

WINE Talk: April 2025

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 132

Welcome to newsletter 132 for April, the fourth WINE Talk Newsletter for 2025. 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, but some of these packs have only one or two available, so we expect them to sell out quickly.

The newsletter also has:

- A discussion about the new arrivals from Fanny Sabre in Burgundy and the Mosse family in the Loire Valley;
- A brief description of the wines that are coming soon;
- Some more French wine terms, this time addressing the stages that vines go through heading towards fully ripe grapes;
- More appellation news – some of the more recent appellations created in France;
- Identifying the earliest appellation created in France;
- A brief story about a change in one of the Bordeaux appellations;
- A story about downy mildew as an increasing problem in French vineyards;
- The Muscat de Hambourg grape variety.

For a full list of wines currently in stock and their prices see:

<https://livingwines.com.au/shop/>

There's an easy way to order our wines. Just send us an email listing the wines and/or packs you would like to order or even just a budget and your style and region preferences. We confirm a plan by return email before processing your order.

If you're not personally known to us or haven't already, please also provide your date of birth so we stay legal (a requirement of Tasmanian legislation). You must of course be over 18 years of age to order.

New Arrivals

Fanny Sabre

We received some more Fanny Sabre wines recently, most particularly some wines from her special secret Beaune vineyard *Clos des Renardes*. We say it's secret because even Fanny, who has lived in the immediate region all her life did not know it existed until she purchased it in 2016. It's a vineyard she is immensely proud of because it was her first purchase. Everything else was vines that had been in the family.

At 2.2 hectares it's in the hills on the edge of a communal forest and surrounded by walls that are more than a metre thick. It's quite different from most Burgundy vineyards which are surrounded by other vines.

One of the bonuses of geotags on photos is that after you've been taken on a journey through various tiny twisted lanes you can actually see where you have been and this satellite image shows the vineyard surrounded by trees quite well. You could easily drive past and never know it was there.



It's 2.2 hectares, which is nearly a third of her vines so an important part of her portfolio. 1.7 hectares is Pinot Noir, which is over 40 years old, and the rest is mainly Chardonnay, some of

which she has planted. She has also planted four rows of Pinot Blanc. There is a tiny amount in the Clos de Renardes Blanc we have newly-available, although the label only identifies it as Chardonnay.

It's 300 metres above sea level which helps, Fanny believes, with the acidity. It also helps to keep very palatable alcohol levels – 12.5% for the Clos des Renardes Blanc and 12% for the Pinot Noir. She also likes the fact the geology is variable – in part of the vineyard it is more clay than limestone and another part is more limestone and clay. Everything is blended together but she thinks it makes for wonderful balance.

We have good supplies of both of these wines, as well as top-ups of the 2023 vintages of Bourgogne Rouge and Bourgogne Aligoté (just a few of those left though), and some 2023 Anatole Rouge (a fresh Pinot Noir from the wrong side of the tracks!) It's sold as a Vin de France now but would be Sainte Marie La Blanche should it still be specifically appellated. That's on the eastern side of the A6, the famous Autoroute de Soleil that passes beside Beaune. Finally there are a few bottles of another compelling white wine – the 2022 Mercurey Blanc and one remaining bottle of Monthélie Les Sous-Roches (at the moment).

Here are all the details of what we have left to buy individually. There are also a couple of packs in this newsletter which have additional wines we haven't listed here which are sold out.

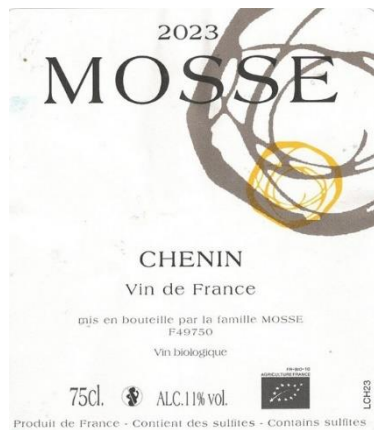
Wine	RRP	Variety
Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2023	\$78	Aligoté
Fanny Sabre Beaune Blanc Clos des Renardes 2023	\$141	Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc
Fanny Sabre Mercurey Blanc 2022	\$139	Chardonnay
Fanny Sabre Anatole Rouge 2023	\$74	Pinot Noir
Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2023	\$89	Pinot Noir
Fanny Sabre Monthélie Les Sous-Roches 2022	\$141	Pinot Noir
Fanny Sabre Beaune Rouge Clos des Renardes 2023	\$141	Pinot Noir

The Mosse Family

We also have four new offerings from the Mosse family – three wines and a glorious rosé vermouth, a bottle which might help you to hold on to summer.

The details are below and see the packs for some special offers.

Mosse Chenin 2023



This cuvée, which is 100% Chenin Blanc, is an estate wine sourced from four plots of young vines planted between 2000 and 2002 in Lambert du Lattay and Beaulieu sur Layon which are quite close to the Mosse winery.

The soils are clay with gravel and schist on which the Chenin vines thrive.

The grapes were slowly pressed in a pneumatic press then aged for 6 months, partly in stainless steel tanks and partly in wood on fine lees.

It was bottled without filtration in March 2024. This wine is fresh and ideal to be drunk young. Certified organic. \$61. 11% ABV.

