

WINE Talk: May 2023

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 114

Welcome to newsletter 114, the third WINE Talk Newsletter for 2023. We hope you continue to enjoy reading them. We certainly are continuing to enjoy writing them!

We have been able to put together 7 packs to offer in this newsletter.

As well as the packs, the newsletter also has:

- News about wines that are arriving soon;
- Information about recent arrivals of which we still have stocks;
- 7 packs with some rare recent arrivals among them;
- Some reflections on an article we read recently regarding the prevalence of drought in Europe;
- A story about the problems that are occurring as a result of increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere;
- A warning about scams involving the Aramex delivery service;
- A story about the Tannat 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 even just a budget and your style and region preferences. 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.

New Arrivals – Michel Guignier's Ethereal Gamays

We are so happy to finally have some wines from Michel Guignier after a long break. Michel farms a small property near the village of Vauxrenard in the Beaujolais with about 7 hectares under vine. When we first started to work with him in 2013 most of the wines were named with the appellation they came from. The majority - the wine from the home vineyards – was Beaujolais Villages by virtue of being in the Vauxrenard commune. But he also made a Moulin à Vent and Fleurie cuvée. He still has land in Moulin à Vent, from which he makes two wines, with the rest coming from the vines on his property. Now, though, he labels all his wines as Vin de France. Like many of the other people whose wine we import, he decided that life was better not having to deal with the bureaucrats. While it's sad in a way that, thanks to rigorous rules, the places his wines come from are no longer so easily identifiable we're more than happy that Vin de France gives him a better life.

It has another advantage in Australia in helping work out whose wines are whose! There is more than one Michel Guignier making wine in the Beaujolais and both are imported into Australia. It helps that the other Michel Guignier, who also works organically but lives in Villié-Morgon, still appears to work entirely with appellated wines. So if you see a recent vintage of a Michel Guignier wine and it has an appellation other than Vin de France it's the Villié-Morgon Michel Guignier. If it's Vin de France it is almost certainly the Michel Guignier we work with who you can see here.

We think these photos emphasise Michel's connection with his soils. They are literally ingrained into his very being.





In the photo below you can see Michel's farm, its borders approximately identified with a red line. If you have ever visited the Beaujolais you know, as you can see in much of this photo, that large parts of it are a monoculture with wall-to-wall vines. In this photo Michel's property is a small oasis surrounded by forest on all sides. To the south is Chiroubles and to the south-east is Fleurie.



As well as vegetables and an orchard, including grains, Michel also farms beef cattle, which share grazing space with his draft horse Bistère, who he works with in the vines. He prepares all his own compost which helps to keep his soils full of life and energy, as do his biodynamic practices. He credits Christian Ducroux for pointing him in this direction which is quite different from the cultivation methods his father used.



When we arrive at Michel's the sense of reaching an oasis is not just about the physical greenery. It's a sense of calm and permanence Michel radiates, unsurprising perhaps because this is the property where he and previous generations grew up. The substantial farmhouse, with the cellar at one end, the equally substantial garden and orchard, and the animals make you feel like this is how it has been forever. It also feels totally self-contained, as if this would be a very good place to wait out any apocalypse. And did we mention the kitten ... who we're sure by now has been put to work as a mouse hunter.



The feeling of arriving and being at Michel's is described beautifully in much more detail by Bert Celce on his [wineterroirs](#) website after a visit he made a few years ago.

And we highly commend this beautiful [map](#), drawn by Anna Hodgson, whose brother Raef is one of the faces of Gergovie Wines, Michel's British importer. It shows the parcels which make up the home vineyards.

Ever since we have known Michel he has worked without additions – no added yeasts obviously but also no added sulphites and no filtration or fining. The wines are a complete expression of these soils and microclimate with no manipulation. He also takes his time before deciding to release each cuvée, as you can see from the dates of the vintages of some of these wines. It was originally something of a surprise to us when we found this gentle, humble farmer making some of the most exciting natural wines in the Beaujolais. It is not the way he originally worked though – with the wine or the vineyard – but his journey has been a remarkable one which we are very happy to play a part in. We love a story he told us some years ago. Both he and his brother inherited vines from their father. Michel's brother continued to work with chemicals, including herbicides. The vines are quite close to one another. As the grapes ripen it's Michel who has problems with the birds not his brother. They know where the best tasting grapes are!

If there's one characteristic that defines all the wines it's their bright acidity. Even the older wines, like the 2015 Au Bon Grès, have a freshness that belies their age. They don't really get old. To appreciate that freshness and life these wines need to be drunk in one sitting though. We wouldn't recommend holding them overnight. These older cuvées which Michel has held back before releasing (like Au Bon Grès) can also be aged even further should you wish. One of the most enjoyable wines we have drunk so far this year was a cuvée of Michel's, which we don't have in this shipment, called Les Grumeaux. It was predominantly from the 2006 vintage (blended with a small amount of wine from 2004 as well) and felt like it could live for many more years.

We have five cuvées available. Four are red and the final one is a rosé. Drinking the rosé, *Mystère de Rosée*, was the Guignier wine that initially encouraged us to contact Michel and this 2021 vintage, from a difficult year, may be best one yet!

Below is a summary of each wine, with pricing but you can also read more about each wine and Michel’s way of working on his own [website](#) (take care with the English version we have pointed you to. Some of the translations are unexpected, (like “semi-carbonic” to “semi-coal”!). But we do like the anglicised version of this quote from Michel ““For me wine is created in a vineyard, but not in the cellar, there we only watch it.”

