

WINE Talk: January 2022

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 105

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

This month we only have five packs, a reflection of fairly limited stocks, but we do have multiple numbers of all of them so it should be easy to secure one if you are quick!

We also have information about forthcoming shipments and some articles for further reading:

- Information about new releases and a reminder about what will be arriving soon (not as soon as we thought!).
- Information about the 5 packs which we have available.
- A story about the Cabernet Franc grape variety that is commonly found in the Loire Valley in the area from the city of Tours along to the Anjou region as well as in Bordeaux.
- A story about Philippe Formentin of Opi d'Aqui whose wines have just arrived.
- Answers to questions we have been asked recently including one about malolactic fermentation, another about massale selection and diversity in vineyards and another about mixing juice from red and white grapes in the one wine.
- A story about the Mâcon appellation which lies in the southern part of the Burgundy region.
- A story about Philippe Formentin, whose domaine Opi d'Aqui is our main new arrival this coming month

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

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

There's an easy way to order our wines. Just send us an email listing the wines and/or packs you would like to order. 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.

New Releases and What's Coming

New Releases from the Languedoc

Our main new release is from Opi 'd'Aqui. We have 6 new wines, described in the table below, together with the price per bottle. There is a detailed story about Philippe Formentin and more information about these wines later in the newsletter.

Wine	Type	Description	Price
Opi d'Aqui L'Abricotier 2019	Red	A carbonic maceration of Grenache Noir (50%) mixed with another carbonic maceration of Vermentino, Grenache Blanc, and Syrah. These were blended after 6 months aging in barrel and then bottled.	\$50
Opi d'Aqui Massale 2019	Light red	Carbonic maceration of Grenache Blanc, Grenache Gris, and Grenache Noir aged in tank, with 25% direct press Marsanne added	\$69
Opi d'Aqui Les Canons 2019	Red	60% Syrah (carbonic maceration), 40% Cinsault (destemmed and macerated for 15 days)	\$55
Opi d'Aqui Les Cliquets 2020	Light red	70% Grenache Noir (Carbonic maceration), blended with 30% directly-pressed Vermentino	\$50
Opi d'Aqui Poupoule 2020	White	100% Piquepoul Blanc, aged in tank	\$59
Opi d'Aqui L'Orangeade 2020	Orange	60% Marsanne and 40% Grenache Blanc. They were destemmed, macerated for 15 days, pressed and aged for 6 months in barrels without topping up	\$64

At the same time we've also decided to release two 2020 wines from Ivo Ferreira and Julie Brosselin, from **Les Cigales Dans La Fourmière**, which we received earlier in the year. Their vines are in Montpeyroux, which is close by to Philippe, so this is an entirely Languedoc release.

Although Julie and Ivo work together in the vines, both these wines are cuvées of Ivo's, meaning he made the decisions on the vinification. They are both wines that previously were released under his l'Escarpolette label from the era before he and Julie became partners.

Le Blanc is an orange wine, a blending of macerated Grenache Blanc, Muscat à Petit Grains and Chardonnay. This cuvée was the first wine we ever tasted of Ivo's and, from memory the first orange wine in our portfolio. It's always a pleasure when it makes its return. It is \$58 a bottle.

La Petite Pépée is direct press Grenache Noir. We've preferred to call it "whiteish" rather than white because there is just a blush of pink about it but in no way could you say it is pink. It's definitely on the funky side, only 11% alcohol with a noticeable acidity. It is \$52 a bottle.

What's coming: Milan, Sabre, Mosse and Carême

Logistics are probably worse now than at any time during the covid-19 era so it's hard to predict timings for new arrivals.

We are still hoping though that during February we will release some Domaine Milan, including some Milan Nouveau, which is one of two new 2021 wines we have in transit, some wines from Fanny Sabre, including Bourgogne Rouge and Aligoté from the 2020 vintage, and Bangarang Primeur 2021 and Bonnes Blanches 2019 from the Mosse family. However, some of these may end up happening in March. Our Jura shipment which we expect will be all allocated, will now definitely not be ready to release until March at the earliest. There was more information about what's in it in our November 2021 newsletter.

And at the rate things are going, our new wines from Vincent Carême may well overtake our earlier shipment. It's very close to Melbourne now! We had hoped we would be releasing that in February but it's also looking more like March.

In the meantime, we will also be continuing to send out offers for some l'Octavin wines which arrived last year to people who requested some.

Current Issues Shipping Wines

These last two months have been the most difficult shipping conditions we have experienced in our 12 years in business.

We stopped using our courier early in December to avoid wines being held up in the normal Christmas rush but perhaps naïvely thought it would be fine to use them again for shipments to nearby cities in the new year.

Our shipments to Melbourne go overnight from Tasmania and normally are delivered within a couple of days after arriving. While some orders have been delivered in a reasonable timeframe, others have seemingly become part of the black hole that is Aramex's Melbourne warehouse.

At the moment, at the time we ship the wine, because the potential delivery date is (somewhat randomly) now so far into the future it is no longer possible to predict the weather for the length of the delivery period.

