

WINE Talk: June 2022

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 109

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 have four packs, including some with newly-released wines which we have reserved to ensure we have some to offer to our newsletter subscribers. Pack 1, unusually, is a dozen wines, all of which are recently-arrived. All the packs are very limited this month.

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 four packs which we have available.
- A story about “ropiness” in wines.
- A story about the little-known Saint-Bris appellation in Burgundy.
- Some news from the wine world including a story about the factors that affect the growth and quality of grape vines.
- A story about the morphology of vine leaves.
- A story about the Pinot Blanc grape variety.

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 a plan by return email before processing your order.

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.

What's New

We are releasing together a small quantity of wines from our Alsace producer Jean-Marc Dreyer and the Mosse family.

There is very little available from either domaine so we decided to release them together to perhaps make it easier, if you are interested in both producers, to make up a mixed case. We are sorry the quantities are so limited, but many people expressed advance interest and most made a purchase. The availability problem was exacerbated because we decided not to release two of the Mosse cuvées that we have a reasonable quantity of and which we had mentioned in advance would be available – the second shipment of Chenin 2020 and Magic of Juju. They have an issue at the moment, and we have decided to hold them for release later in the year. We've described the problem in one of the other articles in this newsletter.

Below is a brief summary of the available wines.

Jean-Marc Dreyer



Jean-Marc in one of his many plots and large old foudre for maturing his wines

Jean Marc has literally dozens of small parcels of vines surrounding the village of Rosheim, not far from Strasbourg, but we first met him at a wine salon in the tiny village of Glaine-Montaigut, many hundreds of kilometres away in the Auvergne. It took some years of subsequent visits to his cellar before we convinced him to sell us some wine and the first shipment arrived at the end of February 2020, just before the world turned upside down.

Since then we have been able to receive an annual allocation and what we are releasing, mostly from the generous 2020 vintage, is our third shipment.

His vines are certified biodynamic and he works without any additives in the cellar, and without filtration and fining. Aging is generally in old wood, a mix of foudre and larger barrels. You can see some in one of the photos above.

The majority of his cuvées, particularly in this shipment, are macerated white grapes from classic Alsace varieties. The macerated wines he makes with a single variety from the same vintage are all in his Origin series. Despite similar winemaking for all of them the differences between each variety are marked, from the heady aromas of the Muscat and Gewurztraminer to a saline, minerality in the Auxerrois.

The wines all work remarkably well with food and are best served at cellar rather than fridge temperature, so the nuances are more detectable.

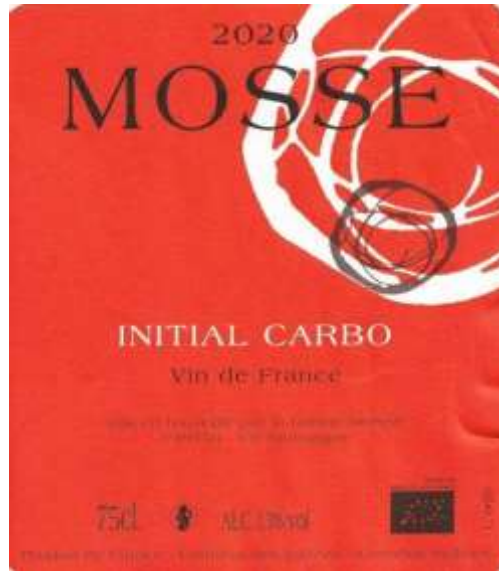
The other two macerated cuvées are blends (Finisterra and Stratos). They are also repeats of wines from the same vintage we had last year so you may already have some. We also have a small quantity of Elios, which is his early-drinking Pinot Noir.

Here is a list of the available wines with maximum quantities. These are the full prices, prior to any discount if ordered in a 6 pack.

Wine	Type	Variety	Price
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Finisterra 2019	Orange	Gewurztraminer, Muscat, Pinot Gris, Auxerrois	\$64
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Sylvaner Origin 2020	Orange	Sylvaner	\$59
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Riesling Origin 2020	Orange	Riesling	\$61
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Auxerrois Origin 2020	Orange	Auxerrois	\$59
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Pinot Gris Origin 2020 - 1 bottle limit	Orange	Pinot Gris	\$64
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Muscat Origin 2020 - 1 bottle limit	Orange	Muscat d'Alsace	\$68
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Gewurztraminer Origin 2020 - 1 bottle limit	Orange	Gewurztraminer	\$64
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Pinot Noir Elios 2020 – 1 bottle limit	Red	Pinot Noir	\$59
Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Stratos 2019	Orange	Riesling, Auxerrois, Sylvaner	\$64

Mosse family

As one of the producers we have worked with for the longest the Mosse family need no introduction and usually neither do most of the wines. However, three of the wines we are releasing are new cuvées. Both are from relatively generous vintages (2020 and 2018) which allowed the new generation of vigneron, René and Agnès' sons Joseph and Sylvestre, to try some new techniques.