Wine	Price	Notes
Michel Guignier La Bonne Pioche 2020	\$56	The vines for La Bonne Pioche are from a parcel within Michel's farm. When it was appellated it was classified as Beaujolais Villages, an appellation that covers vines grown in 38 communes, including Vauxrenard, where Michel's farm is located. The soil on this area is mainly friable granite and Michel also has degraded sandstone (Grès). This wine had 10 days of semi-carbonic maceration in stainless steel then spent 10 months in a foudre before bottling in July 2021. As with all the wines, its acidity ensures freshness and the viticulture and vinification provide the life. 12.5% ABV.
Michel Guignier La Petite Oseille 2020 (limited)	\$68	This wine is from vines within the Moulin à Vent appellation, from a parcel rich in manganese. Vinified the same way as Le Bonne Pioche, it had 10 days of semi-carbonic maceration in stainless steel then spent 10 months in a foudre before bottling. It has a little more complexity than La Bonne Pioche, a little spiciness, which Michel attributes to the manganese, and a very pleasing light touch of reduction. 12.5% ABV.
Michel Guignier Granite 2020	\$63	Granite is another home parcel which could be Beaujolais Villages had Michel wishes. It's just a few minutes walk beyond the cellar. As the name suggests the terroir is granite. This cuvée is slightly more savoury than the other two 2020 wines and the aromas and flavours more darker berries and lush but it has the

Wine	Price	Notes
		<p>same fresh acidity and perhaps even more energy on opening, finishing with just a touch of volatile acidity. It is also more powerful with 13.5% ABV.</p>
<p>Michel Guignier Au Bon Grès 2015 (limited)</p>	<p>\$70</p>	<p>From soils of friable granite and degraded sandstone, this vineyard lies between the parcels of Granite and La Bonne Pioche on Michel's farm. After semi-carbonic maceration in concrete vats this cuvée had two years in foudre and then extended aging in bottle before release, for which we are grateful. It has great structure, depth and complexity without having sacrificed its life. The tannins have had plenty of time to integrate and create a beautifully balanced wine. It's a great example of how wines without added sulphites can age well if they are kept in good conditions. Note that before 2015 Michel rented a plot in Fleurie and the wine he made from there was called Au Bon Grès. So some of the older vintages of Au Bon Grès are labelled with the Fleurie appellation. After he gave up the rented land in 2014 he has continued to use the cuvée name Au Bon Grès (which literally translates as "the good sandstone") for the wine he now makes from his own property. The soils are similar to the soils in the Fleurie plot and the vinification and aging regime are the same. 12.5% ABV.</p>
<p>Michel Guignier Mystère de Rosée 2021</p>	<p>\$56</p>	<p>To make Mystère de Rosée Michel macerated the grapes for 12 hours and then pressed very slowly for 12 hours. The juice was then fermented and aged in foudre. It is so bright and the flavours, including the juice of pomegranate and red fruits, are lingering. The overall effect is savouriness and shining acidity, balanced by perfumed fruit. The colour is pomegranate too. It is 11.5% ABV.</p>

What's Coming

Our next release will be wines from Julien and Carole – both **Domaine Derain** and **Sextant**. That will be followed very soon after by Arnaud and Aurelie from **Geschickt** in Alsace. These will both be released before the next newsletter. We'll keep a few for newsletter packs but it is always a good idea to request information in advance if there are wines you particularly don't want to miss out on.

We also have a new shipment of **l'Octavin** to release soon, which we are hoping to advertise not allocate this time so please let us know if you would like advance information. Some will be very limited but there are good supplies of the 2021 vintage of some familiar wines such as Grenabar and two of our favourite négoce whites (Ivre de Vivre Clé à Molette). There are also several macerated cuvées (2020 Hip Hip J... Chardonnay and Hip Hip J... Savagnin, both of which are Jura cuvées, and the 2021 Muscat).

After that we will have some wines from **Fanny Sabre** and then **Jean-Marc Dreyer**. Last time we had wines from Fanny we intended to advertise them but nearly all the wines were sold to people who requested information about them in advance. It's not quite so frenetic now that people have started travelling and eating out again but we would still expect them to sell quickly so ask now if you don't want to miss out.

We will be allocating some **Mataburro** wine soon after that. The Mataburro wines are all from the 2022 vintage, which was a generous year for Laurent and Melissa. As usual the allocations will be small but perhaps slightly more than last year.

Pack 1: Mainly Octavin Pack (Approx 13% discount)

Note: 2 packs only



This pack is packed with the amazing wines from Alice who turns out such gluggable wines in her new winery on the outskirts of the wine town of Arbois in the central Jura region of France. Some of the wines such as the Elle Aime, P'tit Poussot and the Hip Hip J Poulsard are made with grapes from the Jura and the others are made from grapes that Alice has picked in different regions of France such as the Beaujolais and the Languedoc.

And we have also included a Loire wine made by the Mosse family from estate grapes including Grolleau Noir, Grolleau Gris, Gamay, Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc. This is a lovely light red wine that is also very drinkable, especially with a light chill.

- Mosse Bisou 2021
- l'Octavin Cariboom 2020
- l'Octavin Elle Aime 2020
- l'Octavin Mayga Gamay 2020
- l'Octavin P'tit Poussot 2020
- l'Octavin Poulsard Hip Hip J 2018

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$448 but the pack price is only \$392.50. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination and freight method we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 2: Mosse Popular Selection Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 4 packs only



This is an amazing collection of the incredibly varied wines from the Mosse family covering pet nats, white, reds and orange wines. The list starts with the ever popular Moussamoussettes pet nat. This year it is quite savoury but beguilingly delicious and, it seems, very thirst-quenching. We also have a “Nouveau 2022” a light red-ish / rosé made from Pineau d’Aunis, Grolleau Gris and Sauvignon Blanc that is quite alluring as is the Bisou which is slightly heavier but still in light red territory. With extra aging it also has a little more depth than the flight Bangarang Nouveau.

