

## **Wine Talk: May 2014**

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 45

**There is, once again, heaps of information in this newsletter because there is just so much happening in the world of natural wines.**

**Later this month we will be participating in the Handmade event in Melbourne where a number of importers of natural wines and producers of local natural wines will be showcasing their offerings at the popular Builders Arms Hotel in Fitzroy. See the details below.**

**While we are in Melbourne we will also be matching our wines to six different cheeses at the new and funky Clever Polly's in West Melbourne. Once again, the details are in this newsletter.**

**We have six different special packs this month. The first highlights the newly arrived wines from the wonderful Jean-Paul Brun who makes such clean, precise, flavoursome wines in the Beaujolais. The second is a pack of the no added sulphites red wines from Michel Guignier also from Beaujolais but further north near Fleurie.**

**We then offer a pack of interesting whites and another of lighter style reds for those of you who prefer red wines that complement food rather than overpowering it. We then have another "No added sulphites" pack due to the increasing demand for this style of wine. The final pack is a collation of wines from Gaillac to go with the story later in the newsletter about this fascinating wine region in the south of France.**

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

[http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Buy\\_wines.htm](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.**

## Cheese and wine matching at Clever Polly's in Melbourne

We are delighted to be involved in a cheese and wine matching to be held at the charming Clever Polly's in West Melbourne later this month. Since opening earlier this year Clever Polly's has become a regular venue for locals and visitors seeking good food, friendly service, tasty food, including very good cured meats, and an excellent choice of natural wines.

The tasting will be a collaboration between Clever Polly, Cheese Culture (an importer of high quality cheeses) and Living Wines.



We will be there to explain the wines and Raphael from Cheese Culture will describe the cheeses. There are only 12 places available so make sure you book early.

And, by the way, expect a few surprises with the matchings. They won't necessarily conform to the orthodoxy of cheese and wine tasting. We do not subscribe to the theory that a hard cheese needs to be matched to a big red wine. Rather we like to explore other tastes and textures in wine that complements the flavour of the cheese. It will be an interesting evening.

## HANDMADE natural wine tasting Melbourne May 25<sup>th</sup>

We are looking forward to participating in the HANDMADE natural wine party at the Builders Arms Hotel in Fitzroy in May. We will join a number of local natural wine producers and our importer colleagues from 12:30 to 4:30 on Sunday 25th May.

# HANDMADE

**25.05.14**  
12.30 - 4.30pm



*Shobbrook / Chapter Wines*  
*Pat Sullivan / Mac Forbes*  
*Lucy Margaux / Jauma*  
*Timo Mayer / Si Vintners*  
*Belinda Thomson / The Wanderer*  
*Les Cailloux du Paradis*  
*La Grange Tiphaine*  
*Jean François Ganevat*  
*Mas Coutelou / Michel Guignier*  
*Domaine Belluard / Panevino*  
*Cantina Giardino*  
*Equipo Navazos / Commando G*  
*Suertes del Marques*  
*Daniel Landi Viticultors*  
*Guillot-Broux / Elodie Balme*  
*Vouette et Sorbée / Dettori*  
*Sebastian Riffault / Camillo Donati*

Join us for an afternoon of thrilling wine.

We've got some of the most exciting small producers in Australia today showing their wines along with a line-up of incredibly pure, delicious and nourishing wines from overseas.

There'll be filter coffee by Single Origin Roasters all afternoon and the guys from Epic brewery in Auckland will tap a keg. We'll be serving house cured charcuterie and pickles along with food from the rotisserie, and Gus and Max will be playing very good records in the courtyard.

**Entry \$20 -  
wine tasting,  
beer, food,  
coffee**

Builders Arms Hotel  
211 Gertrude St, Fitzroy  
+61 3 9417 7700  
buildersarmshotel.com.au

We will be pouring the exciting wines of Michel Guignier from Beaujolais and Dominique Belluard from the Savoie. But you might also see us sampling the ethereal wines of Jean Francois Ganevat from the Jura at Andrew Guard's stand or the amazing wines from the lovely people from Cantina Giardino at the Vini Imports stand or the stunning Sancerre wines made by Sebastian Riffault imported by Eurocentric.

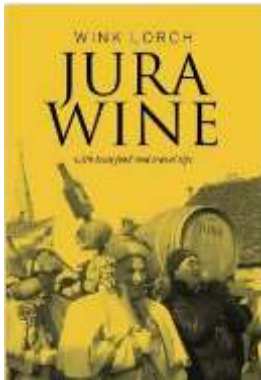
And we will also take the time to enjoy some local wines from Tom Shobbrook, Pat Sullivan and Anton von Klopfer among others.