Mosse Magic of Juju 2023



Magic of Juju is a négoce wine which changes its composition a little each year. Sourced from certified organic vineyards, the 2023 vintage is a blend of 40% each of Chenin Blanc and Colombard and 20% Sauvignon Blanc, all from vines that are on average of 30 years old.

For each variety, the grapes were slowly pressed in a pneumatic press. The Chenin Blanc was aged for 6 months in barrels on fine lees.

The Sauvignon Blanc and Colombard were both aged in stainless steel tanks. The wine was blended a few weeks before bottling without filtration in April 2024.

We love the Mosses' translated description "Dry and extremely fresh white, with notes of white fruits and herbs, a taut and appetizing finish, supported by a smooth bitterness." We would also add that it is incredibly energetic with just a hint or residual CO2. \$52. 10.5% ABV.

Mosse Bang Nouveau 2024



This newly-named cuvée is actually Bangarang Nouveau (which before that was Bangarang Primeur). The shortened name is to differentiate it from Bangarang proper, which we will have later this year.

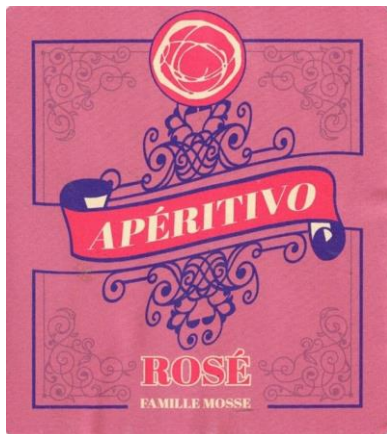
It is a négoce wine, made this year from Gamay, Grolleau Gris and Chenin Blanc from certified organic vines between 10 and 35 years of age. The Grolleau Gris was macerated for four days before pressing.

The other two varieties were directly pressed before fermenting in stainless steel tanks. It was bottled on 25 October 2024, ready for drinking during on the day of the

release of Beaujolais Nouveau (the third Thursday in November).

At 9.5% alcohol it is extremely drinkable. This is not a wine to contemplate. \$49.

Mosse Aperitivo Rose Vermouth 2022



This dusky pink vermouth was made with a base of directly-pressed Cabernet Franc sourced from the 2022 vintage and a grape eau de vie macerated with Sichuan pepper, cocoa nibs, star anise, grape Buckwheat, cinchona bark, citrus fruits, and wormwood leaves.

The juice was fortified after pressing by adding the macerated eau de vie. Fortification halted fermentation, so retaining a lot of natural sugars (18.7 mg of residual sugar).

It was aged for 10 months in a tank before bottling in July 2023.

Only 1,200 were made so we feel lucky to have a small allocation). It's highly recommended as a base with tonic and also delicious neat over ice with a round of orange. \$67. 16% ABV.

What's Coming

In our next newsletter we will be describing some new La Guinelle vinegars and new Domaine Derain and Sextant wines. We will probably also put these on the website early in May before the newsletter is released so if you would like early notice once we release them, please let us know. The early notice is likely to be later this week.

We have Piollot and Marie Courtin Champagnes on the way and will be allocating some new Robinot wines, starting from the end of the month into early June. The de Moor wines have also been collected as well as a small replenishment from the Montanet family, including more La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2023, which we cannot keep up with the supply of. As foreshadowed last year there will be some wine from Mito Inoue coming soon too and we are just waiting on confirmation of a shipping date for the 2024 Mataburro wines. It's close enough for us to have relented and released one bottle from the 2023 vintage which had previously been allocated to us in one of this month's packs.

Pack 1 – New Sabre Wines (15% Discount)

(3 Packs Only)



This is a six pack of some of Fanny Sabre's most iconic wines – three whites and three reds. A few are top-ups of wines we received earlier in the year (the 2023 Bourgogne Blanc, Bourgogne Aligoté and Bourgogne Rouge) and three are new arrivals – her excellent value 2023 Anatole Rouge, and two special wines from Clos des Renardes – the red and white 2023 cuvée.

Fanny uses the same basic principles for all of her red and white winemaking so differences between wines of the same vintage and colour generally reflect differences in the terroir. It makes drinking them fascinating. With three reds and three whites in the pack, all from the 2023 vintage it's a great opportunity to engage in that process.

For the reds, she harvests whole bunches and fermentation takes place in tanks with regular punch down and pump over (pigeage and remontage in French). This takes about two weeks. The grapes are then pressed and aged in barrel (mostly 500 litres, a proportion of which will be new) or, for the Bourgogne Rouge, partly in a large 20 hectolitre wooden conical tank. There is no racking during the aging or filtration prior to assembling for bottling. The white grapes are pressed, settled for approximately 48 hours to remove the largest particles of the lees and then transferred to wooden barrels for fermentation and aging. The wines are racked and lightly filtered prior to bottling. She does add small quantities of sulphites to her wines after the completion of malolactic fermentation.

We've written a little more about Clos de Renardes in the New Arrivals section above.

The Bourgogne Blanc 2023 is only available through this pack as all other bottles have been sold.

