

WINE Talk: January 2021

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 95

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and remember that all past newsletters are available to read on our Living Wines Web site.

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

<https://livingwines.com.au/shop/>

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. Or we are always happy to put together a selection for you if you give us a rough idea of the type of wines you like and a budget. We confirm orders by return email before processing them.

If you're not personally known to us or haven't already, please also provide your date of birth so we stay legal (a requirement of Tasmanian legislation.) You must of course be over 18 years of age to order.

We begin the newsletter with a summary of the wines which have just arrived and then a summary of what's coming. There's some news about temperature-controlled shipping to parts of Australia and much more ...

What Which Has Just Arrived

We've had several shipments since our last newsletter. They have been cannibalised by people who asked for advance information about the arrivals, something we encourage if there's a wine you're particularly interested in but even so there are still many new additions.

Vincent Carême – Vouvray



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Vincent Carême's 2019 Fizzy Pink pet-nat is proving to be a perfect summer wine and selling quickly but we still have a few cases left. It is a blend of 20% Cabernet Franc, 40% Malbec, 20% Gamay and 20% Grolleau Noir. With only 2 g/l of residual sugar it is to all intents and purposes dry.

We also have a small amount of a repeat shipment of a glorious sweet wine, the **2015 Vouvray Premier Trie**. The grapes, affected by noble rot, were picked then sorted by hand. The result is an intense wine with 90 g/l of residual sugar. Think of preserved apricot, quinces and fig delicately balanced with a good acidity (and only 12% alcohol). It is \$110 a bottle – a wine made for matching with some sort of rich autumn dessert at the end of a grand meal.

The other wines have sold out.

Fanny Sabre



We have good supplies of Fanny's 2018 Bourgogne Rouge (\$62), a few cases of 2019 Bourgogne Aligoté (\$56) and a more limited quantity of 2019 Cuvée Anatole Blanc, Chardonnay from Saint-Marie-La-Blanche (an IGP). We've created a pack with these wines in it (Pack 1) and written about IGPs in the newsletter.

As well as those, there are very limited (maximum 1 bottle per cuvée and in some cases that is all we have) supplies of:

- 2018 Monthélie Les Sous-Roches \$92
- 2017 Savigny les Beaune Rouge \$100
- 2018 Beaune Rouge Clos des Renardes \$103
- 2018 Pommard \$121
- 2017 Volnay \$121
- 2018 Saint-Romain Blanc \$109

The other wines have sold out.

Le Temps des Cerises – Axel Pruffer



Axel Pruffer's 2019 wines are tasting delicious. We still have available Avanti Popolo (\$36), which this year is Carignan, Cinsault, Aramon, Muscat à Petits Grains and small amounts of other varieties, Fou du Roi (\$43), which is an equal blend of Carignan, Grenache and Cinsault (very limited), Jalava, (\$50) a new cuvée of Cinsault, which is the third pass of picking his Cinsault vines (also very limited), Les Lendemains Qui Chantent (\$69), made with Grenache from one of the most beautiful of Axel's parcels and La Peur du Rouge (\$50), his white wine which he makes using carbonic maceration. This year it is a 50/50 blend of Clairette and Chardonnay.

We concur with Axel's description that Les Lendemains Qui Chantent is "very juicy" this year and can understand why he told us it was one of his favourites.

We're offering these wines now we can ship temperature controlled to most of NSW and to Perth and would encourage anyone ordering them to choose this option because the wines are made with no additions.

Le Bouc à Trois Pattes - Wim Wagemans



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We only have one wine available from Wim Wagemans’s Le Bouc à Trois Pattes. It’s bottled with the Brutal Wine Co label and is a blend of Carignan and Cinsault. The Cinsault was directly pressed and the Carignan added in whole bunches to the fermenting juice (\$48). We also have a couple of magnums (\$96).

There is also a small amount of an eau de vie (40% alc) called Guilielmus, made from Grenache, and barrel matured for five years. Advice from Wim on the name is that “it’s called Guilielmus (the official first name of my late grandfather who was an alcohol smuggler during World War II; nobody ever called him Guilielmus though, because nobody knew how to pronounce it”. We can sympathise with that view!

Henri Milan



Sydney artist Louisa Chircop’s “Venus sewing the breeze” on the Clos Milan 2018

We have a large range of wines from Henri and his son Théophile Milan, including our first 2020 wine, the Milan Nouveau, mainly in 750ml bottles but also a few magnums, which are becoming more relevant now we’re allowed to spend time with friends again!

