration and the fermentation uses only natural yeasts. This wine is produced from younger vines (about twenty years old) but is still a beautiful wine that is drinking very nicely right now.

Stephane Guion Bourgueil Domaine 2012 – The famous Chambers Street Cellars in New York said recently in their newsletter that the 2012 Guion Domaine was:

"the most pleasurable Cuvée Domaine that we've received from the very modest and hard-working Stephane Guion".

This wine is produced from 100% Cabernet Franc and shows hints of raspberries and cherries on the nose. There are fine tannins providing structure to the wine and the wonderful fruit shines through. Drink this wine with good cheese or a roast dinner.

Terres Dorées Jean Paul Brun Beaujolais Blanc 2013 – This great-value Chardonnay gets its freshness from natural vinification and no use of oak barrels. The vines thrive on limestone soils in Beaujolais. It is a lively, fresh wine that is drinking beautifully right now. The finish is long and clean and the flavour profile is classic southern Beaujolais. This is a wine of some interest as very little white Beaujolais is produced. There is one other technique that Jean-Paul uses to produce the lovely texture of this wine. He no longer uses high, vertical tanks, but has had a tank made that lies horizontally so that there is closer contact between the wine and the lees at the bottom of the tank.

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

Domaine de la Garrelière Cendrillon 2012 – 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 seems to dance together to form an harmonious, elegant and appealing drink.

Causse Marines AOC Gaillac Blanc les Greilles 2013 – Les Greilles is a classy white wine blended from local Gaillac grapes Mauzac and Loin-de-l'Oeil with a little Muscadelle thrown in. To us it an amazing wine of great complexity and with nuances that make it a perfect wine to match with a very wide range of foods. The grapes come from a number of low-yielding parcels in their stunning vineyards with the maximum yield being a low 35 hectolitres per hectare. The low yield leads to increased fruit intensity that shines through in this wine.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$176 but the pack price is **\$149.60 including freight.**

Pack 2: Grapes of the Jura 6 pack



The Jura is one of the most talked-about wine regions of France at present. The interest in this relatively small (1200 hectares) region is intense. Yet, so little is known about the grapes, the wines or the winemaking techniques that make this region so special. For this edition of the newsletter we have written an article about some of the main wine varieties of the Jura as well as assembling this special pack which highlights the six main grape varieties of the region: Trousseau, Ploussard (aka Poulsard), Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Savagnin and Melon le Queue Rouge (a grape variety that is not recognised by the official appellation body of France, the INAO).

We have also listed the wines in the order they would be drunk in the Jura. When we go to a wine tasting with one of our suppliers they will always start with the red wines which are light, delicate and perfumed and then move on to the white wines which are more powerful, sometimes with oxidative qualities and then finish with either a Vin de Paille or a Vin Jaune (see the Jura article for more details).

l'Octavin Vin de France Poulsard Dorabella 2013 – This wine is made from Poulsard grapes from fifty year old vines sourced from the « La Mailloche » vineyard with a little from the « En Curon » vineyard both of which are very close to the town of Arbois. The wine is named after one of the sisters from the opera *Così fan tutte*. We particularly like the mouth-feel of this wine with its generous texture and lovely acidity backed by very subtle tannins. As you would expect from a wine made from the Poulsard grape there are lovely notes of strawberries and cherries, but there is also a lingering herbal note that reminds us of marjoram or oregano. There is also some beautiful spices and pronounced minerality shining through. It is fresh, juicy and light - just what you expect a good Jura red wine to be. Some carbon dioxide remains in this wine to enhance its freshness, but these bubbles soon disappear in the glass. It is only 10.7% alcohol.

Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Le Vigne du Louis 2013 – This wine has a vibrant freshness and hints of smokiness. The 'young' vines are twenty years old and lie on a south west facing slope. Younger vines usually produce lighter wine styles of less complexity than older vines, but wines that are pleasant drinking nevertheless. A small amount of sulphur was added to this wine when it was bottled. It has good structure, very good length and is quite juicy - hence is very drinkable. Michel's

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

vineyards are in the village of Montigny-lès-Arsures which is regarded as the best terroir in the Jura for Trousseau.

l'Octavin Vin de France ULM 2013 – The grapes used in the cuvée are Pinot Noir sourced from vineyards in which the soil is composed of grey marl and limestone which gives the interesting minerality notes and peppery overtones to this wine. ULM underwent 7 months of carbonic maceration and was then transferred to old barrels for approximately 10 months. It has beautiful texture derived from the extended skin contact and a bracing core of acidity that gives life to the wine.

l'Octavin Vin de France Chardonnay Pamina 2013 – This wine is 100% Chardonnay made from biodynamic grapes sourced from the «La Mailloche» vineyard. The name comes from the lovers Pamina and Tamino in Mozart's rationalist enlightenment opera The Magic Flute. There is a pleasant level of oxidative quality in this beautifully balanced wine that displays hazelnuts and sherry aromas alongside a zing of citrus and vibrant minerality. This is a lively wine that begs to be served with just about any food you like! It is 12% alcohol.

Philippe Bornard Cotes du Jura Savagnin Ouille Les Chassagnes 2011 – This lovely wine is made from 100% Savagnin which is a white grape that is native to the Jura region (and, incidentally the one of the “parents” of the Trousseau grape variety). It is named after the lieu-dit or plot of land where the Savagnin is grown. As with many wines from the Jura this wine has been made with a slight oxidative edge which gives it a beautiful, nutty, savoury, umami quality that makes for compelling drinking. You will get notes of grapefruit, almonds and hazelnuts and even salt before you notice the long, long finish. This is an incredibly exciting wine.

Note: the term ouillé refers to the technique of topping up barrels as the wine evaporates to ensure that minimal oxygen gets in contact with the wine.

Philippe Bornard Arbois Pupillin Melon Le Rouge Queue 2011 – The first thing you notice about the label on this wine is that Philippe regards Melon as a different grape variety. This is not Melon de Bourgogne but a variant or cousin of Chardonnay that has 'evolved' in this region on different soils and with a different climate to that found in nearby Burgundy. The local name of the grape is Melon-Queue-Rouge which refers to the red stems of the vines. Bornard thinks that people just forgot about this grape but his father and a few others kept growing it even though it was a smaller grape and somewhat susceptible to disease. However the INAO which officially controls French appellation law does not recognise its existence. There are some oxidative notes in this wine which makes it very appealing to those of us who crave this experience. It is a big, fruity wine but with a razor-sharp streak of acidity offsetting the sweetness of the fruit. As is the case with many of the Bornard wines, the finish is incredibly long.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$353 but the pack price is \$300 including freight.

Pack 3: Toby Bainbridge Loire 6 pack



Toby Bainbridge worked for many years for René and Agnès Mosse, learning about the terroir of the Anjou region that lies below the city of Angers. He eventually realised his dream of owning some great plots of the local grape varieties such as the exciting Grolleau Noir as well as Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc. This pack highlights three of his excellent wines including a delightful rosé that is perfect for year-round drinking.

Note: 2 bottles of each are included

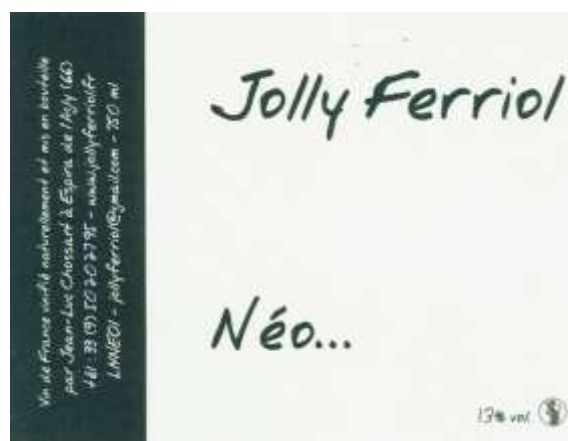
Bainbridge and Cathcart Vin de France Rouge aux Levres 2013 – This wine is made from the red Grolleau Noir grape that is only found at this end of the Loire Valley and rarely seen as a single varietal. The very old vines thrive in red clay and schist soils. The grapes underwent three weeks of whole bunch semi-carbonic maceration (the juice is not drained so both carbonic and alcoholic fermentation occur). Toby does not like to add carbon dioxide so uses a double lidded system in the tank to trap the ambient gas. The wine shows very fresh berry aromas and flavours, soft tannins and lots of juicy goodness. The vines are very old (at least 85 years and some possibly over 100 years old) giving rise to a beautifully structured wine which exhibits considerable charm.