These are the wines:

- **Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Blanc 2023**
- **Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2023**
- **Fanny Sabre Beaune Blanc Clos des Renardes 2023**

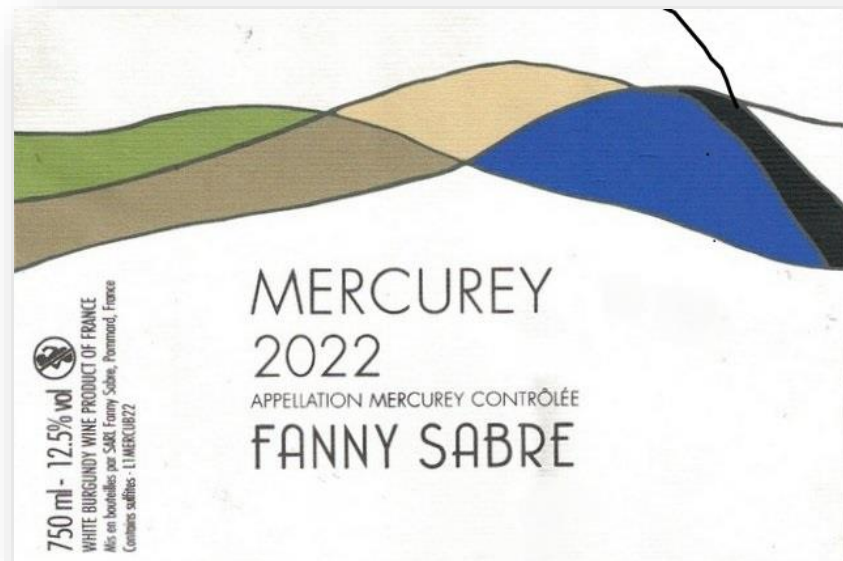
WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

- Fanny Sabre Anatole Rouge 2023
- Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2023
- Fanny Sabre Beaune Rouge Clos des Renardes 2023

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$607.00 but the pack price is only **\$515.95**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 2: New Sabre Wines Premium Whites

(3 bottle pack - 1 Pack Only - Approximately 11% Discount)



There is one only of these packs, with three of Fanny Sabre's most iconic white wines. We created it because we thought there was a good chance at least some of these wines would sell out by the time we released the newsletter because quite a few people had expressed interest for advance notice and we would also have alerted our wholesale customers. It turned out to be the case and this pack is the only way to buy the Meursault Limozin.

The Meursault is a first for us, although she has been making it for several years. One of France's most iconic appellations for making white wines, she swapped some vines she had in Pommard and another part of Meursault (which used to make a cuvée called Sur la Velle) to acquire the vines this wine was made from. It's a village wine but the Le Limozin lieu-dit abuts the eastern edge of the Genevrières 1er cru. The wine has a savoury intensity and power but still with Fanny's finesse.

Mercurey, also a village appellation, is in the Côte Chalonnaise, south of Beaune. It doesn't have the same intensity (or price) of the Meursault but it has the same fresh citrus notes that Fanny always has in her white wines, with just a lick of limestone. It's not such a crime to drink it as a young wine. We've talked about the Clos des Renardes vineyard elsewhere in the newsletter. It is mainly Chardonnay but with some young Pinot Blanc as well.

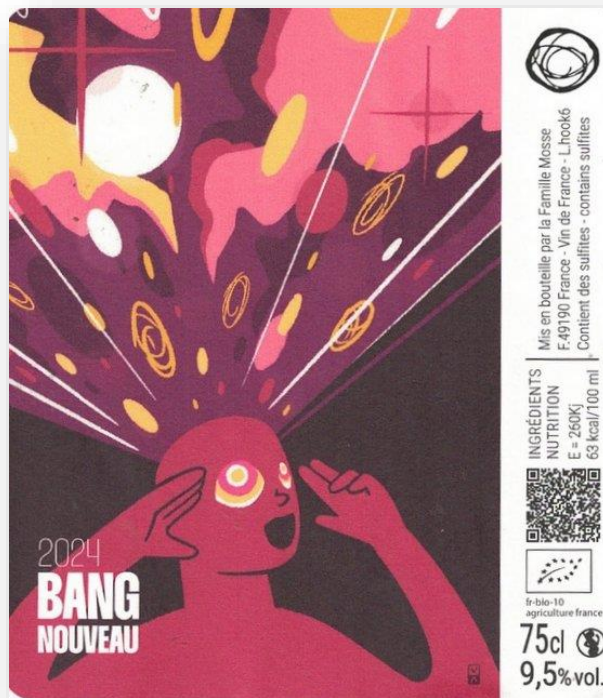
The wines are:

- **Fanny Sabre Beaune Blanc Clos des Renardes 2023**
- **Fanny Sabre Mercurey Blanc 2022**
- **Fanny Sabre Meursault Limozin 2022**

The price for this selection of **3** bottles is \$587.00 but with the 11% discount it becomes **\$521.25**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 3: Mosse New Arrivals – 15% Discount

(2 Packs Only)



This pack has some of all of the Mosse wines we received recently and a bottle of Mosse rosé vermouth, which was in the same shipment. There are two bottles of the primeur wine, Bang Nouveau, two bottles of Magic of Juju, a blend this year of Chenin Blanc, Colombard, and Sauvignon Blanc, and a bottle of Aperitivo Rosé Vermouth.

You will notice on the label above that the amazing Bang Nouveau is only 9.5% alcohol.

