

WINE Talk: March 2022

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 106

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 again have five packs, and this time they contain some very exciting wines from a recent shipment that has just arrived. We have reserved some of the wines to ensure we have some to offer to our newsletter subscribers.

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.
- Information about the five packs which we have available.
- A story about the Vermentino (Rolle) grape variety that is commonly found in the Provence, Corsica and the Languedoc. This grape variety is capable of producing stunning white wines.
- A story about the Milan family whose wines have just arrived.
- A story about why wine investors are increasing their spend.
- A story about the Aligoté appellations in Burgundy and the different types of Aligoté to watch for.

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 Arrivals: Milan, Sabre and Carême

We have just released some new wines from Fanny Sabre, Domaine Milan and Vincent Carême. As we mentioned earlier, we have reserved some of these for newsletter packs as many of the wines are otherwise already sold out. We always encourage you to ask in advance if there are any wines we are about to release that you are particularly interested in so we can give you early warning.

Wine	Type	Variety	Price	Maximum
Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Blanc 2020	White	Chardonnay	\$60	1 bottle
Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2020	White	Aligoté	\$54	2 bottles
Fanny Sabre Chorey-Les-Beaune Blanc 2019	White	Chardonnay	\$81	1 bottle
Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2020	Red	Pinot Noir	\$60	1 bottle
Fanny Sabre Monthélie Les Sous Roches Rouge 2019	Red	Pinot Noir	\$94	1 bottle
Fanny Sabre Savigny-Les-Beaune Rouge 2017	Red	Pinot Noir	\$92	1 bottle
Fanny Sabre Volnay Premier Cru Les Mitans 2017	Red	Pinot Noir	\$180	1 bottle
Fanny Sabre Beaune Premier Cru Chouacheux 2018	Red	Pinot Noir	\$120	1 bottle
Milan Milan Nouveau 2021	Red	Mourvèdre	\$47	
Milan Haru Rosé 2020	Rosé	Grenache Noir, Syrah, Merlot	\$40	3 bottles
Milan Papillon Blanc 2019	White	Grenache Blanc, Vermentino, Roussanne et Marsanne	\$61	2 bottles
Milan Le Vallon 2020	Red	Grenache Noir, Syrah, Nielluccio	\$51	2 bottles
Milan Brut Nature Blanc 2019	Sparkling	Grenache Blanc, Bourboulenc, Roussanne	\$65	1 bottle

Wine	Type	Variety	Price	Maximum
Milan Le Grand Blanc 2018	White	Chardonnay, Grenache Blanc, Vermentino, Roussanne, Muscat à Petits Grains	\$70	1 bottle
Milan S&X 2017	Red	Grenache Noir	\$75	1 bottle
Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Sec 2020	White	Chenin Blanc	\$50	3 bottles
Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Peu Morier 2019	White	Chenin Blanc	\$60	2 bottles
Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Le Clos 2020	White	Chenin Blanc	\$66	2 bottles
Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Tendre 2019	Off dry	Chenin Blanc	\$52	2 bottles
Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Plaisir Ancestral 2019	Sparkling	Chenin Blanc	\$54	3 bottles
Vincent Carême Fizzy Pink 2019	Sparkling	Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Gamay, Grolleau Noir	\$39	6 bottles

We have also put a few bottles from our recent shipment from l’Octavin on our website. They are very limited. Corvée de Trou Trou 2019 is one of Alice’s estate wines, an early release trousseau from the renowned Les Corvées vineyard, just outside Arbois. La Cigogne Green 2019 is a négoce wine. It is macerated blend of Gewurztraminer (50%) and Pinot Gris (50%) from biodynamic Alsace vigneron Marc Humbrecht.

What’s coming

This is the section we encourage you to read for information about future arrivals.

Our next release after some allocation-only Jura wines (apart from a few we will reserve for packs) will be from two friends, Axel Prüfer and Wim Wagemans, who both have vines in the Languedoc.

We met Wim twice over lunch with Axel and his family at the much-loved Cave Saint-Martin in Roquebrun, presided over by the larger-than-life Raymond Le Coq, who sadly died in 2020. The culture Raymond and his wife Betty cultivated, not just the amazing wines and great food but the conviviality, invited the sorts of connections that would inevitably lead to us approaching Wim to visit his vineyards and eventually import some of his wine.

There are many reasons why we form a relationship with a vigneron, but we like to think our friendship and now business relationship with Wim is in part one of the many lovely legacies Raymond left behind, helped along of course by Axel who is always just as keen for us to try his friends’ wines as his own.

There are many including a glorious terrace shaded with kiwi fruit. His annual festival of the kiwi fruit, celebrating the fruit from that terrace and involving a lot of magnums, is one of the events

we really wish we had attended at least once. It was part of our planning for our last trip to France in October 2019 but by then Raymond was very ill and had already sold the restaurant.

