

Wine Talk: February 2012

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 27

Yes – we know February's gone – too quickly as it happens for us to get a newsletter out. But we need a February newsletter to let you know about Fanny Sabre so we can have a March one later this month to talk about our shipment arriving this month.

Fanny Sabre has arrived in Australia! Not her personally but her latest release wines such as the amazing Bourgogne Aligoté and the Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire 2010 which is a 100% Gamay. Both of these wines are sensational and very good value. We also just love her Volnay which is a light, delicate and very elegant Burgundy – just like Burgundy used to be!

As we write this newsletter another shipment is being unloaded from Philippe Bornard from the Jura. We have completely sold out of his fabulous wines. They are just SO popular that they disappear very quickly. Watch out for news of these wines in the next newsletter – all the old favourites will be back.

This month we seem to have gone overboard with the packs – but there is just so much nice wine to offer you! The first is a six pack of the delightful entry level wines of Fanny Sabre which includes a bottle each of the amazing Aligoté and a bottle of her new Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire which is a 100% Gamay. We have also created a six pack of her rarer wines (we only get very small allocations of these wines) which includes the Pommard Chouacheux and two gorgeous wines from the famous Meursault appellation. We have also just received the latest shipment from Ventoux guru Philippe Gimel so we have created a six pack of his bold reds and whites from the slopes of Mont Ventoux. Due to the success of the Guion pack last month we have repeated it again this month. These wines are extraordinary value. And for those of you who like robust reds we have a pack of six bottles from across France representing more robust styles of red. And, finally with all this hot weather around we have a six pack of some very fine rosé for you as well.

Remember that the special packs attract a 15% discount instead of a 10% discount, so if you order a special pack you really are getting a special deal (not that a 10% discount for most wines and free freight on your own selection isn't a good arrangement too)!

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.

News from Living Wines

General news

For this month's newsletter we have put all of our effort into designing a huge choice of six different packs for you to choose from. The descriptions can be found below.

We are also pleased to announce the imminent arrival of the next shipment of Philippe Bornard's delicious Jura wines (unfortunately the Vin Jaune is not ready yet)! All the old favourites will be back although some will be new vintages. There will be two Ploussard (Point Barre and La Chamade), two Trousseau (Le Ginglet and Le Garde Corps), one Chardonnay (Le Blanc de la Rouge), one Melon (Melon le Rouge Queue), three Savagnin (the ever popular Les Chassagnes, the ethereal L'Ivresse de Noe and the Les Marnes), two pet nats (Ça Va Bien and Le Tant Mieux) and a Crémant. Not a bad line up!

Sommeliers arise!

We were interested in an article that came to our attention via Twitter this week. It was published in the Wall Street Journal by Jay McInerney and discusses the role that sommeliers are playing in forming opinions about wines that the public are willing to try.

In the past this role was dominated by wine writers such as Robert Parker and writers for influential publications such as Wine Spectator and Decanter. However the public seemed to tire of their recommendations for high alcohol, over-extracted and over-oaked monsters and instead have wanted to seek out recommendations for styles of wines not addressed by these publications.

Therefore in the past five years we have seen many wine drinkers turning to blogs to get their information and also to sommeliers as opinion leaders. In that same period, natural wine lovers have made Twitter their own with the natural wine community sharing information with each other through the ether.

Certainly, sommeliers such as iconoclast Paul Grieco from Terroir and Hearth have had a strong influence over the drinking habits of the public, especially his campaign to get people to drink Riesling. And recently we have seen the rise of a cadre of young (and some not so young) sommeliers in Australia who are leading the way in making interesting wines available to the dining public.

The article can be found by clicking on the link below:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204909104577237530327096346.html>

Let us choose

Over 60% of our retail customers are content to sit back and let us choose a pack for them. They simply send us an email (wine@livingwines.com.au) saying how many bottles they would like, the average price and the style and colour of wines they prefer and we do the rest!

We choose a selection of the wines that we think are delicious and which fit within your price range. We'll give you a 10% discount on any 6 pack we invent for you.

Pack 1: Fanny Sabre Introduction 6 Pack



Most of the Fanny Sabre shipment has been ordered by restaurants and wine bars but we've kept a few bottles for our retail customers who receive this newsletter. This pack and pack 2 will only last while limited supplies are available and we may have to suggest substitutions and price changes if some of the wines become unavailable. This pack has been designed to introduce you to a range of styles of wine made by her.