Initial Carbo and Nova are both made with grapes harvested from Bonnes Blanches in 2020. On a bed of schist, this parcel of middle-aged vines (approximately 40 years old) is perhaps the heart of this domaine, and certainly the parcel closest to René Mosse's heart.

Initial Carbo, which is a Chenin Blanc that had 11 days of carbonic maceration, has a striking orange label just to make sure you know it's macerated! The wine was aged for 10 months in oak barrels.

To make Nova the destemmed grapes were macerated for 7 months (218 days) in an infusion of its own juice in a wooden tank with no pumping over or punchdown. This exceptional wine, with very fine tannins, drinks more like a white wine, so we have classified it as such. We only have a tiny number of bottles so expect it to sell out almost immediately.

The third new cuvée is not experimental like the first two wines. It's the domaine's 2018 Cabernet Franc, some of which we have received in a previous shipment. Destemmed grapes were macerated gently for 3 weeks with no punchdown but pumpover every 3 days. After fermentation it was pressed and aged in barrels for about 10 months. At that point, a selection of the barrels was assembled for a second year of aging in foudre. That second year of aging is what made this cuvée. It was bottled in August 2020 and had further aging in bottle prior to its recent release.

Bangarang this year is a fun, juicy, fruity mix of 70% Grolleau Noir and 30% Gamay. Whole bunches were macerated for one week prior to pressing and aging in barrel for about 6 months. It was bottled in March this year. With only 11.5% alcohol it is perfect for picnics.

It is a one bottle limit for each wine, except for Bangarang which is up to 3 bottles.

Wine	Type	Variety	Price
Mosse Initial Carbo 2020	Orangeish	Chenin Blanc	\$79
Mosse Nova 2020 (white but made with 218 days of infusion of destemmed grapes in their own juice) 1 bottle only	White	Chenin Blanc	\$101
Mosse Cabernet Franc Vintage 2018 - 1 bottle only	Red	Cabernet Franc	\$59
Mosse Bangarang 2021	Light Red	Grolleau Noir, Gamay	\$42

What's next

We feel like we have been writing this same story for months but our next release will be an allocation of l'Octavin wines. It will happen over the next week or two. If you have asked for an Octavin allocation any time since mid March then there is no need to contact us. We'll be in contact with you with an offer soon.

Bear with us though – each offer is bespoke and individually emailed so it takes a while to work through them all. We also will be allocating Robinot soon too, and it's looking increasingly likely we may also end up allocating our recently-arrived shipment of Marie Courtin and Piillot wines.

During July we anticipate releasing Sextant, Derain, Sylvan Bock, and Domaine de la Garrelière wines and some Fremont cider and Calvados. Once again, if you have put in a request for any of these producers in the last few months we will contact you in advance of their public release.

Pack 1: New arrivals 12 Bottle Pack (Mainly 15% Discount)

Note: 3 packs available



We haven't offered a 12 pack for quite some time, but we had an opportunity this month, even though we can only offer 3 of these 12-packs in total.

There are some great wines in this pack with three pristine Burgundies from the Cadette family including the two sought-after whites.

There are three wines from the Mosse family as well, Initial Carbo 2020, Cabernet Franc Vintage 2018 and Bangarang 2021. They are all described in the previous story.

We then have three great wines from Alice at l'Octavin including a red made from Grenache grapes picked almost within sight of the house we used to have in the village of Caromb in Provence. We also have included a Roi des Cepages made from Riesling and Cigone Green made from Gewurztraminer (50%) and Pinot Gris (50%) both of which were picked in Alsace and vinified in the Jura. These are all from the new shipment we are currently allocating.

We then have included three stunning wines from Alsace made by Jean-Marc Dreyer each of which are lightly macerated to create amazing wines with a purity that is compelling.

The complete list is:

- La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2020
- La Cadette Vézelay Les Saulniers 2020
- Montanet-Thoden Bourgogne Rouge Garance 2020
- Mosse Initial Carbo 2020
- Mosse Cabernet Franc Vintage 2018
- Mosse Bangarang 2021
- l'Octavin Ganache 2020
- l'Octavin Le Roi des Cepages 2018

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- l'Octavin La Cigogne Green 2020
- Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Finisterra 2019
- Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Riesling Origin 2020
- Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Pinot Noir Elios 2020

The RRP for this selection of 12 different wines is \$731 but the pack price is only \$631.20. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge.

