

WINE Talk: June 2024

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 124

Welcome to newsletter 124, the sixth WINE Talk Newsletter for 2024. We hope you continue to enjoy reading them. We certainly are continuing to enjoy writing them! We almost managed to finish it in June.

We have been able to put together **9** packs to offer in this newsletter, but some of these packs have only one or two available, so we expect them to sell out quickly.

The newsletter also has:

- A brief summary about wines that have recently arrived;
- Some information about wines which are arriving soon;
- Part 3 of our faults in wine and what causes them story for this month is – the enigmatic cork taint that is very complicated;
- A short story on the problem of fining wines;
- Grape variety – Terret Bouret;

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.

Travelling but business as usual

We are travelling in France visiting many of the vigneronns we work with over the next few weeks so don't be concerned if we don't answer an email immediately. The time difference isn't conducive to instant answers.

But if you have emailed us and haven't heard after 24 hours it's probably wise to send it again just in case we missed it. It's manageable but tricky trying to navigate, organise and do appointments, eat, sleep, and also sell wine at the same time so just occasionally we might miss an email.

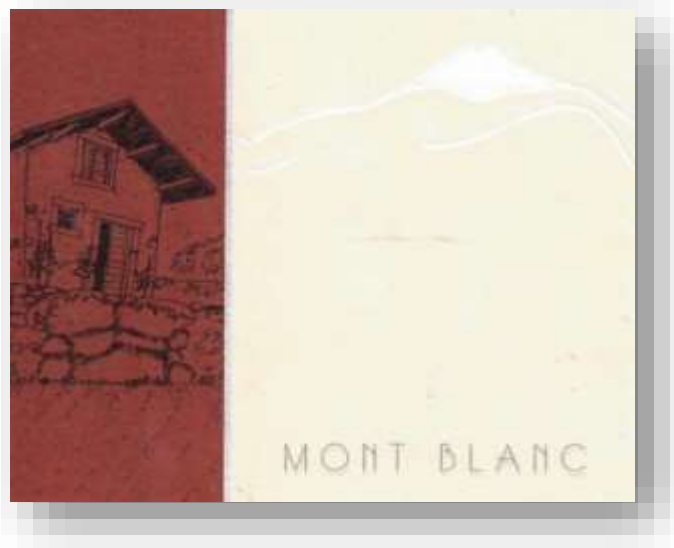
We always confirm orders even if it's just to say yes we have it and thank you so please don't be concerned about following up if we haven't confirmed an order after about 24 hours. Don't be polite and leave it for 2 weeks because if we really have missed the email then the wine might no longer be available by the time you remind us.

Apart from the chance of a delayed answer though it's business as usual so please don't put off asking questions, ordering, or any other issues you might have while we are away. Roger is a good driver and Sue isn't but she's very good at working on the autoroute and we have a lot of kilometres to travel so plenty of time to stay in touch.

If you are interested in following our progress and news we share from producers then please follow us on <http://instagram.com/foodtourist>

New Arrivals

Dominique Belluard's Brut Nature 2019



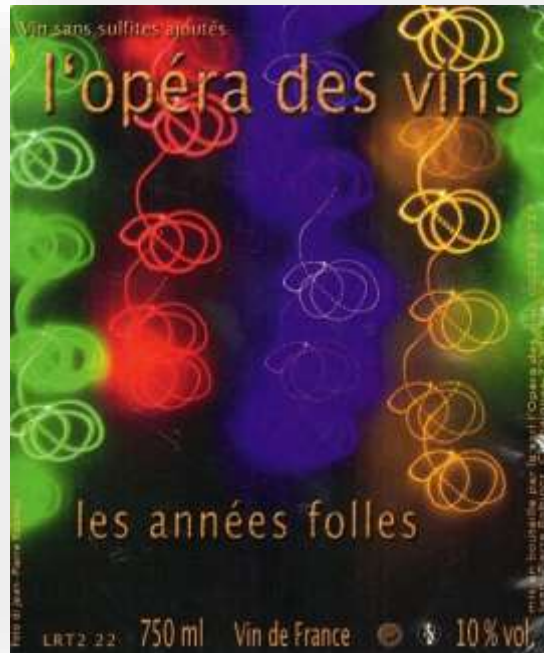
We're finally, after promising it for many months, releasing Dominique Belluard's Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019. We feel the Belluard wines have been a bit like John Farnham's final tour – we think we have had the last wines but then another one turns up. We did not realise this final cuvée existed, although we should have known it did because most of the work would have been done well before Dominique died in June 2021. The disgorgement was however done by Vincent Ruiz, the new owner of the estate. We could not resist the opportunity to take this wine when offered it, even though it was the only cuvée available to take at the time.

It is a Méthode Traditionnelle sparkling wine made with Dominique's beloved Gringet, with no dosage, from vines, growing on limestone scree and clay soils at around 450 metres above sea level. It has only recently been released, after 3 years on lees before disgorgement. It was only ever made in the best years and will not be made again as the new owners are not going to make sparkling wines.

With mineral salinity, length and purity it is a wonderful legacy and a powerful statement of the effectiveness of Dominique's lifetime work to prove that great wines could be made in the Savoie, and particularly from Gringet.

It is \$137 a bottle but there are packs of 3 bottles available in this month's newsletter with a 15% discount.

And ...



As well as the Robinot Opera Blanc 2021 which we mentioned last month as being available it is likely that, for a few of the wines we have been allocating, we may end up with some unallocated bottles by the time we finish the process and have offered wines to people who have already asked for more. If you have received an allocation or didn't but want to and you would like a few bottles of some of the Pineau d'Aunis cuvées, some 2020 Prélude, which is Cabernet Franc from 50-80 year old vines planted in Anjou, or a bottle of one of the Robinots' pet-nats then please let us know and we will offer you whatever is still available. There won't be any spare estate Chenin Blancs but there might be the odd bottle of négoce Chenin Blanc.