Bainbridge and Cathcart Vin de France Highway.8 2012 – The Highway.8 is a 100% Cabernet Franc made in the same genre as the Grolleau Noir. It is fresh, lively and eminently drinkable. The Anjou district of the Loire Valley is some of the best terroir for the production of wines from Cabernet Franc. The southern exposure of Toby's vineyards means that the grapes get plenty of sun during the vital ripening time.

Bainbridge and Cathcart Vin de France "L'Acrobate" Rose Sec 2014 – This is a dry rosé wine made from the Grolleau grape variety that is a lesser known grape in the Anjou area, but one that the locals love. This wine is made from a very special parcel of vines that are between 85 years old up to over 100 years old. The vines thrive in red clay and schist soils. The grapes were pressed and then left on their skins for only two hours to develop the colour. The result is a very pleasant, light, dry rose with an appealing, slightly "bitter herb" touch on the finish.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$216 but the pack price is \$183.60 including freight.

Pack 4: Grenache 6 Pack



Grenache is a beautiful grape variety capable of producing stunning wines in the right hands where the yields are kept low in the vineyard and the grapes are treated with respect during the winemaking process.

Some of the best wines made with Grenache come from the southern Rhone and the Languedoc region of France as well as the Rioja region of Spain and Sardinia where it goes by the name of Cannonau (DNA testing has confirmed that it is the same grape variety).

So, we have put together a pack of some of the best of breed of wines that are either 100% Grenache or made from Grenache and complementary grape varieties such as Carignan and Cinsault.

Henri Milan Vin de France MGO2 Rouge NV – This assemblage of Henri's favourite red grape varieties is a light, silky beauty. The grapes are Grenache, Shiraz, Mourvedre, Cinsault and Cabernet Sauvignon but with more Grenache than usual. The letters MGO stand for Milan Grand Ordinaire which is a humorous allusion to the Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire appellation that has recently been discontinued. This wine came about as a result of the chalk being rubbed off a number of barrels in his cellar so he couldn't tell whether the barrels were from the 2009 or the 2011 vintage of his Le Vallon wines. He also had a couple of extra barrels of Grenache that he needed to bottle. The result is this fresh, fruity, gulpable red wine.

Mylène Bru Coteaux du Languedoc Far-Ouest Rouge 2012 – Far-Ouest has a film connection because of Mylène's passion for film from an early age. She loved Clint Eastwood in 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' and also admires French New Wave director Francois Truffaut who used the metaphor of the Wild West to shape his films. It is a blend of all the red grapes, so it has some Grenache, Syrah, Carignan and Cinsault but might also have a little Marselan and Aubun (an obscure grape from the Vaucluse) depending on the vintage.

Jolly Ferriol Vin de France Néo 2014 – The Jolly Ferriol Néo is a light, fresh, young red wine made using carbonic maceration to preserve the fruit flavours and the liveliness of the juice. It is made from 80% Grenache and 20% Carignan - two grape varieties that grow very well in the schisty marl that litters the vineyards nestled in the elbow of the Agly River.

Le Temps des Cerises Vin de Table Les Lendemains qui Chantent 2011 – Les Lendemains qui Chantent is a beautiful and quite restrained wine (in the sense that it is elegant rather than exuberant) made from 100% Grenache from vines that are at least 25 years old. The vineyard itself is situated at 450 metres above sea level in the forests of the rugged Parc Naturel Regional du Haut-Languedoc which lies inland from the city of Beziers. It exhibits very soft tannins and lovely herbal and flower aromas. There is a distinct minerality associated with this wine derived from the decaying granite and quartz soils. It is Axel's leading cuvée, but he only releases it in years where the crop is exceptional!