## New wine books

There has been a rash of new wine books recently that provide some excellent reading and information about wines throughout the world. Here are some of our favourites:

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### Jura Wine by Wink Lorch



Wink Lorch is an expert on the Jura region and her new book is packed full of information about the people and places in this fascinating wine region that we never tire of visiting. All the favourites are there whether it be Jean-Francois Ganevat, Philippe Bornard, Michel Gahier, Domaine de l'Octavin, Jacques Puffeney, Domaine Rolet, Renaud Bruyere and, of course, Maison Pierre Overnoy.

She also describes the history of wine in the Jura, the grape varieties (tackling the issue of Melon le Queue Rouge versus Chardonnay), the geology of the area and the differences in soil from one village to the next.

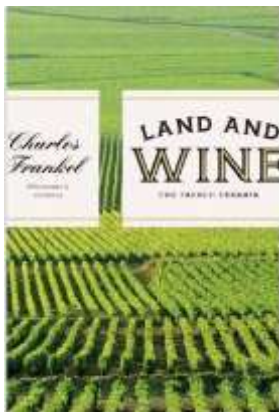
She also lists her favourite places to stay and places to eat and drink. She includes some of our favourites such as Bistro des Claquets in Arbois which we always head to for lunch or a drink in the evening. Les Jardins de St-Vincent which is a shop and wine bar that has an excellent selection of natural wines from throughout France, Essencia in Poligny which is one of the best places to buy Comté cheese in France as well as dozens more places for you to explore.

This is a must-have book for anyone interested in these jewels of the French wine scene or who is planning on visiting the region. Follow the link below to order the book.

[Jura Wine by Wink Lorch](#)

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### Land and Wine: The French Terroir by Charles Frankel



This book is a good introduction to the terroir and wine styles of the main French wine regions. The regions covered, in order, are Savennières and the broader Anjou region, Beaujolais, Alsace, the Mâconnais and Pouilly-Fuissé, Corton and other Burgundy regions, Sancerre and the Upper Loire, the central Loire including Bourgueil, Chinon and Saumur, Provence, Languedoc, Champagne, Bordeaux and the Rhône valley.

Now you might think it odd for a book about French wine regions should start with Savennières (even though it is an amazingly beautiful place producing wonderful Chenin Blanc wines). However there

is a reason. The author concentrates in the book on the geology of the regions and how this contributes to the terroir, so he starts with the oldest rocks of all, the ancient Silurian schists, basalts and rhyolites that form outcrops in this stunning area and date back almost 450 million years.

For each of the appellations covered there is not only a description of the geology and other elements of the terroir such as aspect, vegetation, climate and soils, but he also includes a handy table with a summary of wine types and production details and even other information such as best serving temperature and the ageing potential of the wines.

Some sections of the book are particularly interesting. For example in the section on the Languedoc there is a fascinating account of the life of Saint Benoit d'Aniane and his contribution to the growth of the vineyards in that area in the late 8<sup>th</sup> Century. There is also an excellent section on the terroir of Saint Chinian (with its ancient slate which is so conducive to the production of great Carignan wines) and the dinosaur skeletons that have been found here. (We think he may have a dinosaur fetish because he also writes about dinosaur eggs in the Marseille area in his section on Provence).

The section on Provence is also interesting because he covers some of the lesser known areas such as the Cassis appellation where we have often tried some beautiful white wines that go so well with the local seafood dishes such as bourride. He also points out that this appellation covers less area than Central Park in New York!

This is a highly readable book and well worth adding to your library. Click on the link below to order it.

[Land and Wine: The French Terroir](#)

Pack 1: Jean-Paul Brun New Arrivals 6 pack



This special pack comprises four new wines that have just arrived from Jean-Paul Brun in Beaujolais. These are all exceptional wines at a very reasonable price from a winemaker who is now in his 36<sup>th</sup> vintage!

**Jean-Paul Brun Rosé d’Folie 2013** – We are delighted to have this lovely rosé made from the Gamay grape back in stock. This year it is as good as ever despite the indifferent weather experienced throughout France in 2013. This attractively-packaged wine is always a favourite and is suitable for all-year-round drinking.

**Jean Paul Brun Beaujolais Blanc 2012 (2 bottles)** – Only 5% of the vines in Beaujolais are white and they are all Chardonnay. It is therefore quite rare to find a white Beaujolais wine but this one from Jean-Paul Brun is a lovely example of an unwooded Chardonnay. This one has some lees contact which produces a lovely texture in the wine.