What's Coming

The arrivals immediately after these releases are wines we have mentioned in a previous newsletter – Geschickt and Mataburro. We will be advertising Geschickt and allocating Mataburro so now is the last chance to indicate interest if you would like an offer. We'll be visiting Mataburro about the time we release this newsletter so we may have some more information in our foodtourist Instagram stories soon. The wines have been delayed though so it is unlikely we will be ready to release anything until late July at the earliest.

We are also very close to releasing the 2023 vintage of the Derain Allez Goutons Blanc. It will be a stand-alone release as we have released all the other wines from the shipment it came with.

As also mentioned in the last newsletter we are expecting to allocate some wines from Adeline Houillon and Renaud Bruyère and Alice and Olivier de Moor. We will probably also allocate La Petite Empreinte. Soon after that we will allocate a shipment from Domaine Bornard.

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After that we will be advertising new wines from the Mosse family in the Loire, and from the Montanet family who are based in northern Burgundy, in the Yonne department.

This month's packs – an introduction

There are some very special and unique packs in this month's newsletter. It's partly because since the last newsletter we have only released one new wine, which means there is very little in the way of new arrival packs. It forced us to get inventive.

We had a container of wines arrive just before covid shut down the country. We'd already allocated many of the wines including some generous allocations to us based on our drinking habits at the time. Then, of course, for quite some time there was no-one to share them with. We didn't leave Tasmania for over a year and then, once everything was opened up again and Australia was rife with covid, given our age, we were still very hesitant about being in larger groups. All of which meant we didn't dent our allocations very effectively. Then of course health issues intervened and meant we just are not drinking as much. Now that we know we don't drink so much for more recent shipments we've allocated ourselves far less wine than we used to – just a couple of bottles usually of the most precious wines. But we have looked back at the wines that arrived in the early days of covid and found some bottles we think we should part with.

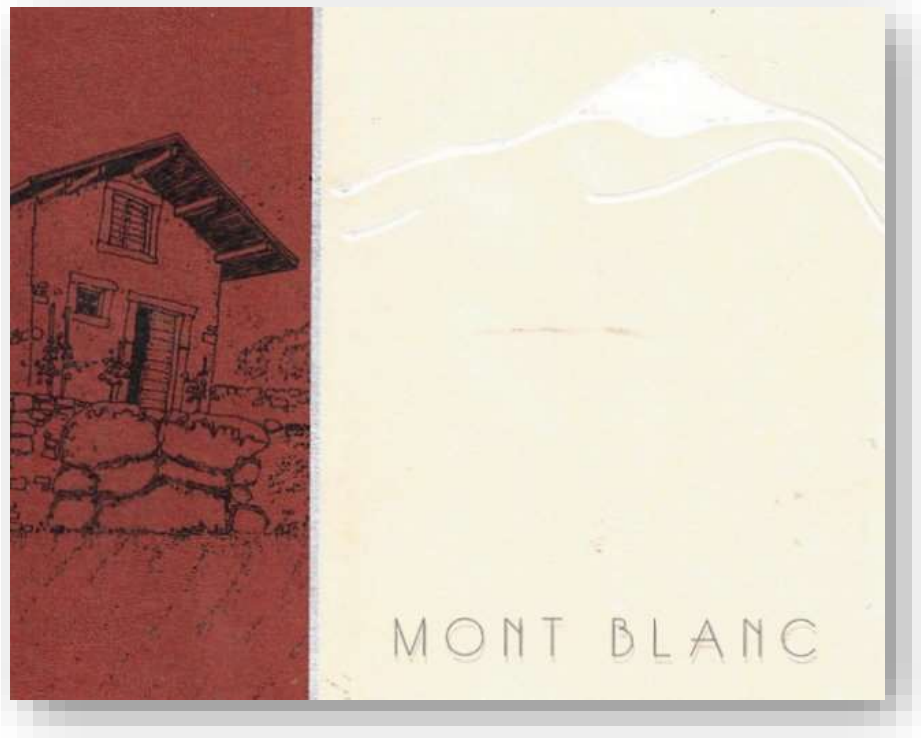
In the process of doing that we found some bottles that at various times have been put to one side because of leaking corks or other terminal damage that makes them unsellable (as opposed to bottles with label damage or cracked wax seals which makes them discountable but not unsellable). We always keep them and eventually open them because just occasionally the wine has survived and is rewarding.

In this newsletter we've decided to do something we have only ever done once before (with some l'Escarpolette wines that had leaking corks). We've designed some packs that include one of these bottles and 5 other wines. There will not be any charge for the damaged bottle or its freight. There's a good chance when you open it you will need to tip it down the sink or you may be able to save it and coax it to become a special vinegar or braise some beef or chicken in it. But you might also be able to drink it – it will be complete chance.

The two wines scattered through these packs are some Domaine Bornard Triffaut Le Ginglelet 2018 and Jean-Pierre Robinot Concerto di Venezia 2020. Good luck if you decide to play roulette and score a pack!

So, all in all it's made for some very interesting packs albeit that you are not going to find much that's new. It does though mean most of this month's packs are very bespoke. There is only one of most of them. Packs which we only have one of often sell quickly so if you're not ordering in the first couple of hours and there is more than one you are interested in you may want to express your preferences. That way if your first preference is sold out we can reserve your second preference immediately. Otherwise by the time we tell you the one you ordered is not available and you get back to us with an alternative it may be too late. We always process the requests for packs in the order we receive them and if someone whose email we haven't read has ordered your second choice which we don't know about it will go to them.

Pack 1: 3 bottles of Belluard Sparkling Pack (15% Discount)



Dominique Belluard's Ayze Brut Nature 2019 a Gringet-based sparkling wine is, we're sure the last new wine, we will have that he made. We've written about it in the New Arrivals section of the newsletter so rather than repeating it we suggest you read [that](#) for more information about the wine itself.

