

WINE Talk: December 2023

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 118

Welcome to newsletter 118, the seventh 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 8 packs to offer in this newsletter.



The newsletter also has:

- News about wines that are arriving soon;
- Information about recent arrivals of which we still have stocks from Domaine de la Garrelière, Vincent Carême and Calvados from Julien Fremont;
- Some wine-related news stories that interested us;
- Part 2 of a story about how grapevines grow, focussing on the photosynthesis process used by most plants, bacteria and seaweeds;
- A story about the very new Voltis grape variety in Champagne.

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.

Christmas Things



This is our last newsletter for 2023 so we want to take this chance to wish everyone a relaxing, peaceful holiday season and hope that our wholesale customers who subscribe to and read this newsletter have a very busy December with a least a little downtime. And of course we hope you all can enjoy some delicious drinking.

If you pay even the slightest attention to what's happening on our fragile planet at the moment it is so deeply depressing, sad and rage-making that it behoves us all to do our best find joy and pleasure with friends and family where we can and, at the same time, be grateful we have the luxury of choosing whether to drink a glass of wine or not and that we can eat and drink well to celebrate the end of one year and the start of the next. Increasingly, it seems, those of us who can do that are fewer and fewer. It's something to be valued and celebrated, not taken for granted.

Our Decembers in recent years have been strangely calm. It took us a long time to realise that battling with couriers and warm weather in December was not a great idea with too much chance of deliveries ending in disappointments because they didn't arrive in time and too much stress trying to shepherd those that did arrive in time to their destinations.

That's the reason we didn't rush to get a November newsletter out and settled on one in December instead. We didn't want to tempt you to even ask us to get you wine in time for Christmas because of the risk of disappointing you. We apologise to anyone we let down who hoped there may have been one more newsletter with packs available for Christmas drinking.

However, we do have options. We can always provide **Christmas gift vouchers** right up until Christmas Eve – so if you leave your shopping to the very, very last minute we could be the answer.

We like to do our bit to get in the Christmas spirit with gift vouchers by promising that anyone using a voucher they receive for Christmas can have a 15% discount on any wines they buy with it. For special wines we only sell on allocation, the maximum discount is normally only 10%, even when we put them in a newsletter pack, so this is definitely our best-value offer available. Our vouchers also don't have an expiry date (unless we expire, in which case we can't be sure what would happen but hopefully even then something would be worked out!).

Alternatively, if you would like to buy someone wine as a Christmas present but we now can't get it to you we can always take a photo of the wines you have purchased and send it to you for use on Christmas Day.

We will be shipping interstate again the week after Christmas so our next interstate deliveries will be earlyish in January.

For our Hobart / southern Tasmanian customers we can continue to deliver orders right up until Christmas Eve (i.e. Saturday and Sunday) and will be working the week between Christmas and New Year if you need wine.

New Arrivals from Domaine de la Garrelière

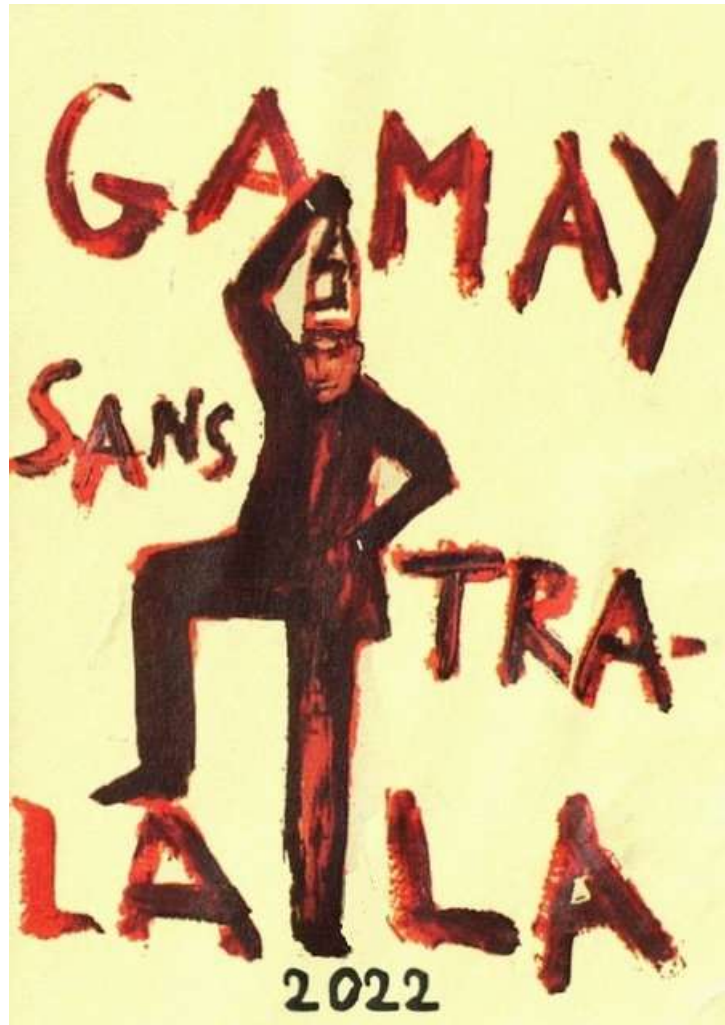
We have just released some Domaine de la Garrelière wines. We have been working with Loire vigneron François and Pascaline Plouzeau since 2010, for so long that now that their then children are adults and part of the business. Both sons, Antoine and Lucas, have been in Australia in recent years so some of you may have come across them. Antoine worked in Victorian vineyards and also at the wonderful Gertrude Street Enoteca. We met his sister Mathilde for the first time last year, hard at work loading grapes into the press with her mother and Antoine. It's a true family operation.

François Plouzeau took over the estate from his father, who had owned it since the early 1970s, in 1985. However, it has substantial history well before the Plouzeau family became the owners with parts of the current cellar, which was built in 1850, dating from 1645. With about 20 hectares of vines, in a series of parcels near the hamlet of Razines it is one of the larger estates we work with. There is quite a diversity of soils, predominantly sand and flint on a clay-limestone base. The parcels are all surrounded by forest and meadows which has made it easier for them to implement their biodynamic practices. You can get some feel for the complexity if you look at [this map](#) (in French) on their website.

As biodynamic vigneron (since 1993) they work with about 30 different types of plants making herbal tisanes to help protect the vines from diseases. Interestingly, these teas are never heated to more than 40 degrees, which ensures their beneficial properties are maintained. Sometimes they add what they call "liquid bread", a long (4-6 months) fermentation of cereals started with sourdough starter, which sprayed on the leaves, helps with the prevention of mildews.

They are certified organic by Ecocert and biodynamic by Biodyvin and have been for many years before we began to work with them.

The wine we have always sold the most of, and which was the one which caused us to approach them, is their juicy, full-bodied Gamay called Gamay Sans Tra La La, which literally means "Gamay Without Fuss". It's a label many will be familiar with.



[The Gamay Sans Tra La La label](#)

The 2022 vintage is drinking particularly deliciously this year and, like a number of their cuvées, is made to be ready to go.

However, perhaps the most interesting wine for us historically though, is Milliard d’Etoiles, which we were surprised to discover was the first pet-nat we imported. It came before Mosse Moussamoussettes and any of the Bornard pet-nats. Possibly from the 2008 vintage (our early records leave a lot to be desired) it must have been one of the first French pet-nats sold in Australia as there were very few available when we began. It’s a wine we always get in limited quantities, but those quantities are slowly increasing as more people try it. A blend of direct press Cabernet Franc and Chenin Blanc, it’s a very complex but clean and stable wine which can be opened without the risk of losing any of its contents. It’s a serious sparkling wine and one we’re proud to have such a history with.

We have a good collection of other cuvées as well including tiny quantities of the rich and magnificent 2018 Couleur du Temps sweet Chenin Blanc, which we have had before, and more 2018 Cinabre, the Cabernet Franc cuvée from 40+ year old vines which is aged in 500 litre barrels prior to bottling. It has had another year to develop in the bottle since we first had this wine last year.

We have made some brief notes about the wines in the list below which we hope you find helpful.