**Jean Paul Brun Beaujolais Cuvée Première 2013 (2 bottles)** – This is Jean-Paul’s entry level Gamay from vines that are approximately 25 years old. It is fresh and lively and drinking beautifully right now. A refreshing drink for sipping or for pairing with food.

**Jean Paul Brun Crémant de Bourgogne Charme JPB** – This is a seriously good Crémant made from Jean-Paul’s plot of Chardonnay. This Crémant is made using the same technique as Champagne but cannot be called a Champagne because it is not from that region. The appellation is Crémant de Bourgogne.

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$193 but the pack price is **\$164.05** including freight.**



## Pack 2: Michel Guignier Beaujolais red 6 pack (No added sulphur)



We are also delighted to receive a new shipment from Michel Guignier whose ethereal Beaujolais wines are so enticing. All of his wines are made without the addition of any sulphur.

**Michel Guignier Beaujolais Villages La Bonne Pioche 2012** – This is Michel’s lovely wine made from Gamay grapes picked from the vineyards near his house outside the village of Vauxrenard.

**Michel Guignier Beaujolais Vauxrenard Bistère 2011** – This is rated as a Beaujolais Villages named village level wine. In France, the villages with the very best terroir in an appellation are permitted to put the name of the village on the label. Vauxrenard is such a village. This wine is named after his faithful horse that he uses to plough the rows between the vines.

**Michel Guignier Fleurie Au Bon Grès 2011** – This beautifully elegant Fleurie has all the structure and charm that you expect from a Fleurie but, as the name suggests, it comes from vines that grow in very good sandstone soil (Grès) rather than the more common granite.

**Michel Guignier Moulin à Vent La Petite Oseille 2011** – This beautiful wine comes from a plot of vines that Michel has in the Moulin à Vent appellation. Michel makes his wines the way we love them. They exhibit delicately perfumed aromas, velvety texture, deep colour and incredible lightness combined with a long, satisfying, lingering finish.

**Michel Guignier Vin de France Mélodie d’Automne 2013** – This is a light, ethereal wine that gradually engulfs you with waves of flavour from the purity of the fruit in this wine. When we first tried it at the Renaissance event in Angers this year we were immediately captivated by its charms.

**Michel Guignier Vin de France Moncailleux 2010** – The vines in the Moncailleux vineyard are over 60 years old and grow in the Moulin à Vent appellation although Michel prefers to label it as a Vin de France. The wine appears incredibly light at first sip, but gradually the power, structure and concentration of the fruit begins to impact. A delicious and memorable wine at only 11.5% alcohol.

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$309 but the pack price is **\$262.65** including freight.**

### Pack 3: “Winsome Whites” 6 pack



For those of you who, like us, love to match white wines with food we have selected a set of “innocently charming” whites that will match to a wide range of foods.

**Domaine de la Cadette Bourgogne Vézelay La Châtelaine 2012** – Domaine de la Cadette are exceptional winemakers. Every one of their wines is crafted with skill using beautiful grapes from their beautiful vineyards. La Châtelaine is a beautiful example of a clean, crisp, mineral-driven Chardonnay.

**Domaine Vincent Carême Vouvray Sec 2012** – The Sec is a dry white wine made from 100% Chenin Blanc that displays notes of pear and wild peaches. From interesting flint soils in both Vouvray and Noizay it has a generous palate and displays rich fruitiness and citrus overtones. It is a wine for drinking now.

**Mylène Bru Vin de Table Lady Chasselas Blanc 2012** – The plot in the windswept Languedoc behind Sete where Mylène has her 50 year old Chasselas vines is a site of amazing beauty. There is a long view over the short-cropped vines to the mountains beyond. Chasselas is almost unknown in this region so this is a very rare wine, but one of some delicacy and with a really lovely mouth-feel.

**Hervé Villemade Cheverny Blanc Domaine 2012** – In Cheverny it is a requirement to blend varieties. This wine is fascinating. It comprises 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Chardonnay. The nose is dominated by the Sauvignon but the taste is much more complex and rounded with the Chardonnay playing an important role.

