

WINE Talk: February 2021

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 96

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. See the final page of the newsletter for information about the penalties which apply if you are under 18 and try to buy wine from us.

New Arrivals

As anticipated, we decided to allocate the shipment of l'Octavin, Michel Gahier and Domaine des Cavarodes wines which recently arrived. There were so many requests in advance we were not left with any wines in any quantity to put them on our website.

But we did reserve a few wines for packs you will find in this newsletter (very limited – they will disappear quickly) and we do still have the odd bottle of Gahier and l'Octavin wines available. If you are interested contact us and we will let you know what we still have. It's all single bottles though.

What's Coming

The shipping fairies weren't kind to us in January and the shipment we were hoping would leave France late in January has only just departed so won't arrive until late April. As we said last time, it contains de Moor and Derain and Sextant wines but in more positive news, the delay meant the Piollot and Marie Courtin Champagne we were hoping to have made it as well.

The de Moor wines will definitely be allocated but hopefully we'll be able to advertise the Derain, Sextant and Piollot wines. If you don't want to miss out it's always wiser to get in touch in advance though. We're unfortunately not going to receive a couple of familiar and much loved Sextant cuvées from the 2019 vintage (Skin Bull, Foun'ette, and MaMaMia) – another casualty of Covid and the complications it's producers caused for stock management, reservations and sales. On the plus side we will take an extra unusual order from Derain and

Sextant leaving in a couple of months with the 2020 vintages of those wines, which are released in the French spring and which usually we wait and take early the following year.

Following that we're expecting wines from Dominique Belluard, Jean-Marc Dreyer, Les Capriades, La Cadette, and cider from Julien Fremont so there's lots to look forward to in the first part of 2021.

The French Vintage in 2020

Not everything was terrible in 2020 in France, despite Covid-19 which has affected the country badly. We're getting reports from the producers we work with who actually write emails (not all of them are that way inclined) that it has been a very good vintage.

I think the thing we're happiest to hear is not just that the yields are relatively good (thank you Jura!) but it looks like producing wines which are typical. Those two things don't always go together.

In 2015, for example, it was a bountiful year but the heat and dryness led to wines which were not usual – typically richer and higher alcohol. Of course, that's better than not having any grapes to pick but the vintages we have loved most are always those which are the result of kinder, gentler weather which has not stressed the vines quite so much.

To quote the English translation in a recent email from Hervé Villemade “2020 is a good quality vintage with nice yields, wines are very fruity with fresh acidities and %alc./vol. between 12 and 13.5%, a “f***ing” right Loire vintage !” (He didn't use asterisks).

After seeing alcohol levels soar in 2018 and 2019 in so many wines this is very welcome news, especially as we will be tasting so few of them before we buy.



And we have of course already received two cuvées of 2020 wines, both of which sold out quickly. They were the Mosse Bangarang Primeur and the Henri Milan Nouveau. We did set aside a few bottles of each wine for the newsletter though and they are available in a very limited 2020 pack (Pack 4 this month).

Living Wines Freight Policies



Some people have questioned why we provide free freight to “many” places in Australia rather than everywhere.

This has to do with the arrangement we have with Fastway (now called Aramex) which operates a series of franchisees throughout Australia. Franchisees are responsible for their area and get to deliver and collect all freight within that defined area.

We have a national agreement with Aramex for delivery to their franchisee areas. If the area you reside in is not a franchisee area then they will offload to a local courier who then delivers to your address. This involves extra costs which we cannot afford to cover. Hopefully, the new company will make an effort to expand the franchise base so more of Australia is covered.

In addition, though, Aramex has significantly increased its prices to some of the destinations which they do deliver directly to, particularly Perth, for which the price for sending a box has almost doubled. Until late last year we had single price national pricing but that has been replaced with a distance-based tariff. This is a back to the past moment for us as we worked that way prior to 2014. It means that we have had to start to charge freight for deliveries to Perth again. It won't be the full cost to us. We will subsidise up to the same level as the cost of the freight to east coast cities. However, even allowing for that, it is actually going to be more expensive to use the Aramex service than it is to ship using our alternative new temperature-controlled transport option to Perth (see below).