Wine	Type	Variety	Notes	Price
Domaine de la Garrelière Le Blanc de la Mariée 2022	White	Sauvignon Blanc	20+ year old vines in sandy soil on clay and silex. Directly pressed slowly over about 3 hours and aged in tank for approximately 6 months. This wine is lightly filtered. 13% ABV.	\$48
Domaine de la Garrelière IGP Val de Loire Cendrillon 2022	White	Sauvignon Blanc	40+ year old vines from a 2.5 hectare parcel of sandy soil on clay and silex. Directly pressed slowly over about 3 hours. 1/3 is fermented and aged in barrel and the rest in tank. Both components are aged for about 8 months before being combined. 13.5% ABV.	\$56
Domaine de la Garrelière IGP Val de Loire Le P'tit Ch'nin 2022	White	Chenin Blanc	5-10 year old vines on sandy soil. Slow direct press and then 12-24 hours of settling. It is aged in tank on its fine lees for about 6 months. For drinking as a young wine. 13% ABV.	\$49
Domaine de la Garrelière Le Chenin de la Colline 2021	White	Chenin Blanc	30+ year old vines from a parcel of 3.2 hectares. Clay and silex soil. Slow direct press over about 3 hours and then 12-24 hours of settling. Fermentation takes place over about 3 weeks in concrete tanks. Aging is 2/3 in tank and one third is place in 500 litre barrels. 13% ABV.	\$59
Domaine de la Garrelière Le Marquis de C 2020	White	Chardonnay	30+ year old vines from a 1 hectare parcel. This wine was originally called Carabas but due to a trademark issue was renamed Marquis de C some years ago. You may see references to it as Carabas on some websites. It is slowly pressed, is settled and then fermented and aged in 500 litre barrels. The barrels are of various ages. 1/4 are new, 1/4 a year old, 1/4 two years old and the rest older. There is no stirring of the lees. The wine	\$66

Wine	Type	Variety	Notes	Price
			rests on its lees for at least a year. It is assembled in tank 3 to 4 months before bottling. 13.5%.	
Domaine de la Garrelière Milliard d'Etoiles 2019	Sparkling	Chenin Blanc, Cabernet Franc (direct press)	The soil is sand on clay and silex. Directly pressed grapes are fermented in tank, then cooled once the alcoholic fermentation has finished to slow down the activity of the yeasts. It is blend of 40% Chenin Blanc and 40% Cabernet Franc of the vintage and 20% of a reserve of a still wine aged for one year in barrels to provide what the Plouzeaus describe as "maturity and wisdom". It is bottled between 18 – 20 gr/L of residual sugars. It is aged sur lattes for 12 months, riddled by hand for 1 month, and then disgorged. No added sulphites. 13.5% ABV.	\$69
Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Couleur du Temps 2018	Sweet	Chenin Blanc	This wine is rarely made. We have only had it twice. Once was the 2005 vintage, in our very first shipment and then this 2018 vintage, which we have now received twice. Picked late in October (on the third harvest of the vines it came from) and aged in barrels, it is a rich and majestic sweet Chenin Blanc, which is ideal for pouring as a match for equally rich desserts. The wine spent one year in barrels prior to bottling in November 2019. It has 85g/l of residual sugar.	\$94

Wine	Type	Variety	Notes	Price
Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Les 2 Amis 2021	Red	Cabernet Franc, Gamay	This wine is a collaboration between Francois Plouzeau and a friend Geoffrey de Noüel, also from the same region. It is a blend of Domaine de la Garrelière Gamay and Cabernet Franc from Geoffrey de Noüel.	\$54
Domaine de la Garrelière Gamay Sans Tra La La 2022	Red	Gamay	35+ year old vines. Clay and silex on limestone. Carbonic maceration of whole bunches for 21 days in a previously filled with CO2. The juice from the vat and the pressing of the grapes are assembled and then aging is in concrete tanks for 6 months. There is no filtration or fining but the wine is cold stabilised to remove tartaric salts.	\$55
Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Le Rouge des Cornus 2021	Red	Cabernet Franc	Destemmed grapes are sorted by hand. They are macerated for 15-20 days with very gentle treatments - just a few pump overs to keep the cap moist. The pressed juice is aged in concrete tanks for about 8 months. No filtration.	\$56
Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Cinabre 2018	Red	Cabernet Franc	40+ year old vines from a parcel of clay and silex on limestone. Initial alcoholic fermentation is in concrete tanks with gentle extraction. After pressing it is aged in 500 litre barrels and undergoes malolactic fermentation. After more than a year it is consolidated into a tank for 2 months before bottling. No filtration. 13.5% ABV.	\$64

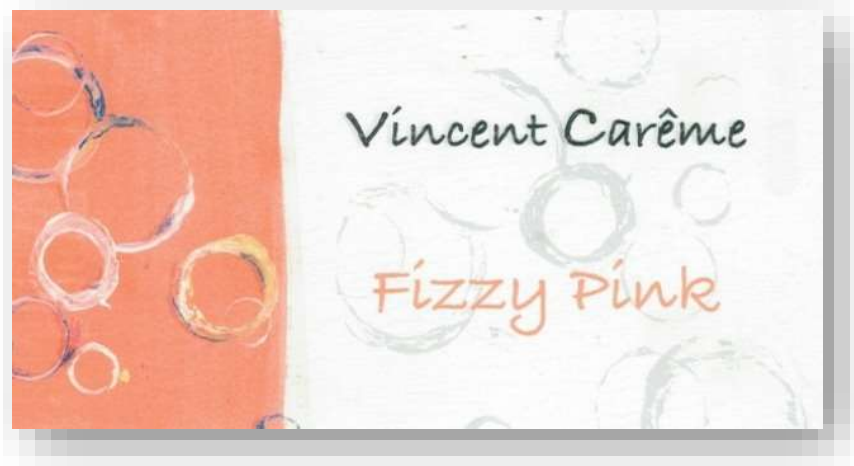
Many of these wines are from the 2022 vintage. We have some observations from François about it. Translated his words are that he is “very happy with the wines produced this year at La Garrelière. The balance is there, the substance of a fleshy fruit suggests very full wines, without excess alcohol, supported by Loire acidity. A very beautiful vintage.” While there was some reduction in yields because of the dry conditions they were lucky to avoid the frosts early in April which took a toll in other parts of the Loire.

We also had some other interesting news from them this year – a decision to withdraw from the Touraine appellation, something they have been thinking about for several years. The family’s

feeling is that, although they feel strongly their association with the place they are more and more at odds with the criteria imposed by the appellation. For that reason they are moving the estate's wines into Vin de France and IGP Val de Loire which, in particular, will give them more freedom regarding which grape varieties they work with.

New arrivals from Vincent Carême

We also have a very small shipment from our Vouvray vigneron Vincent Carême, with only four wines, most of them sparkling.



There's **2021 Fizzy Pink**, which as its name suggests is a fun pink sparkling wine. It's a pet-nat made with classic Loire red varieties - Cabernet Franc, Côt, Gamay, and Grolleau Noir. It may be fun but it's not funky. With its aromas of pomegranate it's perhaps a shade more savoury than the previous vintage. It's been disgorged and is quite clean and safe to open without additional precautions! **\$42**

We also have the **2021 Vouvray Plaisir Ancestral**, also sparkling, but much more serious. Vincent Carême was one of the first vigneron in the Loire Valley to make pétillant naturel wines and this 100% Chenin Blanc, is one of those wines which show that pet-nats are not just for fun. From older vines, this wine is complex and well-balanced with a strong mineral streak. It would stand up against the best Crémants from the same region and would justify a place at any celebratory table (or any other table for that matter!). It is **\$60** a bottle.

There are smaller amounts of two early-release still cuvées from the 2022 vintage. **Vouvray Tendre** is an off-dry Chenin Blanc, with potential for aging, and **Vouvray Sec** is a dry wine Vincent makes from his youngest Chenin Blanc vines, which is meant to be drunk as a young wine. Both wines were aged in oak barrels. The Tendre is **\$49** and the Vouvray Sec is **\$57**.

New arrivals from Julien Fremont



Apple tree in Fremont's orchard - © Living Wines

Julien Fremont belongs in both the new arrivals and the coming soon section of this newsletter.

We received a shipment from him recently but so far have just released the Calvados, mainly to get some to our friends at France Soir restaurant in Melbourne who ask us when it is coming every few weeks! They also take as much as we can offer them so we like to look after them. But they can't have it all and we do have individual bottles for sale for our retail customers.

The Calvados in this shipment comes from a 2017 distillation and is 42%. It is \$133 for a 500 ml bottle.

After a certain time if it is not all sold we will offer the rest to France Soir so it's only here for a relatively short time. And if you would like to try it but don't want the commitment of a full bottle we can heartily recommend a long lunch at France Soir finishing with a glass of Julien's Calvados. For us it's impossible to think of a better moment to drink it.

We will have news about all the ciders in the next newsletter.

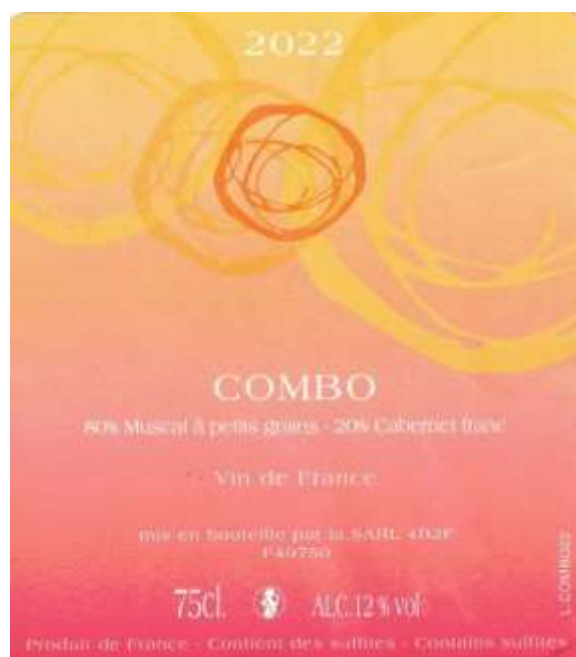
What's Coming?