Fanny Sabre Volnay 2009 – The 2009 is a beautiful, light, elegant wine with lovely fruit and floral aromas and 'palate-coating' berry fruit with a long, lingering finish. It is complex and interesting not big and brutal.

Fanny Sabre Savigny-lès-Beaune Blanc 2009 – This is a relatively rare wine because very little Chardonnay is grown in the Savigny-les-Beaune appellation. The Wine Anorak Web site describes this wine as: *"Complex nutty nose with notes of apple, pear and meal. The palate is fresh and slightly oxidative with lively mineral notes as well as nuts and apples. Distinctive: really lively and multidimensional."*

Fanny Sabre Savigny-lès-Beaune Rouge 2009 – Savigny-les-Beaune lies close the city of Beaune. One again, from Wine Anorak: *"Lovely pale red colour ... complex red cherry fruit and some smoky, spiciness. The palate is lively and precise with a reductive twist and grippy tannins. Very fresh cherry fruit. Lovely."*

Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Blanc 2010– The Bourgogne Blanc is made from 100% Chardonnay which has not spent any time in wood. This makes a clean, crisp, lively white wine with good palate structure and a nice, lingering finish.

Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2010– Fanny Sabre shows a fine touch with her Aligoté. It's in great demand in France and this is the first shipment we have had. Aligoté is the wine that locals drink in Burgundy. It is gradually emerging as an interesting wine as more talented winemakers such as Fanny show what can be achieved with this grape. This is a beautiful wine with great complexity and depth.

Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire 2010– Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire is a special Burgundy-wide appellation that allows winemakers to produce wines from grapes other than Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. In this case, Fanny Sabre has weaved her magic on Gamay producing an elegant, juicy red of the subtlety that we have come to expect.

The RRP for this selection is \$307 but the pack price is only **\$260.95** which includes freight.

Pack 2: Fanny Sabre Premier 6 Pack



This six pack is comprised of 5 Premier Cru wines from Fanny's vineyards and her Meursault Suos la Velle).

Fanny Sabre Beaune Premier Cru Vignes Franches 2009 – The Beaune Premier Cru Vignes Franches is another of Fanny Sabre's premium wines from the Beaune Premier Cru appellation. It is made from 100% Pinot Noir. It is a lively, fresh, light-bodied, intense, velvety Pinot Noir of considerable elegance and depth of flavour. The taste lingers and promises even more with some age.

Fanny Sabre Beaune Premier Cru Chouacheux 2009 – Chambers Street Wines in New York loves this wine: *"Brilliant red color, lovely blackberry, strawberry compote aromas tinged with clove and brown spice. Great intensity on the very complex light-bodied palate, a little toast, good length. This is captivating and quite drinkable now, but will be best after three to five years of cellaring, really delicious!"*

Fanny Sabre Beaune Premier Cru Les Sceaux 2009 – The Beaune Premier Cru Les Sceaux is another of Fanny Sabre's premium wines from the Beaune Premier Cru appellation. Les Sceaux is a lieu dit within the broader Beaune appellation and the wines made from the vines in this plot are considered of such quality as to deserve the Premier Cru status. It is made from 100% Pinot Noir.

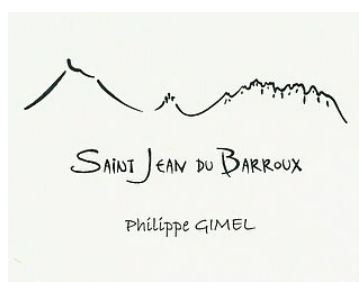
Fanny Sabre Pommard Premier Cru Charmots 2009 – This wine is made from the highly regarded Les Charmots lieu dit which has Premier Cru status. This appellation is known for strong, austere Pinot Noir wines that take a while to reveal their best side. This is a very interesting wine that is lively on the palate and has a long finish. It needs to be decanted for an hour or so prior to drinking.

Fanny Sabre Meursault Premier Cru Charmes 2009 – When we tasted this wine in Fanny's cellar in Beaune we were dazzled by its sheer elegance. It is made from 100% Chardonnay. It is a charming drink now but will also acquire additional grace with time.

Fanny Sabre Meursault Sous La Velle 2010 – Sous La Velle is a special plot within the famous Meursault appellation. It is made from 100% Chardonnay. It is drinking beautifully now but will also acquire additional grace with time.

The RRP for this selection is \$568 but the pack price is only **\$482.80** which includes freight.