In this shipment you will notice that the Milans have released one of their very rare Clos Milan wines (the label for which is based on a painting by Australian artist, Louisa Chircop, see photo above).

See our website for more information about each wine.

Henri Milan Milan Nouveau 2020	\$46
Henri Milan Milan Nouveau 2020 Magnum	\$92

Henri Milan Haru Rosé 2019	\$39
Henri Milan Papillon Blanc 2018	\$65
Henri Milan Le Vallon 2019	\$51
Henri Milan Brut Nature Blanc 2019	\$70
Henri Milan Luna & Gaia 2018	\$70
Henri Milan Le Jardin 2016 (single bottle limit)	\$113
Henri Milan Le Carree 2016 (single bottle limit)	\$113
Henri Milan Clos Milan 2018 (single bottle limit)	\$85
Henri Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2019	\$56

What's Coming!!!

Domaine Mosse

There's only one wine in this shipment from the Mosse boys Sylvestre and Joseph. It's another 2020 wine, a new cuvée called Bangarang Primeur, made with 100% Pineau d'Aunis, after a short four day maceration of whole bunches. We normally wait until Moussamoussettes is ready before shipping a new vintage but this was too good an opportunity to miss. It will be \$40 a bottle if you want to make a reservation.

A shipment from the Jura

There is good news and bad news in a shipment from the Jura which we're expecting in February. We'll have wines available from l'Octavin, Domaine des Cavarodes, and Michel Gahier. Our shipment of Alice Bouvot's l'Octavin will be the biggest ever but there are lots of cuvées so each individual wine will still be quite limited (some are only 24 bottles). But more people will definitely be able to try her wines.

These are the cuvées we will have the most bottles of (some are a repeat order) - Elle Aime 2018, Zerlina 2018, Potion Magique 2018, Pamina 2018, P'tit Poussot 2019, Hip Hip Jura Chardonnay 2018, Hip Hip Jura Savagnin (macerated) 2018, Muscat 2018 and Clé à Molette 2019. We will be offering these wines and the other 11 or so cuvées, not taking orders, but you are welcome to express a preference if there is a cuvee you would particularly like.

Unfortunately though, it's the opposite situation with Etienne Thiebaud's Domaine des Cavarodes wines. We are going to have to disappoint many people because the 2019 wines are extremely limited. We'd hoped there would be more generous quantities of 2018 whites but many are not ready yet so we will have to wait. Any offers are likely to be only for one or two bottles and for some cuvées we're fully allocated – but please you have no chance of getting any of these wines from us unless you ask because we will not be advertising them so ask and we will try. Fortunately, 2020 is looking much more generous.

The situation is slightly better with Michel Gahier's wines, although some cuvées like La Fauquette are more limited than the previous time we had this wine. The vintage we're receiving is 2015. On the plus side, there will be a pet-nat called Montibulle and, even more

exciting, a new cuvée called Lou Blanc, from 2018. It is going to say Chardonnay on the label (we think) but we know that it's actually topped up Melon le Rouge Queue.

And after that ...

Next arrivals will be from **Alice and Olivier de Moor** (almost certainly not to be advertised so ask ahead if you are interested), **Domaine Derain** and **Sextant** (advance requests also recommended).

We're also hoping to have a shipment from **Piollot** and a small number of **Marie Courtin** wines from Champagne. This shipment, whether it comes at the same time or later, will have a dizzying number of cuvées from both! Hopefully by the time they arrive 2021 will have done its thing and we'll all be feeling happier, willing to travel and keen to celebrate with Champagne. We could certainly do with a quick trip off our safe little island!

Temperature controlled shipping and freight costs



The perfect storm of Covid-19, Christmas online shopping and summer has tested our shipping arrangements in terms of transit times and heat and we are looking at options for temperature controlled shipping.

We have a solution for Western Australia and currently have our first pallet of wine in transit.

And we believe we have a solution that will include Sydney, northern NSW, Brisbane and parts of country Victoria. That is going to involve shipping on a pallet to Melbourne (not temperature controlled but it's still fairly easy to find a shipping window of a couple of days between Tasmania and Melbourne) and then it will be shipped temperature controlled from Melbourne to its final destination. Hopefully, this network may expand soon.

There will be a cost for shipping temperature controlled, variable depending on the destination, but we will still offer freight free shipping to most parts of Australia so customers will have a choice. It may be, for example, in the winter months, that it is just as easy to use our current method of shipping by courier. We'll just have to see how things go.