There are then two white wines namely the Chenin and the La Joute. Chenin is 100% Chenin and La Joute is a blend of Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay. Both are estate-grown vines. The final wine is a very fresh red wine (a true red this one!) made from Cabernet Franc grapes that were nicely ripe when hand-harvested.

Most of these wines are long sold out except for these last four packs. It is a repeat of a pack from the last newsletter.

- Mosse Moussamoussettes 2021
- Mosse Bangarang Nouveau 2022
- Mosse Bisou 2021
- Mosse Chenin 2021
- Mosse La Joute 2021
- Mosse Cabernet Franc 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$328 but the pack price is only \$278.80. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination and freight method we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 3: Continuing Sale Pack (20% discount)



This is also a repeat of a pack from the last newsletter. For this very well-priced pack we have divided the wines between two southern regions, Provence and the Languedoc. The Milan family are based in the historic town of St Remy de Provence, Julien Peyras tends his vines inland from the city of Montpellier in the Languedoc and Wim Wagemans makes his wonderful Le Bouc à Trois Pattes wines further inland but still in the same region.

The two Haru-labelled wines are made with Grenache and Syrah with the addition of Merlot for the Rosé and Carignan for the Rouge. The lovely sparkling wine is made from Grenache with Muscat for aroma and Alicante for structure.

The Rosé from Julien is made with Grenache and Syrah but shows a lightness of touch as well as no added sulphites. The Perdu from Wim is 100% macerated Clairette, showing just how some white grape varieties really respond to time on skins. This is a very interesting wine! The Quel Âne de Course is made from 100% Carignan and is an excellent example as Wim's terroir is quite perfect for this grape variety.

- Milan Haru Rosé 2021
- Milan Haru Rouge 2021
- Milan Pet'Nat Rosé 2021
- Julien Peyras Rosé Bohême 2021
- Le Bouc à Trois Pattes Perdu Dans Les Dunes 2021
- Le Bouc à Trois Pattes Quel Âne de Course 2021

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$277 but the pack price is only \$221.60. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination and freight method we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 4: Guignier Pack (Approx. 15% Discount)

Note: 2 Packs Only



We are very excited with the return of the amazing Beaujolais wines of Michel Guignier. We have not been able to source his wines for quite a few years due to a number of circumstances, however on our trip to France last year we were able to drop in to his lovely farm and try his latest wines and confirm just what an outstanding vigneron he is.

We have been able to set aside only two packs because these wines are selling very quickly, as Michel is very highly regarded for his winemaking skill and the natural processes he uses including absolutely no additions of sulphites.

Michel, like many of our producers, no longer submits his wines to the appellation authorities so they are all now Vin de France.

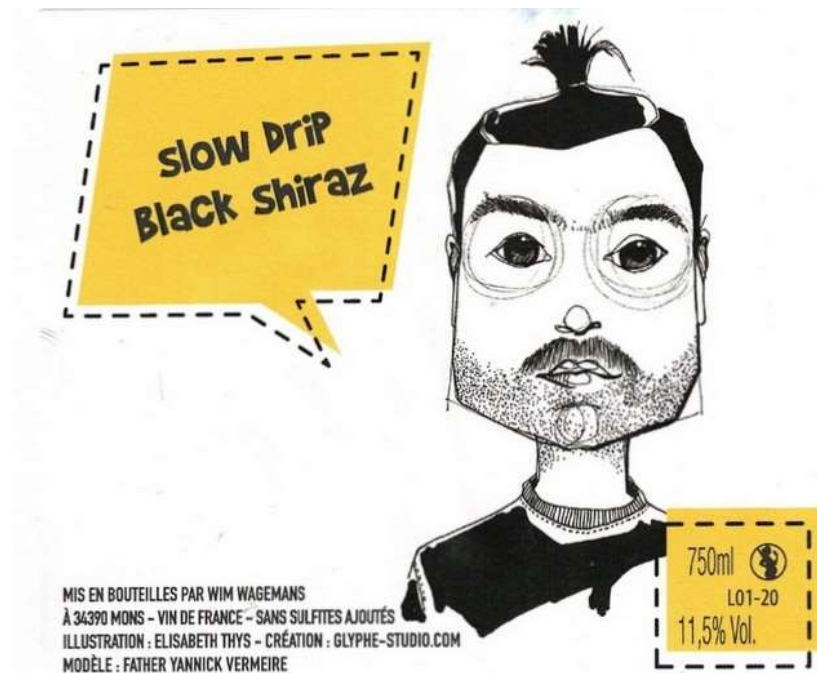
If you don't know about the wines of this amazing producer you can read our descriptions on the Living Wines website [here](#).

- Michel Guignier La Bonne Pioche 2020 (**2 bottles**)
- Michel Guignier La Petite Oseille 2020
- Michel Guignier Granite 2020
- Michel Guignier Au Bon Grès 2015
- Michel Guignier Mystère de Rosée 2021

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$369 but the pack price is only \$313.65. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination and freight method we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 5: Winter Preparation Mixed Red Sale Pack (20% Discount)

Note: 4 Packs Only



We have put together this collection of red wines so that you can be prepared for cold winter nights. The two wines from Provence made by the Milan family are quite dark in colour but light on the tongue. The Haru is made from Grenache, Syrah and Carignan but does not display massive tannins as you might expect – it is light, flavoursome and completely delicious. The same goes for the Reynard Rebels which manages to tame the Merlot and Carignan from which it is made, for another winning combination.