Some memories from our final lunch in the French spring of 2019, just as the kiwi fruit plant was awakening:



Axel Prüfer pouring La Peur du Rouge from a magnum



The terrace at Cave St Martin (on the opposite side of the road to the restaurant it wasn't particularly practical but that never seem to be a problem)



Wim Wagemans (in the green jumper)

Excuse us for that small self-indulgence! We are missing our regular visits to France very much.

Back to the wines. From Axel we will have the 2020 vintages of Le Temps des Cerises Fou du Roi, La Capitulation Ne Paie Pas, Un Pas de Côté and Les Lendemains Qui Chantent 2020. There is also some La Peur du Rouge, a blend of Chardonnay and Clairette.

From Wim we have more cuvées than usual but, as always only very small quantities. Wim's Le Bouc à Trois Pattes cuvées, also all from the 2020 vintage, are Perdu dans Les Dunes, Miss Piggy Blues, Quel Âne de Course, Slow Drip Black Shiraz and Un Coup de Kuq.

Looking into the immediate future we are expecting new vintage wines from **La Cadette** and **Jean-Marc Dryer** as well as another shipment from **l'Octavin**, which we will in full or largely allocate. We will hopefully have finished sending out all the offers from Alice's previous shipment before this arrives! We've been dribbling them out to coincide with the windows when we can ship them (because of the warm weather in most of the country it's largely been limited to shipping by pallet) but it will be easier in late autumn or winter, when these are released. The arriving cuvées include her négoce wines Ganache 2020, Mayga Gamay 2020, Mus'cat 2020, Le Roi des Cepages 2018, Sly Vin 2020, and La Cigogne Green 2020. From her own estate we'll also have some 2017 and 2019 Commendatore, Zerlina 2019 and P'tit Poussot 2018. We usually have enough wines from Alice to offer anyone who would like some a selection but if you don't ask it's likely you will miss out as they are usually not advertised.

The current situation with shipping

Receiving and sending wines continues to be a challenge thanks to covid-19. However, things are definitely better than they were earlier in this year, helped by improved (i.e. cooler) weather.

We have made some experimental shipments to Melbourne with Aramex in the last couple of weeks and it went well, with deliveries occurring within the “new normal” time period. Should that continue it means that unless something goes wrong (like a breakage) wines shipped on Monday are likely to arrive by the end of that week. We can be fairly confident of a weather forecast over that sort of period of time so can predict whether to ship or not. Soon we should be in a position where weather won't be an issue for a few months.

We are planning to send at least one more seasonal pallet to Anonymous Wines and onwards to Sydney, Adelaide, regional Victoria, northern NSW and Brisbane, possibly early next week. We'll assess the weather situation after that, but we may then revert to Aramex for the next few months until things warm up again. Any Melbourne customers who would prefer to use this potential final Anonymous Wines service for a few months are welcome to do so of course.

And of course we will continue our regular pallet service to Perth. We envisage shipping another pallet early in April.

Pack 1: New Arrivals (15% Discount)

Note: 8 packs available



We are so happy to be able to offer this pack for 8 of our newsletter customers, partly consisting of wines which are already otherwise sold out!

It comprises a bottle of the amazing Bangarang Primeur light red (only 11%) from the Mosse family made from Pineau d’Aunis and Grolleau Noir and made fresher by adding Sauvignon Blanc. We have also added a bottle of their famous Chenin Blanc from their premium Les Bonnes Blanches vineyard that we have often walked in and admired the aging vines.

We have also included two great wines from Fanny Sabre including her ever-popular white wine made from Aligoté which comes from vines her father planted in the red soils of Pommard which are normally reserved for Pinot Noir, and her lovely Bourgogne Rouge which comes from plots around the city of Beaune.

We also have included the lively Milan Nouveau made entirely from Mourvèdre grapes, normally associated with big reds, whereas this one has been made with a light touch. The Milan Haru Rosé is also perfect for summer drinking and is a blend of Grenache Noir, Syrah and Merlot.

The complete pack is:

- Mosse Bangarang Primeur 2021
- Mosse Les Bonnes Blanches 2019
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2020
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2020

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- Milan Milan Nouveau 2021
- Milan Haru Rosé 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$329 but the pack price is only \$279.65. 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: Premium New Arrivals Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 1 pack only



This is a very special pack, comprising some of the best wines from some of our premium producers, all of which have just arrived in Australia. Note that there is only one of these packs, so first in first served.

We have included Les Bonnes Blanches from the Mosse family that is also in Pack1 and is one of their premium Chenin Blancs.

We have two wines from Fanny Sabre. One is from the Premier Cru vineyard Les Mitans in Volnay. The other is from the emerging Monthélie appellation, also made from Pinot Noir, which adjoins Volnay with Les Sous Roches being a “climat” on a slope which produces beautifully coloured reds with an appealing mellowness.

From the Milan family we have included one of their premium wines, Clos Milan, made from Grenache and Syrah which is a wine that you can keep for a few years but is also ready to drink now. For this vintage the artist who created the label is an Australian, Louisa Chircop.