The forecast isn't good enough or not even available for the time when it might be delivered. Once we realised this was happening, we stopped and, apart from a couple of locations which have continued to operate relatively efficiently (e.g. Canberra destinations), we have adopted a new solution.

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We had already been offering a shipping service with Anonymous Wines to destinations further from Tasmania (Brisbane, northern NSW, Sydney, Adelaide and parts of country Victoria). We're now also offering this service for metropolitan Melbourne deliveries as well.

It's not as simple a solution as using the courier because we have to accumulate pallets which we then ship to Anonymous Wines in Melbourne and it may be a couple of weeks between shipments but it is much safer and more reliable.

Unfortunately it is much more expensive. The cost for the delivery in Melbourne is much the same as the whole cost of shipping with Aramex and we have to add on the cost of getting the pallets from Hobart to Melbourne.

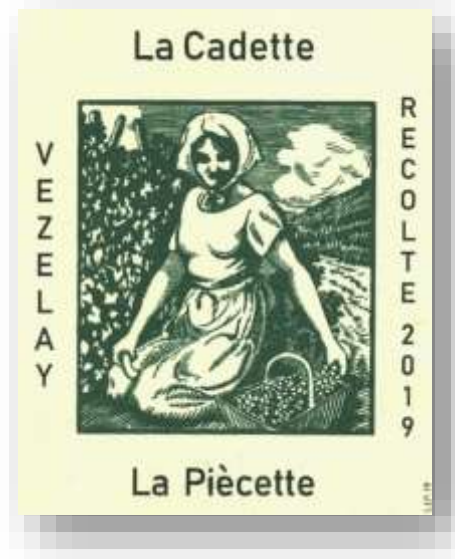
For that reason we are adding a small delivery charge to orders we ship with Anonymous. It varies depending on the destination and we can provide that information in advance of invoicing for orders and give you choices.

Of course you're welcome to still take our free Aramex shipping option but if you do that you would need to be willing to wait until things have improved in terms of timing and when it is cooler. We are always happy to keep wines in our warehouse until you are ready to ship them if you don't mind paying and waiting. There is no charge for storing wine even indefinitely.

And of course we continue to offer a regular pallet-based service to Perth. Assuming the road/rail lines are repaired soon after the recent flooding we anticipate our next shipment will be midway through February.

Pack 1: Mainly Cadette Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 3 packs only



All our recently-arrived Cadette wines sold out in their first week in the country so this and the next pack are the only way to buy them. We've also allocated a bottle of one of the estate wines from our l'Octavin arrival from last year.

We have the lovely La Châtelaine again. This Chardonnay from limestone and clay vineyards which is matured in tanks is a perfect wine for those who value unwooded white wines. The Melon is also an interesting wine with only around 15 hectares of these grapes left in Burgundy. There are two bottles of this wine in the pack.

La Piècette arrives in Australia for the first time and is also a Chardonnay, but this one is the only white which is matured in old wooden barrels. It spent 10 months in barrel, which has created a more complex and deeply-flavoured wine. And also unlike the other Cadette whites, it is not filtered. The Garance is 100% Pinot Noir with the vineyards being laced with limestone rocks.

The Julié纳斯 is from the Cru region of Beaujolais and is a fine example of a Beaujolais from that area – 100% Gamay.

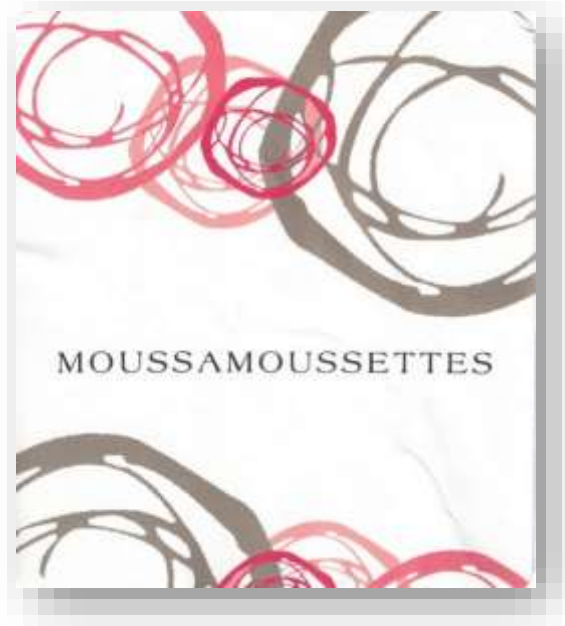
The wine from Octavin is made from the amazing Jura grape called Trousseau to produce a light yet intense wine with lots of character.

- La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2019
- La Soeur Cadette Melon 2020 (2 bottles)
- La Cadette Vézelay La Piècette 2019
- La Soeur Cadette Julié纳斯 2019
- l'Octavin Corvée de Trou Trou 2019

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$351 but the pack price is only \$298.35. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge to account for warm weather shipping in a time of covid-19.

Pack 2: Mosse Summer Drinking Pack (15% Discount) - Repeat

Note: 5 packs only



We still have a few of the Mosse summer drinking packs we offered last month available so we decided to repeat it in this newsletter. It contains two bottles of each wine.