Only 1200 bottles of the vermouth were made so we're delighted to have received enough to include in a pack.

There's a description of all the wines and the vermouth in the New Arrivals Section.

These are the wines:

- Mosse Chenin 2023
- Mosse Magic of Juju 2023 (2 bottles)
- Mosse Bang Nouveau 2024 (2 bottles)
- Mosse Aperitivo Rose Vermouth 2022

The price for this selection of 6 bottles is **\$330.00** but the pack price is only **\$280.50**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 4: Quite a Mix - especially for Lovers of Aligoté Pack

(Approx 14% discount - 1 Pack Only)



There are many last bottles here so we can confidently say this pack is unique and not to be repeated (unless like in January it isn't bought and we offer it again in future!)

There are two Bourgogne Aligotés – a 2023 from Fanny Sabre and 2021 from Domaine Derain, which should be especially interesting. There's our last bottle 2022 Geschickt Riesling, largely sourced from the Holderbaum vineyard on the outskirts of the village of Ammerschwihr, and a last bottle of their 2021 Obi Wine pet-nat. There's a spicy red wine – a blend of Provence Carignan and Grenache made by Alice Bouvot, from l'Octavin and the final wine is a bottle of Mataburro Quartet 2023, something we are willing to release knowing the new vintage is not too far away. This wine also has some Muscat d'Alexandrie in it, which is the subject of our grape of the month.

These are the wines:

- **Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne Aligoté 2021**
- **Mataburro Quartet 2023**
- **Geschickt Vin d'Alsace Riesling Holderbaum 2022**
- **Geschickt Obi Wine Pet-Nat 2021**
- **l'Octavin Cariboum 2021**

The price for this selection of **6** bottles is \$379.00 but the pack price is only **\$325.15**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 5: Geschickt Grand Cru 5 Pack Sale (20% Discount)



For the first time we're offering a 5 pack of wine – partly because we had 5 Grand Cru Geschickt wines available but also, because of their challenging but beautiful shapes, the bottles are difficult to pack and we thought 5 might be easier to manage.

Four of the wines are from Kaefferkopf, the hill which overlooks the village of Ammerschwihr and the fifth is a macerated Riesling from Wineck-Schlossberg.

As concepts the two crus are quite different. Wineck-Schlossberg is virtually all Granite, with a southerly and south-eastern exposure. Aurélie and Arnaud are happily settled on maceration as the best way to deal with their holding in Wineck-Schlossberg, which for them is 100% Riesling.

Kaefferkopf is quite different. The appellation covers a larger area – approximately 72 hectares compared with Wineck-Schlossberg's 28 – and has more than one type of terroir, so much so that it was something of a battle to achieve Grand Cru status as a single entity, something the people of Ammerschwihr fought for because of its significance to their village. A part is predominantly clay and limestone, and a part is predominantly granite. Domaine Geschickt has holdings, predominantly of Gewurztraminer (which must be the primary blend for any wine made within the AOC) in both terroirs but also of many other grape varieties, some allowable as Grand Cru blended with Gewurztraminer and some not. They have Pinot Noir on the

Kaefferkopf and make separate cuvees with it but they cannot be Grand Cru wines. (They also have a growing accumulation of cherry trees, used with Gewurztraminer for Beetle Juice.)

For many years Domaine Geschickt made wines from Kaefferkopf which blended the terroirs but in recent years Aurélie and Arnaud have started to separate them. The older wine, Kaefferkopf 2016, comes from the time when they were not separated. It's almost all Gewurztraminer and was aged in barrels for 6 years without topping up. The result is a nutty wine that's particularly well suited to pairings with cheese. It can also last quite well once opened. Pfulben, which is made from Gewurztraminer, Riesling, and Pinot Gris, is a white wine, although it contains a portion of macerated juice, a habit they have used with their white wines since 2018. It is from the granitic part of the vineyard. Purberg, which is almost entirely Gewurztraminer from the clay and limestone, is macerated and is a bright orange colour. It is a compelling, powerful wine and quite orange. Like Pfulben, it is named after the lieu-dit within the Grand Cru, from where the grapes came from. Khépri is another macerated cuvée from the clay-limestone terroir of Purberg. It is a blend of Gewurztraminer, Riesling, and Pinot Gris and in 2020 was macerated for 200 days in an amphora. Perhaps because of the extended maceration and the bigger mix of varieties, its colour is more amber, quite different from the bright orange of Purberg. In German Gewürz means "herb" or "spice" and, not unexpectedly, these Gewurztraminer-rich wines are aromatic and spicy, but not too floral, and that makes them an exciting match with many different types of spicy and rich foods.

These grand terroirs, combined with viticulture which has been biodynamic since 1998 and which coaxes the best from the soil, make for compelling wines. This pack is a chance to explore some of Domaine Geschickt's best wines across multiple vintages at a substantial discount.