Finally, we have included two whites from Vincent Carême who is widely recognised as a premium producer of excellent Vouvray wines from some of the best flint on limestone terroir in that appellation.

The complete pack is:

- Mosse Les Bonnes Blanches 2019
- Fanny Sabre Volnay Premier Cru Les Mitans 2017
- Fanny Sabre Monthélie Les Sous Roches Rouge 2019
- Milan Clos Milan 2018
- Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Peu Morier 2019
- Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Le Clos 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$568 but the pack price is only \$482.80. 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: Fanny Sabre Wines Pack (15% Discount!)

Note: 2 packs only



It is very rare for us to have enough of Fanny Sabre's gorgeous wines to offer a pack or two, however we have been able to hold back some for our newsletter subscribers.

This pack consists of a bottle of the sought-after Bourgogne Blanc which is made from grapes picked from her vineyards dotted around the city of Beaune. It is made from 100% Chardonnay grapes.

Next, we have two bottles of her delightful Aligoté which is made from vines from the hallowed red turf of Pommard. This is truly an exciting drink! We have also 2 bottles of the Bourgogne Rouge which is made from 100% Pinot Noir picked from her own vineyards near Beaune.

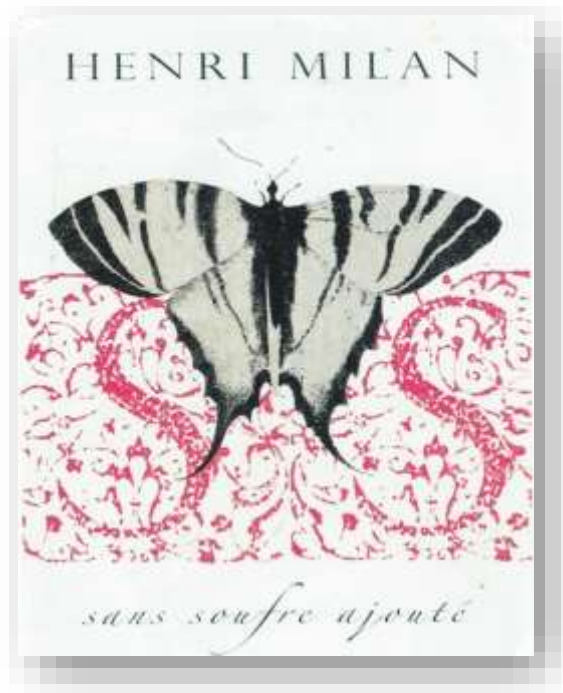
And finally we have a bottle of Savigny-les-Beaune, a Pinot noir that bears the appellation of a small village just to the north-west of Beaune and which has perfect terroir for this grape variety.

- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Blanc 2020
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2020 (2 bottles)
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2020 (2 bottles)
- Fanny Sabre Savigny-Les-Beaune Rouge 2017

The RRP for this selection of 4 wines (6 bottles) is \$380 but the pack price is only \$323.00. 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: Milan Family Wines Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 2 packs only



This pack not only allows you to enjoy the exciting wines being produced by the Milan family in the famous village of Saint-Remy-de-Provence, but it also exposes you to a range of interesting grape varieties that have been planted by Henri Milan over the years. He is always seeking out grape varieties that will benefit from the varied terroir of his plots and is not afraid to experiment. He has even planted Savagnin here due to his love of this Jura variety!

There are two bottles of the Milan Nouveau which is made from 100% Mourvèdre, a grape variety better known to the east where it is used for the strong reds in the Bandol appellation. This one, on the other hand, shows the light touch of son Théo, who shows his skill with this beautiful light, yet flavoursome, red, which had a short carbonic maceration before being released in time for the day which celebrates the release of primeur cuvées, Beaujolais Nouveau Day. This day, originally a day for Beaujolais, has been appropriated by the whole country and now includes wines released in many other regions. (The Mosse Bangarang Primeur is another.)

We also have two bottles of the Haru Rosé which is made from Grenache Noir, Syrah and Merlot – a grape variety more commonly found in Bordeaux.

Papillon Blanc (named after the butterfly on the label, which signifies it's made with no added sulphites) is made from Grenache Blanc, Vermentino, Roussanne and Marsanne. The last two varieties are common in the nearby Rhone Valley, Vermentino is popular throughout Provence and Grenache Blanc is more often found in the Languedoc region of France.