Moussamoussettes is a blend of Grolleau Noir, Cabernet Franc, and Pineau d'Aunis. It's a rosé pet-nat unfiltered so slightly cloudy and quite irresistible on a sunny day. It makes regular appearances on Instagram all over the world!

Bisou, a blend of Grolleau Noir, Grolleau Gris, Gamay, and Chenin Blanc, is somewhere between a rosé and a light red and very well suited for chilling at this time of year.

Chenin is perhaps our most self-explanatory cuvée name. With plenty of minerality to balance Chenin Blanc's natural richness – it's a perfect wine to drink with richer shellfish, such as lobster and crab.

- Mosse Moussamoussettes 2020 (2 bottles)
- Mosse Chenin 2020 (2 bottles)
- Mosse Bisou 2020 (2 bottles)

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$304 but the pack price is only \$258.40. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge to account for warm weather shipping in a time of covid-19.

Pack 3: Top Up Your Whites Pack (15% Discount!)

Note: 3 packs only



We have repeated the descriptions of these wines from Pack 1.

Refer to Pack 1 for a description of the two Cadette wines in this pack - La Châtelaine 2020 and Melon 2020. There are two bottles of each wine in the pack.

The two Octavin wines are a real treat. Joker is made from Jacquère grapes purchased from an organic producer in the beautiful Savoie region of France. The grapes were direct-pressed and matured in tanks to produce a fresh, exciting wine. The Molette grapes for the Clé à Molette were also purchased from a certified organic producer in the Bugey region. This is a bright, fresh and lively wine that makes a very nice aperitif.

- La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2019 (2 bottles)
- La Soeur Cadette Melon de Bourgogne 2020 (2 bottles)
- l'Octavin Joker 2020
- l'Octavin Clé à Molette 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$350 but the pack price is only \$297.50. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge to account for warm weather shipping in a time of covid-19.

Pack 4: Languedoc Pack (15% Discount)

Note: Four packs only



If you are looking for a mixed pack, with many styles of wines, this one, which is full of new releases from Languedoc producers Opi d'Aqui and Les Cigales Dans La Fourmilière Le Blanc 2020, fits the bill.

There is a fresh and lively red (Opi d'Aqui Les Canons 2019), which is a blend of Syrah and Cinsault and only 12% alcohol. There is a wine we've classified as a light red (Opi d'Aqui Les Cliquets 2020), which is mainly Grenache Noir with some Vermentino to freshen it up. It has more body than a rosé but is definitely too light to call a red. There is one white (Opi d'Aqui Poupoule 2020), made with Piquepoul, which is the south of France's classic oyster pairing.

There are two orange wines. Les Cigales Dans La Fourmilière Le Blanc 2020 is a blend of Grenache Blanc, Chardonnay, and Muscat, and Opi d'Aqui L'Orangeade 2020 is a blend of Marsanne and Grenache Blanc.

The final wine is not easy to classify. We've described it as "whiteish". Les Cigales Dans La Fourmilière La Petite Pépée 2020 is direct press Grenache Noir. We bristle when we read stories describing natural wines as funky and cloudy, thinking of pristine wines such as those of Alice and Olivier de Moor, which are anything but. But it's fair to say this wine definitely fits the funky and cloudy description. It has a slightly pinkish hue, noticeable texture (it has very clearly not been filtered), and, at only 11%, still has noticeable acidity.

- Opi d'Aqui Les Canons 2019
- Opi d'Aqui Les Cliquets 2020
- Opi d'Aqui Poupoule 2020
- Opi d'Aqui L'Orangeade 2020
- Les Cigales Dans La Fourmilière Le Blanc 2020
- Les Cigales Dans La Fourmilière La Petite Pépée 2020

The RRP for this selection of **6** wines is \$338 but the pack price is only **\$287.30**. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge to account for warm weather shipping in a time of covid-19.

Pack 5: Opi d'Aqui Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 3 Packs only



We very conveniently received 6 different wines in this shipment from Opi d'Aqui's Philippe Formentin, so it makes it a perfect 6 pack of quite different wines.

The six wines (with a brief description of how they are made and each style) are listed below and we have a feature on Philippe Formentin later in the newsletter.

Wine	Type	Description
Opi d'Aqui L'Abricotier 2019	Red	A carbonic maceration of Grenache Noir (50%) mixed with another carbonic maceration of Vermentino, Grenache Blanc, and Syrah. These were blended after 6 months aging in barrel and then bottled.
Opi d'Aqui Massale 2019	Light red	Carbonic maceration of Grenache Blanc, Grenache Gris, and Grenache Noir aged in tank, with 25% direct press Marsanne added.
Opi d'Aqui Les Canons 2019	Red	60% Syrah (carbonic maceration), 40% Cinsault (destemmed and macerated for 15 days).
Opi d'Aqui Les Cliquets 2020	Light red	70% Grenache Noir (Carbonic maceration), blended with 30% directly-pressed Vermentino.
Opi d'Aqui Poupoule 2020	White	100% Piquepoul Blanc, aged in tank.