During the next few weeks we won't be resting even if we are not shipping much. We'll be releasing some new Mosse summer drinking wines, some Piollot and Marie Courtin Champagnes and, of course, the long-awaited Fremont ciders, which include small quantities of some new cuvées.

From **Julien Fremont** as well as the 2022 Silex, 2022 Poiré (about Julien is particularly excited), and 2021 Brut Par Nature (the latter has had an extra year of aging) there are two new cuvées – Piterne and Quevrue. Piterne is a new creation, a blend of two vintages (2021 was fully fermented and 2022 was still fermenting so it acted like a dosage). Quevrue is also new, a cider from 2021 which spent a year in a terracotta amphora. We are yet to try them, but Julien's descriptions have us salivating.

There will also be small amounts of his delicious cider vinegar and even less Pommeau, which is a blend of unfermented apple juice and Calvados, which we are imagining is going to be a great match for ripe, washed rind cheeses.

We will also soon be releasing the **Mosse** 2022 Bangarang (which this year is a blend of Cabernet Franc, Grolleau Gris, and Gamay) and Bisou (made from estate Grolleau Noir, Grolleau Gris, Cabernet Franc, Côt, and Chenin Blanc) as well as a new cuvée called **Combo** (see label below), which is a complex and haunting blend of Muscat à Petits Grains and Cabernet Franc.



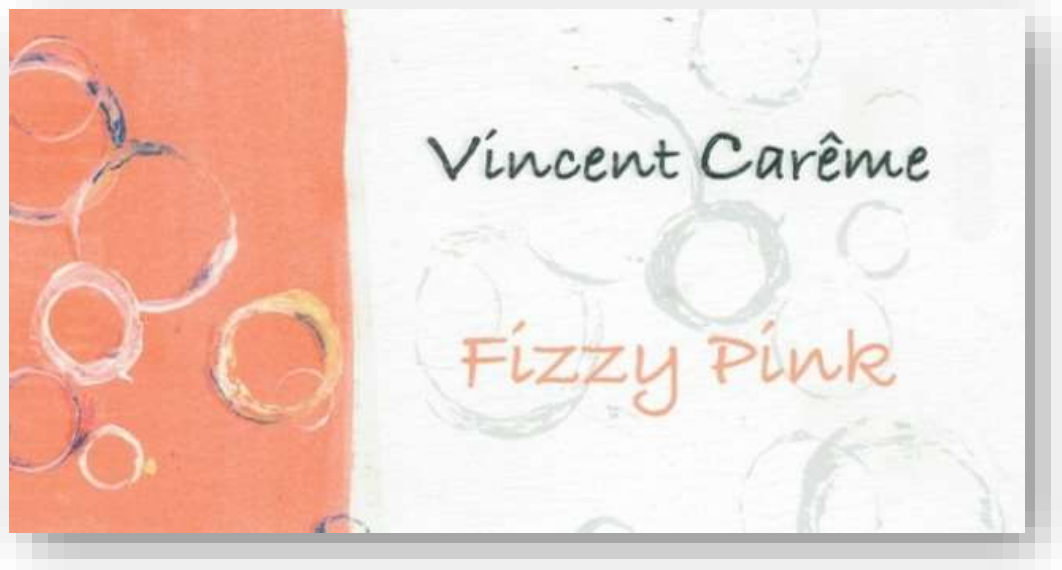
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There are other things to come but we can confirm, because it is on the water, we will have new wines from **Derain**, **Sextant** and **Michel Gahier** soon (provided the Houthi militias in Yemen don't bring international shipping via the Red Sea to a complete halt or fire on the boat that's carrying them). So many things can go wrong!

We'll be allocating the Gahier wines so tell us if you want an allocation and we'd also recommend asking for advance notice about Derain and Sextant because some wines, particularly white cuvées, disappear very quickly.

Pack 1: Vincent Carême Arrivals (15% discount)

Note: 2 Packs Only!



Vincent Carême is a rising star in the Loire Valley appellation of Vouvray. Here only white wines made from Chenin Blanc are permitted to the exclusion of all other varieties. The white wines can be still and dry, still and sweet or sparkling and this pack has some of each of the approved styles, plus a pet nat made from a range of local grapes that exclude it from the appellation, but which is nevertheless delicious.

Vincent has some excellent terroir inherited from his father and beautiful caves cut into the tuffeau hills behind his house where the wines can mature in perfect conditions.

This pack sees one of his beautiful dry white wines, the Vouvray Sec, paired with a slightly sweet wine called Vouvray Tendre.

This is followed by two bottles of a Vouvray sparkling wine called Plaisir Ancestral which is a delicious sparkler made from Chenin Blanc.

Finally, we have the Fizzy Pink pet nat which many of you have enjoyed in previous years – the light pink colour of this wine comes from red grapes such as Côt (the local name for Malbec), Gamay, Cabernet Franc and Grolleau Noir. It is a delicious, fun wine that is perfect for summer drinking.

- Vincent Carême Vouvray Sec 2022
- Vincent Carême Vouvray Tendre 2022
- Vincent Carême Vouvray Plaisir Ancestral 2021 **(2 Bottles)**
- Vincent Carême Fizzy Pink 2021 **(2 Bottles)**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$310.00 but the pack price is only \$263.50. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

Pack 2: Label Damaged Red Bornard Wines Pack Plus More (Approx 18% Discount)

Note: 1 Pack Only



We've had another round of breakages which have resulted in stained labels. Unfortunately, the most recent damage was to a box of red Domaine Bornard wines. To ease the pain we've created a pack with four of the damaged red Bornard wines and two other wines (both white to add some balance).

If you're interested in the nuances of what makes wines different, then you might also enjoy this pack for the comparisons it offers. There are two Pinot Noirs and two Ploussards from Tony Bornard. And there are two whites from the Montanet family.

Tony's Pinot Noirs are quite different – they are from different places (but both from near his village of Pupillin). Pinotctambule is made to be an early drinking wine, aged largely in tank. The name is something of a joke implying it's Pinot for slightly reprobate types who only come out at night. L'Aide Mémoire is a much more serious wine, from vines Philippe inherited within the Arbois-Pupillin appellation (although the wine is no longer appellated). It is aged in barrels and can be cellared for many years.

The two Ploussards are made in a similar way but from different vintages. Normally there are several Ploussard cuvées including Point Barre (which literally means full stop – because it is just the wine “full stop” with no wood or other additions). That was the case with this 2020 wine. But in 2019 (and 2017) the harvest was so tiny because of frost damage that only one cuvée could be cobbled together. The grapes were beautiful, with no impact from mildew and other diseases but there just weren't many of them! This wine was made the same way as Point Barre – semi carbonic maceration then aging in stainless steel.



And finally, the pack has two white wines made by Valentin Montanet, who makes all his family's wines (la Cadette, Montanet-Thoden and La Soeur Cadette).

These wines are from the same vintage and almost made the same way but from different parcels, both in Vézelay.

We should also point out that Vézelay is one of the newest appellations in Burgundy, with the area around Vézelay finally being recognised for the quality of the white wines produced here. It is due to the limestone found in the soil here (it is reasonably close to Chablis which also has limestone everywhere).

Both of the wines are direct pressed and aged in stainless steel except for about 8% of La Châtelaine, which was aged in a new foudre. You can see that both of the wines bear the

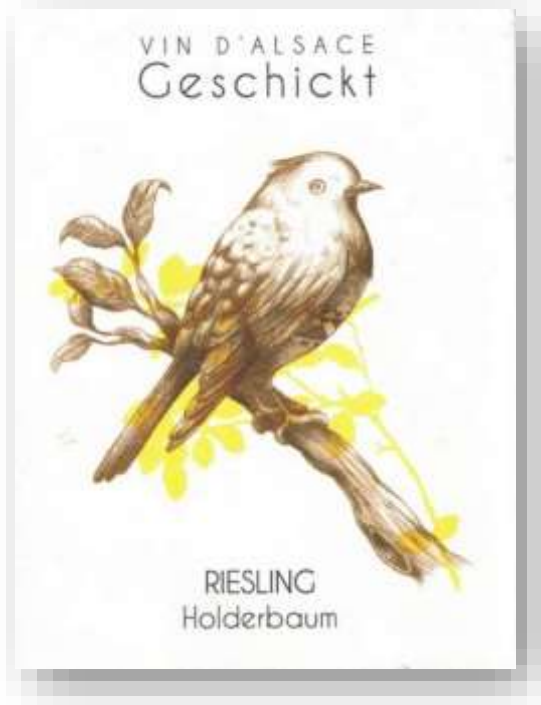
Vézelay appellation!