For Perth, we have had a significant increase in our courier fees and so will have to start charging freight soon once we have used our labels purchased at the old rate. For that reason,

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unless the timing is essential, we'd recommend choosing the temperature-controlled shipping option as we suspect the charges will be similar.

This is a work in progress – ask us about the latest options and pricing when you are ordering if you would like to take advantage of these new services.

Pack 1: New Arrivals (15% Discount)



We have been fortunate that the supply of wines from France has not been interrupted during these difficult times.

Recently, we have been delighted to receive shipments from some of our old favourites such as Fanny Sabre from Burgundy, Vincent Carême from Vouvray, Henri and Theo Milan from Provence and the ever popular Axel Prüfer from the Languedoc.

We are pleased to be able to offer two Burgundy wines from Fanny, both of which are great examples of their genre. The Aligoté is from vines that grow in Pommard where Fanny's father planted these vines even though he could have made much more money by planting Pinot Noir in these hallowed soils. He just loved Aligoté!

We are also very happy to see the perennially popular Fizzy Pink from Vincent Carême return. This delightful fizzy wine is made from Loire Valley Gamay and is perfect for summer drinking.

We also have a white and a light red from Axel with the La Peur du Rouge having some Clairette as well as Chardonnay this vintage and the Avanti Popolo again being a delicious light red that we serve slightly chilled.

And to round out the selection we have the Nouveau from Milan that never ceases to amaze us that they can make such a smashable, lightish red from the Mouvedre grape variety.

- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté Blanc 2019
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2018
- Vincent Carême Fizzy Pink 2019
- Le Temps des Cerises La Peur du Rouge 2019
- Le Temps des Cerises Avanti Popolo 2019
- Henri Milan Milan Nouveau 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$284 but the pack price is only \$241.40 including freight to most Australian cities.

Pack 2: Fanny Sabre Special Pack (15% Discount)



It is great to have Fanny Sabre's wines back in stock! We always look forward to her wines which represent the best of the regions from which the grapes are sourced. There are three different wines in this pack and we are including 2 bottles of each of these delicious wines.

As we have pointed out in the description for Pack 1, the Aligoté is very special as the vines were planted by Fanny's father in the soils of the famous red wine appellation Pommard.

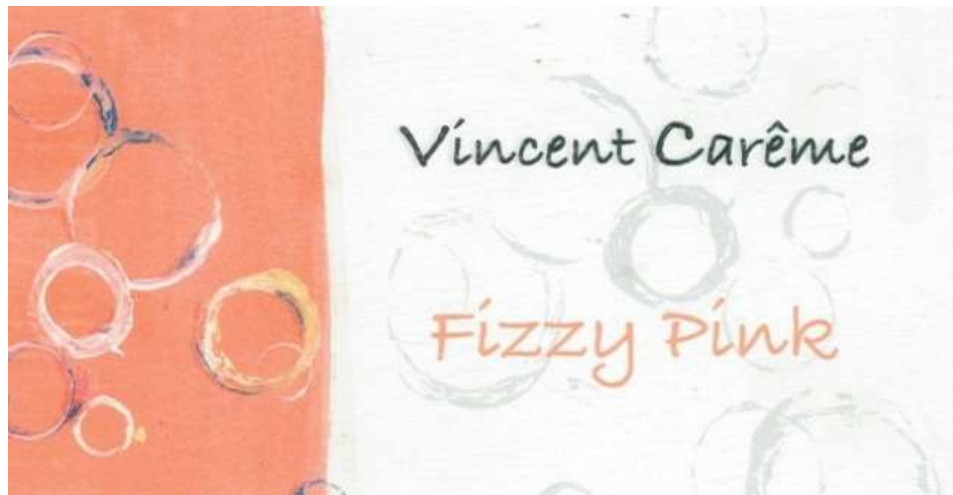
The Bourgogne Rouge has been sourced from her vineyards around the central town of Beaune. It is a wine that will keep but we have enjoyed it recently not long after it arrived, just before Christmas.

The third wine is from the Sainte-Marie-La-Blanche IGP appellation which is just over the A6 (Autoroute du Soleil) freeway from Pommard and hence cannot be called a Burgundy. It is called Cuvée Anatole Blanc and is made from 100% Chardonnay. It is also quite delicious and a wine from a region not often seen in Australia.

- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté Blanc 2019 (2 bottles)
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2018 (2 bottles)
- Fanny Sabre IGP Sainte-Marie-La-Blanche Cuvée Anatole Blanc 2019 (2 bottles)

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$344 but the pack price is only \$292.40 including freight to most Australian cities.

Pack 3: Summer Sparkling Wines (15% Discount)



This pack is perfect for summer drinking and is anchored by the amazing sparkling Gamay from Vouvray master Vincent Carême. This is a sparkling wine that is always popular throughout Australia and sells very quickly, so we have offered some in this pack to ensure that our newsletter readers have the opportunity to try this gem.

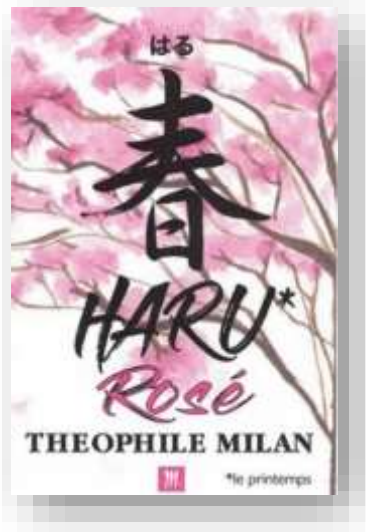
The Fizzy Pink is supplemented by three other amazing sparkling wines from throughout France. We have included Loire producer Hervé Villemade's Bulle Blanche which is a pétillant naturel made from the very rare local grape called Menu Pineau along with equal parts of Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay for added complexity. Next is a delicious méthode traditionnelle (made like a Champagne) from the Milan family in Provence which is a sparkling rosé made from Grenache, Syrah and Alicante (Alicante is an unusual red grape that has red juice whereas most red grapes such as Grenache and Syrah have white juice and obtain their colour from contact with the grape skins).

And, finally we head for the region where France borders Germany to Alsace producer Geschickt and their amazing Double Zero named after the fact that it has zero added sugar and zero added sulphur. This sparkling wine is made from Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Auxerrois and Riesling.

- Vincent Carême Fizzy Pink 2019 (3 bottles)
- Hervé Villemade Bulle Blanc 2015 (1 bottle)
- Henri Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2019 (1 bottle)
- Geschickt Crémant d'Alsace Double Zero 2016 (1 bottle)

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$263 but the pack price is only **\$223.55 including freight to most Australian cities.**

Pack 4: Pink Wines and Light Chilled Reds (15% Discount)



With summer upon us, we naturally turn to rosés and lighter red wines that can be chilled and enjoyed when temperatures are higher.

These four wines fit that category perfectly. We are really getting into Axel Prüfer's Avanti Popolo which is a lighter red that is perfect for chilling and enjoying in the sun (yes, we do get sun in Tasmania!). This year he has used Carignan, Cinsault, Aramon and Muscat to produce this delicious wine. We have written about Aramon in the grape varieties article towards the end of this newsletter.

The Opi d'Aqui Massale is a blend of three Grenache variants, namely Grenache Noir, Grenache Gris and Grenache Blanc resulting in a light, ethereal wine that fits the theme of this pack.

The Haru from Theo Milan shows that expert handling of normally big red grapes can produce a delicate wine. This rosé is made from Grenache, Syrah and Merlot, grapes normally associated with big red wines. However, here the short maceration has given a light but delicious rosé wine.

There is something about drinking a wine that not only tastes good but also looks appealing. The Geschickt Phenix is a pink-orange colour, developed through the maceration of the Pinot Gris grape variety. This grape has pink flecks in the skin which produce a gorgeous colour that helps makes this wine so attractive (it's tastes good too and also holds well, developing an even more interesting flavour profile the second day).

- Le Temps des Cerises Avanti Popolo 2019 (2 bottles)
- Opi d'Aqui Massale 2018 (1 bottle)
- Henri Milan Haru Rosé 2019 (2 bottles)
- Geschickt Vin d'Alsace Phenix 2019 (1 bottle)

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$267 but the pack price is only \$226.95 including freight to the most Australian cities.

Pack 5: Last bottle pack (1 pack only 20% Discount)



This is a pack made up from the last bottle we have left for 6 different wines. Therefore, there is only one of these packs and it will go to the first person to email us.