**Pack 2: Tidy Up Pack (Mainly 15% Discount with some bargains
(approximately 27% in total))**

Note: 1 pack only



We must point out here that two of the wines included in this pack have water damaged labels, but the wines should be fine! We have applied a very good discount to make up for the fact that the labels won't be Instagram-able.

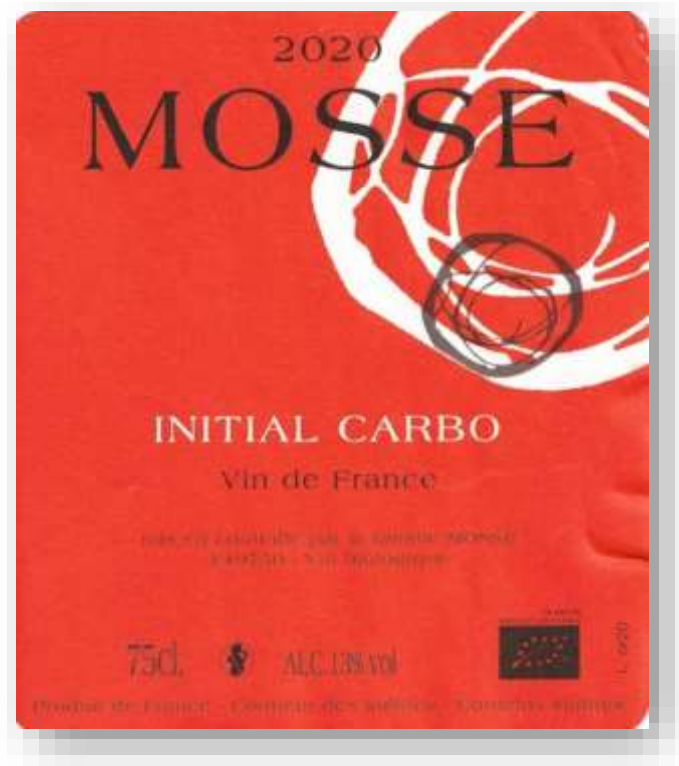
It is, however a very interesting collection with a red and a white from Axel Prüfer, two from the Cadette family, one from the Karnage duo in the Jura and one Chenin Blanc from the Mosse family. The Mosse wine is from a shipment we received earlier in the year, not this current one.

- Le Temps des Cerises Un Pas de Côté 2020
- Le Temps des Cerises La Peur du Rouge 2020
- La Cadette Vézelay Les Saulniers 2020 (water damaged label)
- Montanet-Thoden Bourgogne Rouge Garance 2020 (water damaged label)
- Karnage Kari 2020
- Mosse Chenin 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 different wines is \$341 but the pack price is only \$249.60. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 3: Mosse Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 6 packs only



We are offering 6 of these packs of new Mosse arrivals to our newsletter customers, including some wines which sold out before we released them generally.. There are 5 different wines.

The pack includes Initial Carbo, Cabernet Franc Vintage, as well as the ever-popular Bangarang (of which there is two bottles). Refer to the earlier article about the new arrivals from Mosse for more details those wines. The other two (the Savennieres Arena and Les Bonnes Blanches, both from the 2020 vintage) are classic Chenin Blanc cuvées which the family has made for many years.

- Mosse Initial Carbo 2020
- Mosse Cabernet Franc Vintage 2018
- Mosse Savennieres Arena 2020
- Mosse Les Bonnes Blanches 2020
- Mosse Bangarang 2021 (2 bottles)

The RRP for this selection of 5 different wines is \$332 but the pack price is only \$282.20. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 4: Reservation Left Over Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 1 pack only



This pack has no reds, just two orange wines and three different white wines. The orange wines are both from Julien Altaber in Burgundy, with one made from Aligoté (Po à Po) and one made from Pinot Gris (MaMaMia).

We note that Gris (grey) grapes are making a big comeback in France with many producers proudly making wines from 100% Gris grapes including Sauvignon Gris (see the Saint-Bris story), Clairette Gris (in the Languedoc), Grolleau Gris (the Mosse family) and Grenache Gris (Mataburro in Roussillon) along with many other gris variations of other grape varieties.

The other three wines are all made by the Mosse family with 100% Chenin Blanc including two from their top vineyards namely Les Bonnes Blanches and Le Rouchefer. These are from earlier shipments, not the recent one.

- Sextant - Julien Altaber Po à Po 2020
- Sextant - Julien Altaber MaMaMia 2020
- Mosse Chenin 2020 (2 bottles)
- Mosse Les Bonnes Blanches 2018
- Mosse Le Rouchefer 2019

The RRP for this selection of 5 different wines is \$403 but the pack price is only \$342.55. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination we may have to add a small freight charge.

