

## WINE Talk: July 2023

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 115

Welcome to newsletter 115, the fourth 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 of mainly new wines with some rare recent arrivals among them including a pack of Octavin wines which we rarely get a chance to offer, listed here before its general release;
- Some reflections on the use of the term “sustainable” in agriculture;
- Some help with the use of the terms “varietal” and “variety”;
- A short article about the “cluster” of grape varieties in Alsace that use the term Pinot;
- A revisit of the reasons why many wines are not suitable for vegans.
- A story about the Auxerrois Blanc (Pinot Auxerrois) 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 - Burgundy

As we forecast, a lot of wine has arrived since our last newsletter which we published at the end of May. Many of you, who requested advance information about the wines, will be familiar with what came and have purchased some of them.

We've created representative packs for this newsletter for everything that we've received recently and for many of the wines these are the last available bottles. It means nearly all of the packs this month are new wines.

As we predicted most of the Burgundy arrivals from Derain / Sextant and Fanny Sabre wines sold very quickly. However, we do have a few left. Below is a summary of the wines which are still available in addition to those in the packs.

### Domaine Derain

Domaine Derain Allez Goutons Rouge 2022	Red	Pinot Noir	\$64
Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin Le Ban 2021	Red	Pinot Noir	\$96
Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin En Vesvau NV	White	Chardonnay	\$157

### Sextant

Sextant - Julien Altaber Ecume 2022	Sparkling	Aligoté, Gamay	\$60
Sextant - Julien Altaber Foufou'nette 2022	Sparkling	Aligoté, apricot infusion	\$60
Sextant - Julien Altaber Skin Bull 2022	Sparkling	Macerated Aligoté	\$60
Sextant - Julien Altaber Intuition Foudre 2018	White	Chardonnay	\$148
Sextant - Julien Altaber Intuition Les Fas 2018	White	Aligoté	\$134
Sextant - Julien Altaber MaMaMia 2021	Macerated	Pinot Gris	\$76
Sextant - Julien Altaber Po à Po 2021	Macerated	Aligoté	\$76
Sextant - Julien Altaber Secret de Cave 2016 (maximum 1 bottle)	Oxidative	Chardonnay	\$182

**Fanny Sabre**

Fanny Sabre Beaune Rouge Clos des Renardes 2021 (maximum 1 bottle)	Red	Pinot Noir	\$148
Fanny Sabre IGP Sainte-Marie-La-Blanche Cuvée Anatole Rouge 2022 (maximum 1 bottle)	Red	Pinot Noir	\$76
Fanny Sabre Beaune 1er Cru Les Chouacheux 2020 (maximum 1 bottle)	Red	Pinot Noir	\$201
Fanny Sabre Camille 2022	Sparkling	Pinot Noir	\$62

**New Arrivals – Alsace (Domaine Geschickt)**

The situation is slightly better with our large shipment of Domaine Geschickt wines. Most of these wines are still available. You're unlikely to find them mixed into general packs because the Alsace bottles are so difficult to pack but talk to us if you'd like a bespoke pack other than what we put in the newsletter. The wines are drinking beautifully.

Like many of the families we have been working with for some years there has been generational change at this domaine, with it now solely owned by Arnaud Geschickt and his wife Aurelie Fayolle. Arnaud's uncle Frédéric, with whom he owned the estate when we first started working with them, has retired and Arnaud and Aurelie now own it in their own right.

With what seems like boundless energy (youth is a wonderful thing!) they are putting their stamp on the vineyards, which already were in very good condition having been converted to biodynamic agriculture by Frédéric and certified as such since 1998.

One of the biggest projects involves a massive fruit tree planting program. It began 15 years ago with plantings around the perimeter of their parcels but now they are planting inside the vineyards as well. There are many reasons. The trees add biodiversity (this is a place where there are a lot of adjacent vineyards), they provide shade for the vines, an increasing need as the summers get hotter and the risk of sunburned grapes increases, and of course they also provide fruit. This has also led to the creation of Beetle Juice, a blend of Gewurztraminer and cherry juice, made from cherries in the vineyard the Gewurztraminer came from. We had only one case of this last year so needless to say it was not offered widely but we have slightly more this year so a few more people are going to have the pleasure of trying this unique lightly sparkling cherry-coloured "wine".

The domaine has a number of vineyards all close to Ammerschwihr, the village where the cellar is located. About 4 hectares is in Grand Cru vineyards - Kaefferkopf and the Wineck-Schlossberg – and the rest are in plots around the village. One of the driving forces for Arnaud and Aurelie is to try to find the best forms of vinification for each of the terroirs they work with, especially the Grand Cru vines.

For Wineck-Schlossberg, where the plot is Riesling, they are confident the best way to vinify is by maceration. It's a straightforward decision for what to do on this steep and sunny granitic plot.