This is a very appealing selection with a red wine from the Mosse Family called Le Gros. It is a light red made from 50% Grolleau Noir and 20% Gamay with 10 days of carbonic maceration and 30% direct press Grolleau Gris. This directly-pressed juice makes it extraordinarily fresh and perfectly suited to chilling. The Menage a Trois is from Opi d'Aqui, a great producer in the Languedoc and this lighter style of red was made from Grenache from three different plots. This is followed by a lovely red Burgundy from Domaine Derain, made from old vine pinot noir, that is drinking very nicely right now.

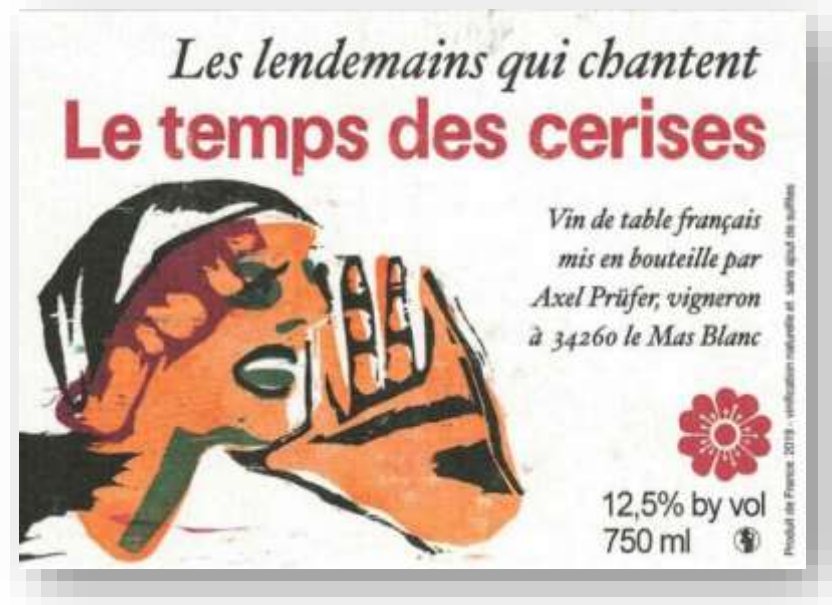
There is a wonderful pet nat from the pet nat masters at Les Capriades, then an Alsace beauty from the Ginglinger family called Stein which is a particularly interesting wine as it is made from 80% Pinot Gris that has been macerated and then 20% Pinot Noir added to produce a light, ethereal wine that is very drinkable.

Finally we have included a Loire Sauvignon Blanc from Garrelière that is in a perfect zone for drinking now.

- Mosse Le Gros 2018
- Opi d'Aqui Menage a Trois 2015
- Derain Saint-Aubin Le Ban 2017
- Les Capriades Piege a Filles Blanc 2018
- Domaine Ginglinger Stein 2018
- Domaine de la Garrelière Le Blanc de la Mariée 2017

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$311 but the pack price is only \$248.80 including freight to most Australian cities.

Pack 6: All Red Selection (15% Discount – Limited)



This is a collection which combines some wines with some age on them and others that are more recent. We have chosen them carefully so that they are all drinking at their best. This is certainly the case with the Le Poiré from Domaine Saint Nicolas. The grape variety used for this wine is Negrette which needs some taming and this one has had a decade to soften out.

The next three are all red wines that are drinking beautifully now due to careful handling during the winemaking ensuring that there was not too much extraction of harsh tannins.

The Moulins de Mon Coeur from Mylène Bru and the Spigao from Samuel Boulay are both over 5 years old and are showing well. The Moulins de Mon Coeur, which we have just released, is made from Syrah, Cinsault and Carignan bunches of which were layered in the tank for a short maceration. The resulting wine has an amazing depth of colour, beautifully fine tannins and a lovely up-front freshness.

The Spigao is made from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. The Merlot may fool you into thinking that there is some sugar in the left in the wine, however the wine is very dry and very elegant!

- Domaine Saint Nicolas Le Poiré 2010
- Henri Milan Le Vallon 2019
- Le Temps des Cerises Les Lendemains Qui Chantent 2019
- Mosse Cabernet Franc 2018
- Mylène Bru Les Moulins de Mon Coeur 2016
- Samuel Boulay Spigao 2016

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$324 but the pack price is only \$275.40 including freight to most Australian cities.

Pack 7: Deep in the Archive Pack (1 pack only - 15%ish Discount)



This month we have done a deep dive into our archive of past vintages and assembled a collection of older vintages going back to 2010 that you can see in the photograph above.