The 5 wines are:

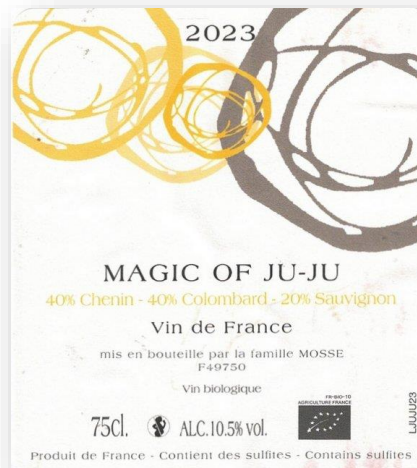
- **Geschickt Alsace Grand Cru Wineck-Schlossberg Riesling 2020**
- **Geschickt Grand Cru Kaefferkopf 2016**
- **Geschickt Alsace Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Pfulben 2019**
- **Geschickt Alsace Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Khépri 2020**
- **Geschickt Grand Cru Kaefferkopf Purberg 2021**

The RRP for this selection of 5 bottles is \$369.00 but the pack price is only \$317.75. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Above is a photo we 'borrowed' from Domaine Geschickt's Instagram feed to show beautiful Gewurztraminer grapes from Purberg, carefully hand-harvested in small boxes, and sitting ready for vinification in the cellar's courtyard.

Pack 6: Mixed Whites and White Sparkling Pack

(15% Discount) - (1 Pack Only)



We've investigated a seldom-visited corner of the warehouse and wrested away a few bottles from our personal allocation to make this and the next pack. It's never easy but necessary occasionally if we are in the right mood to let go.

Pack 6 includes mainly wines from our current list, but also a bottle of Dominique Belluard's 2019 Les Alpes, made from Gringet. 2019 was the final vintage he vinified to completion. It was going to be a white pack but then we decided it would be good to include a bottle of his iconic Mont Blanc Brut Nature from the same 2019 vintage. So, it became a white and white sparkling pack.

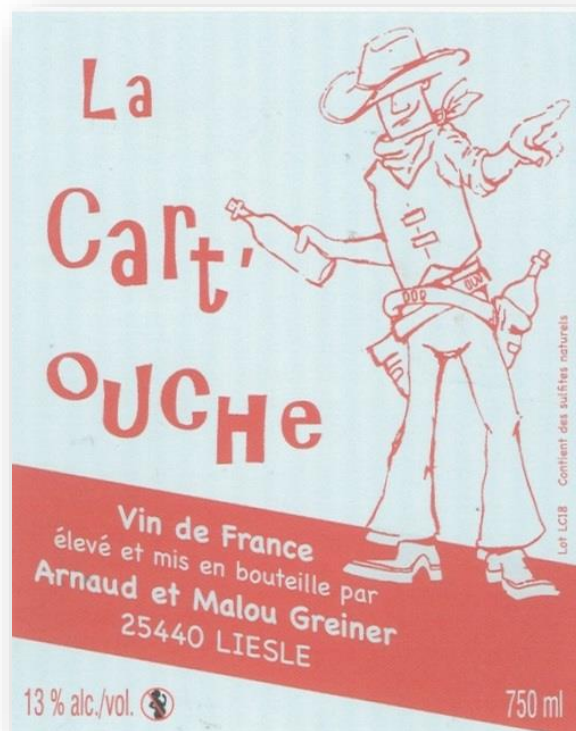
The other four wines include a Crémant d'Alsace from Domaine Geschickt (made from Pinot Blanc and Pinot Auxerrois) and three still whites, two of which are newly-arrived - Fanny Sabre's 2023 Bourgogne Aligoté 2023 and the Mosses' 2023 Magic of Juju (a blend of Chenin Blanc, Colombard and Sauvignon Blanc). The final wine is the Domaine de la Garrelière Cendrillon 2022. It's barrel-aged Sauvignon Blanc from their oldest vines.

The wines are:

- **Belluard Vin de Savoie AOP Blanc Les Alpes 2019**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**
- **Domaine de la Garrelière Cendrillon 2022**
- **Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2023**
- **Mosse Magic of Juju 2023**
- **Geschickt Crémant d'Alsace Brut Nature 2019**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$414.00 but the pack price is only **\$351.90**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

**Pack 7: More Aligoté, One Mystery Brutal, One Bornard and More
(Almost 13.5% discount) - (1 Pack Only)**



The area in the warehouse we explored during March was a source of quite a few last bottles of Aligoté so we have put some older bottles of Aligoté in this pack as well. These two both come from Julien and Carole, but one is the early-drinking Allez Goutons and the other is a bottle of Sextant Bourgogne Aligoté, which is a slightly more serious wine. They are both from the 2020 vintage but the Sextant was released several months later after aging in old wooden barrels. Allez Goutons is always aged in tank and bottled just after fermentation is completed.

The mystery bottle is a super rare l'Octavin Brutal. For reasons we can't remember (if we ever knew) Alice Bouvot has blacked out most of the lot number that was printed on the back label so that all that is left is L at one end and 16 at the other (so the lot number becomes L16). The blacked-out characters are the grape varieties it isn't! From memory we think this is a white wine made with Mauzac. Assuming it is the wine we think it is we last tasted it in February 2023 and it was stunning – very energetic, still with noticeable residual gas. But we cannot be absolutely certain of anything about this bottle.

There is another rare bottle in the pack – a macerated Bornard Savagnin from the 2020 vintage. This one was macerated in a Georgian Qvevri, one of several experiments with different types of maceration vessels conducted by Philippe and then Tony Bornard.