Because it's expensive - at \$137 a bottle, it's a similar price to some excellent grower Champagne – we decided to include it in some 3 packs so that we could offer a 15% discount and make it slightly more affordable for anyone who would like to be part of the ending of this estate.

It's very sad but also this is a wonderful wine with which to drown our collective sorrows! Please toast Dominique's legacy when you drink it.

- Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019 **(3 bottles)**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$411.00 but the pack price is only \$349.35. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 2: Robinot Red Pack (including a free bottle)

1 Pack Only at approx 22% discount overall



This is a rare opportunity to look at two different vintages of the same Robinot cuvée side by side without needing to do your own cellaring. It comes with risk but not financial.

All these are red wines made by Jean-Pierre Robinot. Most are made from Pineau d'Aunis but there is also one very rare bottle of Prélude 2020, a Cabernet France, Jean-Pierre makes with old vines from Anjou.

Regard 2021 and Lumière des Sens are from similarly-aged estate vines (the youngest) and Concerto is a négoce wine made with Cabernet Franc and Pineau d'Aunis.

This is one of the packs with a leaky bottle for which there is no charge – the 2020 Concerto di Venezia, which is 100% Pineau d'Aunis. You may be lucky or you may need to consign it to the vinegar bottle. If it's good then you can compare it with the current release 2021 vintage.

Similarly, there is a chance to try the current 2021 vintage of Lumière des Sens with the 2017 vintage which we have cellared for some years.

Most wines have our normal 10% discount for allocated wines in a 6 pack but with the free bottle (which admittedly may not be drinkable) the discount for this pack is about 22%.

- Jean-Pierre Robinot Concerto di Venezia 2020 (**free bottle**)
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Concerto di Venezia 2021
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Prélude 2020
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Regard 2021
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Lumière des Sens 2021
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Lumière des Sens 2017

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$622.00 but the pack price is only \$485.10. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 3: Risky Bornard Bottle Part 1 Pack (Approx 25% Discount)

1 Pack Only



This is one of two packs with a risky bottle of Philippe Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2018 for which there is no charge. (By the way, for the packs in this newsletter with free bottles, like this one, we will pro-rate the freight cost so you only pay freight on the bottles you actually buy.) The cork has leaked but we hope with the protection from the CO2 remaining in the bottle it might still taste close to the gorgeousness that it exhibited when we were drinking it a couple of years ago.

To ensure, even if the Bornard bottle is a failure, you drink some delicious Trousseau there is a bottle of the 2016 vintage of Alice Bouvot's l'Octavin 2016 Commendatore – her iconic Trousseau cuvée.

There is also our last bottle of Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin En Vesvau, a compelling Chardonnay made predominantly with the grapes from the 2018 harvest but balanced by half a barrel (the total harvest) from the very tiny 2019 harvest. Its distinctive acidity balanced the richness of the 2018 juice.

As a guide to what Carole and Julien thought of the wine they set the price of this non vintage village wine to be the same as the premier cru Saint-Aubin En Remilly 2020 they released at the same time.

The pack also has the Mosse 2021 Savennières Arena, a Chenin Blanc from a parcel that is hitting its prime (the vines were planted in 2004). It is a wine of great finesse from a vintage of great freshness. It was aged for approximately 11 months in barrel on its lees without batonnage.

Like Alice's wine and the Derain Saint-Aubin it is a gastronomic wine. They all deserve to be matched with great food. The last two are Julien Altaber's lively gamay called Métisse because it

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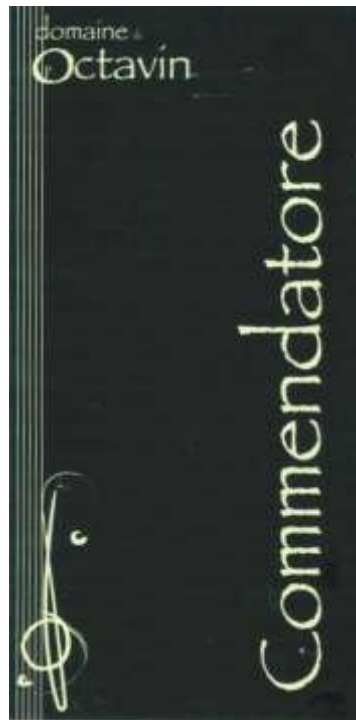
is a blending of macerated and direct press Gamay and the 2020 Geschickt Crémant d'Alsace, a sparkling wine which is a blend of Pinot Blanc and Pinot Auxerrois.

- Philippe Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2018 **(free bottle)**
- l'Octavin Commendatore 2016
- Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin En Vesvau NV
- Mosse Savennières Arena 2021
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Métisse 2022
- Geschickt Crémant d'Alsace 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$607.00 but the pack price is only \$454.75. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 4: Another Risky Bornard Bottle Part 2 Pack (Approx 26.5% discount)

1 Pack Only



This is the second of two packs with a risky bottle of Philippe Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2018 for which there is no charge.

For the remainder of the bottles, they are mostly the same as for Pack 3 except for one bottle so we haven't described them in detail again.

The different bottle is Alice and Olivier de Moor's Le Vendangeur Masqué Bourgogne Blanc 2021. This is a Chardonnay made by Alice and Olivier from purchased organic grapes from Burgundy and made into a stunning wine with their signature precision.

- Philippe Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2018 **(free bottle)**
- l'Octavin Commendatore 2016
- Le Vendangeur Masqué Bourgogne Blanc 2021
- Mosse Savennières Arena 2021
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Métisse 2022
- Geschickt Crémant d'Alsace 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$502.00 but the pack price is only \$369.90. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 5: More Russian Roulette and Buried Treasures Pack (Approx 30% Discount)

1 Pack Only



This is the last pack with a free bottle of wine which may or may not be drinkable. It's another bottle of Jean-Pierre Robinot's Concerto di Venezia 2020, made with 100% Pineau d'Aunis. As with the other packs with leaky corks we will pro-rate the freight so there is no charge for this experiment. Hopefully the dissolved CO2 will save the juice!