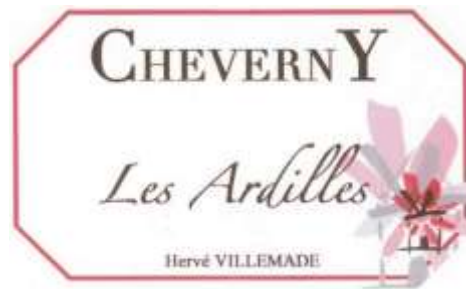
**La Soeur Cadette Vin de France Melon de Bourgogne Blanc 2012** – This grape is common in the Muscadet appellations found around Nantes near the Atlantic coast, however it has almost disappeared from Burgundy. It is a perfect food wine marrying well with many flavours, but it comes into its own with terrines, parfaits, charcuterie and other light meat dishes.

**Terres Dorées Jean Paul Brun Beaujolais Blanc 2012** – It is great to see this lovely wine back in stock. It is a rare wine because very little white Beaujolais is produced. This wine sees no oak treatment and has a lovely texture from being left in contact with the lees. A beautiful wine to match to food.

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$231 but the pack price is **\$196.35** including freight.**



Pack 4: Flavour-packed light reds 6 pack



We have selected six red wines that are low in alcohol yet full of flavour and complexity. These are wines that won't overpower food and also won't give you a headache!

**Hervé Villemade Cheverny Les Ardilles Rouge 2011** – This is a blend of 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Gamay that were grown on light clay and quartz soils. It displays a lovely nose, great texture and an elegance from the Pinot. It is also only 11% alcohol.

**Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Le Clousot 2012** – This wine is a Trousseau that is light in colour but has a vibrant freshness and hints of smokiness. The fruit is sourced from Michel's younger vines. Younger vines usually produce lighter wine styles of less complexity than older vines, but wines that are pleasant drinking nevertheless.

**Terres Dorées Beaujolais Cuvée Première 2013** – The Jean-Paul Brun Cuvée Première is released under the Beaujolais appellation and is 100% Gamay. This wine is produced from younger vines (about twenty years old) than the l'Ancien but is still a beautiful wine that is drinking very nicely right now.

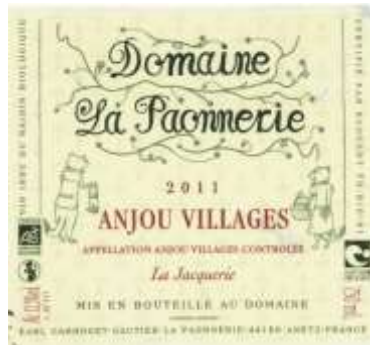
**Michel Guignier Mélodie d'Automne Vin de France 2013** – This is a light, ethereal wine that gradually engulfs you with waves of flavour from the purity of the fruit in this wine. When we first tried it at the Renaissance event in Angers this year we were immediately captivated by its charms.

**Domaine de la Cadette Bourgogne Champs Cadet Rouge 2012** – This red Burgundy is made from 100% Pinot Noir even though small quantities of the César grape are permitted in this region. The Champs Cadet vineyard is one of Cadette's most remote and difficult with lots of stones littering the surface. This is a lovely wine with a velvet texture provided by maturation in old oak barrels, but also with the trademark freshness that makes these natural wines so appealing.

**Domaine de l'Octavin Vin de France Trousseau Les Corvées 2012** – This wine is a Trousseau made from grapes sourced from a number of local vineyards. Notice that this is a Vin de France rather than being under the Arbois appellation. The reason is that the alcohol level is only 9.8% which is less than the required minimum of 10%. This is a fascinating wine. It has the colour of a rose but the weight and texture of a red wine making it a very versatile food wine but also perfect as an aperitif.

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$228 but the pack price is **\$193.80** including freight.**

Pack 5: No added sulphites red 6 pack



This month we are pleased to be able to once again offer a no added sulphites red wine pack for those of you who love the vibrancy associated with wines that do not have sulphur added at any stage of the winemaking process.

**Michel Gahier AOC Arbois Trousseau Le Grands Vergers 2012** – This is a very, very good example of a Trousseau wine having the delicacy that we associate with this fragile grape but also an extraordinary depth of flavour and a complexity that is intriguing. The wine is lively on the nose, has deep flavours (hints of cherry and raspberry and forest floors in autumn) and it tastes alive.

**Domaine la Paonnerie Anjou Villages La Jacquerie 2011 Sans Soufre** – This wine is a blend of 66% Cabernet Franc and 34% Cabernet Sauvignon picked from the Clos de la Jacquerie which the Carroget's own exclusively. The grapes are picked when the Cabernet Sauvignon has reached the desired level of ripeness. This is a lively, vibrant wine that is very gluggable!