There are two “made in the Jura” wines (at either end of the lineup). The first is a Gamay from Alice Bouvot which was made with grapes purchased outside the Jura which she brought back to her winery to produce this delicious cuvée. When we received this wine the front label had been missed so we have increased the discount to 20% for this wine (hence the 15%ish discount). Unfortunately, it means the buyer will not have the cute gnome image on the front label – you will just have to Google it to see what you missed. The other is a Trousseau from the 90 year old vineyard of Michel Gahier from the year 2010 – a real treat!

The Un Pas de Côté is an assemblage of local grapes that Axel vinifies as quite a purple red wine that has softened out during its time in the cellar. The Le Rouchefer from the Mosse family is a classic Chenin Blanc with the signature Mosse deep flavour and special texture. This can easily age for several more years.

We also have included a delicious Languedoc red wine from Mylène Bru that is approaching 9 years old and ready to drink. Also ready to drink is the amazing Moulin à Vent from Jean-Paul Brun in Beaujolais. This Gamay is a real treat.

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- L'Octavin (Alice Bouvot) Méga-Gamay 2015 (Front label missing, therefore 20% discount)
- Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Les Grands Vergers 2010
- Le Temps des Cerises Un Pas de Côté 2015
- Domaine Mosse Le Rouchefer 2017
- Mylène Bru Far Ouest 2012
- Terres Dorées (Jean-Paul Brun) Moulin à Vent 2013

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$285 but the pack price is only \$239.05 including freight to most Australian cities.

Grape variety: Aramon

We last wrote about Aramon in 2013 when we received a shipment of a rosé from the Languedoc that was made entirely from the Aramon grape. Since then, more and more producers are reviving their Aramon vines, although it is unlikely to regain its eminence as the most widely grown grape variety in France.

The decline was due to the dictum from authorities in the 60s and 70s where they were urging replacing indigenous varieties with supposedly superior “international” varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz.

One of the reasons for replacing Aramon was that it generally produced red wines with less colour than other varieties. Especially in the days when Robert Parker was rampaging with his predilection for big, tannic, deep red blockbusters, this grape was anathema to winemakers who were seeking his adulation.

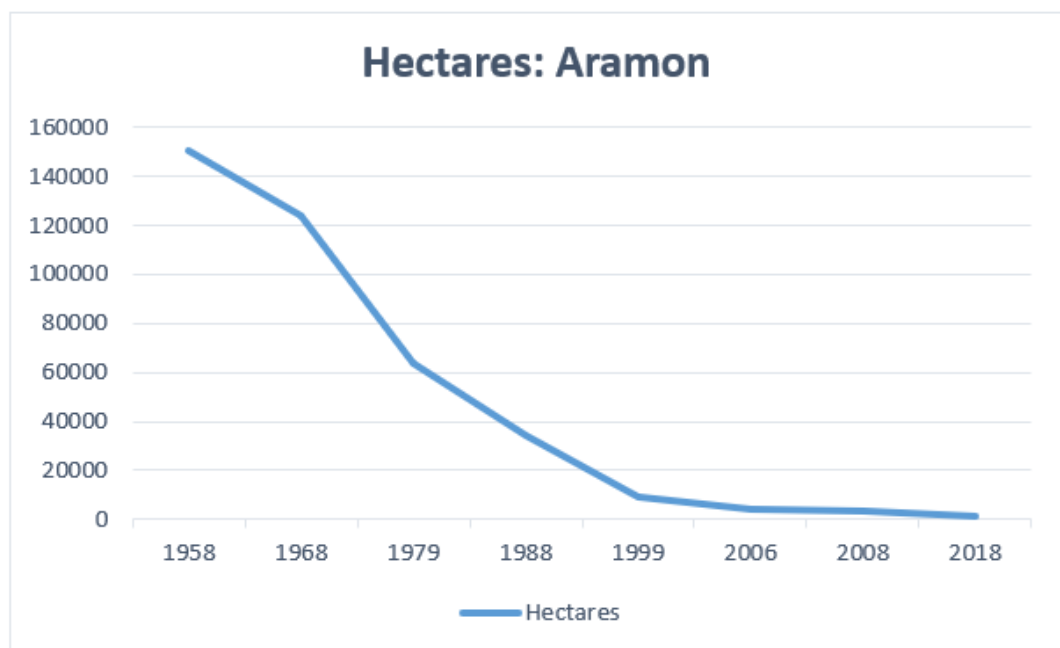
Now, of course, when savvy wine drinkers are turning more and more to lighter styles of red wine that sit more comfortably alongside food, grapes such as Aramon are coming into their own.