But for the Kaefferkopf everything is more complicated, and one style of wine is not enough. As well as having many grape varieties, the most common of which is Gewurztraminer, the terroir itself adds more complexity. There are two quite different kinds of soils. (As an aside we love the story that the Geschickt family told us that when the time came to consider this land, which had been known in the village as the Kaefferkopf for generations, for Grand Cru status, the authorities said that the differences in terroir were so pronounced it would have to be two appellations. The people of Ammerschwihr told them in no uncertain terms that if they had to split the Kaefferkopf, which standing behind it as it does was the heart and soul of Ammerschwihr, they didn't want the Grand Cru status. That's what happened – it was not designated Grand Cru. But apparently eventually their stubbornness prevailed and the Kaefferkopf attained Grand Cru status as a single identity.)

A part of the Kaefferkopf is predominantly granite and the other part is limestone and clay. Aurelie and Arnaud have plantings in both terroirs. Until now, almost all the wines we have received from the Kaefferkopf have been blended from both parts but recently they have begun to vinify them separately. They also continue to explore different techniques such as maceration, blending varieties, amphora aging, longer presses, later harvests and much more, probing the Kaefferkopf for how to best express its terroir.

The biggest expression of these experiments so far is the release of the two new cuvées, Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Purberg 2020 and Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Pfulben 2019. Purberg and Pfulben are two lieu-dits within the Kaefferkopf. Pfulben is granitic soil and Purberg is limestone. They have made a white wine from Pfulben, which is a blend of Gewurztraminer (60%) Riesling (30%) & Pinot Gris and a macerated wine (30 days of skin contact) from the Purberg plot, which is to all intents and purposes made from Gewurztraminer (there are small quantities of other varieties). We also have a new vintage of Khépri, which comes from the limestone and clay soils as well but is macerated in amphora for 200 days. It is a blend of Gewürtztraminer, Riesling, and Pinot Gris. Finally, the 2019 Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Riesling is a white wine sourced from both types of terroir. There is also one more wine made with grapes grown on the Kaefferkopf but it cannot be appellationed because it is 100% Pinot Noir, which is not allowed. That is the Pinot Noir cuvée called K.

The remaining wines are more familiar cuvées, although the Riesling is an unusual blend of 2 vintages (see more details below).

The Geschickt wines are all made without filtration or fining and, when possible, without added sulphites. Occasionally, if they think it is needed, they will add small amounts (typically 1g/hL during aging) to a particular wine in a particular vintage. There is no hard and fast rule for which cuvées will need it. In the table below we've identified the wines made without added sulphites but they also make it very transparent on their labels. If the label says "Contient des sulfites, naturellement" there are no added sulphites. If it says "Contient Sulfites" a small quantity has been added to the wine.

Aurelie and Arnaud have also been experimenting, since the 2018 vintage, with macerating a small proportion of the grapes for their white cuvées, as a way of minimising the risk of "ropiness" a problem where the wine temporarily becomes quite viscous. (You will know it if

you have seen it – it is a shock the first time! The wine tastes as you would expect but has a thick, almost treacle-like texture.) We think that with the Geschickt white wines the decision to include some macerated juice has given the whites more texture and more phenolic complexity (more layers of flavour). We hope, if you buy some, you think so too!

We have made notes about all of the wines we still have available in the table below as well as providing prices and, in some cases, a maximum order limit.

Wine	Type	Variety	Notes
Geschickt Edelzwicker 2019 1 litre \$41	White	Blending juices from all the wines made in 2019 including Riesling, Muscat, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Sylvaner	A wine which uses the final part from the pressing of all the white grapes (i.e. all the different wines). It was aged in foudre for 12 months. No added sulphites. 13.5% ABV. It is very easy to drink and very good value.
Geschickt Riesling Holderbaum 20/21 \$47	White	Riesling	This wine contains grapes from the 2020 and 2021 vintages, from vineyards to the east and south-east of Ammerschwihr, including Holderbaum the village (Prediger and Birgele. which is a parcel to the south-east of Ammerschwihr. Holderbaum, which is south-east of the village makes up 80% of the wine so it provides its name. When the 2021 vintage was harvested, the 2020 vintage still had 30 grams of sugar. The pomace from the 2021 vintage was added to the still-aging 2020 wine to restart the fermentation. The 2020 and 2021 were ready to bottle at the same time so they did an experiment blending them and it was very successful so that's what was done. Interestingly, they were two completely different vintages. Aged in stainless steel. 13% ABV.
Geschickt Pino 2018 \$54	White	Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Auxerrois, Pinot Noir	A blend of the four pinots of Alsace, from several parcels close to Ammerschwihr. A part of the Pinot Gris came from two parcels within Kaefferkopf (one part granitic and the other marne and limestone). The other varieties, from parcels one the edge of the village, have