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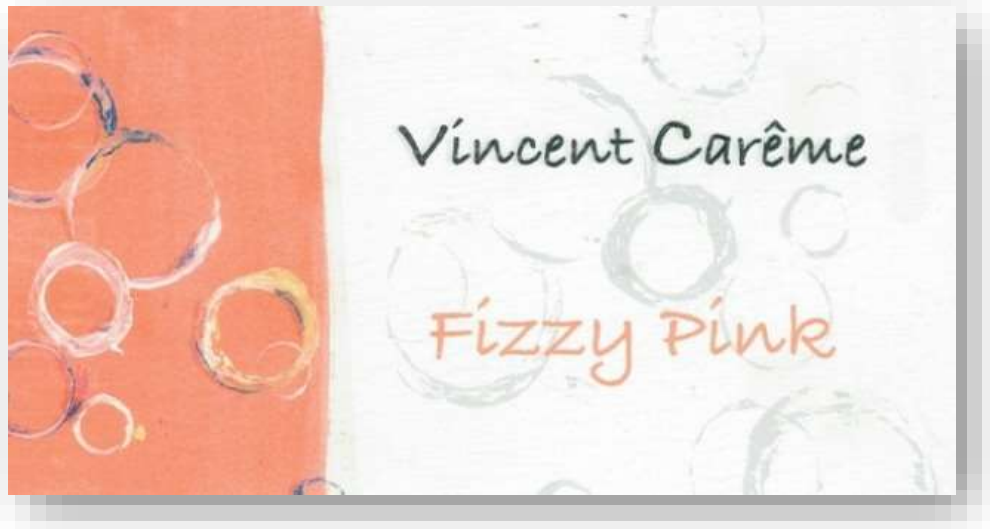
And, finally there is a bottle of the Le Vallon which comprises Grenache Noir, Syrah and the Corsican grape, Nielluccio. This grape is the subject of much discussion as it is very similar to the Italian grape variety Sangiovese, but shows slightly different characteristics in Corsica. Despite the controversy, it does contribute beautifully in this wine!

- Milan Milan Nouveau 2021 (2 bottles)
- Milan Haru Rosé 2020 (2 bottles)
- Milan Papillon Blanc 2019
- Milan Le Vallon 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$286 but the pack price is only \$243.10. 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: Vincent Carême Sparkling Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 3 Packs only



There are only two cuvées in the pack with 3 bottles of each. This allows you to experience the incredible sparkling wines from Vincent Carême from Vouvray.

The Plaisir Ancestral is made using the Methode Ancestrale that was first used in the Limoux region of France and which only sees a single fermentation carried out with the wine being bottled while there is still some sugar in it so that fermentation continues in the bottle to create the required bubbles. (The same as the process for making Pet Nats.) This wine is 100% made from their amazing Chenin Blanc grapes which grow on the limestone and flint terrain here.

The very popular Fizzy Pink is a wine we have been importing for some time now and it always sells very quickly. It is a very attractive wine made with Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Gamay and Grolleau Noir grapes and is one of the most quaffable pet nats that we import!

- Vincent Carême AOC Vouvray Plaisir Ancestral 2019 (3 bottles)
- Vincent Carême Fizzy Pink 2019 (3 bottles)

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$279 but the pack price is only \$237.15. 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.

The wines of the Milan family

Prior to Covid, when we would visit France twice a year, a highlight of each of our trips would be a visit to the Milan family in the beautiful town of Saint Remy de Provence.

The family maintains a tasting centre which is open without appointment, something which is unusual in the natural wine community. However it is a big bonus as anyone can drop in to taste the wines and buy from their extensive range. Being in Provence it is, of course, closed for 3 hours for lunch in the middle of the day though.



Théo Milan in the tasting room

You reach the tasting room which lies in the suburbs of the town by driving through the manicured vineyards from which the wines are made, although they now also have other vineyards just north of the town in Eyragues.



Milan vineyards with Les Alpilles in the background

The centre is surrounded by beautiful trees under which we have had many very pleasant lunches with the family.

It is a very convivial experience with people from all over the world dropping in to try the wines and to chat with cellar master Sebastien who manages the centre or with a member of the family if they are not out in the vineyards.

On one occasion we were joined by an Italian couple who were very interested in the wines and very engaging. We discovered later, after Henri expressed amazement at his new customer's name when he wrote an invoice for him, that it was an Italian soccer player by the name of Paolo Rossi who, we now understand, is relatively well known.

The Milan family, like many other families we work with in France, is undergoing generational change. Henri Milan is gradually stepping back from the day-to-day running of the operation as his son, Théo takes over the reins. Théo is showing a great aptitude for winemaking and has shown a remarkable ability to produce red wines that are packed with flavour and energy but also light and amenable to being served chilled. His American wife Natalie, a former sommelier in New York, is also now an integral part of the family business, involved in all of its aspects. Natalie and Théo have had two children, Elliot and Noah so a further succession is on the cards! It's been a joy to watch the family expand and the domaine flourish with all these extra minds and hands. It does though, make us feel old, watching children who didn't exist when we began working with Henri grow up!

One of the features of their vineyards which lie on the fertile plains within the shadow of the famous Alpilles ranges is the variety of grapes they cultivate, due to the constant experimentation carried out by Henri Milan over the years.

The accompanying map shows a plan of the vineyards at surrounding the cellar (the cave).