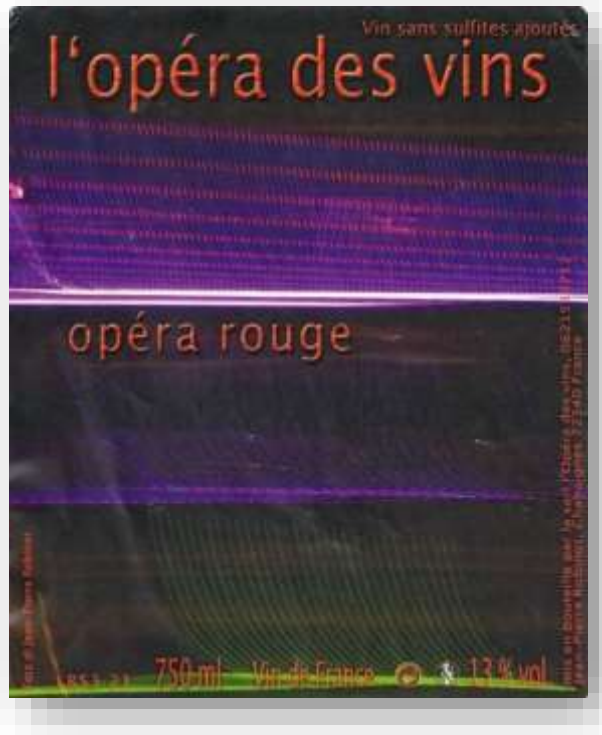
The slow drip Shiraz is yet another joke from Wim Wageman who has a friend who is obsessed with coffee (hence the “slow drip”). It is a beautiful example of a wine made from Syrah. And then there is one of our best known wines – the wonderful Gamay Sans Tra La La that we have been importing for well over a decade now and every year it just gets better and better.

- Milan Haru Rouge 2021 (2 bottles)
- Milan Reynard Rebels 2021 (2 bottles)
- Le Bouc à Trois Pattes Slow Drip Black Shiraz 2020
- Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Gamay Sans Tra La La 2021

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$273 but the pack price is only **\$218.40**. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination and freight method we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 6: Robinot and Guignier New Arrivals Pack (Approx 15% Discount)

Note: 1 Pack Only



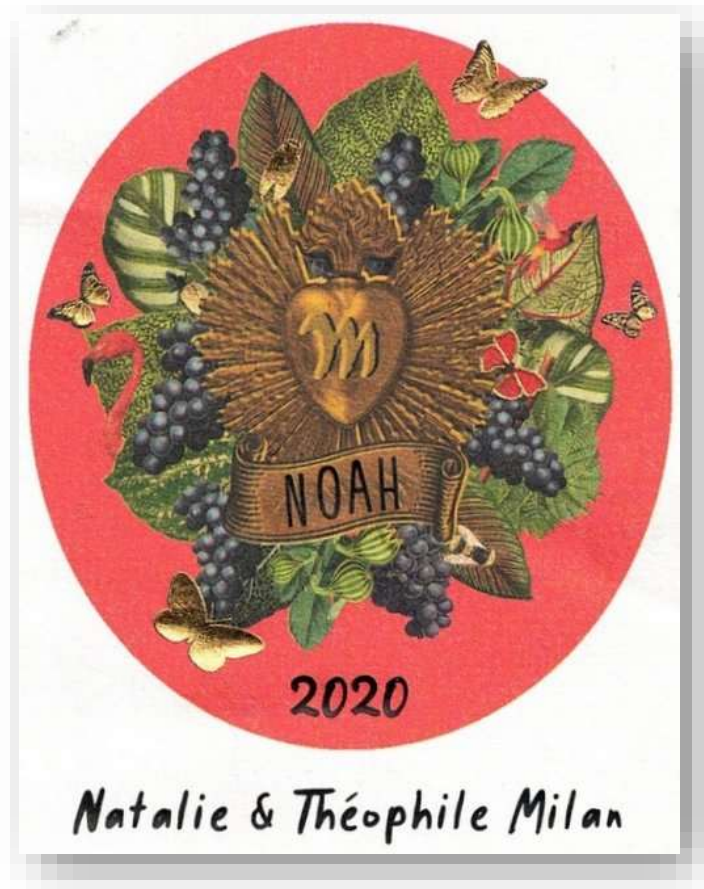
This pack consists of three bottles of wines from Michel Guignier who we have discussed in Pack 4 above and three bottles from the Robinot family in the Loire. The Guignier wines are all made from Gamay grown in Michel's vineyards in the Beaujolais. The three Robinot wines are made with purchased grapes but have that unique unmistakable Robinot stamp.

The Opera Blanc is made from Chenin Blanc that was grown in the area below the city of Angers as was the Cabernet Franc that was used for the Opera Rouge. The Fêtebulles is a 100% Chenin Blanc pet-nat and one of Jean-Pierre's classic cuvées.

- Michel Guignier La Bonne Pioche 2020
- Michel Guignier La Petite Oseille 2020
- Michel Guignier Mystère de Rosée 2021
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Fêtebulles 2021
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Opera Blanc 2021
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Opera Rouge 2021

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$305 but the pack price is only \$259.25. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination and freight method we may have to add a small freight charge.

Pack 7: Pink Pack (Approx 17% Discount)



It is rare for us to have three rosé wines to put in a pack, but we have been able to put together three wonderful examples of the genre.

The label above is from the one-off rosé made from Grenache and Syrah by Theo and his wife Natalie who is becoming a dab hand at the art of wine making to celebrate the birth of their son Noah. It is a gastronomic wine, as far removed from the pale pink wines Provence is known for.

- Michel Guignier Mystère de Rosée 2021 (2 bottles)
- Julien Peyras Rose Bohême 2021 (2 bottles)
- Milan Noah Rosé 2020 (2 bottles)

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$328 but the pack price is only \$274.30. It normally includes freight to most Australian cities but, depending on the destination and freight method we may have to add a small freight charge.

Drought in Europe

An article that we read recently (details at the end) started off starkly!

“It’s barely spring, and Europe is running dry.”

The article went on to provide a number of examples of drought conditions in France, Spain and Italy that are quite dire. But the problem is also becoming acute in Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and some of the Nordic countries.