In fact, just this month we have received two wines made with Aramon – one from Axel Prüfer and one from Wim Wagemans, both of whom tend their vines in the heart of the Languedoc.

Aramon has been around for a long time and is a cross between the Ouliven grape variety and the Heunisch Weiss (Gouais Blanc) variety.

It is an early budding variety which is a real problem in this era of climate change where vines are budding much earlier in the season and so the frosts are wreaking their devastation when the buds have emerged and hence are more likely to be damaged.

The decline in the population of Aramon grapes is starkly demonstrated in the graph below dropping from just over 150,000 hectares in 1958 to around 1,100 hectares in 2018!



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The Aramon grape displays a black skin and is resistant to mildew which has been a big bonus for our producers in recent years as mildew, which is normally prevalent in the north in areas such as Champagne, is now becoming more common in the south.

The leaf has a pronounced central lobe as can be seen in the photo below.



**Ursula Brühl, Julius Kühn-Institut (JKI), Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants,
Institute for Grapevine Breeding Geilweilerhof - 76833 Siebeldingen, GERMANY**

The bunches are somewhat loose which means that the wind can get in amongst the grapes thus reducing disease pressure as can be seen below.



**Ursula Brühl, Julius Kühn-Institut (JKI), Federal Research Centre for Cultivated Plants,
Institute for Grapevine Breeding Geilweilerhof - 76833 Siebeldingen, GERMANY**

Answers to questions we have been asked recently

In our previous newsletter we answered some questions we had been asked about the winemaking process. One question was on the process of topping up barrels, a second question was for an explanation of “direct press” and the other was about the rules for the Vin de France appellation.

This month we have been asked about the IGP appellations in France, motivated by the fact that we have been singing the praises of an IGP from Fanny Sabre that we have just received and which is part of Pack 2 this month. The second question we have answered is about volatility in wine.

What is an IGP?

Following last month’s newsletter where we answered a question about the restrictions associated with the Vin de France appellation, this month we are exploring the IGP appellation and what it means.

One reason is that we have just received a shipment of wines from our long-time supplier Fanny Sabre and one of her wines has the IGP appellation because it comes from a vineyard on the “wrong” side of the A6 (Autoroute du Soleil) freeway, hence is not technically a Burgundy wine.

The label clearly indicates that it is an IGP from the Sainte-Marie-La-Blanche commune and surrounding areas.



First to the name. IGP stands for Indication Géographique Protégée which essentially means that the name is “protected” and that only wines produced in the nominated geographic area that conforms to the rules laid down by the governing body of that area can use that name.

IGP is the second highest and second lowest of the classification hierarchy in France.

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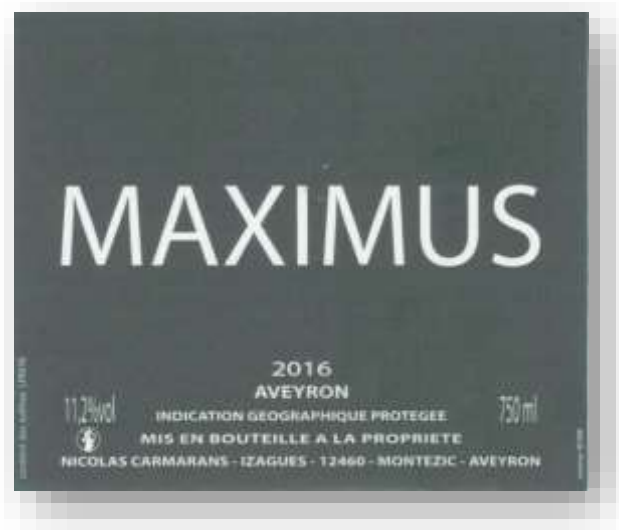
At the top of the classification hierarchy is AOP which stands for Appellation d'Origine Protégée. This is a broader specification that is used throughout Europe and, to some extent, replaces the old AOC.

Next come the regional appellations which used to be Vin de Pays but are now Indication Géographique Protégée (IGP) followed by the name of the region. Some of these are discussed below.

The remaining appellation is Vin de France which is the lowest level of three in the overhauled wine classification system. However, there are still rules attached to this appellation which we will discuss in a future article.