But even if you have to tip that wine down the sink there are plenty of treasures in this pack to make it worthwhile including a very rare bottle of de Moor 2020 Chitry and an even rarer bottle of Jura vigneron's Arnaud Greiner's La Cart'ouche 2020. It's a blend of all the Jura red grapes but mainly Pinot Noir. The photo above shows the barrel which held the same wine from the 2016 vintage. That was the entire cuvée. The estate is less than 1 hectare.

The pack also has a bottle of our current vintage of Jean-Pierre Robinot's 100% Chenin Blanc pet-nat Fêtembulles (2020) so one way or another there will be some Robinot, the juicy red Domaine Derain Allez Goutons Rouge 2023, made with Pinot Noir, and finally, a bottle of Cendrillon, made from Domaine de la Garrelrière's oldest Sauvignon Blanc vines, partly aged in wood and partly in tank.

- Jean-Pierre Robinot Concerto di Venezia 2020
- Arnaud and Malou Greiner La Cart'ouche 2020

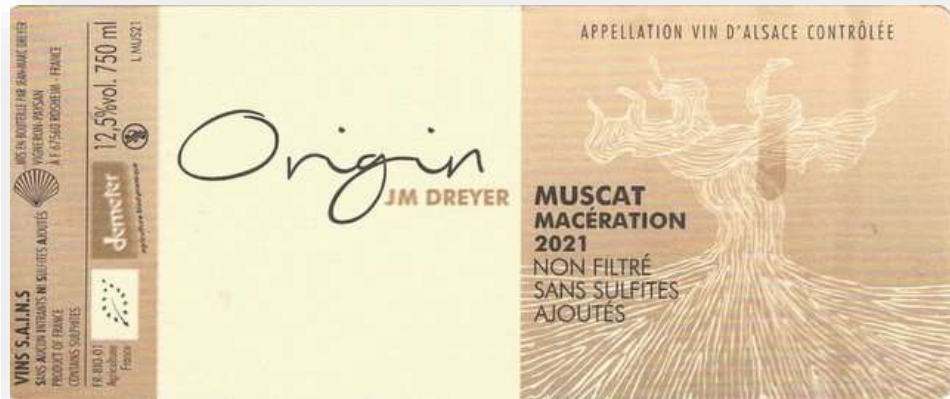
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- Alice and Olivier de Moor Bourgogne Chitry 2020
- Jean-Pierre Robinot Fêtembulles 2022
- Domaine Derain Allez Goutons Rouge 2023
- Domaine de la Garrelière IGP Val de Loire Cendrillon 2022

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$414.00 but the pack price is only \$291.85. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

**Pack 6: Otherwise Unavailable Light Reds and Macerated Whites Pack
(13.5% Discount)**

1 Pack Only



It's not summer but these days, certainly based on our sales and our habits, warm weather is not a requirement to chill a light red. It is a category we currently have no advertised wines for so we know they are popular. (in July when the 2023 Mataburros arrive the situation will be different.)

We've found 3 bottles from previous otherwise sold out vintages – two Mataburro 2021 cuvées and a Mosse Bisou from 2020. It should be very interesting to drink them now they have aged a little. The Mataburro Idoine is mainly Merlot (with a tiny amount of Grenache). Otium is Grenache with a small amount of Grenache Gris and Macabeu. The Mosse 2020 Bisou is a blend of Grolleau Noir, Grolleau Gris, Gamay, and Chenin Blanc.

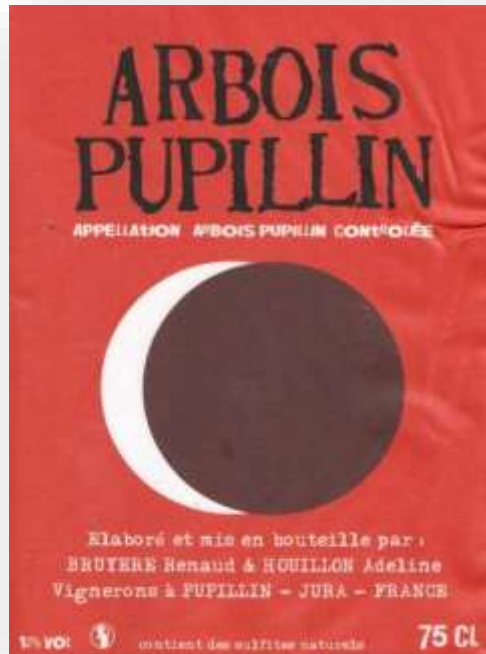
The last three wines are completely different from the first three – all macerated white Alsace grapes and from three different masters of the art. Both Jean-Marc Dreyer's Origin Muscat d'Alsace and Alice's l'Octavin La Cigogne (macerated Gewurztraminer and Pinot Gris) are from the 2021 vintage and the Geschickt Grand Cru Wineck-Schlossberg Riesling is from 2020 and one of our favourite interpretations of macerated Riesling. They should be very interesting to compare and contrast.

- Mataburro Idoine 2021
- Mataburro Otium 2021
- Mosse Bisou 2020
- Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Muscat Origin 2021
- l'Octavin La Cigogne Green 2021
- Geschickt Alsace Grand Cru Wineck-Schlossberg Riesling 2020

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$385.00 but the pack price is only \$332.45. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 7: From the Cellar - Risk and Hopefully Reward Pack (Nearly 15% discount)

1 Pack Only



There is absolutely nothing to link all these wines to a particular theme apart from the fact we found them at the same time. We don't think we need to tell anyone how rare the 2017 Bruyère Arbois Pupillin Ploussard is. It's one of the wines we mentioned in the introduction that we over-allocated to ourselves based on our previous drinking habits. We drank a bottle recently and it was still in fine form so it's time to let one go.