In fact the article claims that more than a quarter of Europe is in drought as of April this year. Furthermore, the satellite data they had access to showed that the drought has been constant since 2018.

It has got so bad that even if it rained all during Spring, the water supply will not be replenished.

Talking about the drought, the Spanish Prime Minister said that “it is going to be one of the central political and territorial debates of our country”.

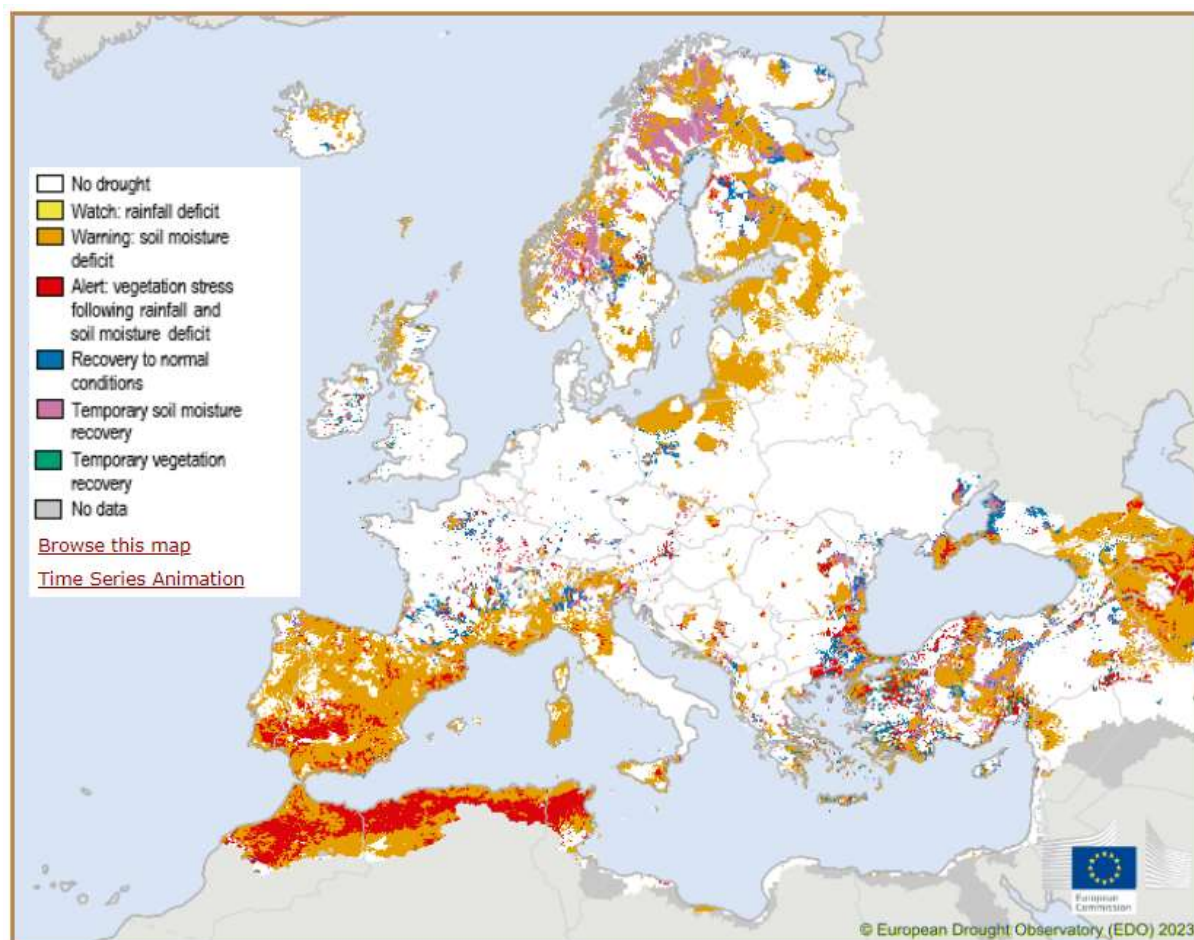
Access to water is vital both for drinking water and for crops. Grapevines need water in spring and summer to produce the grapes that make the wine.

And it is not only drought in spring and summer that is the problem. According to the article France experienced the driest winter in 60 years in January and February this year. Lake Garda in Italy is also at less than half its normal average level.

The lack of rain is also putting the Spanish olive harvest at risk – and on and on!

While the summer drought is a catastrophe, many are worried about the lack of precipitation in the form of snow in winter. Vignerons in particular look for winter snow to settle as it has the effect of killing many of the diseases in the soil that can emerge in spring.

The map below shows the areas experiencing drought (red and tan) particularly around the Mediterranean and in the Nordic regions.



You can download the map for yourself at:

<https://edo.jrc.ec.europa.eu/edov2/php/index.php?id=1000>

The article, where you can read a fuller discussion of the problem was published in Politico at:

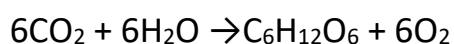
<https://www.politico.eu/article/europe-next-crisis-water-drought-climate-change/>

The Carbon Dioxide dilemma

This week we read yet another unscientific article on Twitter claiming to be scientific. It was from an “amateur” scientist who claimed that climate was not affected by increasing carbon dioxide because it is only, in their words, a “trace element”.

This shows a profound lack of understanding of the role carbon dioxide plays in our atmosphere. Yes, it does only comprise a tiny 0.04% of our atmosphere, but it is not an irrelevant contributor to life on earth. Has this person never heard of photosynthesis??? Without this so-called trace element photosynthesis wouldn't provide plants with the food they need.

The chemical equation for photosynthesis is:



The two molecules on the left side of the equation are what plants use to create the food they need for survival. Notice that they are carbon dioxide and water. They get carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (even though it is a trace element) and water mainly from the soil.