Milan vineyards and grape varieties – Tasting centre is at the Cave

Maps like the one above and in the photo below, which shows the vines in Eyragues, are on the walls of the cellar. They are a great prop when visiting to help understand where each wine comes from.



Plantings in Eyragues

Behind the tasting room lies the winery where all of the wines are made and matured. The rooms are packed to the rafters with very tall tanks and very large foudres as well as some smaller tanks and barrels for more experimental wines.



The highly regarded Le Carrée in barrels



This large foudre with the 2019 Luna & Gaia orange wine

And finally we have a photo of the delicious Milan Nouveau made entirely of the Mouvédre grape variety (you can see where it is grown on the map above). It is maturing in a fibreglass tank, tanks which are widely used in France because they have an adjustable lid which can be lowered to sit on the top of the wine. The lid is circled by a rubber tube (like a tyre tube) which can be pumped up to form a tight seal.

If you look closely below at the scale on the side of the tank you will see that there are 2,700 litres of Milan Nouveau in the tank!



The fibreglass tank

Wine investors affected by climate change

An article we read recently was food for thought as it talked about how investors in wine were currently increasing their investments because they are worried that the changes in climate will cause the typicity of certain regions to be lost.

By this they mean that it is likely that a Bordeaux will no longer taste like a Bordeaux as new varieties are introduced (this has already happened) which are more resilient in that area. And the same applies to other regions such as Burgundy and Champagne.

This was also reflected in an article in Time magazine by Mélissa Godin who wrote about the likelihood of the popular, but sensitive, Merlot variety being unlikely to survive given the changes in the climate in Bordeaux. She wrote:

Climate change—which has increased average global temperatures, along with the frequency and severity of droughts, heat waves and other erratic weather patterns—is changing the flavor of French wines. Warmer temperatures (sic) cause grapes to ripen faster, resulting in more sugar in the grape. That ultimately affects the alcohol content, acidity level and the color of wine. While scientists do not know how long current varieties of Merlot will be able to last under changing conditions, they have said that Merlot will be the first victim of climate change amongst grape varieties in the region.

There is even a trial underway to see if varieties such as Sangiovese and Assyrtiko will be able to survive and act as a partial replacement for Merlot which comprises 60% of the planted area in Bordeaux!

So, in the meantime the investors will be putting their money into the current wines before the essential flavour changes forever. And it's a reminder that the impacts of climate change are pervasively insidious, affecting most aspects of life.

Appellation: Aligoté appellations

Aligoté deserves much more attention than it currently gets, despite many well-known vigneron swearing by it including Aubert de Villaine from Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Domaine Ponsot, Domaine Coche-Dury, Sylvain Pataille and, of course, Alice and Olivier de Moor.

It is often described as the “second” white grape of Burgundy and also as a “simple” wine! Well, if it is so simple, why has Aubert de Villaine established his own vineyard dedicated entirely to Aligoté and why did he put so much energy into establishing the appellation of Bouzeron which is an Aligoté-only appellation? And why is Aligoté one of the white grape varieties authorised for the Morey-Saint-Denis premier cru appellation?

To understand why Chardonnay and not Aligoté stands out in Burgundy, we have to understand that two factors have to align to produce a truly interesting wine. First, the grapes must be grown in very good terroir and second the grapes have to be looked after from inception through to the winemaking process by a vigneron who intrinsically understands the grape and what it is capable of.

Addressing the first issue, we need to be mindful of the effect that the phylloxera infestation has in Burgundy in the late 19th Century. Most of the existing vines were wiped out including both Chardonnay and Aligoté. In order to overcome phylloxera, vigneron needed to graft vines onto American rootstock which was resistant.

When this was done, most of the best sites were replanted with Chardonnay and Aligoté was relegated to the valley floors where the terroir wasn't as conducive to producing fine wines. Hence, chardonnay got a head start over its white cousin.

This resulted in vigneron concentrating more on Chardonnay rather than Aligoté and new plantings of white vines being almost entirely dedicated to Chardonnay.

We were lucky enough to become interested in Aligoté about twenty-five years ago on a tour around parts of Burgundy with wine writer Paul Cardieu. After visiting a producer from the village of Chambolle-Musigny it was 12:00 o'clock and lunch at that time is compulsory in France.

Luckily there is a very good restaurant in that village called La Chambolle-Musigny. Paul deliberately chose an Aligoté for lunch and explained that many winemakers in Burgundy drink wines made from this grape at lunch as it is often lower in alcohol and matches foods much better than other varieties due to the higher acid content.

When we started visiting Burgundy looking for natural wines, we were conscious of our earlier experience with Aligoté. During our early visits to Burgundy we were lucky enough to secure a number of producers and all but one had Aligoté vineyards. We think that our portfolio that includes de Moor, Fanny Sabre, Domaine Derain, Sextant, and Recrue des Sens (Yann Durieux) is a wonderful expression / advertisement of the pleasure to be had by drinking Aligoté. The one Burgundy producer that doesn't have Aligoté planted is La Cadette and they have their own interesting and different varieties namely César and Melon de Bourgogne which are both allowable varieties in northern Burgundy appellations (in the Yonne département).