This pack also has the last bottle of a stash of Saint Jean du Barroux Oligocène 2004. We sold a few in March and no-one has given us any negative feedback about its age so it could be very rewarding. We're sure its maker, Philippe Gimel, would say it was made to go a long distance. It is a blend of Grenache, Syrah, Carignan, and Cinsault. The Samuel Boulay Spigao 2016, which is from the Ardèche, is also a blend of grapes. It is made from Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. The fourth red, Tony Bornard's Le Pinotctambule 2020 Pinot Noir should be in a good drinking window.

The Geschickt Vin d'Alsace Pino 2017, which is an assembly of Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Pinot Auxerrois, and Pinot Noir is a white wine. All the grapes were directly pressed. It is very ageable with at least a part of it coming from the Grand Cru Kaefferkopf vineyard which dominates the village of Ammerschwihr.

Mosse Bisou 2021 is a blend of Grolleau Noir, Grolleau Gris, Gamay, Cabernet Franc, and Chenin Blanc. They are all vines from the Mosse estate. It is a light red wine for chilling and we suspect will still taste good even though generally it's a wine we say to drink in the year following its release. As we said this pack is about risk and we sincerely hope also reward.

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These are the wines:

- Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon Arbois Pupillin Ploussard 2017
- Saint Jean du Barroux Oligocène 2004
- Samuel Boulay Spigao 2016
- Geschickt Vin d'Alsace Pino 2017
- Domaine Bornard Le Pinotctambule 2020
- Mosse Bisou 2021

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$330.00 but the pack price is only \$281.35. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 8: June end of Financial Year Sale Pack (25% discount)



Everyone tends to have an end of financial year sale so we thought we should have one too. We are well aware that the prices of our wines are climbing rather than creeping and putting many out of reach of most people. This pack might make some of them briefly accessible. It includes two slightly different Aligotés, both made by Julien Altaber from the same vintage. Allez Goutons is made for earlier drinking – bottled soon after it has finished fermenting and aged in tanks. The Sextant Aligoté has several more months of aging. It should be interesting to compare them and we're unlikely to ever put them in a sale pack again.

There is a red (Gamay and Cabernet Franc blend) and white (Chenin Blanc from the youngest vines) from the Plouzeau family's Loire estate Domaine de la Garrelière and two unusual wines. Karnage's Zac is Mauzac from the south-west of France made in the Jura by Charles Dagand and Stephane Planche. It feels like it will be sparkling but settles to be still.

And Le Bouc à Trois Pattes French Press Shiraz 2021 has hardly any Shiraz in it. it is 50% Merlot with some Syrah, Muscat de Hambourg, Terret Bourret, Alicante Bouschet, Muscat à Petits Grains Blanc, Chardonnay, and Grenache Gris. It is dark, inky wine but because of the lack of added sulphites or filtering still quite fresh and energetic. (It was also in last month's sale pack.)

That makes four whites and two reds in the pack.

- Domaine de la Garrelière AOC Touraine Les 2 Amis 2021
- Domaine de la Garrelière Le P'tit Ch'nin 2022
- Karnage Zak 2020

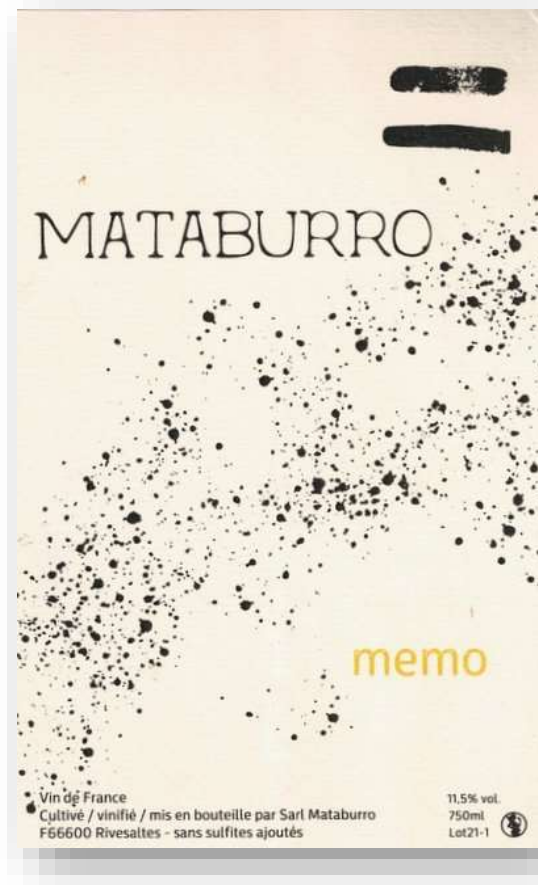
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- Le Bouc à Trois Pattes French Press Shiraz 2021
- Domaine Derain Allez Goutons Blanc 2022
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Aligoté 2022

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$341.00 but the pack price is only \$255.75. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 9: Mixed Pack Including Some Cellar Gems (14% discount)

2 Packs Available



This is another very mixed pack comprised mainly cellared wines from our own allocations. Le Temps des Cerises La Capitulation Ne Paie Pas 2020 is a light red gulping wine made from Cinsault. It's also a good, what we call, 'wedge wine' where you need a bottle to fit between the more serious wines you may have chosen and matched for a meal.

A wedge wine fills the gap between courses – when you have drunk the wine for one course but want to keep the planned wine for the next course until you are ready to eat. In warmer places, like Queensland, it would also be good to drink in a park. In the south that's a bit of an ask at this time of year ... but you could save it for spring.