Some thoughts about grapevines



Healthy vines in the Les Cigales vineyard

It is an incontrovertible fact that traditionally bred grapevines like three things – sun, warmth and wind. Some people would also add, almost counter-intuitively, one other element, namely snow in winter.

The sun is to help the leaves grow and hence provide shade to the grapes. The heat provided by the sun is to help the grapes ripen – preferably not too fast so that the polyphenols have a chance to develop into the correct structures (some call this phenolic ripeness). The wind is important for ensuring that diseases such as mildew and odium don't have a chance to develop on the leaves.

And then there is the question of snow or heavy frosts in winter. There are many winemakers, particularly in areas such as the mountains of Sicily who look forward to the winter snow because it kills diseases that are lurking in the soil waiting for warmer times to invade the vines.

Exploring leaf structure of grapevines

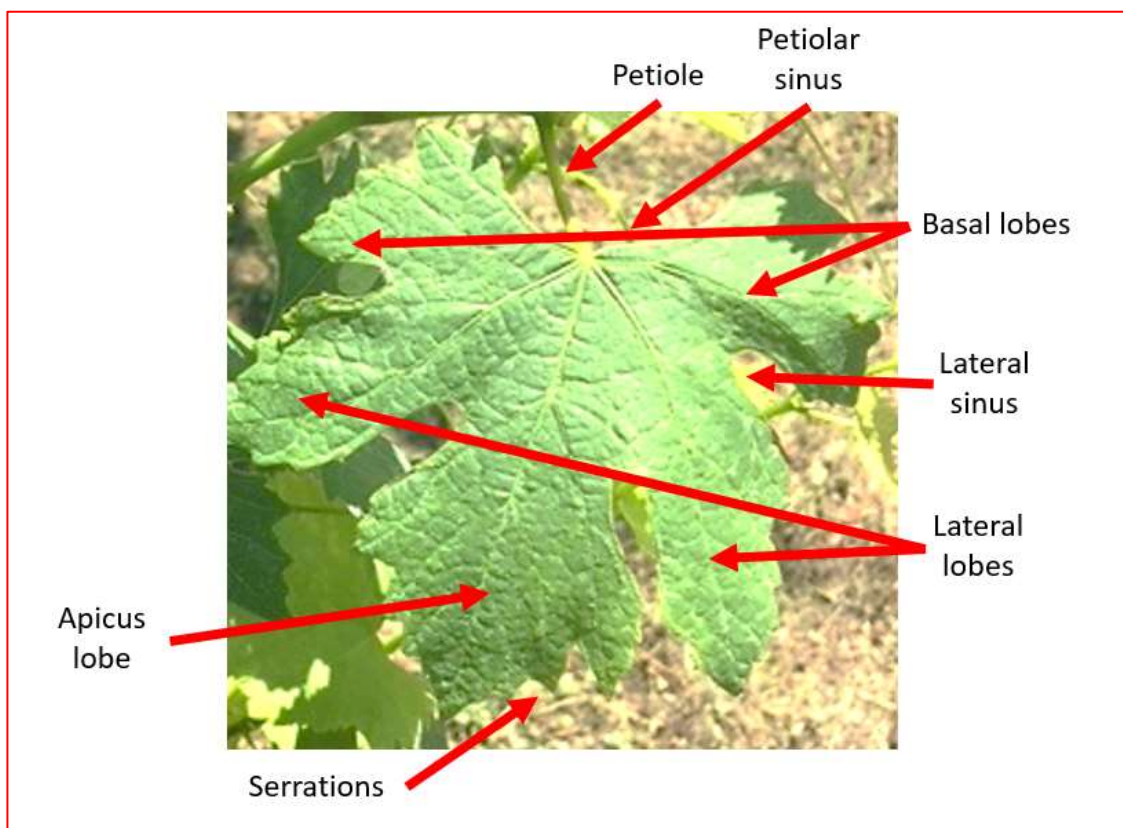
We always include a picture of the grape leaves for each grape type we feature in this newsletter. We therefore thought that we should explain the structure of these leaves in a bit more detail.

To do this we have used a photograph we took of a Ploussard vine just outside the village of Pupillin. We chose this vine because the sign at the entrance to the village tells you that you are entering the “world capital” of Ploussard!¹

Another reason for choosing this vine is that the various features of the leaf are prominent as opposed, say, to Pinot Noir leaves which are more circular and do not have clear delineations between the various structural features.

The leaf of a grapevine is connected to the stem via a small stalk called a petiole. This stalk can be short (quite often) and occasionally long (see the historic Len de l’El picture below).