Wine	Type	Variety	Notes
			much more clay. Aged for 18 months in foudre. No added sulphites. 13% ABV.
Geschickt 6 Pieds sur Terre 2018 \$54	White	Riesling, Muscat, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir	This wine contains equal quantities of each variety, from different plots around Ammerschwih. The name, partly a play on "Six Feet Under" (in French 'pied', which means foot, is used to describe a single vine and there are 6 varieties in this wine). It's predominantly directly-pressed juice but a small part was macerated (all muscat d'Alsace). This vintage was aged for 18 months in foudre. 14% ABV.
Geschickt Pet- Nat 2021 \$56	Sparkling	Pinot Auxerrois, Riesling, Muscat	50% Pinot Auxerrois, 35% Riesling, 15% Muscat. No added sulphites. 12.5% ABV. Sealed with a crown seal.
Geschickt Crémant d'Alsace 2020 \$54	Sparkling	Pinot Blanc, Pinot Auxerrois	Disgorged without dosage and without sulfites. Unusually this is a negoce wine, with the grapes sourced from a colleague in the village who works organically. The last estate Crémant was from the 2018 vintage. There will be another from the 2022 vintage.
Geschickt Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Riesling 2019 \$77	White	Riesling	Predominantly directly-pressed Riesling (a small part is macerated riefly in the press) from within Kaefferkopf, an appellation with both granitic and clay-limestone soils. This wine is sourced from both types of terrior. 14% ABV.
Geschickt Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Pfulben 2019 \$77	White	Gewurztraminer, Riesling, Pinot Gris	Gewurztraminer (60%) Riesling (30%) & Pinot Gris (10%). Predominantly direct-press but a small priorrtion of the Riesling was macerated for 10 days. This wine comes from the lieu-dit Pfulben

Wine	Type	Variety	Notes
			within Kaefferkopf. The soil is granitic. Aged in foudre. No added sulphites. 14% ABV.
Geschickt Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Khépri 2020 \$95	Macerated	Gewurztraminer, Riesling, Pinot Gris	200 days of maceration in amphora. From the clay and limestone part of Kaefferkopf. No added sulphites. 14% ABV.
Geschickt Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Purberg 2020 \$77	Macerated	Gewurztraminer (mainly)	Predominantly Gewurztraminer on clay and limestone soils, 30 days of maceration. Purberg is the name of the lieu-dit within Kaefferkopf. No added sulphites. 14% ABV.
Geschickt Grand Cru Wineck-Schlossberg Riesling 2020 \$54	Macerated	Riesling	From the steep slopes of Wineck-Schlossberg, where granitic soil has lots of exposure to the sun, this wine had 30 days of skin contact. Aged in amphora for 12 months. No added sulphites. 13.5% ABV.
Geschickt Pinot Noir 2019 (Maximum 1 bottle) \$56	Red	Pinot Noir	From the clay and limestone soils around Ammerschwih. 10 days maceration, aged in foudre. 13% ABV.
Geschickt Beetle Juice No 2 (Maximum 2 bottles) \$77	Light Red	Gewurztraminer, Cherries	Skin contact gewurztraminer and cherries from Purberg within Kaefferkopf, a parcel that is predominantly limestone. It is 80% grapes and 20% cherries. The cherries were harvested late in May added (whole with pips) to Gewurztraminer from the same vineyard but the previous vintage (having aged in foudre). They spend a month together after which they are pressed and then bottled. No added sulphites. 12% ABV. Sealed with a crown seal this wine is very lively so open with care.

## What's coming

Our next two releases will be from **l'Octavin** and **Jean-Marc Dreyer**.

Most of the available l'Octavin cuvées are listed in the “pre-release” pack 7 in this newsletter. In addition to the pack wines we also will have a Hip, Hip J Chardonnay from the 2020 vintage which is macerated.

Most of the Dreyer wines are from his Origin series (cuvées made with a single variety of macerated white Alsace grapes) including Sylvaner, Auxerrois, Riesling, Pinot Gris, Muscat and Gewurztraminer. We also have some 2021 Finisterra, which is also macerated but a blend of most of the Alsace white varieties. Finally we will have some Elios Pinot Noir, the red wine he makes from the younger Pinot Noir vines.

In addition to the **Mataburro** wine mentioned in the last newsletter we will also be allocating / offering miniscule quantities of **Domaine Bornard** and **de Moor**. Any offers are likely to be single bottles unfortunately as both are very small shipments. We're hoping that once we start receiving wines from the 2022 vintage we'll have slightly more to offer.

Later in the year we hope to have **Domaine de la Garrelière**, **Vincent Carême**, **la Soeur Cadette**, new **Mosse** vintages and the **next l'Octavin** selection Alice Bouvot has decided to release. We will have more information about the availability of those wines in future updates.