Temperature controlled transport to Perth and much of the East Coast

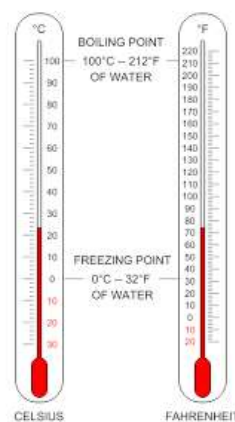


Image supplied by Wikipedia

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We have commenced a service where we can send our wines to customers via temperature-controlled transport. This is in response to the higher temperatures being experienced in many parts of the country, which are likely to become more common over time, and slower courier delivery times to almost all the cities we ship to compared to 12 months ago, particularly into Sydney.

We are sending pallets directly to Perth where they are unpacked by one of Perth's finest wine minds who immediately delivers them to their final destination, ensuring the temperature is managed for the whole journey. If delivery is not possible immediately they are stored in an underground cellar.

We are sending pallets to Anonymous Wines in Melbourne, which then ship them using their next available service to Sydney, Brisbane, Northern NSW (including Byron Bay), Canberra, and country Victoria. Their service is excellent, with wines delivered by people who understand the product and keep it at the correct temperature.

We have to charge for these services but are continuing to subsidise the cost to keep the freight costs as low as possible. For example, for Sydney and Perth we are currently charging \$18 for a case for a dozen bottles. (For Perth we will now be charging a similar amount to ship with Aramex so we'd strongly suggest using our pallet service in preference.)

The disadvantage though is that we can only ship when we have sufficient wines to make up a pallet. That may mean delays in shipping on some occasions. We will be shipping a pallet to each destination early in March but there may not be another pallet delivery until late April when our next shipment arrives.

Even with those issues though, during summer for some wines we may request you either take advantage of this new service, with the freight charge, or if you are in an area where we don't normally charge freight and you want to save paying the freight, ask us to hold the wines until the weather is cooler and then ship them freight free. We are always happy to hold wines in our warehouse until cooler weather if you are prepared to pay for them to secure them.

Tutto's Interview with Jean-Pierre Robinot



Our friends at Tutto Wines in London (Alex Whyte, Damiano Fiamma and Stefania Genisio), who represent Jean-Pierre Robinot in the UK, recently spent time talking to Jean-Pierre and the

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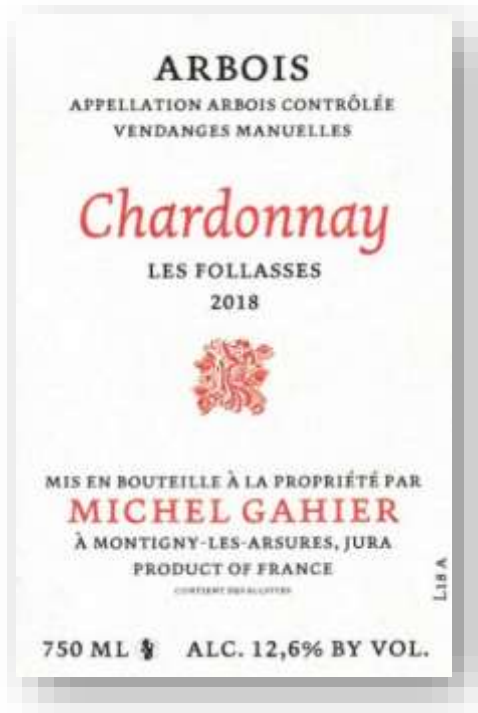
result is a joyful interview full of fascinating stories from Jean-Pierre's past before he became a winemaker (which, because of his influence and connections, also tells a part of the early history of natural winemaking and drinking in France), his reflections on growing Chenin Blanc and Pineau d'Aunis in the Loire Valley, the decision to work without adding sulphites, plans for the future and much more. It's a must read if you are in any way interested in Jean-Pierre's wines. You'll find it [here](#) on Tutto's website.

Tutto's founders, Alex and Damiano, met while working with Giorgio di Maria at the short lived but so influential and wonderful Sydney wine bar 121 BC and we're sure would not deny the significance of their time together in Sydney for setting them on the course that led to Tutto, so we feel a strong Australian connection to them.