- Domaine Bornard Le Pinotctambule 2020
- Domaine Bornard Ploussard Point Barre 2020
- Domaine Bornard Ploussard Au Fil des Générations 2019
- Domaine Bornard Pinot Noir L'Aide Mémoire 2019
- La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2022
- Montanet-Thoden Vézelay Galerne 2022

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$468.00 but the pack price is only \$384.00. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

Pack 3: More Label Damaged Wines and an Alsace Riesling Pack (Approx 20% discount)

Note: 1 Pack Only



Pack 3 is another pack with some bottles which have stained labels. Everything except the bottle of Geschickt Holderbaum Riesling, which is in mint condition, has some light staining on the labels. The damaged labels choose themselves because what the couriers decide to damage is out of our control. But in an exercise of self-flagellation we did specifically choose the Riesling to add to the pack. We chose it because we felt the pack needed a white wine, because it is so delicious and because it is such good value. However, it is self-flagellation to add it to a pack like this because Alsace bottles are so tricky and time-consuming to pack, especially when mixed with other bottle shapes.

Its vinification is also an interesting story. It has grapes from the 2020 and 2021 vintages. 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 its fermentation. Time elapsed and the 2020 and 2021 vintages were ready to bottle at the same time. Arnaud and Aurelie did an experiment blending of both vintages and liked the blend more than the individual vintages so that's what was made.

The pack also has two label-damaged bottles of l'Octavin wine. Both are négoce. One is made with Grenache from Provence and the other a macerated wine made with Muscat d'Alexandrie from Roussillon. There is a bottle of Tony Bornard's Pinot Noir from the vines he purchased a few years ago, sited near the famous Pupillin sign, visible from across the valley. He bought them expecting to start his own estate not imagining at the time that his father would retire when he did.

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And finally, there are two bottles of Syrah made by Wim Wagemans. Unhelpfully, what is probably the most complex wine we have had from Le Bouc à Trois Pattes, a Syrah which we expect will cellar well, is simply called Vin de France! Because there are two bottles if you want to test that theory you could drink one and keep one to look at again in a couple of years. By then the staining on the label may have faded too!

- l'Octavin Ganache 2021
- l'Octavin Muscat 2021
- Domaine Bornard Le Pinot Noir 2018
- Le Bouc à Trois Pattes Vin de France 2021 **(2 bottles)**
- Geschickt Riesling Holderbaum

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$375.00 but the pack price is only \$302.35. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

Pack 4: Explore Alsace Pack (15% Discount)



And while we are feeling the Christmas spirit, we have created a full pack of Alsace wines, for exploring the wines of two of our Alsace families – Geschickt and Dreyer. This time of year, when we are quieter than usual, seems like a good time to tackle the packing issues.

The pack has three macerated wines, two from Jean-Marc Dreyer (Muscat d'Alsace and Pinot Gris) and one from Geschickt's Grand Cru Kaefferkopf vineyard, a cuvée called Purberg which is predominantly Gewurztraminer.

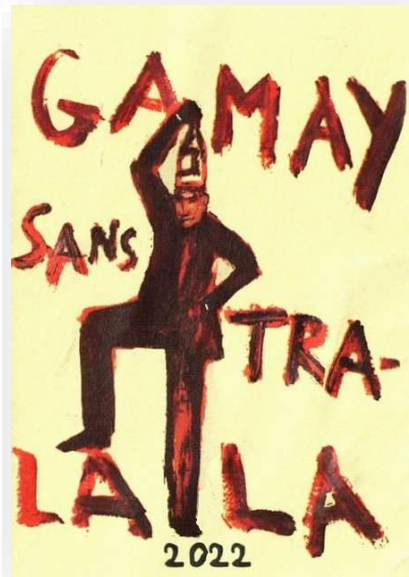
There is a bottle of Jean-Marc Dreyer's rare Elios Pinot Noir, which we are about to sell out of. It's the only red Alsace wine we have in stock at the moment.

And there are two bottles of Geschickt white cuvées. One is a Riesling from the same Grand Cru Kaefferkopf vineyard and the other is called Pino (without a T) and is a blend of four different types of Pinot - Gris, Blanc, Auxerrois, and Noir.

- Geschickt Alsace Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Purberg 2020
- Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Muscat Origin 2021
- Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Pinot Gris Origin 2021
- Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Elios 2021
- Geschickt Vin d'Alsace Pino 2018
- Geschickt Alsace Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Riesling 2019

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$412.00 but the pack price is only \$350.20. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

Pack 5: New Arrivals from Domaine de la Garrelière (15% Discount)



This pack is made up entirely of new arrivals from Domaine de la Garrelière, whose vineyards sit some 60 kilometres south-west of the Loire Valley town of Tours. This area sees a mix of white wines made from Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc. Sauvignon Blanc gradually peters out as one travels from Sancerre, where it peaks, to the west, where Chenin Blanc takes over around Tours/Vouvray.

The Cendrillon, which is one of Garrelière's top cuvees is made entirely from Sauvignon Blanc. The other two still white wines, Le Chenin de la Colline and Le P'tit Ch'nin are made entirely from Chenin Blanc.

The Milliard d'Etoiles is a gorgeous sparkling white wine made from Chenin Blanc and direct press Cabernet Franc.

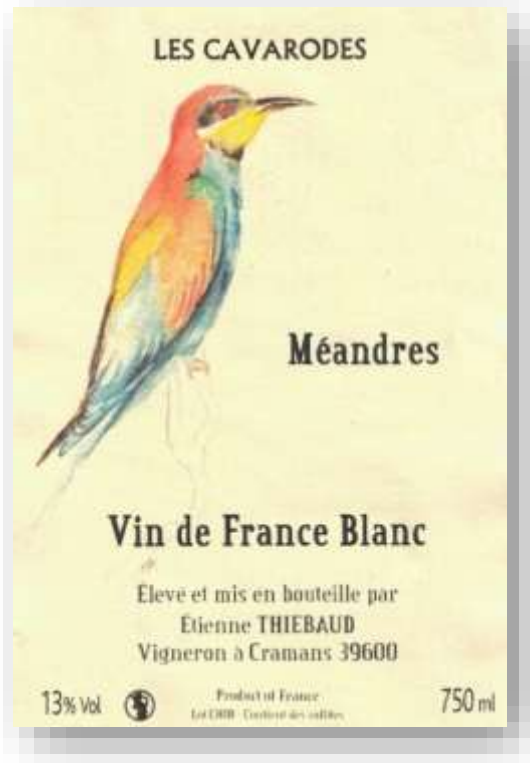
The pack is made complete with two fine red wines namely the Cinabre made from Cabernet Franc and the famous and very popular Gamay Sans Tra La La made from Gamay as the name implies.

- Domaine de la Garrelière Cendrillon 2022
- Domaine de la Garrelière Le Chenin de la Colline 2021
- Domaine de la Garrelière Le P'tit Ch'nin 2022
- Domaine de la Garrelière Milliard d'Etoiles 2019
- Domaine de la Garrelière Cinabre 2018
- Domaine de la Garrelière Gamay Sans Tra La La 2022

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$352 but the pack price is only \$299.20. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

**Pack 6: Jura Treats Pack Domaine des Cavarodes, Arnaud Greiner,
l'Octavin (10% Discount)**

Note: 2 Packs Only



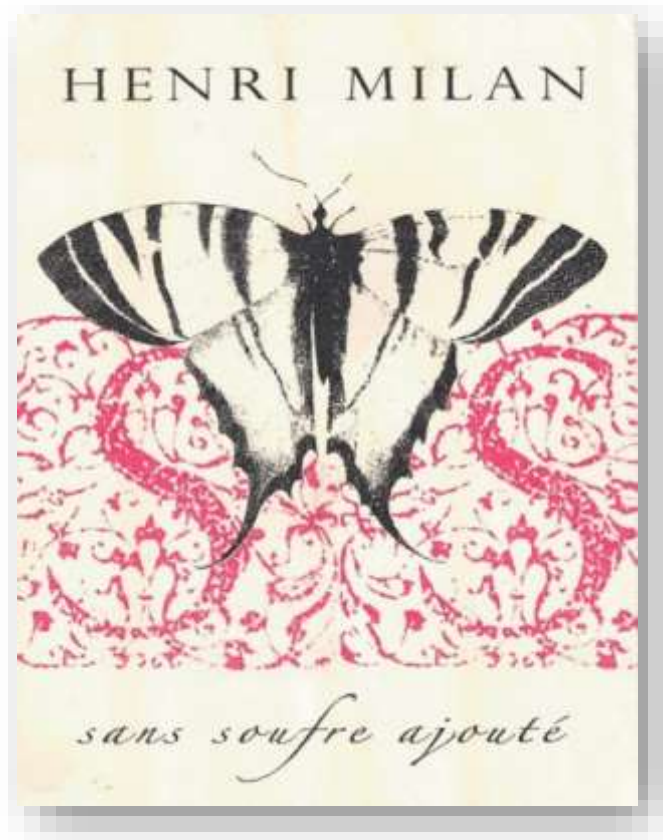
This is a milestone for us, being able to offer a pack made entirely of wines from the Jura! We have just received a shipment from one of the rising stars of the Jura, namely Etienne Thibault of Domaine des Cavarodes and we have been able to incorporate three of his stunning wines into this pack – two very interesting white wines, one made from Chardonnay and the other from Savagnin, and a sparkling wine. All the Domaine des Cavarodes wines apart from the ones in these packs are allocated so this is the only way to buy them if you didn't request some earlier.