Now we should introduce another idea here. There are actually at least four appellations that cater for Aligoté in Burgundy.

Bourgogne Aligoté

The first of the appellations is the Bourgogne Aligoté appellation which was actually one of the first tranche of appellations created in France in the 1930s and which covers some 1577 hectares of vines planted throughout Burgundy.

The first producer that we spoke to in Burgundy when we started to import natural wines to Australia was Fanny Sabre. She had taken over the family vineyards after the premature death of her father.



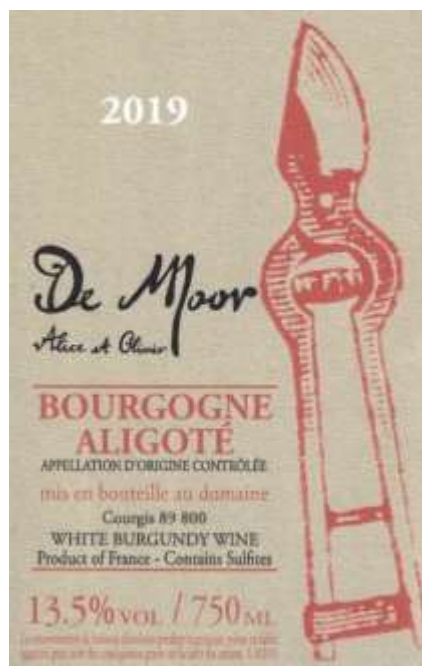
Her father loved Aligoté – it was his “go to” drink. He was so enamoured of this grape variety that he planted a vineyard of it in Pommard – an area better known for the strong Pinot Noir wines that thrive on the iron rich soils there.

It is from this vineyard that Fanny makes her Aligoté that she releases under the Bourgogne Aligoté appellation.

You will notice on the accompanying label that the appellation is listed as:

Appellation Bourgogne Aligoté Controlée

which is the designation for this appellation. Pommard, where the vines grow cannot be mentioned because that is a red wine only appellation.



And, of course, no discussion of Aligoté would be complete without a mention of Alice and Olivier de Moor who make truly delicious white wines from Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Aligoté from their vines in Chablis, Courgis, Chitry and Saint Bris in the northern extremes of Burgundy.

Their old-vine Aligoté is actually from near the village of Saint-Bris which has its own appellation. However, this appellation is an oddity in Burgundy being dedicated to Sauvignon Blanc (because the limestone terroir is very similar to that of Sancerre).

This terroir is also very conducive to Aligoté and the de Moors have an amazing pre-phylloxera vineyard that was planted in 1902. There are very few vineyards in France where the vines are over 120 years old!

As can be seen from their regular Aligoté label (drawn by the talented Olivier) they release the wine under the

Bourgogne Aligoté appellation.

Their Plantation 1902 cuvée has the age of the vines displayed prominently as part of the name.

Another producer we got to know early in our importing days was the ebullient Dominique Derain. He lives in the wine village of Saint Aubin which lies to the south of the city of Beaune among some very good terroir, especially for white wines.

He also had a plot of Aligoté and, as well as a classic cuvée, started making a wine called Allez Goutons which was a word play on the grape name that means “go on and drink”. It’s a wine designed to be released early and is for early drinking too. It’s fresh, unfiltered and sometimes has just a hint of spritz – not bubbles but the sense of bubbles.

This wine became a regular component of our Derain order and has always been a very popular wine in Australia. Notice from the label that this one was not issued under the appellation but instead is labelled as Vin de France. The more classic cuvée is bottled using the appellation.

During our visits to Dominique, we also got to know his “apprentice”, a young man called Julien Altaber and Dominique’s assistant Carole Schwab. Julien was making his own wines in Dominique’s cellar and we were so impressed with his technical ability and his willingness to think outside the square that we started importing his wines as well.



Julien had located two plots of Aligoté. One was also in Pommard and the other was quite close to Saint Aubin near the village of Puligny which is famous for the stunning white wines made from Chardonnay here.

The interesting thing about the plot that Julien bought near Poligny was that the vines are actually a variant of Aligoté known as Aligoté Doré or golden Aligoté. The other attraction is that the vines are over 80 years old. This variant of Aligoté has a higher sugar content than normal Aligoté and produces a richer and more complex wine. It is the same

variant used in the Bouzeron appellation described below.

We should also mention another of our producers from this area as it was an Aligoté that we first tasted from his portfolio. This was the amazing Love and Pif from Yann Durieux who has his main vineyards in the elevated Hautes Cotes de Nuits.