## Pack 1: Chardonnay Pack (Approx 15% discount)

**Note: 1 pack only!**



This pack is a celebration of Chardonnay, mostly from Burgundy, its spiritual home but also one special bottle of Bornard Chardonnay from the Jura that somehow escaped our allocations. Despite being only an hour almost due east by car, visiting the Jura after Burgundy feels like a different country and its Chardonnay is very different too, with more mineral and umami characteristics.

The wines from Burgundy include two bottles of La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2020, which, if you were buying it in France and its price was not affected by international freight charges and our WET, you might say it was a delicious everyday drinking wine. Relatively speaking it is, although the prices of Burgundy in Australia tend to make nothing seem every day!

There are two different Sextant Chardonnays, one of which is from a recent vintage and the other, made the same way, but with extended aging should make for a fascinating comparison. We think Intuition Foudre (the wine from the 2018 vintage) is among the most complex and compelling of the white wines we have had from Julien Altaber.

The last wine, Domaine Derain Bourgogne Landré, is also made by Julien Altaber. It's from a small plot (0.3 hectares) of very old vines. It is drinks as a much more complex wine than its Bourgogne status would suggest.

- Sextant – Julien Altaber Bourgogne Blanc 2021
- Sextant – Julien Altaber Intuition Foudre 2018
- Domaine Derain Bourgogne Landré 2021
- La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2020 (2 bottles)
- Domaine Bornard Chardonnay Les Gaudrettes “Second Tirage” 2018

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$486.00 but the pack price is only \$416.60. 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 2: Altaber and Derain Premium Pack (15% Discount)

**Note: 1 Pack Only**



It is a rare event when we are able to offer a pack such as this! Each of the wines in this pack is a very special offering. They are all made by Julien Altaber (remember that he and his partner Carole have bought Dominique Derain's operation) and each is a unique wine from unique terroir.

Both of the Sextant wines are sporting the new labels. The Les Fas is one of his special, stunning Aligoté wines and the Secret de Cave is an oxidative Chardonnay that is truly sensational!

Then there are four wines from the vineyards that used to be owned by Dominique, two of which are made from Pinot Noir (the Mercurey and the Gevrey) and two from Chardonnay, both from the underrated Saint-Aubin area.

- Sextant - Julien Altaber Intuition Les Fas 2018
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Secret de Cave 2016
- Domaine Derain Mercurey La Plante Chassey 2021
- Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin En Vesvau NV
- Domaine Derain Gevrey-Chambertin En Vosne 2018
- Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly 2020

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$993.00 but the pack price is only \$844.05. 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: Derain and Sextant New Arrivals Pack (15% discount)**

**Note: 2 Packs Only**



This pack is a good representation of the breadth of Julien Altaber’s wine making talents. All the wines in the pack except for Skin Bull are sold out now so this pack is the only way to buy those wines. We saved them for the newsletter.

There are three reds – two Pinot Noirs (the Sextant Bourgogne Rouge and Domaine Derain les Riaux, both from the 2021 Vintage), and Métisse, which is 100% Gamay. It’s lighter than the Pinot Noirs because a small proportion has been directly pressed to keep it fresh. There are two whites – an Aligoté and a Chardonnay) and one sparkling, which is a pet-nat made from macerated Aligoté. We always like this cuvée but this fresh 2022 vintage may be our favourite so far.

- Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Rouge 2021
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Aligoté 2021
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Métisse 2021
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Skin Bull 2022
- Domaine Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux 2021
- Domaine Derain Bourgogne Landré 2021

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$396.00 but the pack price is only \$336.60. 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: Sextant Cellar Secrets 3 Pack (15% Discount)



Our last pack of Derain and Altaber wines consists of 3 unique bottles. They are new cuvées but the product of patience. They are the first releases arising from the desire Carole and Julien have to add some age, in barrel, to some of their wines.

Interestingly, as in the Jura, their goal (bearing in mind all rules are made to be broken) is to get to the point where the serious white wines will spend at least 2 years in barrel with no interference (no racking or bâtonnage). “Do not disturb” is the mantra.

For the reds, they plan to continue to bottle them earlier, to keep the freshness. It’s a very similar philosophy to the aging regime for white and red wines in the Jura, which is only an hour to the east.

In keeping with this intention to age their white wines for longer they have released three special new Sextant cuvées.

- Intuition Les Fas 2018 is Aligoté with additional barrel aging.
- Intuition Foudre 2018 is Chardonnay with extended aging in foudre.
- Secret de Cave 2016 is a Chardonnay aged in barrel with no topping up. In a similar way to Vin Jaune this wine formed a veil, and because it remained exposed with just the veil for protection it is oxidative. Like a vin jaune you can open this bottle and drink it over many days (or in our case weeks). If you eat cheese regularly it is a perfect companion to have standing by. Its complex brightness will stay for as long as there is wine in the bottle.

Unusually this is a three pack – one bottle of each of these special wines.