We have also provided one wine from Arnaud Greiner who works with Etienne and two bottles from one of our long term producers from the Jura namely Alice Bouvot from l'Octavin.

- Domaine des Cavarodes Côtes du Jura Savagnin Pressé 2020
- Domaine des Cavarodes Mousseaux La Bulette 2020
- Les Cavarodes Méandres 2018
- Arnaud Greiner La Cartouche 2022
- l'Octavin Hip Hip J... Savagnin 2020
- l'Octavin Hip Hip J... Chardonnay 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$465.00 but the pack price is only \$418.50. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

Pack 7: Special Sparkling Pack for the Holidays (Discount >15%)



On the basis you can never have too much sparkling wine at this time of the year we have included a sparkling pack in the current newsletter.

Most of the wines, which include three recent arrivals from the Loire and an Alsace pet-nat, have our normal pack discount of 15% but there are two bottles of the extremely delicious Milan Pet'Nat Rosé 2021, made from a blend of Grenache, Muscat à Petit Grains and Alicante, which come with a 25% discount and a challenge. The 25% discount recognises that this wine is very fizzy and it is extremely difficult to open the bottle without losing a small amount of the wine. The bigger discount is so that we pay for the losses, not you.

However, with care it is possible to open the bottle in such a way that you don't lose any wine and that's the challenge. If you manage to save all the wine then rather than being compensation for the loss the 25% is just that, a true big discount.

There are ways you can increase the likelihood of success. Make sure the bottle is very cold and that it has been upright in the fridge for a decent amount of time – 24 hours if possible. Have a decent-sized wide-rimmed jug nearby when you open it. If you are patient, you can release the crown seal slowly so that the CO2 can escape before the wine can. Either way, when you take the top off pour into the jug until it stops fizzing out of the bottle. Then pour from the jug first and then the now-calm bottle.

And, however you decide to approach the opening problem, make sure you do it somewhere where it's easy to clean up if you spill some. We recommend outside.



Rest assured we wouldn't even propose the wine with all its challenges if it wasn't so delicious! Here it is being drunk in situ at the Milan's in Provence (see above).

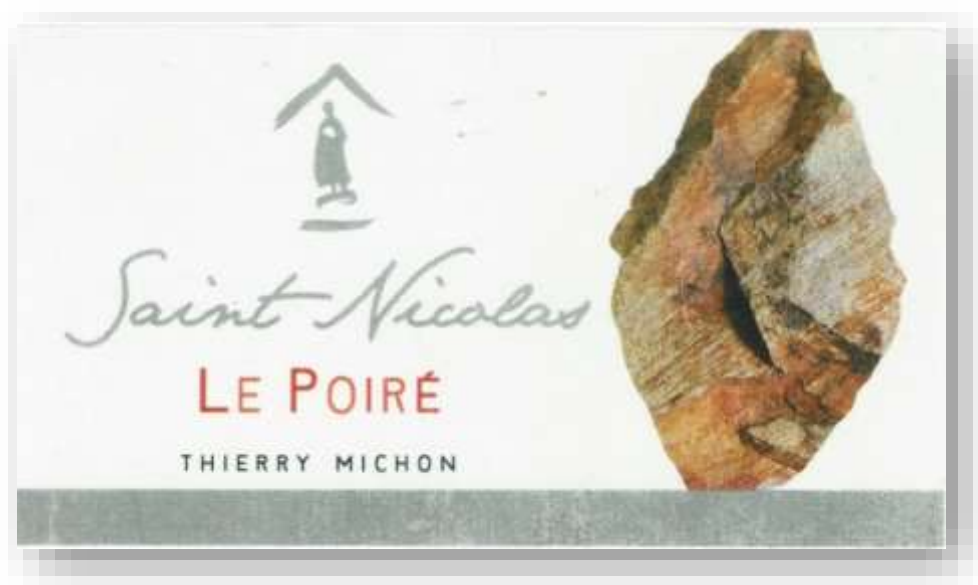
The other wines, which are all much better behaved, are another fun pink sparkling (Fizzy Pink) from Vincent Carême (a blend of Cabernet Franc, Côt, Gamay, and Grolleau Noir), two serious sparkling white wines from the Loire Valley (Vincent Carême's Vouvray Plaisir Ancestral 2021 which is 100% Chenin Blanc and Domaine de la Garrelière Milliard d'Etoiles 2019 (which is Chenin Blanc and direct press Cabernet Franc) and the Geschickt's Obi Wine pet-nat from Alsace (a blend of Pinot Auxerrois, Riesling, and Muscat d'Alsace).

- Geschickt Pet-Nat 2021
- Domaine de la Garrelière Milliard d'Etoiles 2019
- Vincent Carême Vouvray Plaisir Ancestral 2021
- Vincent Carême Fizzy Pink 2021
- Milan Pet'Nat Rosé 2021 (2 bottles)

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$335.00 but the pack price is only \$273.95. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

Pack 8: Cellar Pack (15% Discount)

Note: 1 Pack Only



This pack has been compiled from wines in our cellar, some of which are relatively recent and some much older ones that we think could be interesting to try due to the time they have spent aging in our warehouse. As you would appreciate, **we cannot guarantee how the older wines have held up**, but we think they should be interesting!

The Châtelaine from 2018 is 100% Chardonnay which reflects the limestone terroir of the Vézelay region which is only a short distance south of Chablis. The Peyras Gourmandise is a red wine made from Cinsault grapes harvested from Julien's 40 year old vines in the Languedoc. There are two bottles of each of these wines.

The Domaine Saint Nicolas Le Poiré is now 12 years old so it will be interesting to see how it has aged over all this time. It is a red wine made from 100% Negrette grown in schist soils.

The Mylène Bru Les Moulins de Mon Coeur was made in a large stainless-steel tank. Mylène placed a layer of Cinsault then a layer of Carignan and then a layer of Syrah in the tank, and repeated this until the tank was full.

- La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2018 **(2 bottles)**
- Julien Peyras Gourmandise 2021 **(2 bottles)**
- Domaine Saint Nicolas Le Poiré 2011
- Mylène Bru Les Moulins de Mon Coeur 2016

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$308.00 but the pack price is only \$261.80. Check with us for the subsidised summer freight charge to your location.

Wine News

Proposed new alcohol tax in France

There is a proposal being discussed by the French Government for a new tax on alcohol and many of the French winemakers are not amused! Protests have already begun (including a large protest in the city of Narbonne in the Languedoc), and those of you who have been in France during a protest know that these can get fairly ugly.

One of the reasons the winemakers are protesting is that the business is getting tough as a result of climate change with lower yields due to budding coming earlier leaving the buds exposed to frosts, picking starting up to two months earlier thus bringing about higher costs due to it being the traditional holiday season and additional expenditure as a result of the conflict in Ukraine which was one of the main suppliers of wine bottles.

Now a group of Senators are proposing the imposition of an alcohol tax which would almost double the price of currently low-cost bottles of wine.

This problem is compounded by the fact that there is no similar proposal for a similar tax on alcohol in Spain, so French winemakers are afraid that Spanish wine will be shipped into France in large quantities thus undermining their sales.

To emphasise the point, protestors have been intercepting Spanish wine tankers and opening their taps so that the wine spills onto the road!

What causes wine headaches?



This topic is one that regularly pops up in the wine press with individuals giving learned opinions rarely backed by any scientific or medical research.

What we do know is that there is something about natural wines that some people find is less likely to give them a headache.

For example, a friend of ours is almost a teetotaler, because every time he has any more than a sip of wine, he ends up with a migraine headache that usually lasts for two or three days. Many

years ago, after we had started importing natural wines we were having a pleasant lunch and he tried a glass of one of our low-sulphur wines and was delighted to find that he had no adverse effects at all.

Now, the problem in jumping to conclusions is that one person's reaction is not a scientific experiment.

The area that has been studied the most is the effect of sulphites in wine. Another has been the effect of alcohol – particularly because many wines have high levels of sulphites and, in Australia, high levels of alcohol.

It was therefore with great interest that we read a scientific paper on the topic that was published in the United States recently.

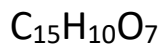
The research explored some of the compounds that might affect people drinking wine and found that one compound in particular might be a candidate.

It involves two key items – one that is found in wine (particularly red wine) and the other is found in the part of our body that does the heavy lifting to process the wine, namely our liver.

The item found in wine that might contribute to headaches may be a polyphenol called quercetin.

Quercetin is a polyphenol of the flavonoid group and flavonol sub-group. It is common in fruits, vegetables and grains among other plants.

For those of you who have are interest in the chemical formula of such compounds, quercetin is:



What the study found is that a particular type of quercetin, namely quercetin-3-glucuronide which is commonly found in red wines, can inhibit an enzyme (ALDH2 - aldehyde dehydrogenase 2) found in our livers that is responsible for converting acetaldehyde (created from alcohol in wine in the form of ethanol) to acetate.