Saint Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux Oligocene Red 2004 – This is a wine for those of you who want to cellar an emerging wine that will be fabulous in a few years but with the potential to last for 15 or 20 years. Philippe Gimel is regarded as one of the emerging stars of the French wine scene and has achieved cult status in the United States. He is an engaging, enthusiastic and passionate advocate of his winemaking philosophy. His vineyard is completely organic and he uses no enzymes or commercial yeasts in the production of the wines. The wine is made from Grenache, Syrah, Carignan and Cinsault which come from vines that are harvested at extremely low yields (20 hectolitres per hectare). The wines see little wood in their maturation - Philippe prefers to use concrete and enamel instead. Only 5% of the wine is treated with wood and those barrels are ten years old!

Le Temps des Cerises Vin de Table Un Pas de Côté NV – Un Pas de Côté is a dark purple wine that has a beautiful, soft tannin structure with complexity coming from the blend of grapes used. This year the wine is a blend from 2009 and 2010. While it used to be a pure Grenache in previous vintages, this year it is 40% Merlot, 40% Grenache and 20% of a blend of Cinsault, Aramon and Carignan (Aramon is a grape that is native to the region). The vines grow on granitic quartz soils and the minerality is pronounced.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$230 but the pack price is **\$195.50 including freight.**

Pack 5 – “Because they are interesting” white six pack



This pack brings together six different white wines that have a little of the unusual as well as a little bit of intrigue and a lot of deliciousness. There is no common theme other than this. They are just the type of wines we like to ponder and to drink slowly and contemplate what it is about them that makes us stop and think!

Le Temps des Cerises Vin de France La Peur du Rouge 2013 – Axel Pruffer can definitely be described as a low interventionist winemaker. This incredibly complex Chardonnay is like no other we have ever tried (except perhaps the incredible Chardonnays produced by Michel Gahier in the Jura). It is packed with minerality and is totally expressive of the 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!

Les Capriades Vin de France Vignnasou 2012 – The Vignnasou falls into the interesting category because Pascale Potaire rarely makes a still wine these days as he is the undisputed king of the sparkling Petillant Naturel style of wine. This one is a still Sauvignon Blanc showing 12% alcohol only. It is a lovely wine with a great mouthful, outstanding minerality and an attractive long lingering finish.

Hervé Villemade Cour-Cheverny Les Acacias 2012 – This wine is interesting because it is made from the rare Romorantin grape, in fact the tiny Cour Cheverny appellation is the only place in France where it is produced. Hervé Villemade has Romorantin vines that are 50 years old and the grapes from these vines are used exclusively to make this wine. These vines are bordered by lovely large acacia trees which give the name to the wine. The wine was matured in 500 litre barrels. This is a fascinating wine because it has been deliberately oxidised to bring out the best qualities of the grape. We love drinking it as an aperitif.

Causse Marines Vin de Table Blanc Zacmau 8002 – The Zacmau is interesting because it is a white Vin de Table wine made from 100% Mauzac, the favoured local white grape of the Gaillac area but relatively unknown in Australia. This is a classy, elegant wine that shows what Mauzac is capable of, especially when yields are as low as 20 hectolitres per hectare. It is a complex wine with considerable finesse with lots of the characteristic Mauzac flavour and a very long and very satisfying finish.

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Cuvée Maria 2011 – The Cuvée Maria is interesting because it is a Chardonnay from the western Loire where Chenin Blanc and Melon de Bourgogne are the usual grape varieties. It is named after Thierry's grandmother. This is a very Burgundian wine being made from pure Chardonnay. It spent 18 months in small old oak barrels and now has had several years' maturation in the bottle. If you like the wines of Burgundy then you will love this cuvée.

Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Aligoté 2013 – We love Aligoté, especially when it is grown in great terroir. Unfortunately in Burgundy this grape is often relegated to lesser areas and Chardonnay is given priority. However we have been lucky with our suppliers because they have either been handed down great vineyards or they have found them. Fanny Sabre's father loved drinking Aligoté so he planted some in the rich, red soils of the famous Pommard commune, Alice and Olivier de Moor have their old-vine Aligoté in the emerging Saint Bris area, Yann Durieux found a vineyard quite close to that of DRC in the hills behind Beaune, Dominique Derain has his almost adjacent to the famous slopes of Puligny-Montrachet and, now, Julien Altaber has secured an old (60-70 years old) vineyard quite close to Pommard as well as a small parcel in the La Combe lieu dit in Saint Aubin. This is a very, very good example of an Aligoté with a nice backbone of acidity that allows it to be used with a wide range of foods. It is lip-smackingly delicious.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$259 but the pack price is \$220.15 including freight.