The purpose of this stalk (apart from keeping the leaf connected) is to supply water to the leaf so that the photosynthesis process can occur. This is where the leaf absorbs carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and combines with the water to produce sugars for food. The process of creating the sugar leaves some spare oxygen molecules (6 of them) which are then released by the leaf into the atmosphere so that we can breathe!²



Ploussard leaf – photo © foodtourist 2017

¹ Ten kilometres away the locals call this grape variety Poulsard!

² The chemical equation is: $6\text{CO}_2 + 6\text{H}_2\text{O} \rightarrow \text{C}_6\text{H}_{12}\text{O}_6 + 6\text{O}_2$

Most leaves on grapevines have five “lobes” but some are more pronounced than others. Ploussard is a good example of where the lobes are each quite pronounced and easy to identify. If you look at the leaf of Pinot Noir below you will see that the individual lobes are nowhere near as pronounced.

The lobe at the front of the leaf is called the Apicus Lobe. The two on the side are called Lateral Lobes and the ones nearest the petiole are the Basal Lobes.

In between each lobe is an indent called a sinus. The one where the petiole is attached is called the petiolar sinus and the others are called lateral sinuses.

Each lobe can also have serrations on the end which can be quite pointed or rounded depending on the variety.

The photo below shows a leaf of Pinot Noir. As you can see the lobes are nowhere near as pronounced as is the case with Ploussard leaves and the sinuses are almost completely absent (except for a small lateral lobe on the left side in this case).



Pinot Noir leaf has less pronounced sinuses

Another grape that has a small difference in structure is the rare South-West France grape variety called Len de l’El or Loin de l’Oeil which is still found in some vineyards in the Gaillac region including our producer Causse Marines. This name translates roughly as “far from the eye” as the leaf and the grape bunches have a long petiole thus making them far from the eye on the stem.

You can see this petiole in the drawing below which comes from an amazing series of books by Viala and Vermorel published in the early 1900s, where each grape variety has a painstakingly drawn representation of the grape clusters and leaves as you can see.



[Len de l'El with long petiole - Wikipedia](#)

“Ropiness” in wine

In the almost decade and a half that we have been importing wines from France, we have detected “ropiness” in perhaps three or four batches of wine – so it is not a common fault, but one that causes a problem when it occurs.

One of the biggest problems is that it can appear many months after the wine has been bottled, so the wine may have arrived in Australia before it is detected by the producer.

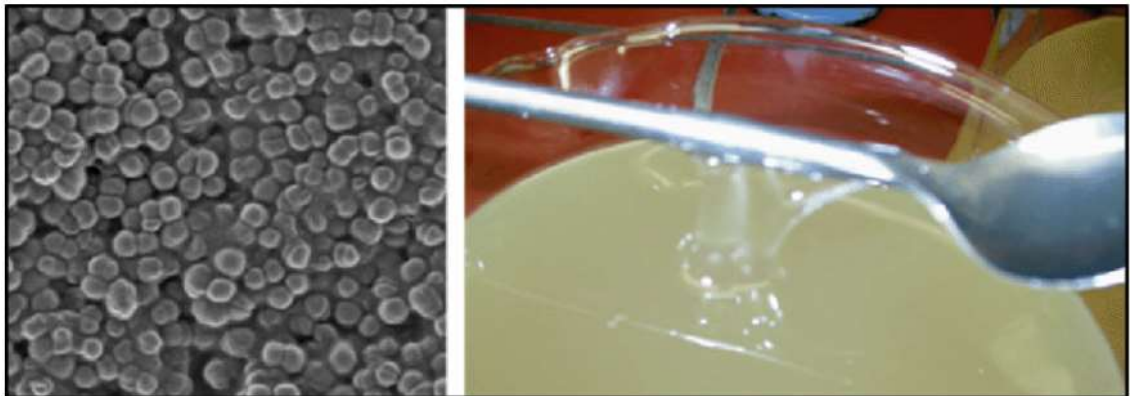
We thought it might be useful to explain what causes this problem because it is indirectly related to climate change and hence may become more prevalent in the future.

Ropiness is easy to detect because the wine becomes “thick” and almost elastic and this texture can be noticed when you pour the wine into a glass because the wine “hesitates” as it leaves the bottle. Confusingly, this has no obvious impact on the flavour, just the texture, but the first time you see it, it is positively disturbing!

If you know the problem exists in a given wine, then one solution is to give it a vigorous shaking an hour or so before you are going to serve it and the texture usually returns to normal. But that’s an emergency solution. The best solution is to wait for it to eventually go away.

So, what causes this strange texture? Well, scientific studies have narrowed the culprit down to a bacteria called *Pediococcus parvulus* which is one of the lactic acid bacteria family commonly found in wine (although *Oenococcus oeni* is the main player in converting malic acid to lactic acid in wines). These bacteria are the ones which carry out the malolactic fermentation that many winemakers encourage, particularly in white wines.