Now, acetaldehyde is quite toxic so if the enzyme is inhibited from performing its job then this toxic substance remains in our liver thus causing various problems such as headaches, flushing and more.

We shall investigate this further and write an article in a future newsletter about the crucial importance of enzymes in all sorts of areas.

Reference

Devi, A., Levin, M. & Waterhouse, A.L. (2023) *Inhibition of ALDH2 by quercetin glucuronide suggests a new hypothesis to explain red wine headaches*. Sci Rep 13, 19503.

A word or two about autochthonous yeasts

What a lovely word! This story is about yeasts that are autochthonous (roughly pronounced **or-tok-thon-oos**).

In the natural wine world one of the non-negotiable rules is that no commercial yeasts can be used to ferment the wine. There are a number of reasons for this, but one is that commercial yeasts are an additive and they do not reflect the “terroir” of the area where the grapes have been harvested. They can also be used to add particular flavours to the wine that are not related to the environment in which the grapes have grown.

It also means that a wine said to be natural should not be made in a facility where commercial yeasts are used, because these will inhabit every corner of the facility and end up in the wine, no matter how careful the processes used have been.

And now we get to our special word. Autochthonous yeasts are yeasts from a particular area that reflect that area. Yeasts vary quite significantly from one area to another. Even in one valley they vary from one side to another, from one end to another and from the valley floor to the top of the hills.

In this way they are a significant contributor to terroir including making sure that a wine made using only these naturally occurring yeasts contribute their specific sensory outcomes (flavours and aromas) derived from their “place” to the wine.

We should also add here that yeasts are single-cell members of the fungi kingdom and there are many species, each of which can contribute to the overall texture, aroma and flavour of the wine – some good and some not so good.

As grapes are ripening, they start to exude a white “bloom” known as epicuticular wax which is composed of various aliphatic esters such as alkanes (paraffins), fatty acids and triterpenoids (which help protect the grape by toughening the skin and provide health benefits in the wine¹).

This sticky bloom has a number of roles. For one it protects the grape from water so that they don't rot. Second, they reflect light (both visible and ultra-violet and infra-red) so that they ripen slowly and don't get sunburnt. And the third role is to capture yeasts which, when the grapes are pressed, can gorge on the sugars in the grapes and produce the required alcohol and carbon dioxide.

We are interested in the third of these functions. When grapes are brought into the winery from the vineyards, the local yeasts are stuck on the grapes by the epicuticular wax. Therefore, there are plenty of local yeasts to begin the fermentation process.

However, the temperature at which these waxes begin to melt is 40 degrees Centigrade – a temperature that is being experienced in vineyards more and more due to climate change. This leaves the grapes susceptible to rot if there is a lot of rain and also makes it easier for the rain to wash off any yeasts that have previously been stuck in the wax.

So, we could see a degradation in the ability of harvested grapes to undergo fermentation if there are fewer yeasts brought in from the field. However, for wineries where wine has been made over many years there is probably enough yeast in the cracks and crevices in the winery to help with the fermentation, even if it is a bit slower.

¹ Anna Szakiel, Cezary Pączkowski, Flora Pensec & Christophe Bertsch (2012) Fruit cuticular waxes as a source of biologically active triterpenoids. *Phytochem Rev* 11, 263–284.

How grapevines grow – Part 2

In the previous newsletter (Edition 117) we introduced the topic of “How Grapevines Grow” and gave a high-level example of how the photosynthesis process takes in sunlight in the form of photons, water from the soil and carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to create sugars in the leaves.

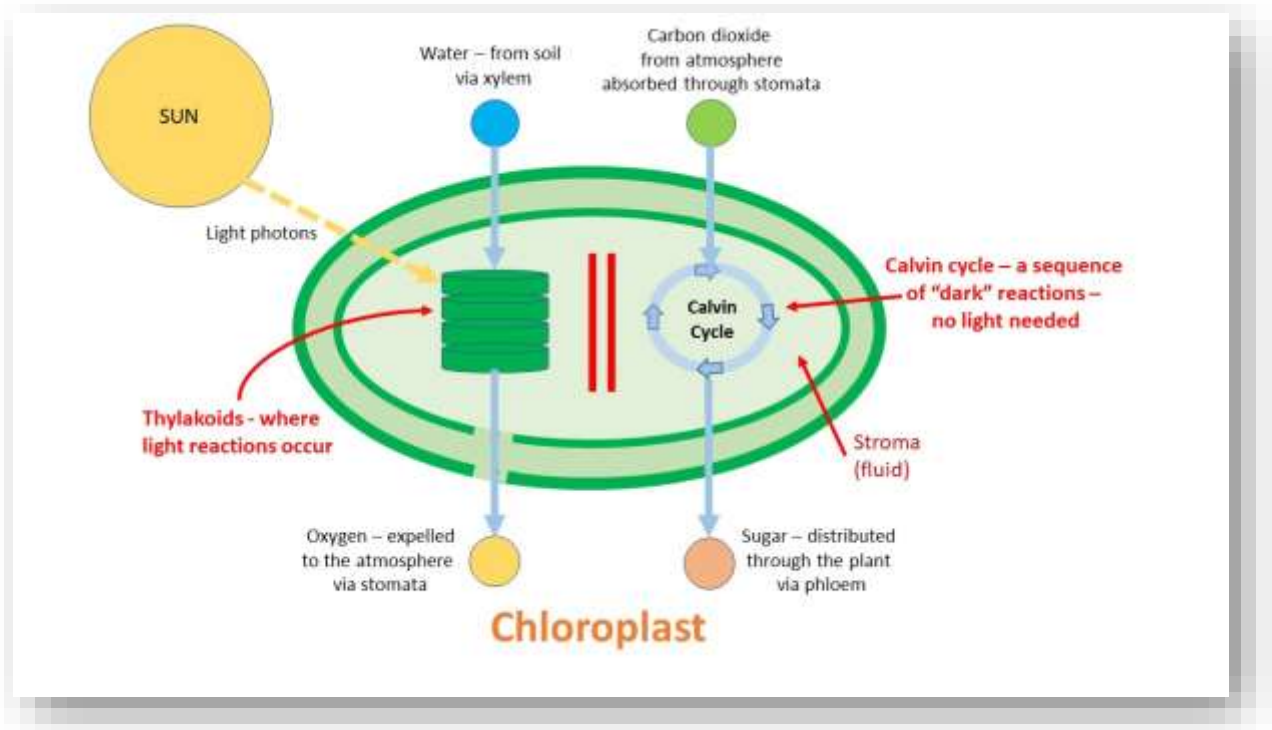
We then explained how oxygen is produced as a by-product and expelled to the atmosphere and sugar is created and distributed via the phloem within the plant to parts that need the energy that can be created from the sugar.

We got to the point of explaining that the photons in the form of light from the sun provide energy to the plant. But we didn’t have the time or the room to explain, in detail, the chemical processes that take place within the leaves to trap the energy and transform chemicals within the leaves.

In this article we will explain the two major processes that occur. We mentioned them in the first article, and they are:

- Light-dependent processes; and
- Light-independent processes.

As a general rule, the light-dependent processes occur in the thylakoids inside the grapevine’s leaves (see diagram below) and the light-independent processes (called the Calvin Cycle or dark processes) occur in the liquid stroma of the chloroplasts, as shown in the diagram below.



As you can see above, the photons from the sun are captured in the thylakoids inside the chloroplasts that we have explained in the previous article.

The light dependent reactions

A process that occurs separately to photosynthesis is water (H₂O) from the soil is passed up through the xylem inside the grapevine to all parts of the plant including the leaves. Once a photon has entered the thylakoid and initiated the photosynthesis process, a series of light-dependent processes are carried out – one of which is to split the water into hydrogen, oxygen and electrons.

A sequence of chemical reactions then occurs, and the oxygen is expelled through the gaps in the leaf called **stoma** into the atmosphere.²

We need to explain something about the chemicals that are created during these processes and how chemists overcome dealing with the complex chemical equations involved, by creating “shortcut” names for the chemicals.

With some chemicals the formula is very simple, such as the formula above for water (H₂O), and the formula for common salt which is NaCl. Water consists of 2 atoms of hydrogen connect to 1 atom of oxygen – very simple. Salt sees 1 atom of sodium (Na) connected to one atom of chlorine (Cl) – also very simple.