They initially worked with Italian producers, all of whom were well-known at 121 BC but were not represented in the UK when they arrived in London. Now, though, they also have an extensive list of French producers as well as being the UK representatives of South Australian vignerons Tim Webber and Monique Millton from Manon.

We'd strongly recommend you [subscribe](#) to their regular newsletter so as not to miss out on excellent stories like this interview with Jean-Pierre. Their website is also a very good resource for descriptions of wines, including from some of the people we work with.

Pack 1: Gahier New Arrivals Jura Pack (2 packs only) 10% Discount



It is very rare for us to be able to offer 6 Jura wines in a pack as we have done here, especially from such a sought-after winemaker as Michel. Please note that there are only two of these packs available, so please get in quickly if you would like to buy one of them.

There are six of Michel's best wines on offer here. The Les Follasses (the name of one of Michel's vineyards) is made from a Chardonnay variant called Melon à Queue Rouge which you can read about in the Grape of the Month article later in this newsletter.

The Les Grands Vergers is a red wine and is made from Trousseau which performs best around the village of Montigny-Les-Arsures and the vineyard is right in the centre of the village. The vines are heading for 90 years old! La Vigne du Louis is another Trousseau from a different vineyard in the same area but with younger vines and the Le Clousot is yet another vineyard with even younger vines. We are pleased to be able to offer three Trousseau wines from different vineyards so that you can see the difference that age of the vines and different terroirs have on the wine.

The other two wines are new ventures for Michel. This is the first time we have been able to import them.

Montibulle is a sparkling wine, made from Chardonnay. It could have been a Crémant du Jura but, because he bottled it (for making the secondary fermentation) earlier than the appellation's decree date, it is a Vin de France. It's very similar, including its 11% alcohol, to crémants we have had from Michel before.

The Lou Blanc is a truly new cuvée. It is a fresh wine which has been "topped up" in the barrel to ensure that any oxidation is minor. It is made from Melon à Queue Rouge.

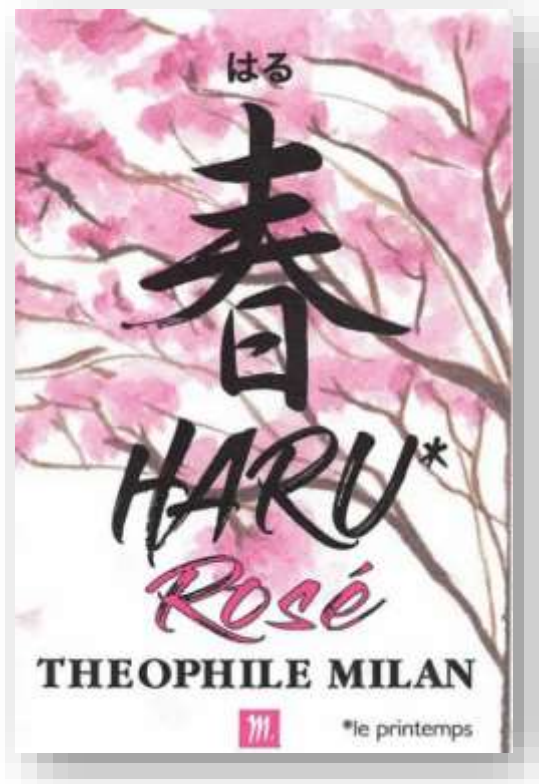
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The wines are:

- Michel Gahier Arbois Chardonnay Les Follasses 2018
- Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Les Grands Vergers 2018
- Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau La Vigne du Louis 2018
- Michel Gahier Mousseux Montibulle NV
- Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Le Clousot 2018
- Michel Gahier Arbois Lou Blanc 2018

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$399 but the pack price is only \$359.10 including freight to many Australian cities.

Pack 2: New and Recent Arrivals Pack (4 packs only) 15% Discount



This pack (of which there are only 4 on offer because most of the wines are sold out) has a bottle of Michel Gahier's Les Follasses from the Jura that was described in Pack 1 above. There is also a white wine from the south of France called le Peur du Rouge which means "the fear of the red" based on the name of one of Axel Prüfer's most beautiful vineyards. Normally this wine is made from 100% Chardonnay, but this year, due to low yields in the vineyard half of the grapes are Clairette, which we think has made an intriguing wine of some complexity.