In the diagram³ below you can see a microscopic view of the *Pediococcus* bacteria on the left and the “ropiness” of the wine on the right.



The way it works is that the *Pediococcus parvulus* bacteria synthesize an exopolysaccharide called glucan (quite a large molecule) which increases the viscosity of the wine.

Now this only occurs in environments where the pH of the wine is over 3.5 – in other words if the acid is low.

And this is where we bring in climate change. As temperatures during the winemaking period get higher, (the season is already getting very warm in France with temperatures over 40

³ Diagram courtesy of ResearchGate.

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degrees Centigrade already causing issues) then the acidity in the wine decreases. So ropiness is something we may see more frequently in future.

Eventually the bacteria degrades and dies and the wine returns to its normal state but this can take several months or longer. This is the reason why we have not released our recent shipment of Mosse 2020 Chenin Blanc and 2021 Magic of Juju, which we'd previously advertised would be arriving soon.

Appellation: Saint Bris (Burgundy)

If you ask people about the white wines of Burgundy, most will be able to name Chardonnay as the main white grape variety. Some may even list Aligoté, which has its own appellations (Bouzeron and Bourgogne Aligoté) but is also permitted in other appellations including the Crémant de Bourgogne appellation. Some may even mention Melon de Bourgogne, Pinot Blanc or Pinot Gris.

However very few will mention the three other white wines that are legal in Burgundy, namely Sacy, Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris.

Saint Bris is a curious appellation based around the village of Saint-Bris-le-Vineux in the northern parts of Burgundy that gets little recognition, despite two interesting facts. The first is that it is quite close to Chablis (and a few kilometres south of Auxerre) and produces some excellent white wines that spring from the beautiful limestone soils. The second is that it is the only appellation in Burgundy that allows wines made from Sauvignon Blanc and/or Sauvignon Gris.



According to the Cahier des Charges which is the legal document from the INAO which sets down the rules for each appellation, these two grape varieties can be grown any of five neighbouring communes of the Yonne department namely Chitry, Irancy, Quenne, Saint-Bris-le-Vineux and Vincelottes. These communes cover an area of approximately 100 hectares.

Historically, the wines from this area were made from a variety of grape types including Roublot which has now almost completely disappeared.

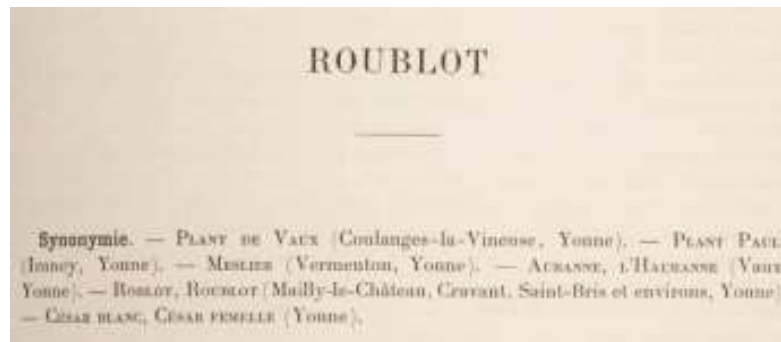
In the famous “tome” from Viala and Vermorel in 1905 that includes a description of all known grape varieties including the iconic drawings of the grapes and leaves, they say of Roublot:

Ce cépage, cultivé de temps immémorial dans l'Yonne, semble localisé dans certains cantons viticoles de ce département, entre Auxerre, Chablis, Avallon et Mailly-le-Château;il est désigné sous un nom différent dans chaque canton, même d'une commune à l'autre.

This translates as:

This variety, grown from time immemorial in Yonne, seems to be located in certain wine-growing cantons of this département, between Auxerre, Chablis, Avallon and Mailly-le-Château; it is referred to as a different name in each canton, even from one commune to another.

The main thing in this snippet is that Roublot seems to have been a very old grape variety that had always been grown in the area (Yonne), but that it disappeared very quickly, almost certainly as a result of the phylloxera that swept through the area at about the same time that Viala and Vermorel assembled their massive work.



A snippet from the Viala and Vermorel book

They also point out that this grape was often called Arbane (but probably not the Arbane used in nearby Champagne) and César Blanc, a white variety of the very rare César Noir which is still used by La Cadette in one of their Bourgogne Rouge cuvées.