The other two wines are both red blends. Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Les 2 Amis 2021 is a blend of Gamay and Cabernet Franc from the Loire Valley and Arnaud Greiner's La Cartouche, from the 2018 vintage, is a blend of mainly Pinot Noir with Trousseau and Poulsard. It's a Jura wine we normally only sell on allocation.

The wines are:

- **Domaine Derain Allez Goutons Blanc 2020**
- **Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Aligoté 2020**
- **l'Octavin Brutal 2016**
- **Arnaud Greiner La Cartouche 2018**
- **Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Les 2 Amis 2021**
- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Amphore Mammouth Géorgien 2020**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$417.00 but the pack price is only **\$361.10**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 8: Some of the Labels are Dodgy Pack

(Approx 22% discount - 1 Pack Only)



It's a sad moment when you open a box of wine and there staring at you is a label that wasn't properly printed – and also a mystery as to how it could happen!

There are two bottles of Fanny Sabre's compelling Aligoté in this pack. One has a perfect label and one has only part of the label printed, and is missing all the important information, like its name! We've had to hand-write the information in the gap where the name was meant to be, which is not a great look. The reason for including a second bottle, apart from the fact it's delicious, was to show whoever buys the pack what the dodgy bottle should look like.

We also had some l'Octavin macerated Sylvaner which has a slightly damaged label (but at least is complete!) so we decided to make this a label challenged pack by including it as well.

All the rest of the labels are fine. The remaining three wines are an allocation-only bottle of Domaine des Cavarodes 2023 Arbois Poulsard Chemenot, the Mosses' new lively Magic of Juju, a white wine which is a blend of Chenin Blanc, Colombard, and Sauvignon Blanc and, finally, a bottle of Julien Altaber's 2022 Bourgogne Rouge.

Thanks to substantial discounts on the two wines with damaged labels the overall discount for the pack ends up being 22% - definitely a bargain if you don't mind a hand-written label!

- **Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2023**
- **l'Octavin Sylvaner 2021**
- **Mosse Magic of Juju 2023**
- **Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Rouge 2022**
- **Domaine des Cavarodes Arbois Poulsard Chemenot 2023**
- **Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Aligoté 2023**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$444.00 but the pack price is only **\$346.80**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

French wine terms

Here are some more French wine terms we accumulated this month. These terms are all related to the various stages that grapevines go through when coming out of winter dormancy.

Un Burgeon – A bud

The first sign that this is occurring is the appearance of buds breaking through the bark on the vines. This is also a time of concern for the vignerons because if frosts appear while this is happening they can “burn” the buds off the vines which means no grapes from the affected vines.

The vignerons might say:

Les bourgeons sont apparus sur les vignes

Which translates as:

The buds have appeared on the vines.

Débourrement – Bud break

This is the process of the bud breaking through.

Ébourgeonnage – Bud/shoot thinning

This is the process of taking excess buds/shoots off the vines to reduce the quantity of the potential harvest but, in doing so, to increase the quality of what remains.

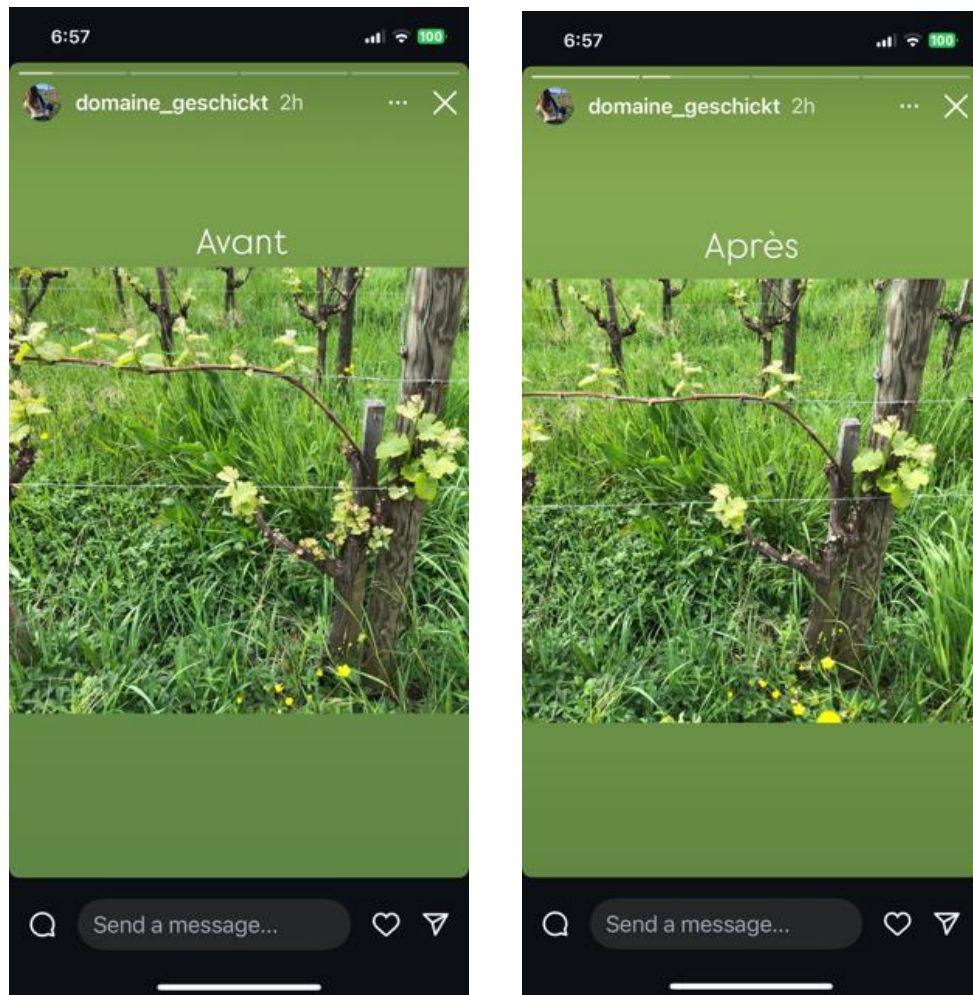
Below are two photos taken by Alice Bouvot from Octavin in the Jura labelled “before ébourgeonnage” and “after ébourgeonnage”, and two photos taken by Geschickt in Alsace showing the same process but with a slightly different view.