Next we have the Papillon Blanc from the Milan family in Provence. Their Papillon series (the wines with the butterfly on the label) are made without any added sulphur. The grapes used are Grenache Blanc, Rolle (Vermentino), Roussanne and Marsanne.

The next wine is an orange wine from Alice Bouvot, from l'Octavin, made from Muscat à Petit Grains and Muscat d'Alexandrie, and macerated for 15 days. It is a perfect wine for matching to diverse dishes throughout a meal. This is one of Alice's négoce wines. The grapes were grown by Vincent Lafage in Roussillon.

Back to the Milan family for the Haru Rosé, this year made from Grenache, Syrah and Merlot. Theo Milan who now makes many of the wines has a really light hand with red grapes and can coax flavour out of grapes such as Merlot and Syrah without over-extracting them to the point where they are blockbusters.

The final wine is the Commendatore, also from Alice Bouvot from l'Octavin, but this time from her own vines. This is a lovely, light but complex red made from Trousseau. It's our second shipment of this 2018 vintage because we loved it so much when it first arrived last winter.

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The wines are:

- Michel Gahier Arbois Chardonnay Les Follasses 2018
- Le Temps des Cerises La Peur du Rouge 2019
- Henri Milan Papillon Blanc 2018
- l'Octavin Mus'cat 2018
- Henri Milan Haru Rosé 2019
- l'Octavin Commendatore 2018

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$385 but the pack price is only **\$327.25 including freight to many Australian cities.**

Pack 3: Octavin Pack (2 packs only) 10% Discount



We rarely get the opportunity to offer a straight Jura pack as we mentioned in the introduction to Pack 1. This newsletter sees us doing it twice to say thank you to our newsletter customers who have been so loyal over such a long time!

This pack contains 6 of Alice Bouvot's l'Octavin wines which have just arrived; one white, two orange and three reds, and a mix of estate and négoce wines. There are only two of them so it would be wise to email early if you're interested. (Although they are newly-arrived several are wines we have already had one shipment of so you may have seen or bought some of them already.)

The white wine is the 2018 Pamina which is made with Alice's own Chardonnay from the La Mailloche vineyard on the outskirts of Arbois. It is one of her most complex wines, and one of the few she ages in barrel. The Tutto (see above) verdict is "with impeccable balance and length, this might just be the best Pamina yet".

Sly Vin 2019 is an orange wine made from white Sylvaner grapes purchased from Domaine René Clauss in Alsace. Alice placed the whole bunches in a tank and macerated them for 15 days to develop the orange colour.

The Hip Hip Chardonnay J... is a wine made from Jura Chardonnay grown near Arbois, but they are not Alice's grapes. Half the grapes were directly pressed and the juice transferred to a fibreglass tank and the other 50% was macerated for 6 weeks and then the juice added to the direct press juice.

Charlot is made from Merlot from the 2016 vintage sourced from Thierry Goult in Carcassonne which underwent whole bunch maceration for 30 days as well as some Molette and Muscat from 2017 added to lighten and freshen the wine.

Dorabella is one of Alice's long-running wines. It is made from Poulsard which was handpicked in the "En Curon" vineyard just near Arbois. It is a light and ethereal red wine. This 2018 vintage was destemmed and macerated for two months prior to pressing. It was bottled in July 2019.

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Zerlina is made from 50% Pinot Noir and 50% Trousseau which are also from “En Curon” and treated in a similar way to the Dorabella.

We think it is a pretty impressive line up and apologise in advance that only 2 people are going to be able to buy it.

And a note about something obscure on one of the labels where you see Hip Hip J... Because Alice has left the appellation process she is now not allowed to use any word on her labels which may overlap with terms used by the appellation. She therefore has to use only the postcode for her town of Arbois because Arbois is also the name of an appellation! The same goes for the word Jura which she is also not allowed to use because of the Cote du Jura appellation (hence Hip Hip J... - see back label example below).