**Michel Guignier Vin de France Mélodie d'Automne 2013** – This is a light, ethereal wine that gradually engulfs you with waves of flavour from the purity of the fruit in this wine. When we first tried it at the Renaissance event in Angers this year we were immediately captivated by its charms.

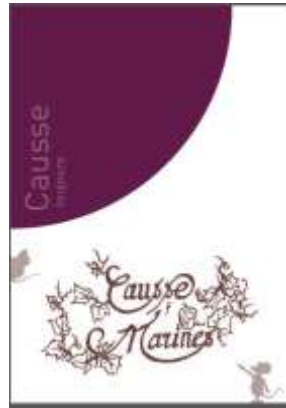
**Domaine Milan Sans Soufre Ajouté Rouge 2012** – This wine is made with grape varieties Grenache, Shiraz, Mourvedre, Cinsault and Cabernet Sauvignon and spends 8 months in old barriques. This is a great wine for people who have developed a reaction to sulphur or for those who love the freshness of natural wines.

**Le Petit Gimios Vin de France Rouge Fruit 2012** – This is an amazing wine! There are at least sixteen different grape varieties planted in this place. There is Carignan, Cinsault, Aramon, Grenache, Oeillade, Terret Rose, Terret Noir, Terret Blanc, Syrah, Muscat and Alicante among others. The grapes are co-fermented to produce this amazing soft, round, subtle red with layers that seems to go on forever.

**Domaine la Paonnerie Coteaux d'Ancenis "Simplement Gamay" 2012** – This is made from 100% Gamay Noir a jus Blanc. The wine is fermented with natural yeasts and is neither filtered nor fined. This is a light, lively delicious no-sulphur red wine that goes beautifully with food such as lamb chops or roast chicken or a robust cheese.

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$256 but the pack price is **\$217.60** including freight.**

## Pack 6: Wines with a story 6 pack: The wines of Gaillac



These wines accompany the detailed story below on the Gaillac region and its history. Each of the wines contain historic grape varieties from this region that are currently being restored by Patrice Lescarret and his colleagues.

**Causse Marines Vin de Table Zacmau 2102** – You have to remember that wines classified as Vin de Table are not permitted to put the grape variety or year on the label without paying a fee. We can tell you that this is made from the ancient variety Mauzac which is a white grape and the year of production was 2012.

**Causse Marines Gaillac Rouge Peyrouzelles 2012** – Here is your chance to drink some of the “bluid red wine” mentioned in the article below. This wine is blended mainly from ancient grapes Braucon and Duras as well as more recent Syrah. But lurking within there is also the extremely rare Jurancon Noir and Alicante.

**Causse Marines Gaillac Les Greilles 2012** – Les Greilles is a classy white wine blended from local Gaillac grapes Mauzac and the ancient Loin-de-l'Oeil with a little Muscadelle thrown in. We do not give this wine full praise. It an amazing wine of great complexity with nuances making it a perfect wine to match with many foods.

**Causse Marines Vin de France Causse Toujours 1102** – This wine is made from the Syrah which provides silkiness, spice and body and some Prunelart (a local ancient grape that is being revived in the area by Patrice and some of his fellow vignerons in the area) from young vines to provide a more rustic element to the wine.

**Causse Marines Vin de Table Effervescent Préambules 2011** – This sparkling wine is naturally fermented in the bottle. It is made entirely from very low-yielding Mauzac vines. The bead is very, very fine and it has a yeasty, bready nose and quite an intense apple flavour. It is a perfect aperitif wine but is also a good match for food as well. For a sparkling wine of some elegance

**Causse Marines Vin de Table Zacmau 9002** – We have chosen this wine so that you can compare it with the first in this line up. The Mauzac 2102 is a recent wine whereas this one has five years of age in our cool cellars.

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$221but the “wines with a story” pack price is \$187.85 including freight.**

## Some musings about the wines of Gaillac

The historic town of Gaillac lies about 50 kilometres to the north-east of Toulouse in south-west France. All around this pleasant town there are rolling hills that are covered by grape vines and beautiful fields of sunflowers.



Sunflower fields between Gaillac and Vieux (Photo Foodtourist)

To appreciate the wines of the local area it helps to understand the Gaillac appellation and its history.

The history of this area is tied up with the history of ancient Gaul which covered a wide area that included parts of Germany, the southern part of Holland, all of Belgium, most of France and the top section of Italy.

It is thought that the Phoenicians first planted vines in Gaul with these first plantings being in the northern Rhone around the town of Hermitage and also in the area around Gaillac.