As a matter of interest, this is precisely the time that this will be taking place in France!



In the photo on the right which was taken after ébourgeonnage you can see that a number of the shoots have been removed.

And now to Geschickt in Alsace.



Notice the long shoot in the left photo with quite a few shoots poking up. On the right side all but three of the shoots have been removed. Avant means before and Après means after.

Une Pousse – A shoot

This is the shoot that breaks through the bud.

Une feuille – A leaf

The next thing that you observe is a leaf breaking out from the shoot. This is where the buds turn into shoots and then leaves appear on the shoots.

Une fleur – A flower

The next thing that happens is that flowers begin to appear on the shoots.

Floraison - Flowering

The process of flowering.

Nouaison – Fruit set

After flowering, the fruit begins to form, a process known as fruit set.

Wine News from France

More appellation news

Following a recent article in the newsletter about the establishment of a new AOP appellation in the Camargue region, we have had enquiries about a number of aspects of the appellation system in France and questions such as:

- What are some of the other recent appellations that have been created? See next story.
- Can vignerons change from one year to the next between Vin de France and an AOC/AOP appellation? The simple answer is Yes.
- Do the authorities check the details on the wine label to see if they conform to the appellation rules? Yes, sometimes very closely.
- Can anybody read the rules for a particular appellation? Yes. All you have to do is download the “cahier des charges” by typing into google the appellation name followed by those three words which stand for “specifications”. Below we discuss the “Gros Plant du Pays Nantais” appellation. If you want to see the rules then simply type the following into Google “Gros Plant du Pays Nantais cahier des charges” and the rules will be available to download as a pdf.
- What is the oldest appellation in France? The answer is given below.

Of course, over the past sixteen years or so we have published many explanations of the rules of specific appellations, but not necessarily the answers to the above questions, so here we go!

10 Recent Appellations created

The table below show the 10 appellations created prior to the Camargue appellation that we published in last month’s newsletter.

As can be seen from the table below, there has been a lot of attention paid to areas in South West France recently, reflecting the improvement in the quality of the wines coming from that region. Here is a brief (very) summary of each.

AOC	Wine region	Year
Cairanne was granted AOC status for both red and white but not for rosé wines which is strange considering this appellation is in Provence.	Rhone Valley	2018
Côtes de Millau was created as an AOC on 30 November 2011 for white, red and rosé wines. In the permitted grape varieties the traditional Duras and Fer Servadou were given lower status than Gamay and Syrah.	South West France	2011

AOC	Wine region	Year
Côtes d'Auvergne - The most recent update was on the 30th June, 2023. A lot of work is being done in this appellation to preserve some 170 old and very rare varieties such as Canari Noir and Chanis gris to name just two!	Central France	2023
Haut-Poitou – this appellation is located in the Loire Valley. Red wines are made from Cabernet France supplemented by Gamay as well as two of the teinturier Gamays (Chaudenay and Bouze). Whites are made from Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris (the same rules as for the Burgundy appellation of Saint Bris).	Loire	2011
Côtes-du-Rhône Villages – Nyons. - In 2020, Nyons was granted its own named village status within the Côtes-du-Rhône Villages AOC.	Southern France – Rhone Valley	2020
Tursan is also an AOC and each of white, red and rosé wines are permitted. Whites are based on the two principal varieties of Baroque and Gros Manseng. Reds and rosés are based on Cabernet Franc and Tannat as the principal varieties.	South West France	2011
Gros Plant du Pays Nantais – this area was granted AOC status for white wines made from the Folle Blanche grape variety supported by the Colombard and Montils grape varieties.	Western France	2012
Côtes-du-Rhône Villages - Vaison-la-Romaine - Côtes-du-Rhône Villages – Sainte-Cécile, Suze-la-Rousse, and Vaison-la-Romaine: These villages were elevated to named village status in 2016, recognizing their unique terroirs and wine quality.	Vaucluse – Provence	2016

The first/oldest AOC appellations

And while we are discussing appellations, there were 6 appellations given AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) status by the President of France on 15 May 1936.

These were Arbois, Cassis, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cognac, Monbazillac and Tavel. These were the first French wine appellations to receive this designation.