On the right-hand side of the equation you can see that sugar is produced from the reaction in the form of glucose ($C_6H_{12}O_6$) and 6 molecules of oxygen which is returned to the atmosphere for us to breathe.

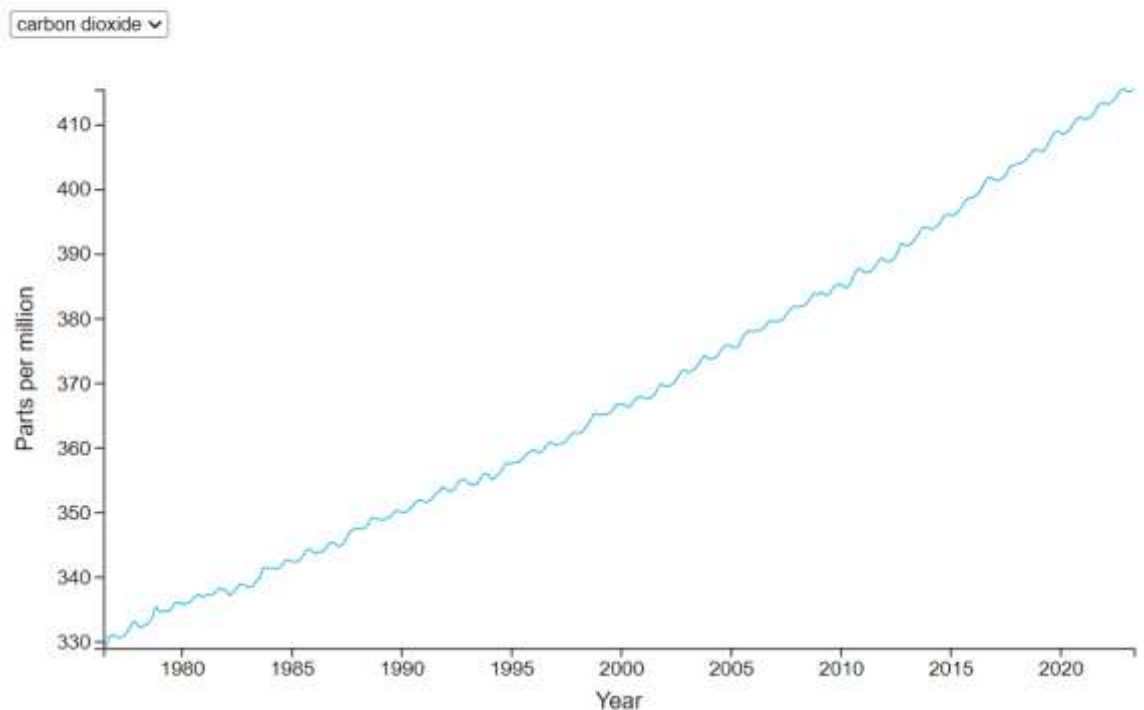
Now, you might think that the more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere then the more the plants can use it to generate sugars and therefore the quicker they will grow. The problem with that thinking is that everything reaches an equilibrium. If there is too much carbon dioxide then plants grow faster but without the proper molecules required for sustained growth (such as cellulose) being created.

Thus, we are finding that many of the trees in Europe where the bark is used for corks are no longer suitable because the cork is not as dense as it used to be and hence they leak because of the lack of structure.

The same is happening with oak trees that have traditionally been used for making wine barrels. The fact that they are growing quicker means that they do not create dense wood and, once again, the wine leaks through the wood – a very unsatisfactory situation!

To reinforce what we have been discussing, we have included below the current data from the Cape Grim observatory in North West Tasmania. As can be seen from the graph below, the carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have well and truly passed the 400 parts per million level which has always been regarded as the danger level for plants and animals on this planet!

carbon dioxide (CO₂): 415.4 ppm April 2023



Aramex delivery service and scams

A delivery service that we use quite often for deliveries interstate has recently been having problems with scammers intercepting information about deliveries and scamming the customers waiting for the delivery by saying that they have to pay a holding fee and demanding credit card details.

As you would know if you have bought wine from us and had it delivered by Aramex, you do not have to pay anything to Aramex for the delivery – all costs are incorporated into our invoice to you.

If you want more information about the scams there is quite a good summary on their Web site detailing some of the scams.

You can find the page by going to:

<https://www.aramex.com.au/tools/online-security/>

A summary of the scams from their page is shown below so you don't need to visit it.

Protect yourself – important things to remember

- Aramex will never ask you to pay when collecting a parcel from a depot or our Parcel Connect agents (there may be a re-delivery fee but this is arranged at the customer's request).
- When Aramex is shipping your goods you'll always be given a tracking number that can be tracked via our website <https://www.aramex.com.au/tools/track>.
- Not all senders let their customers know who will be shipping their goods. If you are expecting a parcel and you don't know who the carrier is, you can contact the sender to check with them.
- If you think you may have given money to a scammer, contact your financial institution immediately.
- If you think you've fallen victim to a scam, contact us immediately at scams@aramex.com.au. We thoroughly investigate every report of suspected fraud, but generally, will not respond to personal inquiries.

Grape variety: Tannat

The history of the Tannat grape variety is shrouded in mystery with some claiming that it was already used in South-West France before the Romans arrived over 2000 years ago. However, there isn't any literature other than the quote below that we could find to support this assertion.

Another claim is that in the 12th and 13th centuries the red wines of Madiran made from Tannat were used by the Kings of France as taxation revenue. This suggests that these wines were highly prized at the time.

There are records of Benedictine monks moving to the Madiran Abbey in the 12th Century and taking a liking to the deep, red wine of the region. It became a wine used in their religious ceremonies and its fame spread widely as the area became part of the route for pilgrims who travelled to Santiago de Compostela in Spain. They often used the monastery as a resting place and the monks shared the local wine with the pilgrims.