There are two other more substantial reds, both from our current offering from Julien Altaber. The Coteaux Bourguignons is a blend of Gamay and Pinot Noir. And the Bourgogne Rouge is 100% Pinot Noir. Both are from the 2022 vintage.

There are two whites, both of which will have only improved with our cellaring. Nicolas Carmarans Entre les Eaux is a white wine which is a blend of Chenin Blanc and Aligoté and Alice's l'Octavin P'tit Pousot 2017 is 100% Chardonnay from her own estate.

Finally, there is a bottle of the 2021 Mataburro Memo, which is macerated Macabeu. This wine is made from vines Laurent's grandfather planted but which he recently purchased from a subsequent owner. It's a lovely story!

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- Le Temps des Cerises Cerises La Capitulation Ne Paie Pas 2020
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Coteaux Bourguignons 2022
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Rouge 2022
- Nicolas Carmarans Entre les Eaux 2020
- l'Octavin P'tit Poussot 2017
- Mataburro Memo 2021

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$382.00 but the pack price is only \$327.45. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

A comment on fining wines

We have written about fining wines before, but two happenings recently have made us think about the role of fining again.

The first was a wine we tried in Tasmania from a reputable winery in our home state, but which wasn't natural. It was the type of wine that garners medals at wine shows and sells reasonably well.

Normally we don't drink wines that are not natural due to the likelihood that the vines will have been sprayed with systemic sprays. Remember that systemic sprays are sucked up into the vines and the grapes by the plant and cannot be removed. As an example, Roundup and similar sprays are systemic.

Our second experience was at a restaurant in London where the wines on offer generally had more sulphites than we prefer. We ordered a rosé. In both cases there was just one problem – the wines had no flavour at all – they were short on flavour and big on clarity. Neither was a living wine!

The problem stems back to organisations such as the wine shows giving marks for clarity (or rather taking marks off for lack of clarity). This has led to many wine drinkers expecting their wines to be clear.

This leads to the question what is fining and what does fining do to a wine? A natural wine is never fined because it involves adding something to the wine and a wine can't be considered natural if it includes a substance that is external to the juice from the grape.

In a paper by Karamanidou et al¹ fining is defined and explained as follows:

Fining describes the deliberate addition of an adsorptive compound that is followed by the settling or precipitation of partially soluble components from the wine. The products used for this purpose are referred to as fining agents. They include animal proteins such as gelatin, casein and egg albumin; plant proteins such as wheat glutens and lupin proteins; polyvinylpolypyrrolidone (PVPP) and bentonite; and even polysaccharides extracted from seaweeds.

It is also important that natural wines are not fined as many of the fining "agents" mentioned in the quote above are made from animal proteins such as fish intestines or egg whites (see below) and hence are not suitable for vegans and vegetarians. The problem for them is that in Australia it is not required to state the use of animal products on the label.

Some of the reasons winemakers fine their wines are:

- To remove dead yeasts from the wine;
- To remove some of the tannins from wines;
- To reduce bitterness in wines;

¹ Karamanidou, A et al (2011) *Fining of red wines: effects on their analytical and sensory parameters. J. Int. Sci. Vigne Vin, 45, n°1, 47-60.*

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- To reduce the effect of colouration in wines;
- To reduce the likelihood of malolactic fermentation occurring;
- And more ...

When a wine is fined it involves adding something that will attract particles or specific molecules that are in the wine and precipitate them out. It might be the intestines of fish or gelatine (very commonly used) or isinglass or egg white or even the scarily named polyvinylpolypyrrolidone. These additives attract particles in the wine or denature them in some way.

In fact, fining is not as simple as some people try to make out as it is not just a process of precipitating solids from wine so that it looks clear. It can also be used for other reasons such as preventing colouring of the wine such as white wines that turn brown or develop a pink hue during aging.

Adding some of these animal or other products to wine is for convenience - it is not necessary if you are patient. Many of our winemakers have relatively clear wines but don't fine them. What they do is allow the solids to fall to the bottom of the tank or barrel that the wine is aged in and then carefully rack the wine off into another container leaving the precipitants behind.

The result is that the flavour remains in the wine rather than being stripped out by the fining process.

Wine faults 3: Cork taint (2,4,6-Trichloroanisole)

This is the third story in our discussion of wine faults where we are going to briefly discuss cork taint which is caused by a chemical called 2,4,6-Trichloroanisole which has a formula of $C_7H_5Cl_3O$.

The molecule has 7 atoms of carbon, 5 atoms of hydrogen, 3 atoms of chlorine and 1 atom of oxygen. In the world of chemistry and now in the wine world most people use the adopted shortcut of TCA.

It is thought to be caused when fungi that naturally occur in oak trees (and their bark) come in contact with chlorine-based chemicals in the winery.

The result is an unpleasant smell which some people refer to as like damp cardboard and others like damp earth. Some people are very sensitive to this phenomenon and others hardly notice – but it is a fault because it reduces the vibrancy of the wine.

As an aside, we were interested to find out on a recent visit to the Robinot family in the Loire valley that there is a company in France which has developed the technology to check cork for likely contamination and treat them to significantly reduce the likelihood of cork taint occurring.

In our reading for this story we came across a long piece of research by Sefton and Simpson² which we think nicely summarises the role of TCA and other agents in cork taint.

They address the issue which puzzles some people that cork taint can be very mild sometimes or other times may be unusually strong.

For example, in their summary of their paper they have this to say:

TCA is recognised as the major cause of cork taint in bottled wine. But occasionally, the concentration of TCA present in tainted wine cannot account for the intensity of the taint. Presently, there are about 12 compounds in addition to TCA that are implicated in cork taint, either as a primary cause of cork taint or co-occurring with other taint compounds. All are aroma-intense microbial metabolites. Because TCA has dominated the literature on cork taint, the role of these other compounds has not received adequate attention and is incompletely understood.