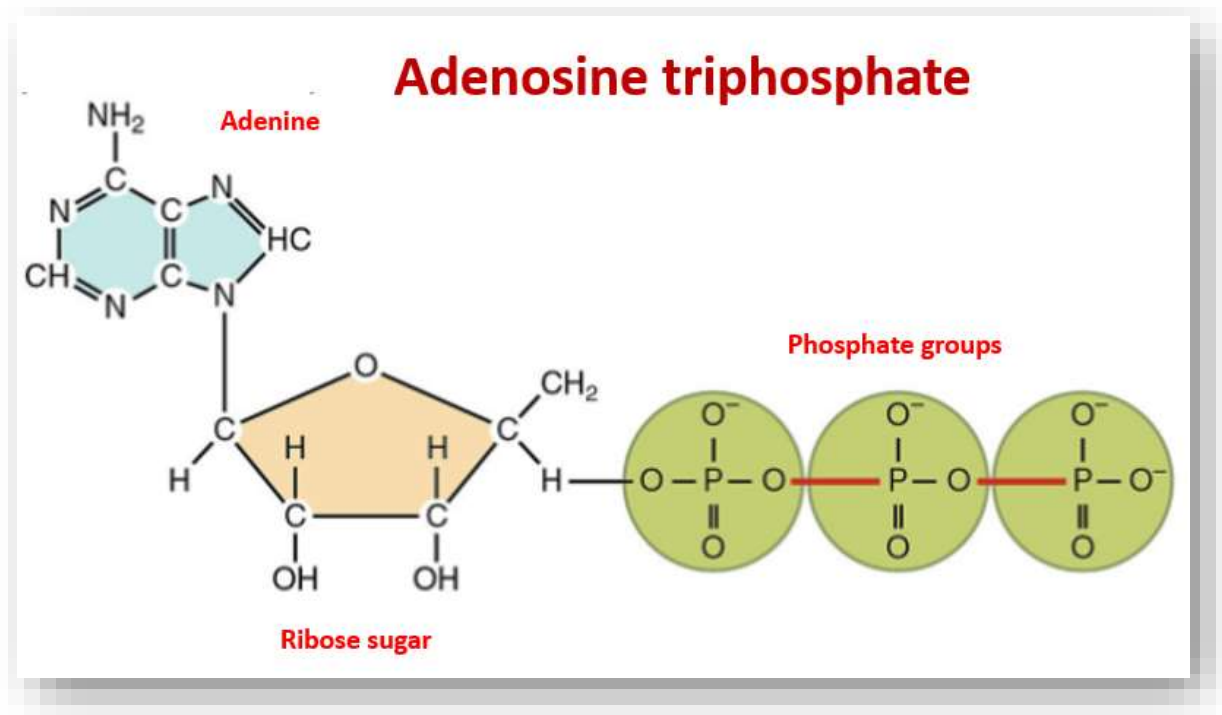
However, when we start analysing more complex molecules especially those known as organic molecules which sometimes have lots of atoms of carbon, such as the very common molecule found in life forms (including us), known as adenosine triphosphate.

The formula for this molecule is C₁₀H₁₆N₅O₁₃P₃. This is why the molecules are given shortcut names, in this case ATP, because the molecular formulae are hard to remember when you need to know every atom in the molecule and how many of each atom are represented in the molecule.

In the formula above you can see that there are 10 atoms of carbon. If you look at the diagram below, you can count 5 atoms of carbon in the Adenine group and 5 in the Ribose Sugar group. Similarly, there are three phosphate groups each with one atom of phosphorous – hence P₃ in the formula.

The ATP molecule mentioned above consists of a nitrogen base (adenine), a sugar molecule (ribose sugar) and three phosphate groups that form a “tail” in the molecule. This is shown in the molecular diagram below:

² Note that the **stoma**, plural **stomata** (not **stroma** which is the liquid inside the chloroplast) is a closable gap mainly found in the underside of the leaf that allows carbon dioxide to enter the chloroplast and oxygen to be expelled into the atmosphere.



We will now explain the chemical processes that occur and how the plants use quantum mechanics to make those processes significantly more productive.

ATP is produced when a photon of light hits a chlorophyll molecule in the thylakoid causing an electron to jump to a higher energy level in the chlorophyll molecule (C₅₅H₇₂O₅N₄Mg).

The steps that occur are:

- As already mentioned, energy from light photons is absorbed by chlorophylls – these are in an area called Photosystem II (PSII);
- These excited electrons are then passed through a series of protein complexes called the “electron transport chain” (ETC);
- As the chlorophyll molecules (P680) lose electrons, water molecules are split into protons (H⁺), oxygen (O₂) and electrons in a process known as photolysis;
- The electrons are transferred to the primary electron acceptor in PSII and then via a sequence of steps to Photosystem I (PSI). This is a highly efficient process which may use quantum processes (still a point of conjecture) because it is just so efficient with almost no energy being lost (in the form of heat) as they move across the “chain”;
- More energy is also absorbed directly by chlorophylls (P700) in PSI causing more electrons to be transferred to the electron acceptor in PSI;
- These electrons are used to convert NADP to NADPH.
- As electrons move through the electron transport chain, protons travel through the thylakoid membrane;
- A proton gradient is created by this movement and the potential energy issued by ATP synthase to create ATP from ADP and Phosphate (P);

- Finally, the oxygen molecules that were created as part of this process are released by the plant to the atmosphere through the stoma.

So, the plant has now created ATP and NADPH which will be used in the next part of the photosynthesis process known as the Calvin Cycle.

The Calvin Cycle

The process is called the Calvin Cycle due to the work of a biochemist called Dr Melvin Calvin who worked at the University of California at Berkeley and was awarded the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1961.

We will now explain the subsequent “dark processes” that occur in the Calvin Cycle to finally create the sugars using carbon dioxide from the atmosphere (very good for reducing the amount of carbon) and then distributing this newly created food to various parts of the plant.

These steps are carried out in the Stroma of the leaf which is the liquid part inside the chloroplasts.

Remember that the plant provides two types of molecule for the photosynthesis process. We have already mentioned how water is split during the light-dependent processes and oxygen is expelled to the atmosphere. Now we will look at what happens to the carbon dioxide absorbed from the atmosphere.

- A carbon molecule from the carbon dioxide is attached to a 5-carbon molecule called ribulose biphosphate (RuBP) through a process called carbon fixation;
- This process creates a 6-carbon molecule;
- However, the 6-carbon molecule immediately splits into two molecules of 3-phosphoglycerate (3-PGA);
- These molecules are now converted into glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate (G3P);
- Now each two molecules of G3P combine to form one molecule of sugar in the form of glucose;
- To complete the cycle, the G3P molecules that remain are converted back to RuBP and cycle back to capturing more carbon dioxide.

In another article in a future newsletter, we will also explain the role that enzymes play in this process, particularly in making the sugars and breaking the molecules of water and carbon dioxide apart so that the oxygen can be released back into the atmosphere, without which we would not be able to breathe.

These enzymes are thus vital for our ability to breathe. However, we will also include a salutary warning because enzymes can be “denatured” (ie they stop working) if the temperature gets too high. This is the reason why plants are not found in desert areas such as the Sahara and the Atacama, because in these two areas the temperature sometimes exceeds 50 degrees Centigrade which is way above the denaturing temperature for some enzymes.

In fact, if the temperature begins to exceed 40 degrees Centigrade some of the key enzymes that are vital to the photosynthesis process stop working. We will leave this discussion for next month!

Well, that is the photosynthesis process in a nutshell and by now the grapevine has a source of food for itself and for the grapes that grow on the grapevine.

In this article we have only got to the point where the food for the plant is available. There are many other things that are required for the grapevines to grow such as obtaining the right minerals from the soil and having the right enzymes to create molecules such as cellulose for the cell walls.

These will be topics that we address in future newsletters.

Conclusion

We should also mention before we finish this article that there is an important sub-process occurring as part of photosynthesis that many of you will have noticed.

Part of the Calvin Cycle we discussed above extracts carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and extracts the oxygen which is returned to the atmosphere. The carbon is used to create the glucose which is used to provide energy for the growing grapevine.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimates that terrestrial ecosystems, including forests, grasslands, and other vegetation, sequester about 30% of anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions – a figure which is very significant.

However, before we get too excited about the role of photosynthesis in ameliorating the effects of climate change, we also need to take into account other negative effects such as respiration, decay, and the dramatic effect of what we call bushfires and others call wild fires (which release masses of carbon into the atmosphere).

One of the most efficient ways to capture carbon from the atmosphere is through planting young trees on a large scale as they sequester more than old forests.

Grape variety: The “Climate Change Grape” Voltis

Voltis is a white grape variety that has been bred by a cooperative effort between France and Germany to create a grape that will be more resistance to the dramatic effects that climate change is having of grape harvests in Europe.

You may ask why the fuss with adopting a new variety in France? Well, the issue is partly the fact that all grape varieties currently approved by French appellations belong to the *Vitis Vinifera* species which is a variety thought to have been brought to France from Asia by the Phoenicians in around 600 BCE when they populated the area now called Marseilles.

Voltis is not a pure *Vitis Vinifera* plant, having been bred from crossing Villaris (which, in turn, was created by crossing plants from two American species namely *Vitis rupestris* and *Vitis aestivalis*) with *Muscadina rotundifolia* to give it genes from *Vitis berlandieri*, *Vitis rupestris*, *Vitis vinifera* and *Vitis rotundifolia*. The reason is that Voltis was created to be resistant to both downy and powdery mildew which is becoming more and more of a problem throughout Europe.

The most extraordinary thing that has happened is that it has recently been approved, on an experimental basis, for use in Champagne of all places! This approval comes from the official body in France that controls all aspects of wines marketed under any of the French appellations. It is the L'Institut National de l'Origine et de la Qualité (INAO).