One reference we found is shown below which addresses the wine of Madiran which was made from Tannat in the 12th Century.

Au XIIe et au XIIIe siècle, les rois de France acceptaient en paiement d'impôts, pour leur usage personnel, le vin de Madiran dont le Tannat était l'élément.

Le Tannat, cultivé de temps immémorial dans le SudOuest, est plus spécialement localisé sur les coteaux argilocalcaires qui s'étendent du midi au nord, le long de la plaine de l'Adour, le centre étant le vieux bourg de Madiran.

The second quote refers to Tannat as being in the South-West since “time immemorial” on the plains of Adour¹ and the old town of Madiran².

As a side note, some of the references we found to the 12th Century referred to the Tannat as being blended with “Bouchy”. We had no idea what they were referring to until we found a simple explanation – Bouchy is the local name for Cabernet Sauvignon which is still used as a blending wine as you can see in the table below.

There are also records of Francis I of France (the King of France during part of the Renaissance period 1515 - 1547) and the Court of England both having an affection for Madiran wine.

In Tome 5 of their gigantic series entitled *Ampelographie* Viala and Vermorel refer to Tannat a number of times.

In a delightful phrase in Tome 5 the only reference in the entire book is a comparison with the South-West grape variety Corbu Noir. They say, in reference to this grape:

Ce cépage est sujet à l'Oïdium, contre lequel on le défend par trois soufrages; il craint le Mildiou moins que le Tannat.

¹ Adour is a village quite close to the Atlantic Coast below Bordeaux.

² Viala, P and Vermorel, V et al (1903) *Traite General de Viticulture. Ampelographie. Tome 4, Page 80.*

The first part says that Corbu needs three sulphur treatments to get rid of the Odium disease but that “It fears Mildew less than Tannat”.

Tannat also is called by other names in the South-West including Moustrou, Moustron, Mansain, Madiran Rouge, Gros Manseng (in the Gers), Plant Delmas and Tanay.

We should also add that although we are writing about the role that Tannat plays in France, it is also a beloved grape variety in Uruguay where it is the principal grape variety for red wines³.

The Tannat variety is approved in a number of appellations, with the main appellation being Madiran AOC. The following is taken from the Madiran Cahier des Charges (the legal document outlining the rules for an appellation) detailing the red grape types that are permitted in the appellation.

V. — Encépagement

1°- Encépagement :

Procédure nationale d’opposition suite à l’avis du Comité national des appellations d’origine relatives aux vins et aux boissons alcoolisées, et des eaux-de-vie du 11 septembre 2014

Les vins sont issus des cépages suivants :

- cépage principal : tannat N ;
- cépages accessoires : cabernet franc N, cabernet-sauvignon N et fer N.

In the Madiran appellation the percentage of Tannat allowed in the red wines is between 60% and 80%. The reference to the accessory grape fer N above is to Fer Servadou, a common red grape in the area above Toulouse especially in the Aveyron (for example, the delicious red wine of Nicolas Carmarans called Fer de Sang which is made from 100% Fer Servadou).

The other appellations that allow the Tannat grape variety include:

Appellation name	Appellation type eg AOP, IGP etc	Notes	Curiosity	Location
Lavilledieu	IGP	One of 6 red grapes permitted	Also allows as a supplementary grape the rare Milgranet Noir also known as Merille.	Forms an arc to the north of the city of Toulouse.

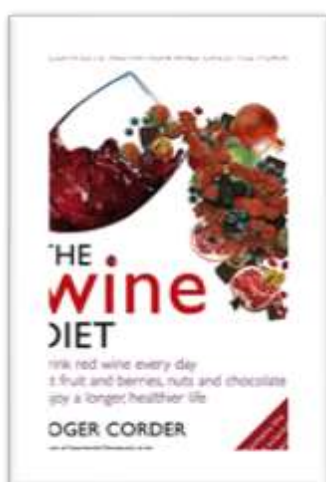
³ The Tannat vines were taken to Uruguay, possibly illegally, from France in the 19th Century.

Appellation name	Appellation type eg AOP, IGP etc	Notes	Curiosity	Location
Tursan	AOC	Tannat and Cabernet Franc allowed for red wines.	This AOC allows the use of Baroque Blanc for white wines.	Tursan borders the Madiran appellation which is widely known for Tannat wines.
Bearn	AOC	Tannat, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc allowed for red wines.	Courbu Noir, Fer Servadou and Manseng Noir are support grapes and must be less than 20% of the mix.	This AOC lies to the west of most of the South-West appellations south of Bordeaux.
Saint Mont	AOC	Tannat is the principal grape for red wines and must comprise at least 60% of the blend.	In this AOC there is a trial of Tardif Noir and Manseng Noir as more able to adapt to climate change.	Adjacent to Madiran and Tursan.
Irouleguy	AOC	Tannat is one of two grapes allowed as principal grapes for red wines and one of three for the Rose wines.	For the rosé wines from this area red grapes must comprise 90% of the blend so only 10% is available for white grapes such as Manseng and Courbu.	This appellation is very close to the Spanish border.
Saint-Sardos	AOC	Tannat is one of two principal grapes.	The other principal grape is unusual for this area being Syrah which is mainly grown in the Rhone region of Central France.	This appellation lies above the Gers region.

Appellation name	Appellation type eg AOP, IGP etc	Notes	Curiosity	Location
Brulhois	AOC	Tannat is one of three principal grape varieties along with Cabernet Franc and Merlot.	Tannat, due to the high levels of tannin, is restricted to between 15% to 40% of the blend.	Directly west of the town of Montauban.
Cahors	AOC	Tannat is an accessory grape to Cot (Malbec).	This is a red wine only appellation.	Cahors is directly north of the city of Toulouse.