The wines are:

- l'Octavin Pamina 2018
- l'Octavin Chardonnay Hip Hip J... 2018
- l'Octavin Sly Vin 2019
- l'Octavin Charlot 2016 / 17
- l'Octavin Dorabella 2018
- l'Octavin Zerlina 2018

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$512 but the pack price is only \$460.80 including freight to many Australian cities.



Pack 4: 2020 Pack (4 packs only) 15% Discount



Both of the wines in this pack are completely sold out, except that we held back enough bottles of each wine to make up 4 packs to ensure that our newsletter customers got the opportunity to try them!

Both of the wines in this pack are made by highly talented new generation winemakers. The Mosse wines are now being made by Sylvestre and Joseph, the sons of René and Agnes Mosse who we have been working with for many years. During that time, their sons have been keenly observing what needs to be done in both the vineyards and the winery and are now putting that experience to good use, especially the red wines such as the Bangarang which is made with a very light touch.

The Bangarang Primeur is a classic example of the intrigue of the Pineau d'Aunis grape variety. It is no wonder that wines made from this grape are selling like hotcakes at the present time! This wine is packed with flavour, it is light, it is gulpable and very, very delicious.

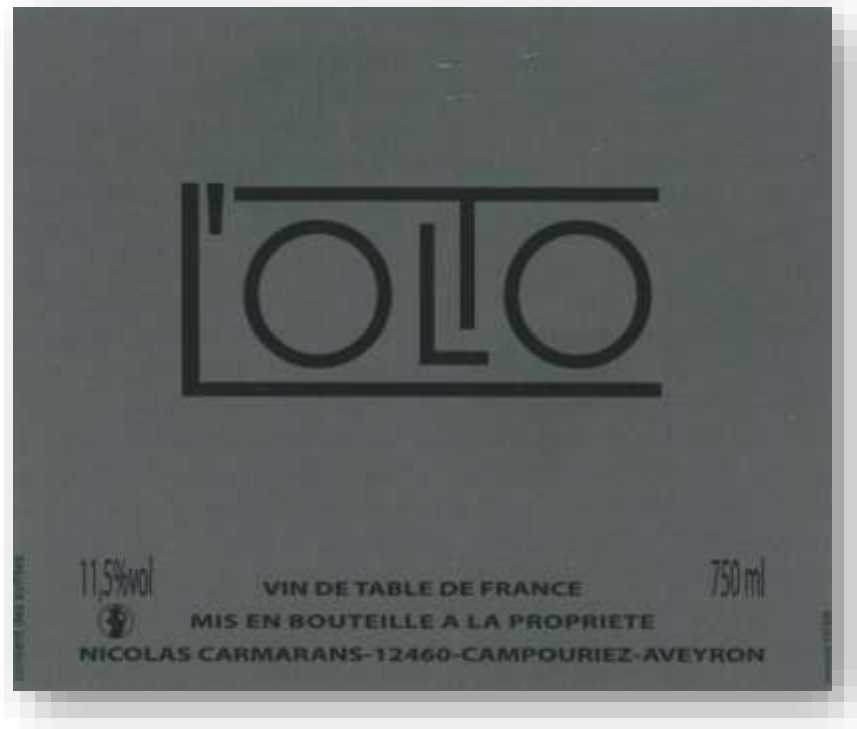
Henri Milan has ceded some of the winemaking duties to his son Théo who has become an integral part of the team at Domaine Milan in the last few years, and is responsible for inventing the “Nouveau” cuvée we have now had several vintages of.

Théo has demonstrated flair and precision in the making of their red wines. In addition, he seems to have a symbiotic relationship with the Mourvèdre grape variety. This variety is used to make huge blockbuster wines along the coast in Bandol but Théo seems to find the perfect balance of flavour and lightness to make the Nouveau a perfect summer wine (it's 11%!).

- Mosse Bangarang Primeur 2020 (3 bottles)
- Henri Milan Milan Nouveau 2020 (3 bottles)

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$258 but the pack price is only \$219.30 including freight to many Australian cities.

Pack 5: Stranded assets pack - 15% Discount (2 packs only)



Sometimes we end up with the odd few bottles of wine which we've removed from our lists thinking it's sold out then for many different reasons still end up with some.