There are 76 IGPs in France. Some of them cover a wide area such as the IGP Val de Loire which can be used throughout the Loire Valley. Others apply to a specific administrative area such as a département or restricted geographical region. Examples are:

- IGP Ardeche
- IGP Aveyron
- IGP Drome
- IGP Drome
- IGP Vaucluse



Nicolas Carmaran's IGP Aveyron from the département in the centre of France

Others get down to an even more restricted geographic level where the use of the IGP is restricted to a city or village and sometimes the communes surrounding the village. The example we have provided above for Fanny's wine is an example where a village is named, but the appellation also covers a number of villages surrounding the named village:

- IGP Sainte-Marie-la-Blanche
- IGP Coteaux de Beziers
- IGP Cite de Carcassonne

The Beziere IGP was created to take advantage of the fame of these cities. Beziere is a well-known city in the Languedoc and Carcassonne is a famous walled city that is also well known for the famous local dish of Cassoulet.

There is also a couple of very specific IGPs such as the IGP Vins de la Corrèze, which covers the département of Corrèze in central France, which is slightly known for its “straw” wines where the grapes are dried out on straw before crushing.

What is volatility and why does it matter?

Volatility in wine is an issue that divides wine drinkers due to different people having different perceptions of the chemicals that contribute to the volatile acidity of a wine.

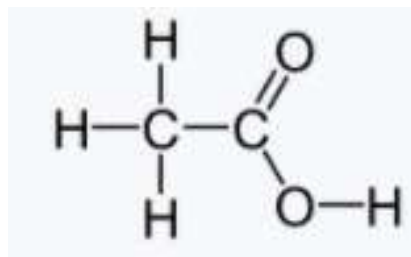
By far the biggest contributors are acetic acid and ethyl acetate, but there are other acids such as sulphurous acid, lactic acid, formic acid and butyric acid that can also contribute to volatility.

How do we perceive volatility? This is complicated because many drinkers who dislike it talk about bitterness, or a vinegary odour or sourness in the mouth.

However, to take one example, not all bitterness is bad, in fact some of us really enjoy bitterness in wine if it is harmonious. The best example we can think of is the recent rise in popularity of wines made from the Pineau d’Aunis grape which is grown in a small area of the Loire Valley just north of the city of Tours.

Wines made from this grape often display a pleasant bitterness at the back of the palate. This is common in the wines made by Jean-Pierre Robinot, for example.

But back to volatility. Let’s concentrate on acetic acid, which is the main component of vinegar. It has the chemical formula $\text{CH}_3\text{CO}_2\text{H}$ and is formed from one methyl group CH_3 bonded with a carboxyl group COOH .



[Wikipedia](#)

Normally, when tests are done to determine the volatility of a wine, it is only the acetic acid which is measured. Acetic acid is created during the winemaking process if oxygen is present which allows the bacteria acetobacter to do its work.

This can happen when the level in a barrel drops slightly to allow oxygen in. It is also a problem when the temperature in the room increases slightly because this makes the bacteria more active.

This is not a problem with many of our winemakers because the wine is matured in barrels stored well below ground in very cool conditions.

WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

In red wines volatility become noticeable for many people at a concentration of about .75 grams per litre and if it reaches about 1 gram per litre it becomes sour.

However, there is another acid that can be created in wines that has a lower threshold and is more difficult to ignore. This is ethyl acetate which gives off the distinctive odour of nail polish remover or glue and can be detected at a much lower value of 0.15 grams per litre.

It is a slightly more complex molecule with a formula of $C_4H_8O_2$ or $CH_3CO_2CH_2CH_3$.

While bitterness or the taste of vinegar might be tolerable at low levels, there are not many people who can cope with their wine tasting like nail polish remover!

So, the moral of this story is that volatility is subjective and depends on the person drinking the wine. Some people like bitterness, some hate it. Some like a subtle taste of vinegar, many do not. Therefore, any discussions about volatility need to be much more nuanced than the current hard and fast approach taken by many in the wine industry.

Licence Notice

WARNING

Under the *Liquor Licensing Act 1990* it is an offence:

for liquor to be delivered to a person under the age of 18 years.
Penalty: Fine not exceeding 20 penalty units

for a person under the age of 18 years to purchase liquor.
Penalty: Fine not exceeding 10 penalty units

Because of the above penalties we are now required by the Tasmanian Government to collect your date of birth from you when ordering via the Internet. We apologise for this imposition. In the past we have been able to accept a declaration that you are over 18.