We probably need to mention one of the most striking features of the Tannat grape is that it has high levels of polyphenols which include both anthocyanins and tannins.

You can see the effect of the anthocyanins immediately due to the deep blue to black colour of the wines. When you taste a Tannat wine you notice the tannins on the inside of your cheeks (the level of tannins in Tannat is claimed by Da Silva below as being 6 times higher than Pinot Noir).



British professor Roger Corder publishes in his book “The Wine Diet⁴” the results of a scientific study showing that the average lifespan of men over 75 in the south-west of France (Gers) is the highest of France (with many surviving into their nineties).

According to him, this phenomenon is linked to two reasons: the consumption of fresh food products and the daily consumption of a glass of Madiran.

Indeed, Tannat is particularly rich in polyphenols and is said to have antioxidant properties which would play an essential role in the protection against cardiovascular diseases.

There is also a very detailed scientific paper by Da Silva and others where the Tannat genome is explored in detail⁵.

In the Da Silva paper, they address the health benefits we mention above:

Polyphenols acquired from the moderate consumption of red wine also provide pharmaceutical and nutritional benefits to humans [18], such as helping to prevent cancer and reducing the inflammation associated with coronary artery disease [19]. The proanthocyanidin content in local red wines in areas such as Gers in France, where

⁴ Corder, Roger (2009) *The Wine Diet*.

⁵ Da Silva et al. (2019) *The Tannat genome: Unravelling its unique characteristics*. *BIO Web Conf.*, Volume 12, 2019, 41st World Congress of Vine and Wine.

Tannat is the main grape used for red wine production, correlate strongly with increased human longevity in this region.

Other reports we have read make it clear that there are an unusual percentage of men in the region over the age of 90!

The leaves of the Tannat grape variety are quite regular with five distinct lobes. The central lobe (Apicus lobe) is the most pronounced as can be seen in the photo below.



Tannat leaves showing distinctive lobes - Photo courtesy: Vitis International Variety Catalogue

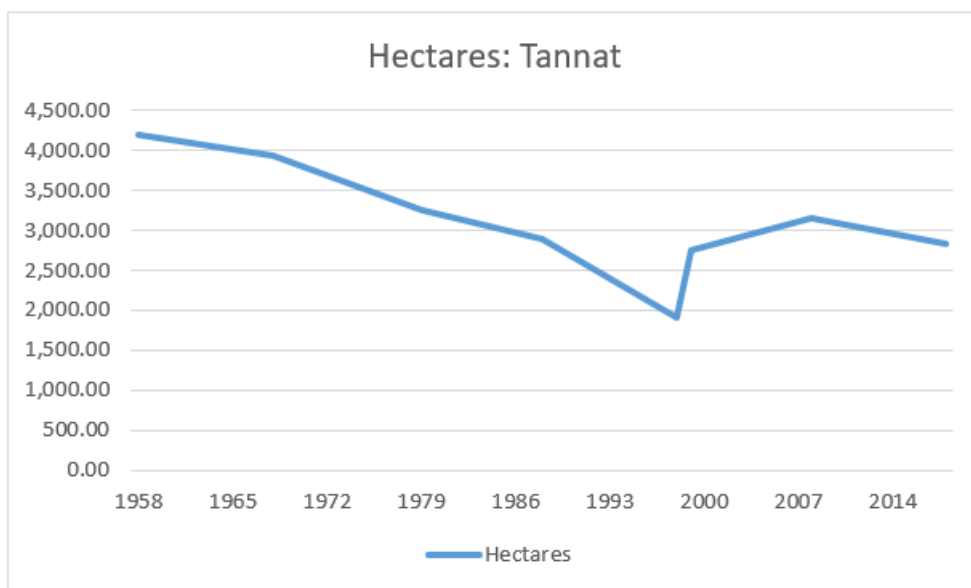
The grape bunches are quite distinctive, with large grapes deeply coloured grapes as shown below.



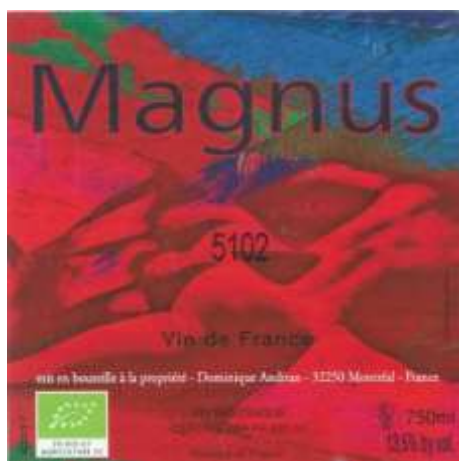
Tannat grape bunches - Photo courtesy: Vitis International Variety Catalogue

Finally we turn to the growth and decline of Tannat over the past 60 years or so. When we consider the rise and fall of grape varieties in France we also need to take into account whether the variety is mandated by an appellation or not. In the case of Tannat as discussed above, in some appellations such as Madiran and Saint Mont, Tannat is the only principal variety. In Tujrsan, Irouleguy and Saint Sardos, Tannat is one of 2 principal varieties and in Bearn and Brulhois it is one of three.

As can be seen in the graph below, the area planted to Tannat in France rose steadily between the early 1950s and 1979 and then suffered a steady decline thereafter.



Tannat growth and decline



Tannat suffered a slow decline from the mid-fifties to the late nineties and then having a small resurgence between 1998 and 2008.

A producer from the South-West that we have used in the past and hope to get another shipment soon, namely Dominique Andiran from the Gers region, has a wine called Magnus which sometimes has 100% Tannat and sometimes is Tannat blended with Merlot. It is always delicious!

Although he doesn't use the appellations that permit Tannat his vineyards fall within the Madiran

appellation area where Tannat is the only principal red grape.

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.