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Opi d'Aqui L'Orangeade 2020	Orange	60% Marsanne and 40% Grenache Blanc. They were destemmed, macerated for 15 days, pressed and aged for 6 months in barrels without topping up.
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- Opi d'Aqui L'Abricotier 2019
- Opi d'Aqui Massale 2019
- Opi d'Aqui Les Canons 2019
- Opi d'Aqui Les Cliquets 2020
- Opi d'Aqui Poupoule 2020
- Opi d'Aqui L'Orangeade 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$347 but the pack price is only \$294.95. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge to account for warm weather shipping in a time of covid-19.

Opi d'Aqui New Arrivals

Philippe Formentin is a very savvy winemaker. He understands natural wines very well, uses little or no sulphites and he is willing to adapt his wines to current customer preferences. Despite the fact that he works in the Languedoc, where there are a lot of big, heavy reds produced, he regularly turns out light, expressive and flavoursome reds by cleverly matching juice from red grapes with some juice from white grapes to produce eminently satisfying light reds that retain complexity and nuance.

You can read more about what he and others do this in the answer to the question about whether it is legal to mix red juice and white juice in wines that is below in the Questions and Answers section.

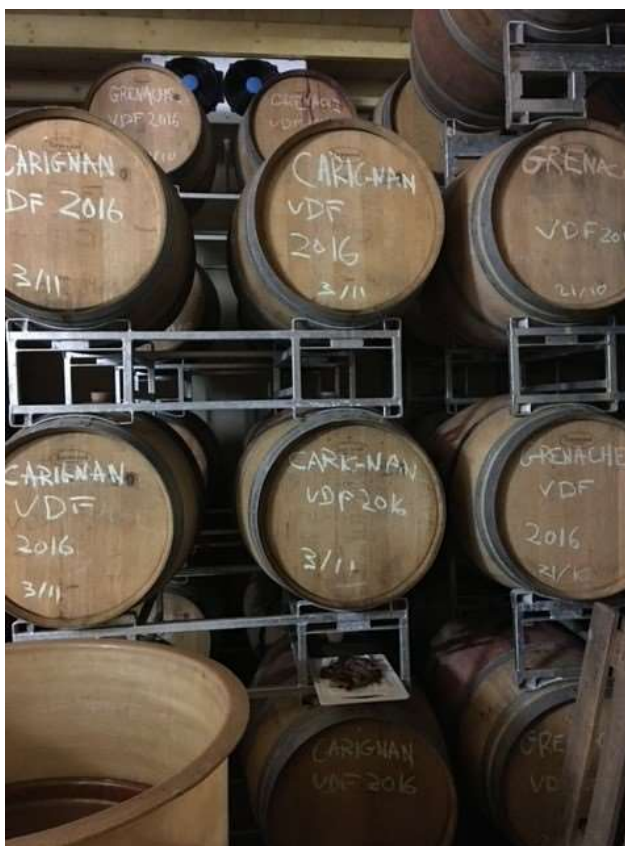
Philippe has his vineyards and winery close to the town of Clermont l'Herault in the Languedoc. It is about 40 kilometres directly west of the city of Montpellier and north-west of the delightful seaside town of Sète.



The red indicator shows the location of Philippe's winery and new vineyard



The large entrance doors to the winery



Used barrels with Carignan maturing



The latest vineyard – notice the proximity of the trees



A healthy vine in the new vineyard



Philippe at our most recent tasting

The recent arrivals

Opi d'Aqui Vin de France Orangeade 2020 - The name "Orangeade" is a light-hearted attempt to explain this wine. It is made by macerating Marsanne (60%) and Grenache Blanc (40%) grape varieties which were destemmed and macerated for 15 days then aged in used wooden barrels for a period of 6 months without being topped up. It is a lightly orange wine which we have found stands up quite well over a couple of days of being opened.

Opi d'Aqui Vin de France l'Abricotier 2019 - Philippe loves to experiment - he is always on a quest to make even more delicious, light, red wines as well as his beautiful range of whites. This wine is made from Grenache Noir (50%) which has undergone carbonic maceration whereas the remainder is a mix of Vermentino, Grenache Blanc and Syrah which also underwent carbonic maceration, before being aged in oak barrels for 6 months. The two batches were then combined and bottled.

Opi d'Aqui Vin de France Poupoule 2020 – Piquepoul (also called Picpoul) is a legendary grape variety of the area around the coastal town of Sète in the Languedoc. More correctly, it is Piccupoul Blanc because, like many grapes there is a Noir and Gris version as well. The grapes were picked by hand from a 1 hectare plot near Pinet (limestone and clay terroir) and placed in small 10 kg baskets. The grapes were then direct-pressed and the juice transferred to tanks for a period of 6 months. The wine was then bottled without filtration and without the addition of sulphites to ensure freshness. Philippe used to call this cuvée Piquepoule but the authorities controlling the AOC Picpoul de Pinet, which is made exclusively with Piquepoule Blanc, decided the name was too similar to the appellation name. Since the 2018 vintage he has used the name Poupoule for the same wine.