Grape variety: Meslier

There is a great deal of confusion surrounding the Meslier grape variety so we will start this discussion by boldly asserting that this is not the same grape as the variety grown in the Champagne area and known as Petit Meslier.

Meslier is also known as Meslier Saint-Francois and is thought to have originated from an area about half way between Troyes and Orleans and then spread along the Cher River into the Charente and then down into the Gers in south-west France.

DNA profiling shows that it is most probably descended from Heunisch Weiss and Chenin Blanc which makes it a sibling of Colombard (which is also found in the Gers region).

We first came across this grape variety late one evening on a visit to Les Capriades. As we were walking through Pascal Potaire's vineyards near the Cher River (a tributary of the Loire), he showed us his rare vines and explained that he likes to use this grape variety because it retains its acidity even in very warm seasons.

In his book *The Red and the White*, Leo Loubère explains that in the middle of the 19th century, Meslier was blended with Sauvignon Blanc in Sancerre, whereas now only Sauvignon Blanc is allowed. This is confirmed by Gregor Dallas in his publication *The Imperfect Peasant Economy: The Loire Country, 1800-1914* saying the Meslier was the most important white grape in the area around Orleans which is not very far from Sancerre.

The grape was also praised in the 1828 publication *The New England Farmer - Volume 6* by Thomas Greene Fessenden in which the juice of Meslier was described as 'pleasant and sweet'.

There is also some good information in another 19th Century publication called *A Treatise on the Vine: Embracing Its History from the Earliest Ages to the Present Day* (1830) by William Prince who talks about the similarity between Meslier and Chasselas but then confirms that the vines and leaves are quite different although the grapes and clusters are somewhat similar.

The leaves of the Meslier grape variety can be seen in the photo below.



Photo courtesy: Vitis International Variety Catalogue

Notice then pale green colour and the large lobes on the leaf.



Photo courtesy: Vitis International Variety Catalogue

You can also see the grapes themselves in the photo above. Just like Chasselas, the grapes are quite large and almost round.

Interestingly, there were some 23366?? hectares recorded in France in 1958, but this has plummeted to only 30 remaining hectares in 2006!

Pascal Potaire and Moses Gadouche have a lovely Petillant Naturel sparkling wine called Pepin La Bulle which is made from Chardonnay (70%), Meslier (20%) and 10% of another rare grape variety called Menu Pineau.

To reward you for reading this far in the newsletter we have a secret special sparkling pack consisting of two bottles of Pepin La Bulle, two bottles of Pet'Sec (made from Chenin Blanc and Cabernet Franc) and two bottles of Piege à Filles (made from Gamay, Pineau d'Aunis, Grolleau Noir, Cabernet Franc and Côt).

The RRP for this secret selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$248 but the pack price is \$210.80 including freight.

The Jura explained: Are these the world’s most versatile wines?

For a long time the Jura was a forgotten region of France. Lying just one hour’s drive to the east of Burgundy this sleepy region was rarely visited by Australians who preferred instead to explore the big-name appellations of Burgundy, Champagne and Alsace.

Now there is a new generation of wine drinkers and wine professionals who have been exposed to the wines of this area sales are booming, knowledge is increasing and the versatility of the wines produced here is finally being celebrated.

This brief article will look at the geography and geology of the Jura, the appellations in the Jura region and the styles of wine that are produced here. We also hope to show that these wines pair beautifully with a wide range of foods, making them extremely versatile “one bottle suits every course” wines.

Where is the Jura?

The Jura region is named after the Jurassic geological period due to the predominance of rock types from this era found in the mountains that separate France and Switzerland.

The region is shown in pink in the following snippet from Google Maps.



Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

Key wine regions in this area are centred on the town of Arbois (which has Pupillin and Montigny-les-Arsures nearby), Poligny, Chateau Chalon (which is halfway between Poligny and the capital of the Jura, Lons-le-Saunier), Rotalier which is south of the capital and is where Jean-Francois Ganevat makes his extraordinary wines and finally, L'Etoile which is just north of the capital and is an appellation in its own right.