Pack 3: Philippe Gimel Ventoux – 6 bottle Pack



Philippe Gimel makes delicious, juicy wines in the shadow of Mont Ventoux. If you are a lover of big red wines and complex white wines then these will be for you. His wines are often compared with the much more expensive Chateauneuf-du-Papes wines, which are made not far away.

Saint Jean du Barroux Cotes du Ventoux Oligocene Red 2004 – The Oligocene red is made from Grenache, Syrah, Carignan and Cinsault which come from vines that are harvested at extremely low yields (20 hectolitres per hectare). Only 5% of the wine is treated with wood and those barrels are ten years old. This is a big wine but with very fine tannins. It has the potential to be a great wine.

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux La Pierre Noire Rouge 2007 – La Pierre Noire is the new name for Philippe's premium wine. Made from 75% Grenache and 25% Shiraz, this wine displays berry fruits, dried herbs, chocolate and even leather along with impressive minerality. It has power and it has length!

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux L'Argile Rouge 2007 – This wine is a blend of 75% Grenache and 25% Syrah. The grapes are partially destemmed. The fermentation is carried out in concrete tanks. One writer has referred to the 'spicy and developed nose with dark berries, garrigue, minerals and chocolate' and also the 'superb length and intriguing aftertaste of spices and black pepper'.

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux La Source Rouge 2008 - This is Philippe's entry level wine. It comprises 70% Grenache, 25% Carignan and 5% Cinsault. The yields for this wine are around 30 hectolitres per hectare and the grapes are all hand picked and then 100% destemmed. Maceration extends over 7 days. This vintage was aged for two and a half years before bottling and is 15% alcohol.

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux Le Rose 2010 – This beautifully light-pink rose is made from 95% Grenache and 5% Cinsault is now in Australia in time for the rest of summer. In 2010 he was able to dedicate a tiny batch of 1400 litres of Grenache and 60 litres of Cinsault to the rosé, so there is not very much available. We were allocated 48 bottles.

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux La Montagne Blanc 2007 – Philippe only produces one white wine, a blend of Clairette, White Grenache and Bourboulenc with each usually contributing one third of the blend. The yield for his white grapes is a low 25 hectolitres per hectare. The grapes were hand picked and then put through a vertical press. About 75% of the wine was put into tanks and the remainder into old barrels.

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$253 but the pack price is a very reasonable \$215.05 including freight.

Pack 4: Stéphane Guion red 6 pack



Stéphane Guion only makes two red wines – an unwooded red and a wooded red both made from Cabernet Franc. They are both extraordinary value for money!

These wines are incredibly popular in New York with the famous Chambers Street Wine store constantly praising the wines and the equally famous Ten Bells natural wine bar in the Lower East Side always offering Guion by the glass (see current wine list snippet below).

Going Red ???

by the glass

Vdt "L'Echappee Belle" 10 "Edouard Laffitte" (France) 9/45
Vdt "Malophet" 10 "Stephane Morin" (France) 11/55
Chinon 02 "Jerome Lenoir" (France) 11/55
Cheverny 10 "Philippe Tessier" (France) 9/45
Vdt "Querida" 08 "Jean-Sebastien Gioan" (France) 10/50
Vdp "La Coquille" 10 "Patrick Rols" (France) 9/45
Bourgueil "Cuvée Domaine" 09 "Stephane Guion" (France) 9/45

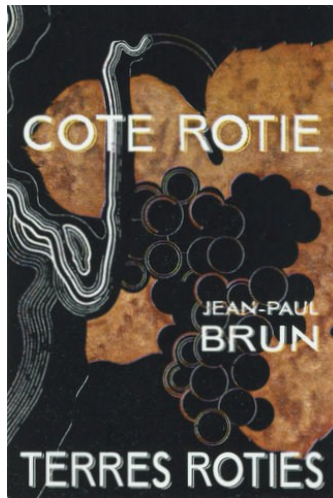
Here we offer a six pack made up of the two wines.

Domaine Guion Cuvée Domaine Rouge 2010 (3 bottles) – This wine is produced from 100% Cabernet Franc and shows hints of raspberries and cherries on the nose. There are fine tannins providing structure to the wine and the wonderful fruit shines through. Drink this wine with good cheese or a roast dinner. No oak is used in the production of this wine.