Opi d'Aqui Vin de France Massale 2019 - This light-red, smashable but still complex wine is made from three Grenache varieties (Grenache Noir, Grenache Gris and Grenache Blanc) with the addition of 25% of Marsanne to add freshness. Don't judge this wine by the colour alone! Despite the light red colour, it has plenty of both texture and flavour. The four grape varieties provide an alluring complexity to this wine as well as a compelling texture, and just when you think it's all about the confectionery from the Grenache Noir other sensations take over and the finish has a grenadine light bitterness to it. This is a perfect example of a wine that has been made with intelligence and skill to cater for the new wave of wine drinkers who want to be teased and excited by the wine, not assaulted!

Opi d'Aqui Vin de France Les Cliquets 2020 - This wine has been made from 70% Grenache Noir which came from a small plot (0.8 hectares) near the town of Vendémian which lies approximately 16 kilometres south-east of Clermont-l'Hérault. The soils here are clay over limestone. Traditionally 100% Grenache, this year, Philippe decided to add freshness to the wine by his normal technique of adding some white juice made from direct press Vermentino (30%).

Opi d'Aqui Vin de France Les Canons 2019 - This is a new cuvee for us made from 60% Syrah (from 30 year old vines which thrive in clay limestone soils near the village of Aspiran) which underwent carbonic maceration and 40% Cinsault (from some vines that he planted about 8 years ago and which are only a very short walk from Philippe's winery) which he destemmed and which were traditionally macerated for 15 days.

Weird French wine rules

We thought it might be fun to document some of the strange rules that we come across when visiting our suppliers across France.

This month we highlight one of the rules from Alsace which involves the grape varieties Pinot Blanc and Pinot Auxerrois (often called just Auxerrois). Pinot Blanc is widely used in Alsace and there is even an AoP appellation for Pinot Blanc.

Now to divert for a moment, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Auxerrois are not the same grape variety. Pinot Blanc is a mutation of the Pinot grape variety and Pinot Auxerrois is an offspring of the almost extinct Gouais Blanc and Pinot Noir.

However, in Alsace the Pinot Blanc rules for the appellation allow some Auxerrois to be used. In fact, the rules allow for 100% of the wine to be made from Auxerrois, but the label will say Pinot Blanc!

Answers to readers' questions

Here we answer questions we have been asked recently.

What is malolactic fermentation and why do some winemakers let it happen and others don't?

Malolactic fermentation is a process whereby bacteria in wine converts some or all of the malic acid into lactic acid and carbon dioxide and a by-product called diacetyl.

Therefore, the simple answer is that some winemakers like the presence of malic acid in wine and others don't.

You may have heard, or read about, a winemaker saying that they let "the wine go through malo". This is an abbreviation that is used for malolactic fermentation as is MLF.

You also read about Californian Chardonnay being rich and "buttery" – this is because they have been through malo and therefore contain lactic acid which is the same acid found in dairy products – hence the buttery sensation.

Wines that haven't gone through malolactic fermentation usually have an acidic taste that gives the sensation of green apples

We earlier mentioned bacteria because this fermentation is not carried out by yeast, but by bacteria of the Lactobacillus species. These bacteria do occur naturally in wine and natural winemakers rely on these naturally occurring bacteria to carry out the second ferment. However, many commercial producers add the bacteria to ensure the malolactic fermentation occurs.

There are some side benefits to allowing malolactic fermentation to occur in that these good bacteria tend to consume the remaining nutrients in the wine thus making them unavailable for "bad" bacteria to use, which could create faults in the wine.

A problem with malolactic fermentation, however, is that it lowers the acidity of the wine (raises the pH level) thus making it less stable.

When bacteria cause malic acid ($C_4H_6O_5$) to break down into softer lactic acid ($C_3H_6O_3$) you will notice that the number of hydrogen atoms stays the same, the number of carbon atoms is reduced by one and the number of oxygen atoms is reduced by 2. This means that carbon dioxide (CO_2) is formed. The process for this happening is called “decarboxylation” which is a great word to throw in at the next party you attend!

I see the term massale selection used to refer to vines, but I have no idea what it means.

This term is often used without explanation, as are many terms in the wine industry. Massale selection (sélection massale in France, massal selection in USA) refers to carefully observing a vineyard and then replacing any dead or unproductive vines with cuttings from vines with the most attractive attributes.

These attributes might be high yield, early ripening, great flavour, disease resistance or many others. Some of these characteristics might be mutually contradictory. For example, high yielding vines often do not have as deep a flavour as vines which produce lower yields.

Another related but important consideration is the whether the cuttings you are planting are likely to be diseased. An entire industry has grown up, particularly in the United States, but also Australia, of selecting specific clones that have been certified by a nursery as being disease free and of having specific characteristics.

Thus, the idea of planting vineyards with vines of identical clones has become fashionable over the past twenty or thirty years. The problem with this approach is that it severely restricts diversity in the vineyards and wines produced from such vineyards seem to lack nuance and depth.