**The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$464 but the pack price is only \$394.40. 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 5: Geschickt New Arrivals Pack (15% Discount)**

**Note: 2 Packs Only**



We have arranged the wines in a slightly different format because some of them are new wines for Geschickt, so you might like some additional information about these wines.

Geschickt Riesling Holderbaum NV	This wine contains grapes from the 2020 and 2021 vintages, from vineyards to the east and south-east of Ammerschwihr, including Holderbaum, Prediger and Birgele. Holderbaum, which is south-east of the village makes up 80% of the wine so it provides its name. When the 2021 vintage was harvested, the 2020 vintage still had 30 grams of sugar. The pomace from the 2021 vintage was added to the still-aging 2020 wine to restart the fermentation. The 2020 and 2021 were ready to bottle at the same time so they did an experiment blending them and it was very successful so that's what was done. Interestingly, they were two completely different vintages. Aged in stainless steel. 13% ABV.
Geschickt Pino 2018	A blend of the four pinots of Alsace, from several parcels close to Ammerschwihr. A part of the Pinot Gris came from two parcels within Kaefferkopf (one part granitic and the other marne and limestone). The other varieties, from parcels on the edge of the village, have much more clay. Aged for 18 months in foudre. No added sulphites. 13% ABV.

Geschickt Pet-Nat 2021	50% Pinot Auxerrois, 35% Riesling, 15% Muscat. No added sulphites. 12.5% ABV. Sealed with a crown seal.
Geschickt Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Purberg 2020	Predominantly Gewurztraminer on clay and limestone soils, 30 days of maceration. Purberg is the name of the lieu-dit within Kaefferkopf. No added sulphites. 14% ABV.
Geschickt Pinot Noir 2019	From the clay and limestone soils around Ammerschwihr. 10 days maceration, aged in foudre. 13% ABV.
Geschickt Beetle Juice No 2	Skin contact gewurztraminer and cherries from Purberg within Kaefferkopf, a parcel that is predominantly limestone. It is 80% grapes and 20% cherries. The cherries were harvested late in May added (whole with pips) to Gewurztraminer from the same vineyard but the previous vintage (having aged in foudre). They spend a month together after which they are pressed and then bottled. No added sulphites. 12% ABV. Sealed with a crown seal this wine is very lively so open with care.

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$367 but the pack price is only **\$311.95**. 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: Sabre New Arrivals Pack (15% Discount)**

**Note: 2 Packs Only**



Our new Fanny Sabre wines, as predicted, came and went very quickly. We saved 2 mixed packs for the newsletter, and just as well because now most of these wines are sold out.

It's a lovely mix. There are two wines from Clos des Renardes Fanny's relatively new Beaune Village parcel. (One is Pinot Noir and the other Chardonnay). There are two bottles of Fanny's highly sought-after Bourgogne Aligoté, made from vines planted by her father in Pommard, a Pinot Noir only appellation.

There's a Pinot Noir from the IGP Sainte-Marie-la-Blanche (Anatole Rouge, a Pinot Noir named after one of Fanny's children).

And finally, there is Camille, named after Fanny's daughter. It's a complex, serious pet-nat, a Blanc de Noir made with Pinot Noir.

- Fanny Sabre Beaune Blanc Clos des Renardes 2021
- Fanny Sabre Beaune Rouge Clos des Renardes 2021
- Fanny Sabre IGP Sainte-Marie-la-Blanche Anatole Rouge 2022
- Fanny Sabre Camille 2022
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2021 **(2 bottles)**

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$580.00 but the pack price is only \$493.00. 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: Octavin Unreleased Arrivals Pack (15% Discount)

**Note: 3 Packs Only**



We're about to release some new Octavin wines but we're making them available in the newsletter prior to general release. We've set aside 3 packs but depending on how soon we release the wines more generally there may be more. However, each customer is limited to one pack.

It is a shipment of négoce wines and the pack is full of many styles of wine and many grape varieties sourced from several parts of France. Initially the négoce business began as a consequence of a couple of devastating harvests due to frosts in the Jura, as a way to insure against increasingly fickle weather, but now it has become an integral part of her business and even during the rare bountiful local vintages she always makes négoce cuvées too. And one important series in the négoce wines (the Hip, Hip J wines) are actually sourced from a local organic grower and so are Jura wines.

For her négoce wines she and her team harvest the grapes when they suit her winemaking decisions and she vinifies the wine in her Arbois cellar. She has a long term relationship with many of these producers, including all the wines we have in this collection, and over the years we have received multiple vintages of the same cuvée. Having said that, two of the wines in the pack have taken quite a new direction. Ivre de Vivre and Grenabar are both wines that, when we have had them in the past, have been made with different varieties sourced from different growers and also been quite different styles. The new versions are very different. These wines, like Ganache, are now sourced from Claude Ughetto's Demeter-certified vineyards in the tiny village of Saint Pierre de Vassols in Provence. Some of you may know that the story of Living Wines begins with a house we owned with friends in Provence (the house came before our wine business). Sadly we had to sell the house in 2020 but these wines provide a continuing connection. Saint Pierre de Vassols is just a few kilometres from where our house was and you could look towards these vineyards from its upper floors.



## WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

- l'Octavin Ganache 2021
- l'Octavin Grenabar 2021
- l'Octavin Ivre de Vivre 2021
- l'Octavin Clé à Molette 2021
- l'Octavin Muscat 2021
- l'Octavin Hip Hip J... Savagnin 2020

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$447 but the pack price is only \$379.95. 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.**

## Bits and pieces

We have a few bits and pieces of news and ideas this month that we thought we would share with you.

### Variety versus varietal



We often hear people using these words incorrectly so we thought a short grammar lesson might be useful, especially for younger readers who may not have been instructed in the rigours of English grammar.

Put simply, the word “variety” is a noun and the word “varietal” is an adjective. Unfortunately, many people now use “varietal” as a noun rather than an adjective. It is not only wine people who do this, coffee people are even worse!

If you are describing the grapes that are found in the Jura you might use a phrase such as “Ploussard is a grape variety found in the Jura”. Many people use the word varietal here where it is not

being used as an adjective.

The correct use of the word “varietal” would be the following sentence where you are describing a wine from the Jura. “A wine that is made from Ploussard is a varietal wine.” Notice here that the word “varietal” is adding to our understanding of the word “wine” hence it is being used as an adjective. Or it makes sense to write that “The varietal characteristics of the Ploussard grape include that it is thin-skinned.” because it is also being used as an adjective, qualifying the noun “characteristics”.

End of lesson!

### Damaging effects of microplastics and nanoplastics

There have been a number of recent academic papers published on the effect of microplastics and nanoplastics in agriculture. Some of the papers reference vineyards but others analyse potato crops, grain crops and rice crops – the findings, however, affect every one of us.

In order to clarify the language here, microplastics are plastic fragments which are less than 5 mm in diameter whereas nanoplastics are much smaller, with diameters less than 0.001 mm.

Research into wildlife has linked micro- and nanoplastic exposure to infertility, inflammation and cancer.

But humans are not exempt either. Humans are constantly exposed to micro- and nanoplastics through the inhalation of fibres from clothing and fabrics, tyre dust from motor vehicles, ingestion of water with residues (from filters, pipes, and particularly plastic bottles) and ingestion of contaminated foods.

## Getting rid of the term sustainable

The term “sustainable” in agriculture is one that rankles. First there is no clear definition of the term and secondly there is no set of rules for farmers to abide by. In many cases farmers say they are acting sustainably by using less damaging sprays or less damaging fertiliser on their crops. But they are projecting an image of clean crops where the residues are still going to damage anyone who ingests them.

It was therefore with some pleasure that we read a very well-thought-out article on the topic of “regenerative farming” called “Over the rainbow – sustainability and farming systems” by Dudley Brown recently. We found a link to the article (which was published on the Jancis Robinson web site) on Dudley’s website:

<https://www.inkwellwines.com/publications>

On this web page there are some publications in a section called Academic articles that have been written by his wife Irina Santiago-Brown and then two articles below those where you will find the “Over the Rainbow” link.

We found a lot in the article that we could agree with and some of the practices that are discussed are those that many of our producers in France follow.

The main takeaway from the article is that he shines a light on the poor practices in vineyard farming that have become endemic in Australia.

Take this quote for example:

*The fact is that highly mechanized, chemical input driven wine grape farming has quite a lot of negative externalities – rural depopulation, soil degradation, excessive water use and pollution, low profitability and oddly, low employment.*

The other problem that he mentions indirectly is that so many owners of vineyards want them to look perfect – well, to them anyway. When we see a perfectly manicured vineyard the first thing we think about are the chemicals that were expended in making it look that way. We prefer looking at vineyards that have flowers, weeds and a range of plants that will attract living creatures that can carry out tasks that nature intended.

One thing we specifically look for are spider webs as spiders are very good at capturing creatures that might damage the ripening grapes such as wasps. We well remember one year when we were helping our friend Dirk Meure pick his grapes, dodging the spider webs that were everywhere in his organic vineyard, and were laden with dead wasps – nature at its best!

When we see no foliage under the vines we know that dangerous sprays (usually Roundup) have been used to kill the grass and weeds. Of course, some of the spray will be sucked up into the vines and then into the grapes that are used to make the wine.

In summary, the text in red below is Dudley’s summary of the main points he discusses in the article, with the first two point expanding on what we have just discussed.