Promised purchase orders never come, people leave the country (less of that these days!), people forget and circumstances change (more of that these days) or we think it's sold out, remove it from the list, and then realise we can't count but, by that stage, with only 1 or 2 bottles left it doesn't make sense to advertise it again.

We're gradually going to put some of these "stranded assets" into packs. Some are quite new but others have been in the warehouse for years, which means given we're selling them at their original prices, are quite a bargain.

It's very much a mixed bag. The Domaine de la Garreliere Milliard d'Etoiles Petillant Natural is from a very old vintage – we think it's more than 10 years old (there may not be bubbles) and we're not sure if Carmarans' l'Olto (100% Fer Servadou) is 2013 or 2012. We've given whoever buys the packs the benefit of the doubt and chosen the vintage with the cheaper price. When you open the bottle there may be a vintage on the cork. Don't be too surprised if it's 2012 not 2013.

There's an element of risk here with some of the older wines – very much a lucky dip - but the pack also includes a bottle of two more recent rare wines which we can guarantee will be delicious – Julien Altaber's 2017 Skin Bull (macerated Aligoté pet-nat) and Hervé Villemade's beautiful 2016 Les Souchettes, which is made from 100% Menu Pineau and should be drinking beautifully now.

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The wines are:

- Domaine St Nicolas Reflets Rouge 2011
- Herve Villemade Les Souchettes Blanc 2016
- Domaine de la Garreliere Milliard d'Etoiles Petillant Natural (vintage unknown)
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Skin Bull 2017
- Causse Marines Zacmau Blanc 0102
- Nicolas Carmarans Aveyron L'Olto Rouge 2013 (possibly)

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$232 but the pack price is only \$197.20 including freight to many Australian cities.

Pack 6: Almost Red sale pack (6 packs only) - 20% Discount



This pack is mainly comprised of red wines, but there is one very special white wine (the Opi d'Aqui l'Éléphant Blanc).

We have four different reds (there are two of the amazing 2017 Massale from Opi d'Aqui, which is a light red). There is also a powerful Grenache from Le Temps Retrouvé, Cabernet Franc from Domaine Les Grandes Vignes in Anjou which they call Breton after the local name for this grape variety, and a bottle of 2014 Rita from Mylène Bru in the Languedoc. This wine made from Carignan is absolutely singing at present. This 2014 vintage is actually also a stranded asset (i.e. not on our published list) but we realised we had enough bottles to make it part of this pack. (There is also one more bottle available apart from the 6 set aside for this pack if anyone is interested. Otherwise, it will likely end up in a last bottle pack next month.)

The white is made from Rolle or Vermentino which grows close to the coast in the Languedoc and is fabulous with oysters or any seafood.

- Le Temps Retrouvé Grenache 2014
- Opi d'Aqui Massale 2017 (2 bottles)
- Domaine Les Grandes Vignes Cabernet Breton 2015
- Mylène Bru Rita 2014
- Opi d'Aqui L'Éléphant Blanc 2017

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$338 but the pack price is only \$270.40 including freight to many Australian cities.

Answers to questions we have been asked recently

Why is there some effervescence in this wine?

Of all the questions we get asked (or the comments made) about the natural wines that we import one of the most common relates to a slight “fizz” that people detect when they pour the first glass of some of our wines.

Why the comments and questions? Well, this has long been held as a fault in wine judging circles and many judges haven’t caught up with modern winemaking methods and still apply the same rules as they did in the 1960s and 1970s.

They haven’t caught up with the fact that many winemakers are preferring to make wines without added sulphites to maintain the vibrancy and “life” of the wine (we are called Living Wines for a reason, after all).

The problem with adding sulphites is that it has a deadening effect on the wine, especially if too much is added. We were once lucky enough to try a wine of our producer Axel Prüfer where his English importer had asked him to add some sulphur (around 10 grams per litre) to a particular cuvée. So, he reluctantly added the sulphites to the bottles that had been ordered plus a few more out of curiosity.

When we next visited he opened a bottle of both the sulphited wine and the one without added sulphites. The difference was amazing. The one without sulphites was alive and vibrant, the one with sulphites added was dead in the bottle – it exhibited none of the vibrancy that many natural wine drinkers crave.