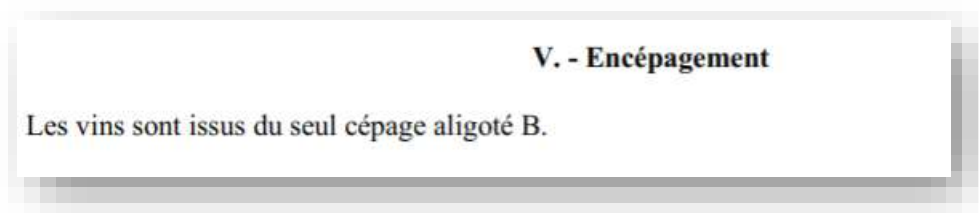
The Love and Pif is a lovely wine with great texture and a central core of acidity that makes it a great match for a wide range of foods. Like many vigneron, he chooses not to use the appellation for any of his wines now.

Interestingly, he also makes two macerated versions of Aligoté which are quite amazing. These are orange-tinged beauties that pick up some of the tannins and other polyphenols from the skins during the short maceration (about 21 days) that Yann allows. Called Les Ponts Blancs and Les Grands Ponts Blancs, these are very rare wines but we do have small quantities occasionally.



Bouzeron Appellation

This is the appellation in the south of Burgundy where Aligoté is the only permitted grape variety as can be seen from the extract from the Bouzeron “Cahier des charges” below.



Encépagement means grape varieties and the rest of the text translates as “The wines are made from a single grape variety Aligoté Blanc”.

This is the appellation where Aubert de Villaine from the prestigious Domaine de la Romanée-Conti has established his vineyard planted to Aligoté Doré (Golden Aligoté) and Aligoté Vert which is the most common variant of this grape.

Crémant de Bourgogne Appellation

Aligoté is permitted in the sparkling Crémant de Bourgogne appellation as can be seen from the extract below taken from the INAO “Cahier des Charges” document where the rules for the appellation are laid out.

V. - Encépagement

Les vins sont issus des cépages suivants :

- cépages rouges : gamay N, pinot gris G, pinot noir N ;
- cépages blancs : aligoté B, chardonnay B, melon B, pinot blanc B, sacy B.

You will notice that most of the authorised Burgundy grape varieties are allowed in the Crémant appellation. The only ones missing are Sauvignon Blanc, Sauvignon Gris, Gamay de Bouze, Gamay de Freaux, Gamay de Chaudenay and César.

Coteaux Bourguignons Appellation

The Coteaux Bourguignons appellation covers the entire area of Burgundy with some exceptions made for particular grape varieties. It was created in 2011 to replace Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire (a name we loved and were sorry to see disappear!). This appellation is often used when a winemaker wants to blend more than one variety (e.g. Pinot Noir and Gamay or Chardonnay and Aligoté).

V. - Encépagement

1°- Encépagement

- a) - Les vins blancs sont issus des cépages suivants : aligoté B, chardonnay B, melon B, pinot blanc B et pinot gris G.
- b) - Les vins rouges sont issus des cépages suivants :
 - cépages principaux : gamay N, pinot noir N et pour le seul département de l'Yonne le César N.;
 - cépages accessoires : chardonnay B, gamay de Bouze N, gamay de Chaudenay N, pinot blanc B, pinot gris G.
- c) - Les vins rosés sont issus des cépages suivants :
 - cépages principaux : gamay N, pinot gris G, pinot noir N et pour le seul département de l'Yonne le César N.
 - cépages accessoires : chardonnay B et pinot blanc B.

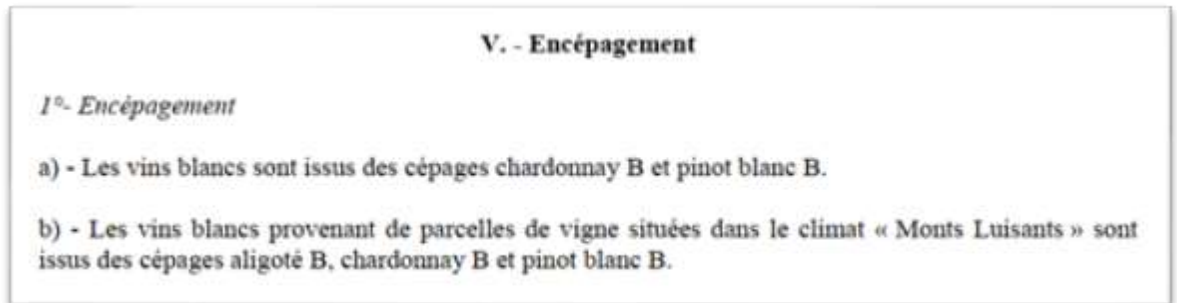
You will notice from the extract above that Aligoté is a permitted variety so a winemaker could label their wine as Coteaux Bourguignons Aligoté, however the Bourgogne Aligoté appellation described above is considered more prestigious.

There is a restriction on the use of César in that it can only be used in the northern Yonne département.