As we have written in this newsletter before, Champagne currently has 7 official grape varieties that are allowed by the INAO, namely Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, Pinot Gris, Arbane, Petit Meslier and Pinot Blanc. And now, number 8 has been added, albeit with some restrictions which we will discuss further down.

It is quite a remarkable (desperate?) move as this variety was only created in 2004. The move reflects the fact that diseases are getting increasingly worse as the weather is creating more and more problems with higher temperatures, more severe frosts and more severe rain storms.

However, Voltis is only admitted on an experimental basis and will still have to prove itself.

Enter Drappier

Voltis has been enthusiastically embraced, on a trial basis, by the famous Champagne house of Drappier. They are currently planting Voltis vines which must be limited by regulation to less than 5% of their property.

They (and others who might plant the grape) have been permitted to trial the grape for a period of ten years, after which an assessment will be made of the quality of Champagne that includes Voltis. If it is felt by the authorities that the quality is not what is expected for a Champagne then Voltis will be removed from the authorised list.

However, some trials have already been carried out, and the Champagnes using Voltis were blind tasted with others made with the traditional grapes and those with Voltis were judged to be fresher and more flavoursome than the ones without!

The Restrictions

There are three main restrictions relating to the introduction of the Voltis grape:

- The first is that it has only been permitted for a trial period of ten years;
- The second is that the area planted to the seven fully approved varieties mentioned above must be at least 95% of the area planted and the area planted to Voltis must be less than or equal to 5%;
- A wine made using Voltis must not use more than 10% Voltis by volume in the blend.

Chemistry and Composition of Voltis grapes and wine

Now for a relatively new term. Voltis is known in wine jargon terms as a PIWI grape variety. This is a shorthand for grapes that combine various species of grape as we mentioned in the introductory paragraphs.

The PIWI shortcut comes from a very long German word, **Pilz**Widerstandsfähig which means “fungus resistant” and applies to grapes that usually have been created by crossing *Vitis vinifera* grape varieties with other species of grape that are more resistant to fungal diseases, such as powdery mildew and downy mildew.

The crossings are usually made with species from other countries or continents and Voltis was created by crossing a European species, *Vitis vinifera*, with species from the United States.

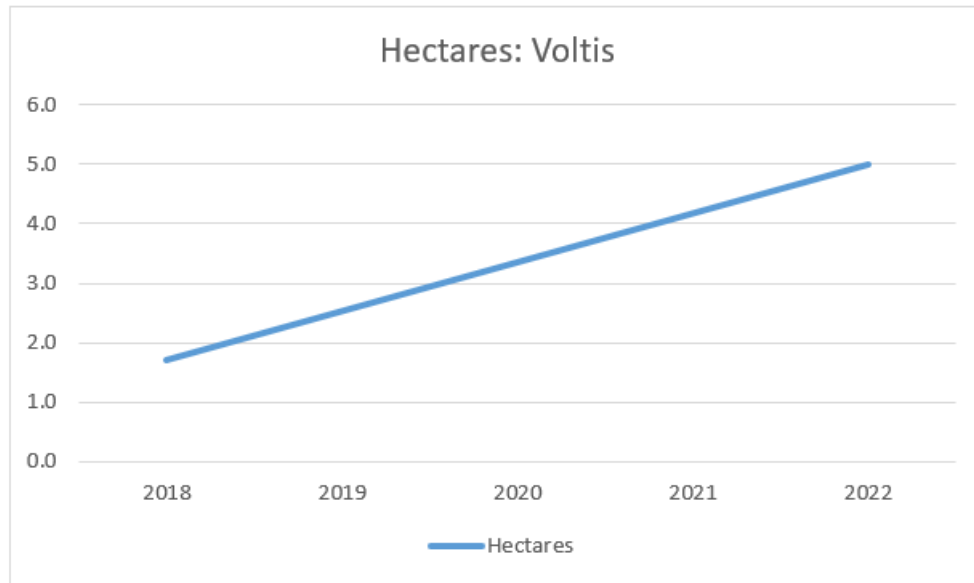
There are many different species in the United States because grapes of *Vitis vinifera* were found to be unsuitable due to the harsh weather conditions east of the Rocky Mountains. So, early pioneers had to locate hardier species elsewhere than Europe.

There are now a few grape varieties that European countries are experimenting with in order to reduce or eliminate the need for fungal sprays. These include Voltis and also Sauvignier Gris, Johanniter, Sauvignac, Muscaris, Pinotin, Cabernet Noir, Cabernet Cortis and Cabernet Jura.

How much Voltis has been planted so far?

Each month, we create a graph showing the area planted to the grape we are discussing over the years that records have been maintained for that grape variety.

This month the graph isn't very exciting as there are very few producers who have planted any Voltis, therefore the graph looks very sparse – but we think that, in itself, says something!



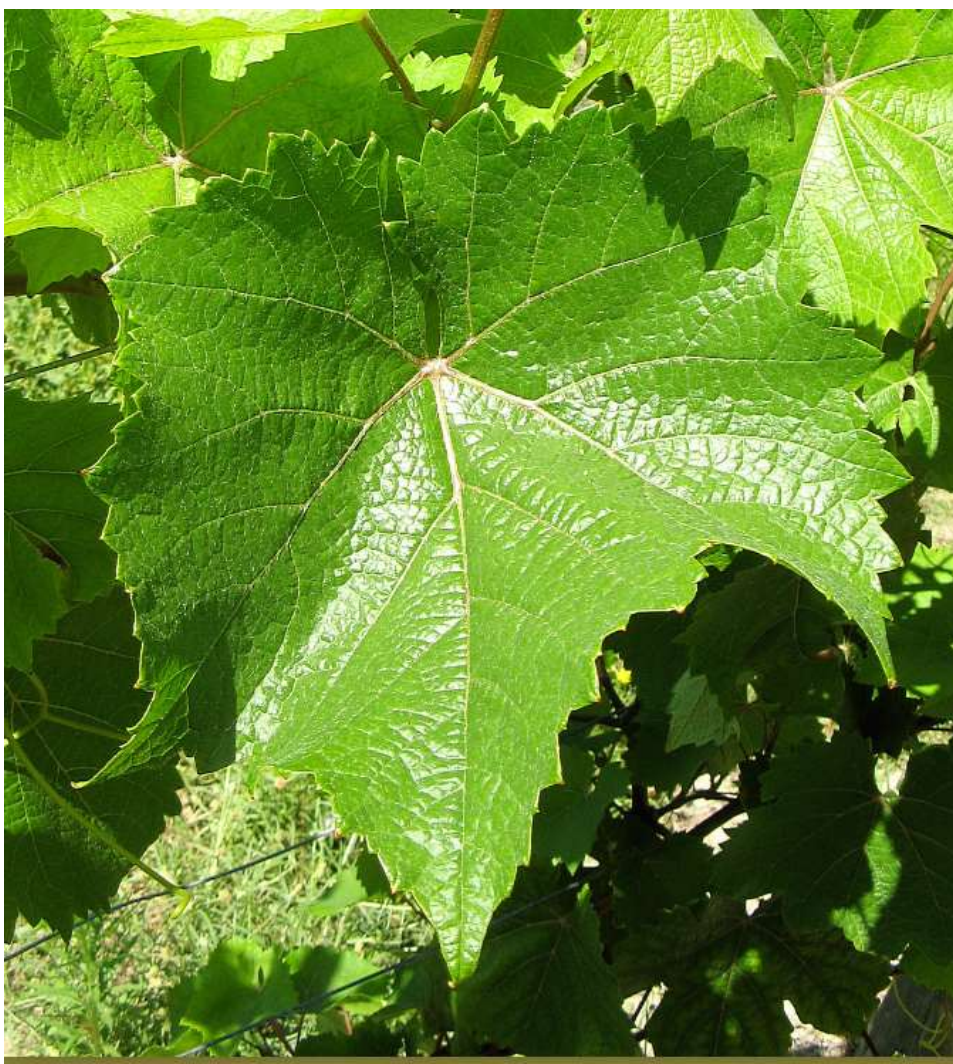
As you can see from the above graph, the area planted to Voltis has more than doubled over the past five years but only from 1.8 hectares to a little less than 5 hectares!

Now to what Voltis looks like!

The Voltis leaf has three distinct lobes with one central lobe and one on each side of the central lobe. The lobes are separated by variable sized “sinuses” – as can be seen in the photo below.

You can also see in the photo below that there are three lobes which are very thin and “pointy”, and with only the frontal lobe being distinct.

The two other lobes are almost circular towards the top of the leaf.



The following photo shows the structure of the bunches of grapes which are reasonably loosely packed.

This is an advantage in warmer times ahead as the wine can blow through the bunches thus making it difficult for diseases, especially those that are in the form of a fungus to deposit on the grapes and leaves.



Photo courtesy of Wikipedia

The grapes are white and quite spherical, showing none of the normal elongation that many grapes display.

The grape bunches are also quite loose as can clearly be seen in the photo above. This helps the wind to get in amongst the grapes to stop fungal diseases from settling.

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.