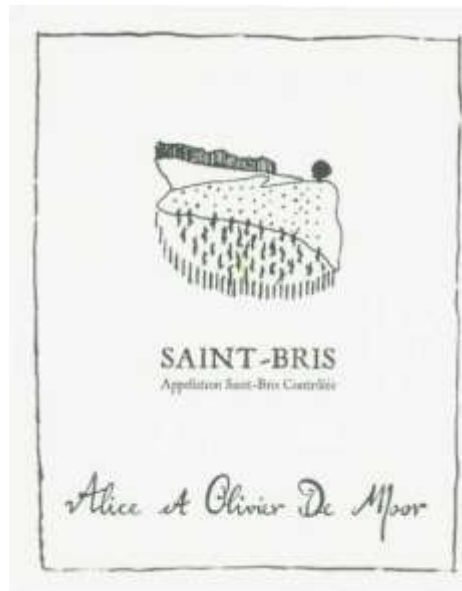
So, when this grape disappeared people started experimenting with other varieties including Aligoté which also grows very well in these communes. Alice and Olivier de Moor have a patch of this grape variety in Saint Bris which was planted in 1902 – but wines made from this grape cannot use the Saint Bris appellation.

And so it came to pass that some growers tried Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris due to the known affinity of these grape varieties for limestone soils (as per Sancerre, for example). And they were right! The vines thrived here and soon the wines became recognised as being of such quality as to deserve their own appellation.



Sauvignon Gris grapes

However, it was not until 2003 that the appellation was proclaimed allowing producers to proudly display Saint Bris on their bottles of Sauvignon Blanc and/or Sauvignon Gris.



An historic label of Alice and Olivier from their official Saint-Bris cuvée

Now we consider some of the other rules apart from the grape varieties that are permitted to call a wine a Saint-Bris. We have already discussed the two permitted grape varieties and the five communes where the vines can be grown.

Other rules include:

- The vineyards must be planted to a minimum density of 7000 vines per hectare.
- The rows of vines must be less than 1.3 metres apart and the vines within a row must not be less than 0.8 metres apart.
- Pruning must be according to the Guyot simple method (which trains one or two fruiting arms along a main wire).
- The height of the trellised foliage must be at least equal to 0.6 times the spacing between the rows.
- The number of dead or missing vines is limited to a maximum of 20%. New vines to be planted must be treated with hot water to kill the disease known as golden flavescence.
- Grassing of the soil is required.
- Irrigation of the mature vines is completely prohibited.
- The minimum allowable alcohol percentage is 10%.
- The maximum yield is set at 11,500 kilograms of grapes per hectare (this is to ensure that fertilisers are not used to “force” the growth of the grapes which reduces the quality of the juice).
- Spraying the vines from helicopters is prohibited!

These are just a few of the rules we have extracted from the official document. There are many more!

And all this leads to wines that are packed with minerality, have good acid balance and deep, satisfying flavour.

We should note here that the Sauvignon Blanc wines we import from this area from Alice and Olivier de Moor are now usually released under the Vin de France appellation not Saint-Bris.

Grape variety: Pinot Blanc

In the May edition of Wine Talk we featured Pinot Auxerrois as the grape variety, so this month we thought it would be interesting to follow that up with a discussion of the quiet achiever, Pinot Blanc.

Very little is written about this grape variety however it plays an important role in some appellations including Alsace, Burgundy and Champagne. In Champagne it is permitted to produce a wine with 100% Pinot Blanc as it is in some of the top Burgundy appellations. We discuss this in more detail below.

The first question to answer is where did Pinot Blanc come from? The answer is relatively simple. It came from Pinot Noir. In fact, it is a mutant form of Pinot Noir so shares exactly the same parentage, namely Savagnin Blanc and an unknown variety.

We know it is a mutant because it was first discovered on vines of Pinot Noir where one branch would contain white grapes and all the others red grapes. Vignerons started planting vines from cuttings of those branches and that was how Pinot Blanc started to spread. The same applies to Pinot Gris as well.

It received a small boost late in the 19th Century in the Yonne département in northern Burgundy when a series of severe frosts wiped out many of the Savagnin vines in that area, but the Melon de Bourgogne and Pinot Blanc survived⁴.

En 1879, et quelques années après, les treilles de Savagnin ont gelé alors que le Melon et le Pinot blanc ont résisté.

Their Ampélographie Tome 2, published in 1901, also included a beautiful drawing of the leaf and grapes of Pinot Blanc as shown below.



⁴ Viala and Vermorel (1902) Ampélographie Tome 4, page 307.

Pinot Blanc is quite widely grown in France, but it is rare to find wines made exclusively from this grape variety except in Alsace (where it is also known as Klevner), although some are produced in Burgundy and Champagne. It is also planted in Germany (Weissburgunder), Luxembourg and Friuli (Pinot Bianco) as well as the United States and Argentina.