There is good evidence that wine was being produced in Gaillac on a commercial basis in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. There is evidence to suggest that up until this time the Romans who dominated the area had banned the planting of vineyards so that they could supply wine from their own wineries in Italy and Greece<sup>1</sup>. In an article written by McGovern and others they say:

*During the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD, the local production of Gauloise amphoras began to predominate, after the official lifting of the Roman prohibition against the culture of the vine in Gaul.*

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick E. McGovern, Stuart J. Fleming, Solomon H. Katz (eds) *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine: Food and Nutrition in History and Anthropology*. 2003, page ??

However, there is evidence that the wine trade from Italy was firmly established hundreds of years before the ban was lifted and continued afterwards:

*Greco-Italic amphoras are found as far north as Toulouse and Limoges in Gaul. A good deal of wine in Gaul was evidently coming from Italy before the Romans conquered the province, and this continued to be the case in the succeeding centuries.*

We have also found evidence that vineyards may have been planted in the northern Rhone around Lyon around 30BC as amphorae similar to those produced on Cos and in Italy were being manufactured in Lyon for wine which was being produced in the area<sup>2</sup>.

The fall of the Roman Empire saw conquests by the Goths and the Visigoths and during this era many of the vineyards were either destroyed or fell into disuse.

The vineyards of the Gaillac area were eventually restored by the monasteries that sprang up in this area. There is a record of the Abbey of St-Michel-de-Gaillac requiring serfs to use part of their rented land to grow grapes so that wine could be produced for the monks.

The wines from Gaillac became popular in northern Europe, England and Scotland. In the Scottish ballad set in the 13<sup>th</sup> century called Sir Patrick Spens, the opening lines see the king drinking a wine that many commentators claim was a red wine from Gaillac.

*The king sits in Dumferling town  
Drinking the bluid-red wine:  
'O whar will I get a guid sailor  
To sail this ship of mine?'*

Then in 1520 there was the famous meeting between Henry VIII and Francois 1 in Balinghem near Calais in the field called "Cloth of Gold" at the beginning of the "Entente Cordiale" where Francois gave Henry fifty barrels of wine from Gaillac.

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<sup>2</sup> Moore, Jennifer (2010) *When Not Just Any Wine Will Do...? The Proliferation of Coan-type Wine and Amphoras in the Greco-Roman World*. in Drexhage, Hans-Joachim; Mattern, Torsten; Rollinger, Robert; Ruffing, Kai; Schäfer, Christoph (Hrsg.) 2011



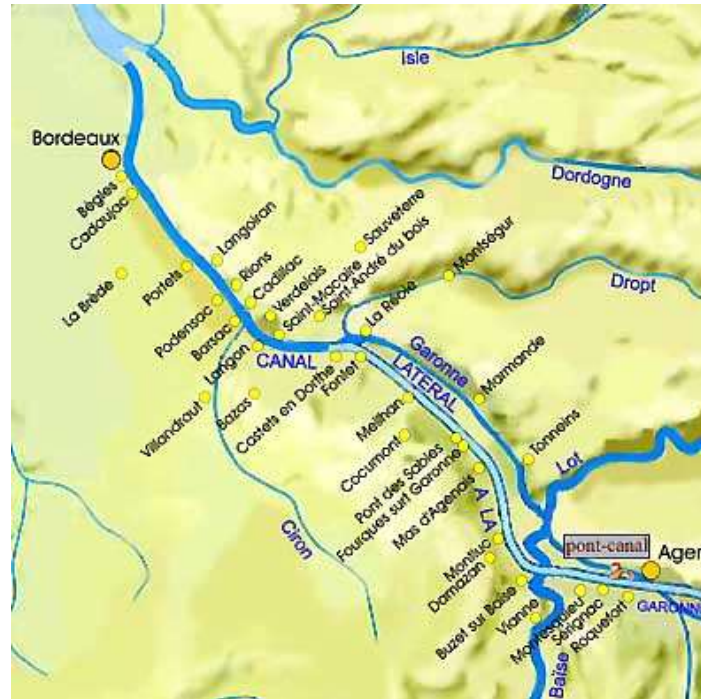


The celebrations at the field of the cloth of gold

This increased the popularity of wine from this region in England and increased demand much to the annoyance of the merchants of Bordeaux who saw this wine being shipped through their port as it was transported down the Tarn River and then down the Garonne to the Gironde estuary.