Domaine Guion Cuvée Prestige Rouge 2009 (3 bottles) – This wine is also 100% Cabernet Franc but has had some oak treatment. This is a fine, savoury wine with lovely tannins and good length on the palate. There is a streak of acidity running through this wine that will ensure that it will last for many, many years. It represents excellent value for money and is currently drinking very well, but will also last for a considerable time in the cellar

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$144 but the pack price is a very reasonable **\$122.40** including freight.

Pack 5: Robust Reds 6 pack



Robust reds are a long-standing Australian tradition! We have looked through our extensive portfolio of red wines from France to offer some very robust wines that will satisfy those who love robust Australian reds.

Domaine du Pech Buzet Le Pech Abusé Rouge 2006 – Domaine du Pech pick all of their grapes by hand. This is a serious red wine with some five years of time to mellow in the huge oak casks capable of holding 100 hectolitres of wine. The blend for this vintage is 40% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot.

Domaine Guion Cuvée Prestige Rouge 2009 – This wine is also 100% Cabernet Franc but has had some oak treatment. This is a fine, savoury wine with lovely tannins and good length on the palate. It represents excellent value for money and is currently drinking very well, but will also last for a considerable time in the cellar

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Le Poiré 2007 – This is an intriguing wine made from an intriguing grape (100% Negrette). The colour is deep red and the flavour has hints of cherries and plums and a lingering, intense spiciness. It is a great, full-flavoured, intense wine. We think it is like a Pinot Noir on steroids! This one is well worth a try.

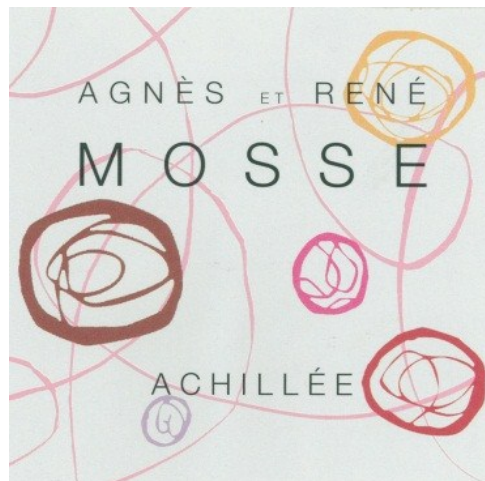
Domaine Milan Vin de Table de France Le Vallon Rouge 2007 – For Le Vallon the grapes are all hand harvested. The wine is fermented with wild yeasts then is matured for a year in old barrels after a short whole-bunch maceration. The grape varieties are Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Mourvedre - the same grapes as in the 2006 Domaine Milan Rouge.

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens La Grande Pièce Rouge 2006 – This is one of the domaine's prestige red wines and is made from pure Pinot Noir from vines that are at least 25 years old and that provide very low yields (<30 hectolitres per hectare). It is already elegant and refined but will continue to improve with age.

Terres Roties Cote Rotie 2007 – Terres Roties is the northern Rhone domaine of Jean-Paul Brun from Beaujolais. This prestige Cote Rotie is a smoky, spicy beauty made from Syrah grapes sourced from the northern Rhone.

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$316 but the pack price is a very reasonable **\$268.60** including freight.

Pack 6: Summers Rosés 6 pack



This month we have put together three beautiful rosé wines from three different regions of France. These are all pale, limpid beauties which pack lots of flavour.

Domaine Saint Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Reflets Rosé 2009 – The Domaine Saint Nicolas Rosé is a delicate, pale pink perfumed beauty that is quite savoury with a dry finish making it perfect as an aperitif. The wine is predominantly Pinot Noir although there is a touch of Gamay and Groslot Gris as well to provide some additional complexity.

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux Le Rose 2010 – This beautifully light-pink rosé is made from 95% Grenache and 5% Cinsault. Philippe rarely makes a rosé but in 2010 he set aside a tiny batch of 1400 litres of Grenache and 60 litres of Cinsault to ferment naturally into a pale pink lightly perfumed rosé. And the results are stunning! So, we are delighted to have an allocation of this very rare wine to offer to our clients in Australia.

Domaine Mosse Vin de France Achillée Rosé– The Achillée is a beautiful sweet, yet crisp wine with an appealing pale-orange colour and a lively acidity made from the 2010 vintage. The grapes used for this lovely wine are Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grolleau Gris, Grolleau Noir and Gamay. All vines are at least 25 years old. The grapes were all harvested by hand and the yield was a very low 25 hectolitres per hectare. A perfect wine with desserts which have a berry component.