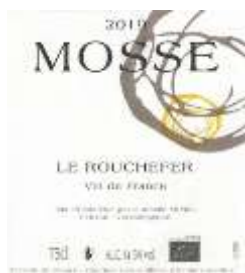
There are also problems with diseases. If a disease that is likely to damage a particular clone strikes a vineyard with just that clone, then the damage will propagate through the entire vineyard.

Massale selection, on the other hand, works by selecting existing vines in an existing vineyard and taking cuttings from those vines with particular observed characteristics. These cuttings are then planted either in the same vineyard or a nearby vineyard.

This approach is better than the same clone approach described above, however it still may reduce diversity if only vines with certain characteristics are chosen.

Two different approaches are possible in order to encourage biodiversity. The first is to plant many different clones throughout the vineyard to ensure diversity of characteristics.

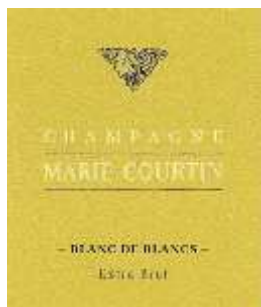
A second approach, and this is the approach taken by one of our favourite producers in the Jura, is to take cutting from many different vines in a vineyard to replicate the characteristics of the entire vineyard thus preserving the existing diversity.



An example of a massale selection vineyard is Le Rouchefer which the Mosse family have tended organically since 1999 thus leading to very healthy soils and correspondingly strong and healthy vines.

This vineyard sits on a small parcel of gently sloping, southwest facing land that extends over 1.66 hectares with clay and gravel (studded with quartz) sitting on schist. The yield from this vineyard is very low with 20 hectolitres per hectare being common.

These vines are used for the iconic Le Rouchefer cuvée which is matured in old oak barrels and is always an amazing wine of great purity and depth.



Another example of a wine produced from a massale selection vineyard is the new Blanc de Blancs Champagne cuvée from Marie Courtin, the label of Dominique Moreau.

This wine also demonstrates the power and elegance of a wine produced from biodynamically tended grapes (see on the back label on the right “Domaine en



Biodynamie” and the fact that their biodynamic work is certified by Demeter). This wine is made from Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Arbane, three white grapes from vines that were planted via massale selection. Notice on the back label that the vines are 100% Sélection massale.

Is it legal to mix red and white juice in the same wine?

The simple answer is sometimes! This is a technique that is becoming more and more common as customers turn to lower alcohol, easy-to-drink styles of wines and turn away from the 1990s blockbuster reds that were so beloved by opinion-shapers such as Robert Parker.

As to the legality, there is a parallel issue that also needs to be taken into account. In regions such as the European Union there is a rigorous system of appellation that controls what can be in a wine and much more. To affix the Protected Designation of Origin (Appellation d'Origine Protégée) to a wine label it must conform to the rules of the appellation.

For example, for the Côte Rôtie appellation in the northern Rhone region a red wine must be made from at least 80% Syrah or the related Serine. However, it is legal and common for the remaining 20% (or less) to be juice from the Viognier white grape variety. If the percentage of Viognier is greater than 20% then it would be illegal to display the appellation and the wine would need to be classified as Vin de France.

Similar rules apply in some parts of Burgundy. For example, in the Saint Aubin appellation which lies south of the city of Beaune, there is a different set of rules. If it is a red wine it must be made from at least 85% Pinot Noir, but in the vineyards up to 15% of the vines can be a mix of Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris (called Pinot Beurot locally) and these grapes can be used in making the red wine.

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There are many other examples throughout France of similar rules. It would also be possible to direct press the red grapes in both of the above examples to produce white juice from the red grapes, but this is not permitted in either of those appellations.

However, it is legal in Champagne where red grapes such as Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier are often direct pressed to create a white Champagne. There is even a special name for it which you often see on the labels, namely Blanc de Noir or Blanc de Noirs.

We import many wines where red juice and white juice have been mixed to make lighter, fresher and energetic wines. Currently we have a number of wines from Languedoc producer Opi d'Aqui in stock (see story above about these wines) and most of them combine red and white juice to make light and refreshing, yet complex, wines.



A red wine made from Grenache Noir and Vermentino

We also import wines from Wim Wagemans, Axel Pruffer, Ivo Ferreira, Julie Brosselin and Alice Bouvot who all mix red and white juice or make white wines from red juice. In each of these cases, the wine is designated as Vin de France as there are no such restrictions under this designation.



A red wine from Ivo and Julie made from Grenache Blanc and Grenache Noir



A wine by Wim made from Aramon (red) and Ugni Blanc (white)

Appellation: Mâcon appellation

We have only recently started importing a wine from the Mâcon region of Burgundy thanks to Domaine La Cadette in Vézelay whose wines we have been importing for a very long time. They have more recently set up a négoce to allow them to purchase organic grapes from other regions to insure against the inevitable bad seasons which are occurring with greater frequency all over France.

We hadn't been against the idea of importing from Mâcon, there are some stunning wines produced here – we just hadn't got round to it.