They then talk about their investigations into the passage (or not) of TCA from the cork into the wine:

TCA is strongly retained in the cork whereas most of the other compounds implicated in cork taint have greater polarity and are likely to be more completely transferred into the wine. Part of the TCA in a contaminated cork is more amenable to extraction into the wine; it follows that this TCA must be located on or close to the surface of the cork or within the lenticels where the

² Sefton, M and Simpson, R (2005) Compounds causing cork taint and the factors affecting their transfer from natural cork closures to wine – a review. *Australian Journal of Grape and Wine Research* 11, 226–240.

wine can reach or it can migrate into the wine. In addition, some TCA is less readily released and part of this may never transfer into the wine during normal bottle storage because it is locked away deep within the matrix of the cork. Part of the more slowly extractible TCA that is not accounted for in wine soaks used in taint assessment could nevertheless contribute to TCA measured in wine after months in bottle, because the longer time will allow migration of some of the TCA within the cork to parts of the cork that are extractible by the wine.

We would suggest that if you are interested in this topic that you read the whole article by Sefton and Simpson – they also make some interesting comments about other research which they reference in the article.

The main takeaway from this article and the others they talk about is that cork taint is not a simple topic and that there is much more to learn about it.

Grape variety – Terret Bouret

This month we have a very rare and very interesting grape variety to discuss. We were discussing this grape while drinking a bottle of Wim Wageman's fascinating Le Bouc à Trois Pattes French Press Shiraz 2021.

Typical of Wim who likes to extend his sense of humour to his wine labels, this wine contains a reference to a French Press in honour of a friend of his who turned him into a coffee fanatic. He also references Shiraz (using the Australian name rather than Syrah) even though there are 8 different grape varieties in this wine – one of which is Terret Bouret. The others are Merlot (the main variety in the wine), Syrah, Muscat de Hambourg, Alicante Bouschet, Muscat à Petits Grains Blanc, Chardonnay and Grenache Gris.

We have written about this variety about ten years ago, but we thought it might be useful to give it another run because it embodies some interesting features that are worth repeating.

Both this variety and the Alicante Bouschet fall within a small classification of grape varieties called teinturier grapes which are grapes that have red juice rather than white juice. That's why, despite it having juice from some white grapes in it, this wine is particularly inky-coloured.

Most other red grapes have red colouration in their skins but not in the juice. They need to be macerated (the juice left with the skins) for the colour of the juice to turn red.

The second interesting feature of this grape is that it is a mutation of the more widespread Terret Noir. The reliable Vitis International Variety Catalogue claims that both Terret Blanc and Terret Gris are mutations of Terret Noir. Terret Gris is also known as Terret Bouret (sometimes called Terret Bourré or Terret Bourret). This variety adds floral notes to a wine.

The Terret Bouret or Gris grape variety has been known for quite some time as can be seen from Viala and Valmorel's description of the Terret Bouret grape and the beautiful drawing of a grape bunch in their massive tomes from 1904 as shown below. (see Volume V, Viala and Valmorel, 1904, page 211).

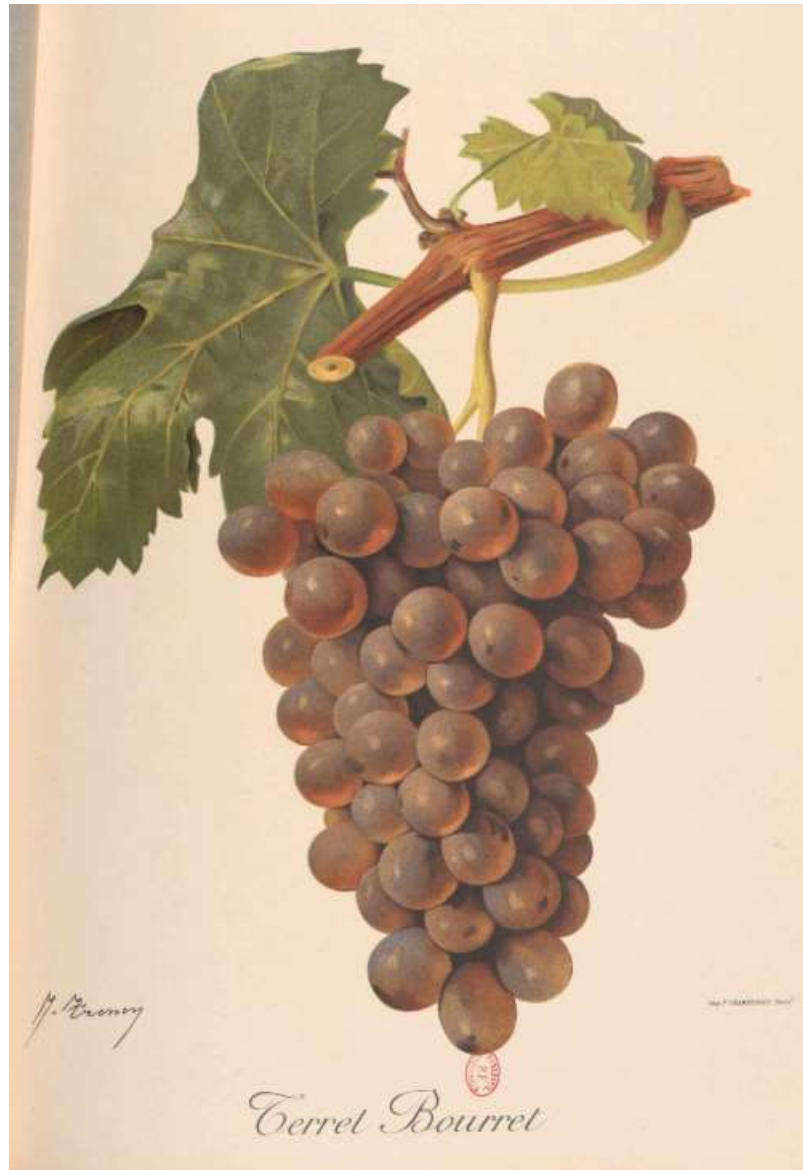
The description of Terret Bouret is interesting as they combine each of the Terrets into the same section and call them "the Terrets" namely Noir, Gris/Bouret and Blanc.