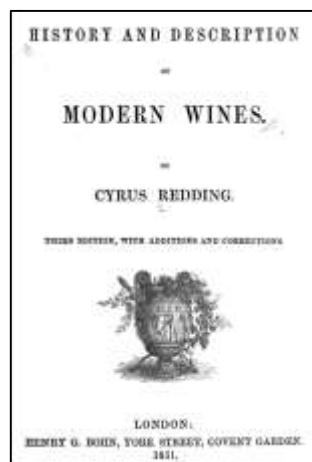
This resulted in large taxes being levied on the export of Gaillac wines by the Bordeaux authorities so the export market reduced but the local consumption continued with the result that total production was much lower. However, the overall quality remained high.





Map showing the Lot River joining the Garonne near Agen

In a book written by Cyrus Redding<sup>3</sup> which was published in 1851 he attested to the longevity of Gaillac wines claiming they were the best in the south-west and that “these wines will keep good for eighty to one hundred years”.



Another old book also attests to the quality of the wines. In an 18<sup>th</sup> century publication Thomas Salmon<sup>4</sup> wrote:

*Gaillac is situated on the river Tarn three leagues<sup>5</sup> below Alby<sup>6</sup>, remarkable for an abby of Benedictines, and for producing some of the best white wine in France.*

<sup>3</sup> Redding, Cyrus (1851) *A history and description of modern wines*.

<sup>4</sup> Salmon, Thomas (1745) *Modern History Or the Present State of All Nations*, Volume 2

<sup>5</sup> A league is 5.55 kilometres

<sup>6</sup> The present-day town of Albi

Another history of wine written in 1824<sup>7</sup> explained that one of the reasons why the wines of Gaillac were so good was that adding fertiliser to the soil (known then as dunging) was prohibited.

*It has been already observed, that the grapes which grow on very rich soils are of inferior quality: all strong composts are, therefore, regarded as prejudicial, and in some of the principal wine countries the use of them is strictly prohibited. "By a public decree", says Olivier de Serres, "dunging is forbidden is Gaillac lest the reputation of the white wines, which its vineyards furnish to the neighbouring towns of Toulouse, Montauban, Castres, &c, should be depreciated".*

Even famous Francophile Thomas Jefferson was entranced by the wines of Gaillac and records exist of him ordering Gaillac wines after his return to the United States. Jefferson noted in his diary at the time (December 21<sup>st</sup> 1785):

*Paid Mr. Andrier for le sieur Gazonner 74-8-9 for a barrique de Gaillac dit du Cocq which contains 215 bottles.*

Gaillac having survived invading armies and rapacious tax officials the problems kept coming! In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century phylloxera swept through the vineyards of Gaillac almost totally destroying them. This caused many vigneron to turn to other crops.

In addition, the French Government during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century embarked on a campaign to encourage vigneron to pull out indigenous varieties and to plant "international" varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Shiraz to compete with the so-called New World.

However, recently a number of vigneron in the Gaillac region including Patrice Lescarret and Virginie Maginen from Domaine Causse Marines have begun restoring the old varieties from the time when Gaillac reigned supreme in the European wine world. They have been replanting ancient varieties such as Ondenc, Loin de l'Oeil, Mauzac, Prunelart, Jurancon Noir and Duras.

Causse Marines has a beautiful vineyard in the tiny village of Vieux which is quite close to Gaillac. As you approach the vineyard you might see Patrice pruning his high growing Syrah vines with a dangerous-looking machete.

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<sup>7</sup> Henderson, Alexander (1824) *The History of Ancient and Modern Wines*. Page 13.



Patrice and his trusty dog in the Syrah vineyard

Patrice and Virginie like to make single varietal wines out of some of these old grapes but the appellation requires winemakers to blend. So, instead, they release them under the Vin de France label. And, of course, they are not permitted to put the grape variety on the label (a common feature in France – in Sancerre there is no mention of Sauvignon Blanc on the label). But their labels give a hint to the grape variety without spelling it out.



Not only that but Patrice and some of his colleagues such as Plageoles and Cazzotes along with their chef have opened a restaurant in the newly remodelled centre of Gaillac called Vigne en Foule. This restaurant is a great place for a leisurely lunch and also a good place to study the historic grape varieties of Gaillac which are lovingly preserved in jars above the entrance to the kitchen. A bonus is Bordelet cider on tap!



The wine offering at Vigne en Foule – notice the Zacmau!

We sat inside so that we could see the action in the open kitchen but the area outside is very relaxing also.



The outside seating at Vigne en Foule

Remember that there is a special pack (Number 6) this month of Gaillac wines to accompany this story.