While this might seem to be a large area (it is about 85 kilometres from north to south of the region), the total area under vines is only 1600 hectares, a tiny fraction of the total area. This means that there is plenty of biodiversity in the region making it easier to implement biodynamic and organic viticulture.

The area is also famous for the cheese produced here with Comté and Beaufort both produced in the area and sold at outlets such as one of our favourite cheese shops, the delightful Essencia in the village of Poligny where you can not only buy beautifully aged Comté but also select from a broad range of natural wines from throughout the Jura and beyond.

The geology

Most of the formative geological events occurred in the Jura during the Mesozoic era which contains a number of periods including the Triassic (255 million to 199 million), the Jurassic (199 million to 145 million) and the Cretaceous (145 million to 65 million).

During this time there was a giant lake covering the area and therefore huge deposits of fine mud settled in the bottom. Later these layers became compressed to form the characteristic marl rocks that dominate the Jura and give character to the terroir there.

There is a confused mixture of marl available as you move through the Jura region. There are yellow marls, grey marls, blue marls and even red marls as well as some limestone, particularly in the small areas of Cretaceous rocks.

The most southerly vineyards have more limestone and are more similar to the soils of nearby Burgundy.

Jura grape varieties

There are six main grape varieties in the Jura, Trousseau, Ploussard (Poulsard), Pinot Noir, Savagnin, Chardonnay and Melon-Queue-Rouge (which is not recognised by the appellation governing body, the INAO).

Trousseau is a native grape variety of the Jura region and wines made from this grape can either be quite light and delicate or more powerful if grown in the area around the village of Marigny-les-Arsures just north of Arbois. In 2006 there was 165 hectares of Trousseau remaining in the Jura. During the time the Spanish “owned” the Jura in the 16th Century cuttings were taken to Spain and subsequently to

Portugal where it became known as Bastardo and became very popular for the production of Port.

Ploussard is another native grape variety which thrives in this region and is particularly suited to the area around the village of Pupillin with its confused mix of marl soils. The plantings given over to this grape variety have remained very consistent over the years at just over 300 hectares mainly in the area around Arbois and Pupillin. Ploussard gives rise to light, delicate wines with lovely cherry and raspberry overtones. A sign at the entrance to the village of Pupillin proudly proclaims the village as the “World capital of Ploussard”.



Pinot Noir was almost certainly introduced to this region from nearby Burgundy early in the 15th Century. While not as popular as Trousseau and Ploussard there are still some beautiful wines made from this grape variety in the Jura.

Savagnin is the iconic white grape variety of the Jura which is the parent of Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Grüner Veltliner. There were 185 hectares in 1956 but this has risen to 454 hectares in 2006 due to the popularity of Vin Jaune and other oxidative white wines produced from this grape variety. Savagnin is capable of producing wines of incredible depth and complexity and is proving to be very versatile in pairing with foods ranging from the local Comté cheese through to a broad range of Asian dishes with a high chilli content.

Chardonnay is also commonly found in the Jura but the soil and climate is different to Burgundy and therefore wines made from this grape taste different to those of its near neighbour. Chardonnay is the dominant grape used for white wines in the prestigious L'Étoile appellation (see below).

Melon-Queue-Rouge is not officially recognised by the appellation authority but many winemakers from the area think that it is a different grape variety to Chardonnay. There are three reasons for this. The first is that the Melon-Queue-

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

Rouge grapes are small than those of Chardonnay. The second is that the grape bunches are attached to the vine via a red stem (Queue-Rouge). The third reason, which was confirmed by Michel Gahier) is that the Melon-Queue-Rouge grape contains an enzyme which assists in the formation of the 'voille' which is the layer of yeast on top of the wine which protects the wine from excessive oxidation. This allows Michel to create oxidative wines of great complexity from Melon-Queue-Rouge such as his celebrated La Fauquette, even though he adheres to the requirements of the appellation and displays Chardonnay on the label.

Pinot Gris is a grape more commonly associated with Burgundy and Alsace, however it is permitted in the Jura in the production of the local Crémant de Jura.

The Appellations of the Jura

There are seven official wine appellations in the Jura, which we've included a short description of.