**For the un-initiated, the core tenets are:**

- **Keep bare ground covered, even with weeds if necessary. Even that 40% of your vineyard right under your vines.**

- **Have a diverse mix of ground covers (ideally at least seven species from four different plant families, e.g. grasses, clovers, legumes, brassicas, flowers, root vegetables, etc). This needs to be amended and fine-tuned over the years and seasons.**
- **Minimise soil disturbance.**
- **Incorporate grazing animals into your farm system or employ mechanical bio-mimicry if you don't have grazing animals.**
- **Minimise or eliminate artificial fertilisers and herbicides – even weeds have a role to play at times.**
- **To the extent possible, have living plants covering the ground year-round.**

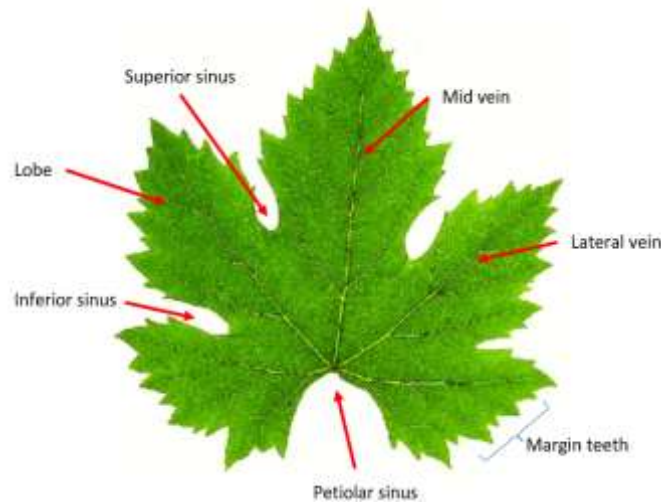
The article goes on to discuss the above points in more detail. It is well-worth a read!

### Pinot types in Alsace

This article attempts to reduce the confusion that may exist surrounding the Pinot types that are found in Alsace. These are:

- Pinot Noir
- Pinot Blanc
- Pinot Gris
- Pinot Auxerrois

We might start this short story with a picture of each of these varieties so that you can see for yourself what the visual differences are.



The main leaf components



**Pinot Noir leaf and grape bunch**

Notice pronounced inferior sinus and long petiolar sinus and fairly tight grape bunches.



**Pinot Blanc leaf and grape bunch**

Pronounced petiolar lobe and loose grape bunches.





Pinot Gris leaf and grape bunch

Three lobes with pronounced sinuses. Medium-tight grape bunches.



Auxerrois Blanc (Pinot Auxerrois) leaf and grape bunch

Auxerrois leaf lacks sinus definition, 3 lobes. Grape bunches medium tightness.

One of the most interesting issues in Alsace is that it is not compulsory to mention the use of Pinot Auxerrois in a wine labelled as Pinot Blanc. In fact, it is permitted to label a wine as Pinot Blanc even though it contains 100% Pinot Auxerrois!

The same goes for a common wine called Edelzwicker where Pinot Auxerrois often plays a dominant role.

Each of the above grape varieties can also be used in Crémant d'Alsace along with Riesling and Chardonnay as shown in the snippet below from the Cahier des Charges (the official document) for Crémant d'Alsace.

#### IV - Encépagement

##### *1°- Encépagement*

a) - Les vins blancs sont issus des cépages suivants : auxerrois B, chardonnay B, pinot blanc B, pinot gris G, pinot noir N, riesling B.

You will notice in the entry above that the official name for Auxerrois is Auxerrois Blanc not Pinot Auxerrois – but that is a very minor point.

### Vegan wines

We thought it might be useful to revisit the issue of wines that may or may not be suitable for vegans. The process which would make a wine unsuitable for a vegan is the fining process, something which is common with conventionally-made wines. Fining is a process where unwanted materials are stripped from a wine. It can be for many reasons, for example to remove tannins which will reduce the wine's bitterness and astringency.

And it also improves clarity. Many winemakers seek clear wines, particularly those who submit their wines to wine shows where points are often awarded for a wine's appearance.

To fine a wine, seemingly incongruously, the winemaker adds something to it – a fining agent. The fining agent attracts tiny unwanted solids which are floating in the wine so that they become part of larger masses, making it possible to remove them when the wine is filtered.

Non-vegan fining additives include the following:

- Collagen (can be extracted from broccoli but more likely comes from beef bones)
- Albumen (is a protein that is usually extracted from egg whites)
- Gelatin (usually extracted by boiling animal products to extract the gelatin from their skin and bones – this is widely used by winemakers)
- Isinglass (this is a substance similar to gelatin and is usually extracted from fish bladders)
- Casein (extracted from milk products)
- Chitin (extracted from the skeletons of crustaceans)

## WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

- Fish oil extracted from the tissues of fish

Each of these products is capable of attracting solids in the wine through colloidal action and then precipitating the solids to the bottom of the vessel.