Morey-Saint – Denis Appellation

We should hasten to add that we don't have any Aligoté from this appellation as it is very rare. But for completeness sake we should mention it because it is the only Premier Cru appellation that permits the use of Aligoté due to the fact that the terroir is perfect for this variety.

The rule for the grape varieties for this appellation is shown below.



This is an extract from the rules relating to the Morey-Saint-Denis appellation which lies north of the city of Beaune.

What this is saying at point a) is that the wine can be made from either Chardonnay or Pinot Blanc (or by inference a mixture of these) from anywhere in the appellation area.

But at point b) you will see that provided the grapes are grown in the sub-region or *climat* known as Mont Luisants then the wine can be made from Aligoté and hence attach the Premier Cru designation on the label.

Grape variety: Vermentino

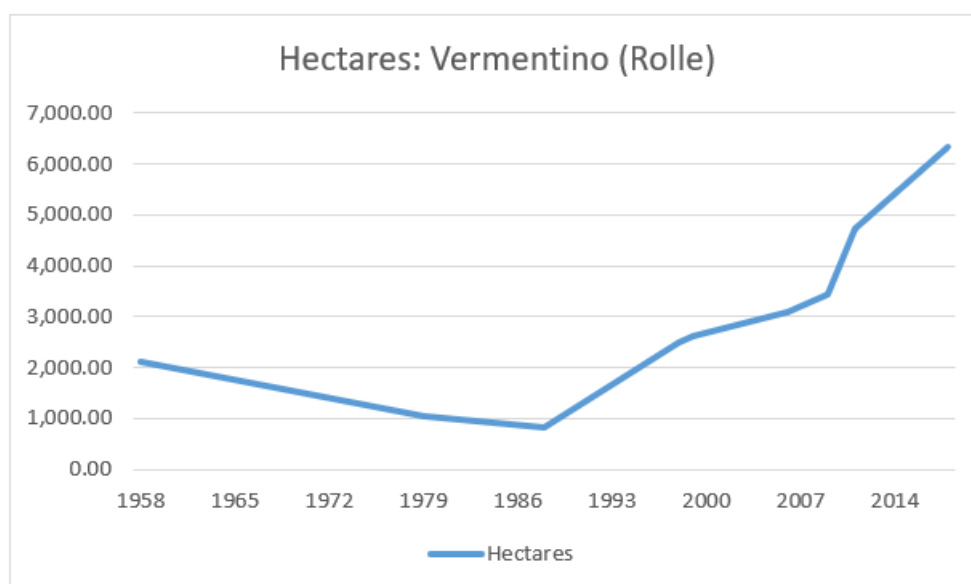
Vermentino was almost certainly a grape variety that originated in Italy, possibly in the region of Tuscany in the fifteenth century. However, there are many competing theories, none of which have been supported by DNA testing.

There is also a plethora of names. It is also known as "Rolle", "Varlentin", "Verlentin" in parts of France, "Garbesso" in the Var in Provence, "Vermentinu" in Corsica and "Favorita" or "Pigato" in Tuscany.

The Australian author of *Journal of a Tour through some of the Vineyards of Spain and France*, James Busby doesn't mention Rolle or Vermentino in his 1833 account of his travels in France, even though he spent some time in Provence.

As can be seen from the following graph, the area planted to Vermentino in France decreased steadily from 1958 through to 1986 but has increased rapidly over the past 40 years reaching almost 6,500 hectares of planting at the present time.

This sustained and relatively rapid increase in the area under vine confirms our view that this is an excellent grape variety for the production of interesting and compelling white wines.



Hectares in France, courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

The leaves of the Vermentino grape variety have five distinct "lobes" with the leaf being almost semi-circular. As the leaf advances in age, they change from a yellow colour to a dark green colour. There is also a distinctly circular "gap" where the petiole attaches to the leaf. The petiole is the connector between the leaf and the stem of the vine. The circular gap can be seen very clearly on the right-hand leaf below which shows the underside.



Photo courtesy of [Vitis International Variety Catalogue](#)

The 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. The grapes are slightly off-circular being slightly (but not very) oblong. As the grapes ripen they become flecked with brown which you can just see appearing on the right side of the photo below.



Photo courtesy of [foodtourist.com](#)

Two of our producers are committed to Vermentino. The Milan family in Provence use this grape variety in their Luna and Gaïa, their Papillon Blanc (the one with the butterfly on the label) and also their flagship Le Grand Blanc.

Philippe Formentin from Opi d'Aqui is a big fan of Vermentino and uses it to make his Abricotier and Les Cliquets. With the Abricotier which is essentially a red wine made from Grenache Noir he lightens it by adding both Grenache Blanc and Vermentino to create a lightness and vivacity to the Grenache which we talked about in the last newsletter.

He also does the same with Les Cliquets which, again, is made from Grenache Noir lightened with Vermentino.



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.