In total there are only 1300 hectares of this grape variety planted in France with most of the plantings being in the Alsace area. In Alsace it is usually used as a blending wine as a component of the widely-drunk Edelzwicker which sees Riesling, Gewürztraminer, Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc blended together. Pinot Blanc can also be used in Crémant d'Alsace.

In Alsace you can also find many wines with Pinot Blanc on the label, but quite often these wines are a blend of the various Pinot varieties where Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir are crushed and the skins immediately removed to produce a white wine.

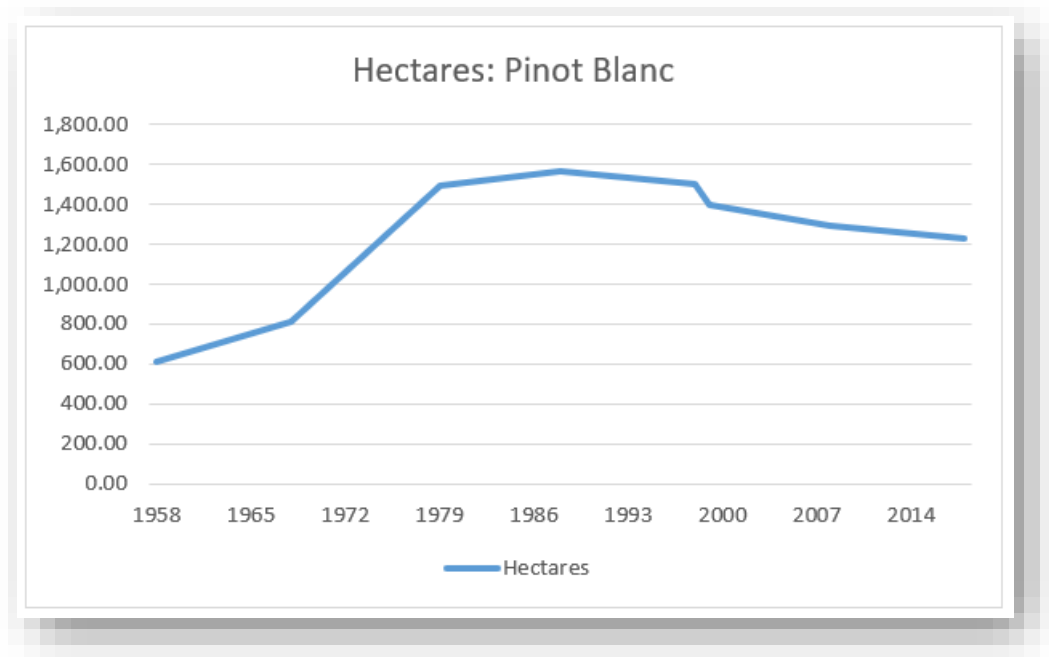
Pinot Blanc is recognised in France as being a premium grape variety allowing it to be used as a single variety in appellations such as Saint Aubin and Côte de Nuits-Villages in Burgundy, and also, as we mentioned above, as one of the nominated varieties for Champagne.

For example, Roland Piollot and Dominique Moreau, our Champagne producers, planted their Val Colas Robin vineyard entirely to Pinot Blanc and release a Champagne under the vineyard name which is 100% Pinot Blanc.

Also, Dominique uses Pinot Blanc in her celebrated Blanc de Blancs Champagne which consists of Chardonnay (60%), the very rare Arbane (5%) and Pinot Blanc (35%). She also uses a similar amount of Pinot Blanc in her Présence cuvée.

Pinot Blanc is fairly widely distributed, and, despite current perceptions, France is not the spiritual home of this variety! In fact, the country where it is most common is Italy, followed by Germany, Russia, Austria then France.

As can be seen in the graph below, the area planted to Pinot Blanc in France rose steadily between the early 1950s and 1988 where it reached a peak and has then slowly declined to around 1200 hectares since that time.



The morphology of the grape clusters, leaves and vines of Pinot Blanc are identical with that of Pinot Noir, mainly because Pinot Blanc is “simply” a mutant of Pinot Noir – of course there is nothing simple about mutation in plants, however!

As you can see from the photos below the pictures of the leaves of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir that we have displayed look almost identical except for the slightly wider petiolar sinus (see article above on leaf structure) on the Pinot Noir.

Grape leaves of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir.



Pinot Blanc



Pinot Noir

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

There is also a similarity with the grape clusters except for the fact that one has white grapes and the other red.



Pinot Blanc



Pinot Noir

Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

Pinot Blanc is well-known for ripening easily even in cold weather which is why it is prized in colder areas such as Champagne (where it is sometimes called Blanc Vrai) and Alsace.

Pinot Blanc delivers best when it is not subjected to treatments such as new oak; rather it seems to benefit from maturation in stainless steel or concrete.

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.