Mâcon is officially part of Burgundy and sits above Beaujolais (which is also a sub-section of the Burgundy appellation) and below the Côte Chalonnaise. In fact, Burgundy extends over 5 distinct départements starting with département du Rhône in the south just above Lyon and encompassing the Beaujolais region, département de Saône-et-Loire in which lies the Mâcon appellation and other interesting ones such as Bouzeron which is dedicated to the Aligote grape variety.

Heading north, the next département is the département de la Côte-d'Or (divided into the Côte de Beaune and further north the Côte de Nuits) in which lie such well-known appellations as Gevrey-Chambertin, Beaune, Chassagne-Montrachet, Volnay, Pommard, Vosne-Romanée and Vougeot, for example. Once you reach the city of Dijon there is then a significant gap with very few vineyards as you drive north-west.

You then reach the département of Yonne which has a plethora of small appellations with the largest being Chablis but also including Vézelay, Saint-Bris (famous for wines made from Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris), Irancy and Chitry.



Mâcon appellation shown in blue

To find the specific rules for an appellation you need to work through a document called the Cahier des Charges for that appellation and these are available only in French, however they are relatively easy to follow if you know a little French and a little wine language.

The Cahier des Charges for this appellation covers approximately twenty communes around the city of Mâcon.

The appellation rules allow the production of white, rosé and red wines, but not in all communes. Some communes such as Serrières are not permitted to produce white wines, for example. Others, such as Fuissé, Loché, Montbellet, Solutré-Pouilly, Uchizy, Vergisson and Vinzelles can only produce white wines.

If the appellation Mâcon is displayed on the label a red or rosé wine can be made from Pinot Noir or Gamay and a white wine can be made from Chardonnay.

It is also possible, like in other parts of Burgundy, to add a qualifying geographical name to more particularly identify where the wine is from. This leads us to the label for a new Cadette wine we received recently from the 2018 vintage, illustrated below. We thought it was a wine we had purchased previously but it was a careless assumption (it's so much harder doing our buying and learning from this side of the world).

When it arrived and we saw the label, as we should have noticed with the offer, it was clear it was a different wine from a different appellation. The previous wine, from the same vintage, was a 'Mâcon Villages' but this was 'Mâcon Chardonnay', which more specifically hones in on where it is from than the more generic "Villages" does.

It is not called Chardonnay because that is what the wine is made from, even though it is made from Chardonnay. Mâcon Chardonnay is a designation that identifies wines grown within four communes, including a village called Chardonnay. The other three are Ozenay, Plottes, and Tournus. We have yet to visit the vineyards where Valentin Montanet works in the Mâcon – we have only ever spent time in their own vineyards – but, as was later confirmed, this subtle difference in the labelling was sufficient to identify that the wine was from a more precisely identified place than the previous wine we had, emphasising how important place is in the whole French wine regulation process,



Notice the Cadette label above from the Mâcon appellation

To add a further complication of interest, red “village” wines (where the appellation is the word Mâcon followed by a qualifying village name) can only be made from Gamay, reflecting the proximity of the villages to the terroir of Beaujolais.

These are just some of the rules. There are also rules regarding the density of planting (eg 7000 vines per hectare), the maximum yield allowable per hectare (between 60 and 70 hectolitres per hectare), the type of pruning that is allowable, when the harvest can begin, the minimum alcohol level and much more. There are even rules about the number of dead vines that you are allowed to have in a vineyard!

Grape variety: Cabernet Franc

We have been thinking about Cabernet Franc quite a bit recently because the Mosse family have been using it in some of their blends and we also thoroughly enjoyed their 100% Cabernet Franc 2019 that was released recently.

This grape variety is very common in Bordeaux but is also found in the Loire Valley from the city of Tours (the appellation of Touraine lies below this city) along through the appellations of Bourgueil and Saint Nicolas de Bourgueil where Cabernet Franc dominates on the northern side of the river.

On the south side of the Loire, the appellations of Chinon and Saumur also favour this variety and some excellent wines are the result with Cabernet Franc reaching the required degree of ripeness to overcome the “green pepper” aromas that signal under-ripe grapes. This is due to the development of methoxypyrazines in the grapes which give rise to this characteristic pepper and grassy aroma.

It is interesting that methoxypyrazines develop in plants primarily as a defence against pests and we will develop this idea further as a more general article in a future newsletter.

Further west the grape is also common in the Mosse’s home territory of the Anjou region that lies below the city of Angers.

Cabernet Franc is very influential, being one of the parents of the famous Cabernet Sauvignon grape that has become an iconic grape for red wine production in most wine producing countries including France, Italy, Australia and the United States.

DNA testing of Cabernet Franc was conducted in 1971¹ (with at least thirty DNA exact matches) and this proved that Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc were the genetic parents of Cabernet Sauvignon. Cabernet Franc is also a parent of the Merlot grape variety. Cabernet Franc is most likely a native of the Basque region of south-west France.