## Grape variety: Mauzac

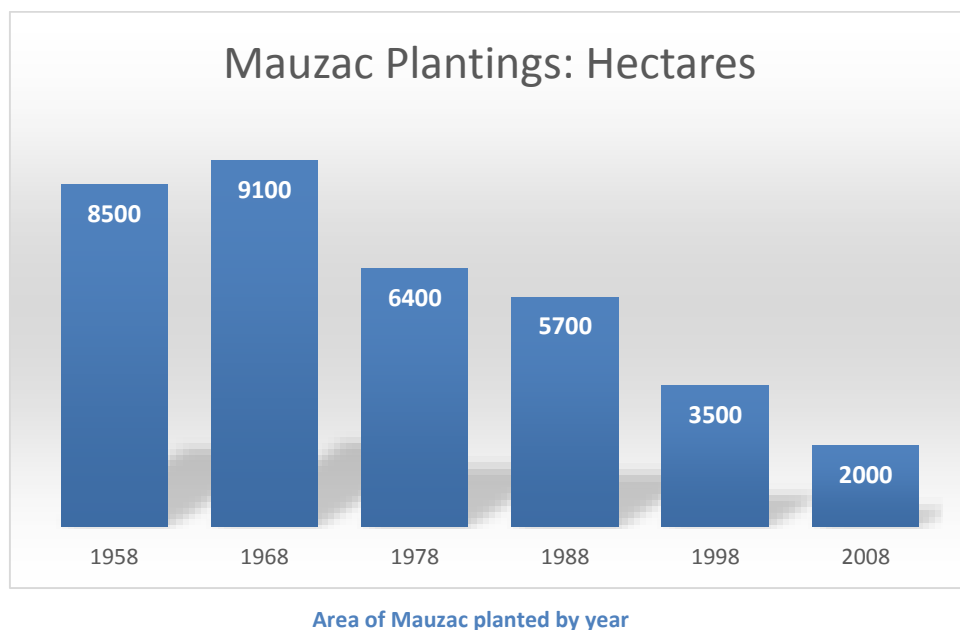
The story above where we discussed the development of grape growing in the Gaillac region has inspired us to write about the Mauzac grape variety this month as it is one of the key grape varieties of this region.

Mauzac is an ancient white grape variety that is an important grape in the Gaillac appellation. It is also used to make the iconic sparkling wines in the Limoux appellation where it is known as Blanquette due to the white down on the underside of the leaf.

Some writers believe that Mauzac was used by the monks of Saint-Hilaire to make the first ever sparkling wine in the year 1531 a long time before the technique was developed in Champagne.

Jancis Robinson cites research that suggests one parent of the Mauzac grape is an obscure and now defunct grape variety called Négret Castrais. (We don't know if this variety is a relative of the Negret de Banhars still found a little further north in the Aveyron that Nicolas Carmarans uses in his delicious Mauvais Temps.)

The area planted to Mauzac in France has been declining rapidly over the past sixty years as can be seen from the accompanying graph.



The leaves of the Mauzac grape vine are quite distinctive as shown below:



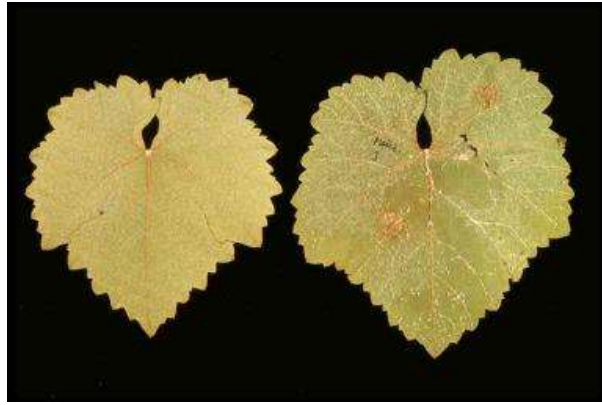


Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

The grapes vary from green to yellow depending on the soil in which they grow.



Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

We enjoy Mauzac in the lovely Les Greilles produced by Domaine Causse Marines where it is blended with Loin de l'Loeil and Muscadelle. They also produce a 100% Mauzac still wine that is not covered by the appellation – so they release it as a Vin de France and call it Zacmau! This is a beautiful example of a white wine made solely from this grape variety. There are two bottles of Mauzac in Special Pack Number 6 this month.

### How to order

You can order any of these packs by sending us an email to [wine@livingwines.com.au](mailto:wine@livingwines.com.au)

Or for other wines you can use our order form.

[http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Order\\_Form\\_Current\\_2014.pdf](http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Order_Form_Current_2014.pdf)