Now to the answer to the question. Many winemakers, such as Axel, tend to bottle with a tiny bit of residual sugar still in the wine. They need to be quite skilful to pull this off.

There is some residual fermentation that occurs and the remaining sugar is converted, in part, to carbon dioxide. Now, good old CO₂ is an excellent preservative, very little bacteria can survive in the presence of this gas, but it doesn’t have the deadening effect of sulphites.

When you open a bottle of his wine (or those of many of our producers) such as his Jalava you might notice a slight fizz or prickle in the glass from the carbon dioxide. A simple swirl of the glass and it blows off, however we like that slight prickle. It tells us that the winemaker has taken the trouble to provide some protection for the wine.

The final observation we would make is that it is not a fault if it is done deliberately!

Why do Moulin à Vent wines seem to have more minerality than other Cru Beaujolais?

There are ten areas in northern Beaujolais that have been awarded Cru status. These are, roughly going from north to south:

- St-Amour
- Juliéna
- Chéna
- Moulin-à-Vent
- Fleurie
- Chiroubles
- Morgon
- Régnié
- Brouilly
- Côte de Brouilly

One minor issue is that list is not strictly north to south as Côte de Brouilly is actually enclosed completely by the Brouilly area. Moulin à Vent is widely known for the weathered pink granitic rocks which dominate this area. In Beaujolais these rocks are called “gore”. This is one of the reasons we have been saying for the last three decades that the East Coast of Tasmania is an ideal place for Gamay to be grown, but the obsession with Pinot Noir always seems to win.

The pink granite in Moulin à Vent also has seams of manganese which is an important mineral for plants including grape vines. It helps with take up of nitrogen and with photosynthesis. As the granite is weathered some of this manganese enters the soil as salts as the rocks are broken down through acidic water slowly eating into the manganese veins.

The presence of manganese salts in the plants and therefore the grapes and later the wine is a contributor to the sensation of minerality, just as the presence of sodium in the wines of Fiefs Vendéens which borders the Atlantic Ocean gives the sensation of saltiness in the wine.

What is dosage in a sparkling wine or Champagne?

Sparkling wines and Champagnes often have on the back label a reference to the dosage used in the wine.

For the sake of simplicity here we will remind everyone that Champagnes are sparkling wines made using a two-stage method that can only have the word Champagne on the label if they have been produced using grapes grown in the designated Champagne area which lies to the east of Paris in France. The resultant wine must also adhere to all of the other rules set out for Champagnes in the official INAO document.

For the rest of this story we will use the term sparkling wine to cover all sparkling wines produced anywhere in the world that use the same two-stage method as Champagne.

The process starts with the picking and sorting of the grapes. Once the grapes are ready they are then crushed and the juice is run off immediately to a tank or similar vessel if the resultant wine is to be white or left in contact with the skins for a few days if a rosé wine is preferred.

It is also very common in Champagne for the “direct press” method to be used on red grapes such as Pinot Noir to produce a white sparkling wine known as Blanc de Noir (white from red).

The next step in the process is for the wine to undergo fermentation. If the wine is to be natural (the approach used by the people we work with) it is left to ferment using the yeasts that came with the grapes from the vineyard. If a more conventional approach is taken the grapes will be dosed with sulphites to kill the ambient yeasts and then bags of yeast will be added to the juice to commence the fermentation.

Eventually the fermentation will complete and there may or may not be some remaining sugar in the resultant wine.

Now for the bubbles. In most cases a second tranche of yeast will be added to the resultant still wine and this yeast will convert any remaining sugar into carbon dioxide thus producing the required bubbles. Sometimes extra sugar will be added at this stage to ensure the bubbles are produced.

Because Champagne is in the northern part of France it is quite cold there and often the grapes struggle to become fully ripe. This tends to produce reasonably acidic wines which does not sit well with many Champagne lovers. Therefore when the two fermentation processes are finished the wine is checked and extra sugar (dosage) is added to make the wine sweeter.

It is possible to tell because the amount of dosage is often printed on the label. There are regulations regarding the amount of added sugar that can be added to the final product and what needs to be on the label as a result.