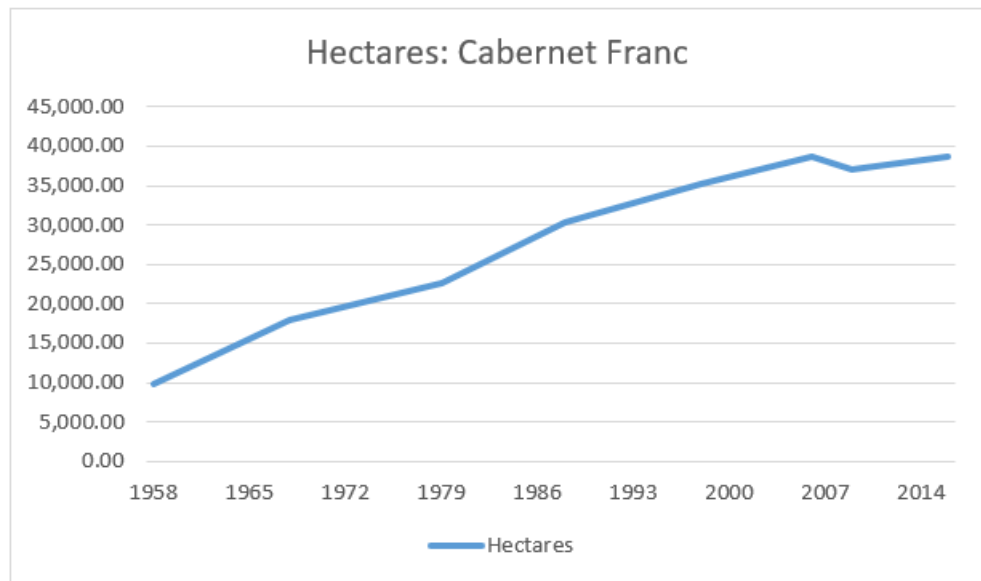
Cabernet Franc is regarded in Bordeaux as a minor adjunct to the more tannic and aggressive Cabernet Sauvignon.

However, some domaines give it more prominence and up to 60% of the iconic reds from Domaine Cheval Blanc can be Cabernet Franc.

In the Loire region, however, it tends to be preferred over Cabernet Sauvignon especially in appellations such as St Nicolas de Bourgueil (where it was introduced by Cardinal Richelieu in the 17th century), Bourgueil and Touraine. Here they are passionate about the alluring perfumes that waft up from wines made from this grape. They also love the softness of the tannins that are a relief from the tight aggressiveness of those from Cabernet Sauvignon grapes. The wines provide an initial hint of ripe raspberries crossed with the taste of a sucking on a river pebble plucked fresh from a mountain stream.

¹ Bowers and Meredith *The parentage of a classic wine grape: Cabernet Sauvignon*. *Nature Genetics* 16, 84-87, 1997. Page 7

The area planted to Cabernet Franc has increased steadily over the past 60 years reaching almost 40,000 hectares of planting in France at the present time. Compare this with a paltry 366 hectares planted in Australia, for example.



Hectares in France, courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

The leaves of the Cabernet Franc grape variety have five distinct “lobes” with the leaf being almost semi-circular.

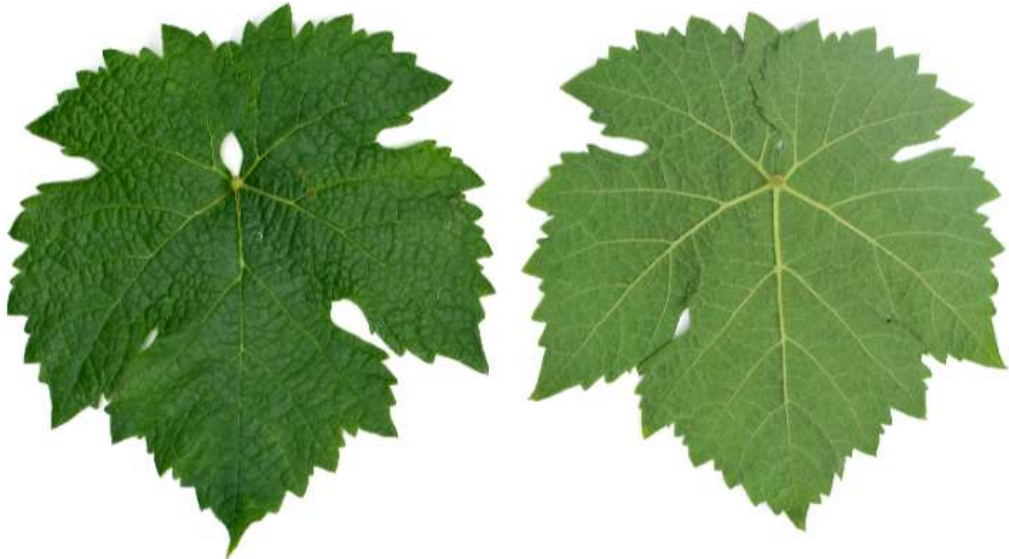


Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

The deep red grapes are tightly packed leaving them somewhat susceptible to mildew and fungal diseases as air movement, which can help in reducing these problems, is difficult among the tight bunches.



Photo courtesy of foodtourist.com

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 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.