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$170 but the pack price is a very reasonable \$144.50 including freight.

Duras grape variety

Duras is a red grape variety found in the Tarn Valley in South-West France north east of the city of Toulouse. It may have been introduced to the area by the Romans over 2000 years ago.

It is certainly used in the Gaillac appellation where it is one of the allowed red grape varieties. In the 1950s and 1960s many growers were urged to uproot local varieties and instead plant 'international' varieties such as Shiraz and Chardonnay. By the end of the 1960s less than 100 hectares of Duras survived.

In the Gaillac region, however, the 1980s and 1990s saw the emergence of a group of vignerons who saw the folly in following international trends and they returned to their native varieties and started planting Duras, Fer Servadou, Alicante, Prunelard and Jurancon Noir – all red varieties in danger of disappearing. By 2009 over 1000 hectares of Duras had been established in the valley.

The leaves of the Duras vine have long lateral lobes as can be seen in the following photo.



Photo sourced from Vitis International Variety Catalogue



Photo sourced from Vitis International Variety Catalogue

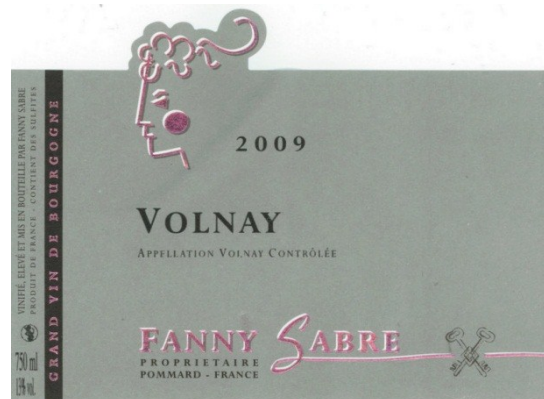
Wine made from this grape can resemble a soft Shiraz due to the spicy, peppery notes that are found. It produces quite elegant wines with deep colour and beautifully restrained tannins.

Duras is one of the varieties found in the popular Causse Marines Gaillac Peyrouzelles that we sell. Causse Marines also make a pure Duras called Rasdu 2008 which they

market as a Vin de Table because the rules of the Gaillac appellation require that wines are blended rather than being single varietal. (The red wines must contain both Duras and Fer Servadou, for example.)

For fans of Jura wines, it has recently been discovered through DNA testing that Duras along with Petit Verdot are the parents of the Trousseau grape variety which is commonly used to make elegant, light red wines in the Jura such as the stunning Michel Gahier Grand Vergers or the Philippe Bornard Le Ginglet and le Garde-corps

Appellation: Volnay



Driving south-west out of the city of Beaune, the epicentre of Burgundy, you first reach the pleasant village of Pommard where Fanny Sabre runs her tiny chambre d'hôte c. Continue along D973 and you drive through Volnay and then 3.5 kilometres further on, after turning on to the D23 you reach the famed village of Meursault where some of the best white wines in Burgundy are produced.

We mention this because these three villages are very close to each other, yet Pommard and Volnay are best known for their red wines and Meursault is famous for whites.

Volnay actually sits in a valley formed by a Jurassic fault line and the soils are mainly limestone with some clay depending on which vineyard you walk through. The wines vary quite markedly from one vineyard to the next because the limestone base is sometimes rock hard and the roots of the vines are forced to stay close to the surface, in other vineyards the limestone base is shattered allowing the roots to snake deep, down to water sources and in others the limestone is rubble allowing easy access to water.

Volnay has been an official appellation since September 1937 and is reserved for red wines only since the locals know that the soils and the microclimate is perfect for the production of reds. In keeping with Burgundian tradition, the reds can contain up to 15% of white wine from Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris.

The grapes must have been grown in the commune of Volnay or in one small section of the neighbouring commune of Meursault (the climat of Santenots).

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

Volnay is a highly regarded appellation for the production of elegant, light, ethereal red wines that have a deceptive ability to age well but that also drink very well when they are young.

Fanny Sabre's 2009 Volnay is a perfect example of the Volnay style. It is light, elegant, charming and has great persistence on the palate.



The entrance to Volnay village



Vineyards on the edge of Volnay on a cold autumn day

Living Wines Order Form

You can simply send us an email to order wines, but if you would like to use the form to check prices or availability, click on the link below.

http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Order_Form_Current_2011.pdf