Crémant de Jura

As we have mentioned before in our articles and newsletters, Crémant is a sparkling wine made using the Méthode Traditionnelle that is the same double fermentation process used to make Champagne (only in Champagne can they call this method Méthode Champenoise).

Crémant de Jura is a broad appellation for the entire Jura area where the sparkling wines can be white or rosé and can be made from Savagnin, Chardonnay, Ploussard, Trousseau, Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris. There are no rules about proportions.

These are usually fresh, lively wines with a good streak of acidity. We love the crémants produced by both Michel Gahier and Philippe Bornard.

Côtes du Jura

This is another appellation covering the entire area of the Jura and all types of still wine including white, red, rosé, Vin de Paille and Vin Jaune. The red wines can be made from Ploussard, Trousseau or Pinot Noir. The white wines are made from Chardonnay or Savagnin or a blend of both. Rosé wines are made from any or all of the grape varieties that are nominated for red and white wines.

The Vin de Paille are wines where the grapes have been dried on straw mats to concentrate the sugars for a minimum of six weeks. They are then slowly fermented without the addition of alcohol to stop the fermentation. The resulting alcohol percentage must be between 14.5% and 17%. The wine is then transferred to small barrels for a minimum of three years. The resulting wine is a delicate sweet wine of astounding complexity and with aromas of candied fruits and honey. These can be made from any of the nominated grape varieties except for Pinot Noir. The wines

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

produced in this area in this way can bear the words Côtes du Jura Vin de Paille on the label.

Vin Jaune is a very special wine that is unique to the Jura. It is named after the colour of the wine which turns a golden yellow colour. It is made exclusively from the Savagnin grape which must be aged in small wooden barrels for a minimum of six years and three months. The wine must form a veil (voile) of yeast to protect the wine from excessive oxidation and to allow the yeast-wine interaction necessary to develop some of the desired polyphenols such as the all-important sotolon. Evaporation through the pores of the barrel leads to about one third of the wine being lost. The resulting wine is allowed to be bottled in special 620 ml bottles called clavelins and can display the words Côtes du Jura Vin Jaune on the label. These wines are nutty, umami-laden and delicious and are the perfect accompaniment for Comté cheese. But they are equally at home with just about any food. The versatility of these wines is amazing. They also have the ability to last for hundreds of years.

Arbois

The Arbois appellation is based around the pretty town of Arbois in the north-east sector of the Jura. This appellation includes the same wine types as the Côtes du Jura, namely Arbois Blanc, Arbois Rosé, Arbois Rouge, Arbois Vin de Paille and Arbois Vin Jaune. The permitted grape varieties are also the same.

Arbois Pupillin

The tiny village of Pupillin which lies just a few kilometres up the hill from Arbois is widely regarded for the quality of the Ploussard wines that are produced here. But don't limit your exploration of the wines of this appellation because legends such as Pierre Overnoy also live in this village and his iconic wines have always been produced here. Note that the wines are now being produced by his successor Emmanuel Houillon.



Chateau Chalon

Chateau Chalon is a beautiful area just north of the capital which is reserved for Vin Jaune only. The grapes must be grown in one of four communes, namely Château-Chalon, Domblans, Menétru-le-Vignoble and Nevy-sur-Seille. These four communes are clustered tightly together near the Seille River and are situated about 25 kilometres south of the central town of Arbois. These are some of the most stunning wines in the Jura.

L'Étoile

The village of L'Étoile is named after the star shape of the marine fossils found in the limestones that are common in this area. The appellation lies just north of the capital and the soils here cry out for white grape varieties. Therefore only white wines are permitted including the two special wines Vin Jaune and Vin de Paille. There are, however, extra restrictions as Trousseau is not allowed in the Vin de Paille here. The communes that qualify to use this appellation are restricted to L'Étoile, Plaineoiseau, Quintigny and Saint-Didier.

Macvin de Jura

This is a strange appellation because it references a wine type as well as an area.

This is a wine that is made from unfermented grape juice and must which has been boiled to reduce the volume by 50%. The wine is then fortified with a marc which has been made on the premises to gain an alcohol level between 16% to 22% which is required for acceptance by the appellation. The resulting wine must then be aged

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

in old oak barrels for at least a year before being released. The wine can be red, white or rosé depending on the grapes used.

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_2014.pdf