Such agents are never mentioned in the ingredients on the wine label because they, along with what they attracted, are removed. Of course, the problem is that there might still be trace quantities of these animal products left behind in the wine, thus making them unsuitable for vegans.

And if you like to know the really gory details of this process, once upon a time a common substance that was used in the fining process was animal blood! It is now illegal.



## Grape variety: Auxerrois Blanc

Auxerrois Blanc is a white grape variety found mainly in the Alsace region of France along with minor plantings in Canada and Germany, which is normally used to make blended white wines as well as the local Crémant d'Alsace sparkling wine. In Alsace it is also referred to as Pinot Auxerrois.

Be careful, however, because on the other side of the country around the town of Cahors the term Auxerrois is used for the Malbec grape variety. This has been the traditional name here for a long, long time as can be seen by the following mention:

**Les vins noirs, dits de Cahors,  
sont produits par le cépage  
nommé *auxerrois* ou *ped  
de perdrix*.**

This text is taken from a book by B.A. Lenoir called "TRAITÉ DE LA CULTURE DE LA VIGNE ET DE LA VINIFICATION" which was published in 1828. It refers to the black wines of Cahors being called Auxerrois.

When Cyrus Redding wrote his famous "A History and Description of Modern Wines" in 1851, he mentions Auxerrois, but it is only the Auxerrois from Cahors, which we now know as Malbec.

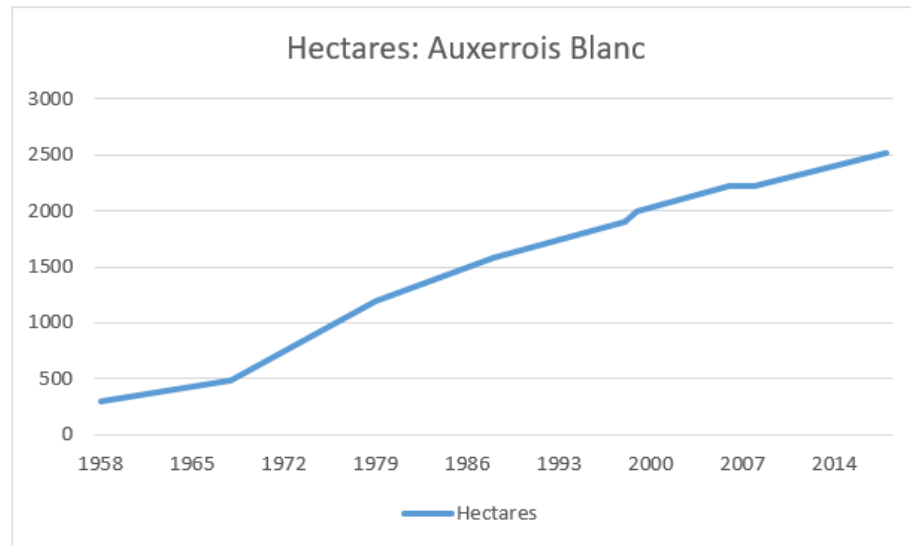
There is another name that is also used in the Lorraine district of France namely Auxerrois Blanc de Laquenexy which may provide an idea of its origins as the village of Laquenexy is about 15 kilometres South-East of the city of Metz. The records of Auxerrois in this region go back as far as 1812.

In his book of 1816, A Jullien mentions an Auxerrois when he was discussing the region of Lorraine, and in particular the area around Moselle including the communes of Metz, Thionville, Sarguemines and Briey.

DNA testing has shown that the parentage of Auxerrois is Heunisch Weiss (Gouais Blanc) and Pinot Noir, the same grapes that are the parents of Chardonnay.

The success of the sparkling wines in the Alsace region has seen increased plantings of this flexible grape variety. In 1958 the area given over to this grape was only 299 hectares, however by 2008 it had increased significantly to 2,225 hectares.

You can see in the graph below that the area of land given over to this grape variety has increased steadily since the early 1950s and is still increasing.



It is a low acid variety which makes it a good blending variety with the more high acid varieties of the Alsace such as Riesling and Pinot Blanc. It also has the advantage of early ripening.

A curiosity of the Alsace labelling laws is that Auxerrois Blanc can be used in wines labelled as Pinot Blanc. In fact, there are some white wines in Alsace that are made from 100% Auxerrois Blanc that are labelled as Pinot Blanc quite legally.

Auxerrois Blanc is known for providing a slightly musky aroma that is quite appealing. As the wine ages, honey notes start to develop giving the wine an attractive aroma providing the wine is made with skill.

The vines have pointed leaves with a central lobe and two side lobes as shown in the photo below.



Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

The white grapes are loosely clustered into small bunches allowing air circulation within the bunches, thus reducing disease pressure.



Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

One of our Alsace producers, Jean-Francois Ginglinger makes a beautiful Crémant d'Alsace from Pinot Blanc and Auxerrois Blanc.

**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.