The term dosage refers to the amount of sugar that is added (i.e. the wine is dosed with sugar) and the term residual sugar is used to say how much sugar remains in the wine.

These are the terms which apply to Champagne from which you can determine how much sugar is in the wine.

- Doux – the wine contains over 50 grams per litre of residual sugar;
- Demi-Sec – the wine has between 32 and 50 grams per litre of residual sugar;
- Sec – the wine has between 17 and 32 grams per litre of residual sugar;
- Extra sec – the wine has between 12 and 17 grams per litre of residual sugar;
- Brut – the wine has less than 12 grams per litre of residual sugar;
- Extra-Brut – the wine has between 0 and 6 grams per litre of residual sugar;
- Brut Nature – the wine has no added sugar and under 3 grams per litre of residual sugar.

You can see from the following label by Roland Piillot from Champagne that the Come des Tallants has no added sugar (zero dosage).



The next label has Brut Nature displayed which means two things – there has been no sugar added and the amount of residual sugar is less than 3 grams per litre.



Grape variety: Melon le Queue Rouge

There is much controversy about exactly what Melon le Queue Rouge is, but those who love this grape variety have few doubts. It is highly likely that it is a clone of Chardonnay that has evolved in the marl-rich soils of the Jura after being transplanted from the limestone soils of Burgundy.

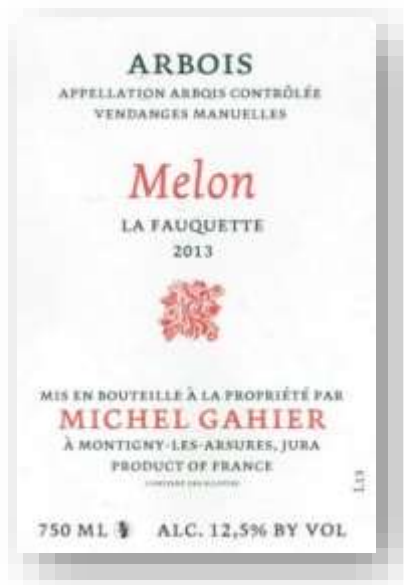
There are some producers in the Jura who claim that it is identical to Chardonnay and they are probably correct from a purely genetic point of view. However, there are some clear differences between the Chardonnay growing in the Jura or nearby Burgundy and this more obscure and interesting grape.

The first difference is quite pronounced. As the grapes ripen, the Melon vine stems become quite red – hence the “queue rouge” part of the name which translates as “red tail”.

The grapes are also smaller than Chardonnay grapes and have thinner skin. They are also more prone to disease. However, despite these difficulties producers who love this variety are able to make wonderful white wines from this variety.

We have been fortunate to work for many years with Phillipe Bornard and his son Tony (who has now taken over the entire estate and winemaking duties from Phillipe) and they have always treasured their plots of Melon. The cuvée “Melon le Rouge-Queue” (not quite the same name as the grape!) is one of their most sought after wines and we’re hoping Tony will introduce new cuvées made with this grape as well.

Another of our producers, Michel Gahier also has some vineyards of Melon although in the past he was reluctant to put this on the label, due to the INAO not recognising it as a separate grape variety. Now, his fabulously complex La Fauquette which is not topped up, so matures under a veil of yeast, has Melon proudly displayed on the label (not quite the whole name but getting there).



To learn more about Melon we visited a vineyard near the village of Pupillin with Tony Bornard who was eager to show us where his Melon grew and to point out the key features of the vines.

These are some photos taken during this vineyard visit.



A Melon vine pre-veraison (ripening of the grapes) note that the vine stems are not red at this stage
– Copyright foodtourist.com 2018



Melon has a “roundish” leaf sometimes with two lateral lobes – Copyright foodtourist.com 2018



Melon le Queue Rouge with the red stalks clearly showing – Copyright foodtourist.com 2018



A 48 year old Melon vine – note the trunk – Copyright foodtourist.com 2018



Blue marl rock from the Melon vineyard – Copyright foodtourist.com 2018



Blue marl rock and marl clay in cutting – Copyright foodtourist.com 2018



Flowers between the Melon vines – no lethal sprays here! – Copyright foodtourist.com 2018

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.