Terrets are essentially grape varieties from the southern region, and more especially Bas-Languedoc proper, including the departments of Hérault, Gard, Aude and Pyrénées-Orientales. They are not found elsewhere; and everything suggests that this is their place of origin and their habitat. They appear in first rank of those we call plants of the country, and precisely because they are there remaining closely confined, they have few synonyms. Although they were known there a very long time ago and it is impossible to determine the time of their introduction in this region as local authors rarely mention it. Thus, neither Olivier Serres nor Garidel say a word about it; alone, Magnol cites them under the name of "Tarret." This silence is made to surprise when we think of the place occupied by the Terrets in our ancient vineyard.

This 1904 description places the location of the Terrets in the Languedoc and nearby départements and confirms that they are native to this area. They also point out that prolific

author Olivier Serres doesn't mention this variety although a writer named Magnol (who we hadn't heard of previously does but calls them Tarret!)

You can see the colour of the grapes below in the beautiful drawing from Viala and Valmorel.



Notice how the grapes are neither white nor red. Sometimes they are referred to as grey (gris) and other times they are referred to as pink flecks.

Another thing we have noticed trawling through their drawings is that they are very precise with the grape bunches but it is difficult to determine much about the leaf structure because they are usually pushed to the background.

There is a mention of Terret Bourret in an earlier book by Odart (1873). Our rough translation is:

Its beautiful and numerous grapes are gray in color or rather light red. This abundance of production made it spread on the hillsides as well as in the plains.

Notice that Odart also mentions that the colour varies for this variety. He also talks about how it grows prolifically.

Another early author Victor Rendu from 1857 mentioned the grape variety in his book “Ampélographie française”.

For boiler wines, we cultivate almost exclusively Aramon and Terret-bourret. These two grape varieties mainly cover the plains from which the majority of boiler wines are obtained: these are, between others, the Hérault plain, from Saint-Guilhem to the sea

Rendu mentions that Terret Bourret and Aramon are used as “boiler wines”. In the 19th century grapes were widely used to make a simple form of spirits by boiling them – hence the name boiler wines.



There is even an older book by Lenoir in 1828 called *Traité de la Culture de la Vigne et de la Vinification* which mentions Terret a number of times in the section from page 219 to page 231.

Lenoir specifically mentions Terret-Bourret (Lenoir uses two of the letter r for Bourret whereas most authors seem to use only one) and how it is late in ripening using the term “tardif”.

He also refers to Terret Bourret as the dominant type of Terret when compared to Terret Noir and Terret Blanc. The text talks about how Terret Noir is very productive but only makes mediocre wines.

Terret Bouret leaf structure and bunch image



The leaf of the Terret Bouret vine (Source Foodtourist)

The leaf structure of the Terret Bouret grape variety can be clearly seen in the photo above. You can see three clearly defined sinuses (these are the “gaps” in the leaves of which usually there are either three or five). There is also a clear frontal lobe bordered by the two Lateral sinuses to form what is known as an apical lobe.

From a much more recent photo of the grapes themselves (see below) you can see that they form tight bunches and the skins are quite thick helping them to resist disease pressure.



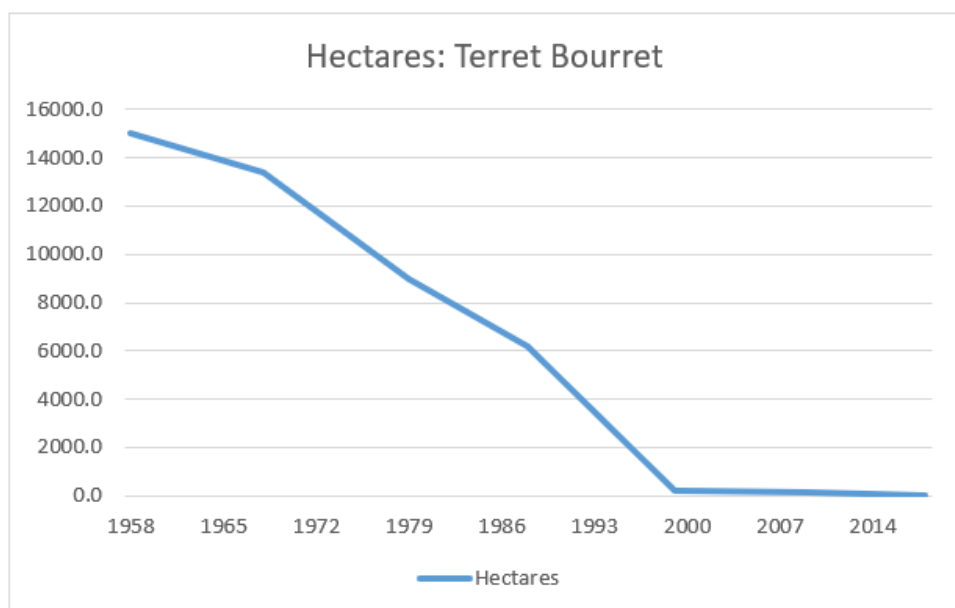
Source Vitis International Variety Catalogue

Area devoted to Terret Bouret

Terret Bouret has had a spectacular decrease in area devoted to it since the 1950s. As you can see from the graph below, in the late 1950s there were over 14,000 hectares given over to this variety throughout France.

However, it has shown a rapid decline up to the year 2000 as it has been taken over by more “modern” varieties, especially Chardonnay in the Languedoc.

As of 2018 there were just a few hectares remaining and most of them in the Languedoc.



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.