This has led winemakers in Arbois to claim that Arbois was the first appellation to be granted AOC status. However, it is clear that the 6 nominated areas all received their appellation status on the same day.

Sometimes you may see a claim that Châteauneuf-du-Pape received its appellation status long before this date, in fact in 1894.

Well, yes, there was a localised attempt to overcome massive fraud at the time by winemakers outside this area (not very well defined) passing their wines off as coming from the village of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

In order to reduce this fraud the winemakers in Châteauneuf-du-Pape created a *Syndicat Viticole* which was run by the mayor of the town.

One of the most useful things that the *Syndicat* managed to do was to pass into law the actual official winegrowing boundaries of the Châteauneuf-du-Pape region.

But there still was not a France-wide authorisation – that was to come later as mentioned above in 1936 when the AOC system (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) was introduced.

The area for Châteauneuf-du-Pape as authorised by the AOC in 1936 is, in fact, broader than the commune of Châteauneuf-du-Pape by also including areas from the surrounding communes of Bédarrides, Courthézon, Orange, and Sorgues.

A change in Bordeaux

Many of the appellations in the Bordeaux region are dedicated to either red or to white wines rather than both.

However there has been a recent change in one of the regions widely known for white wines made from Muscadelle, Sémillon, Sauvignon Blanc and Sauvignon Gris, namely Entre-deux-Mers.

It is now permitted to use the AOC Entre-deux-Mers label on bottles of red wines made from Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Cot (Malbec), Merlot and Petit Verdot, as well as small quantities of Carmenère.

The area in question lies on the northern side of the Garonne River.

Problems with grapevines - downy mildew

When we visit our producers in France, an increasing problem that we are seeing is the onset of downy mildew outbreaks on the grape leaves and eventually of the vine shoots and then the grape bunches.

Last year the outbreaks were particularly bad leading to many grape bunches having up to 50% of the grapes damaged by rot caused by the mildew.

The added problem this causes is that the damaged grapes have to be taken off the bunches in the vineyard so that the disease is not brought into the winery where it can continue to cause problems.

Recently, we found a good explanation of the problem from the West Australian Agricultural Department entitled Downy Mildew of Grapevines with some very good accompanying text and photos. We have reproduced a small number of the photos to get across the magnitude of the problem if it is left unchecked.



Here you can see a leaf that is just starting to be infected with mildew. If you look carefully you can see the green-yellow colour in the centre of the two spots where it is becoming infected and just appearing around the outside is a chocolate coloured ring marking the outer part of the infection.



This photo of the underside of a leaf taken a bit later in the cycle shows the white mould that is starting to appear underneath the infection on top of the leaf.

The problem is that as the disease spreads throughout the leaf the plant has reduced capacity to carry out the important task of photosynthesis in order to feed itself. If all the leaves become infected, photosynthesis will reduce and eventually cease.

The other problem is that when the plant is attempting photosynthesis it is sucking the spores from the leaves into the main arteries of the plant known as the phloem and the xylem which is used to conduct water and other elements the plants need for survival around the plant. Unfortunately, as the spores cover the leaves, they are sucked into these two arteries which then become clogged.



Much later, in the above photo, the grape bunches have appeared and been almost completely damaged (there was also a photo of a grey-brown mould on the shoots as well) – with only a few having developed resistance to the disease and looking quite healthy.

Picking bunches like this takes more time in the vineyard ensuring that only healthy grapes are sent to the winery thus costing more due to more time being required.

Some good news

But all is not lost. We have noticed in the academic literature recently a lot more attention being paid to this emerging risk to wine production in France and elsewhere and recently found a paper that suggests a means of tackling the risk caused by downy mildew.

This is the paper in the journal *Frontiers in Plant Science*¹.

Endogenous cell wall degrading enzyme LytD is important for the biocontrol activity of *Bacillus subtilis*

Luotao Wang^{1†}, Jianquan Huang^{2†}, Si Chen¹, Xin Su¹,
Xun Zhang³, Lujun Wang⁴, Wei Zhang⁴, Zhenshuo Wang¹,
Qingchao Zeng¹, Qi Wang¹ and Yan Li^{1*}

In the paper by Wang and others written in 2024 they discuss methods of combatting pathogens in the fields without the use of poisonous sprays which are so common in agriculture and which are taken up by the plants and passed on to humans when we eat those plants or fruits or vegetables.

They propose, in this paper, that downy mildew can be combatted in the field through the use of an enzyme found in a common bacteria,

The following is a quote from the 2024 paper quoted above:

Bacteria from genus Bacillus are considered as one of the most important microorganisms in biological control against plant diseases of various crops. Besides the high efficacy against phytopathogens, additional advantages of using these bacteria include the ease of culture, storage, and manufacture due to the ability of Bacillus to produce. In recent years, commercial

¹ Wang, L et al (2024) Endogenous cell wall degrading enzyme LytD is important for the biocontrol activity of *Bacillus subtilis*. *Front. Plant Sci., Sec. Plant Pathogen Interactions*, Volume 15.

formulated Bacillus-based biological pesticides have been increasingly used to control various plant diseases worldwide. To date, B. subtilis is among the most exploited species from the genus.

So, the process seems relatively simple. Release the *Bacillus subtilis* bacteria into the vineyard and an enzyme within those bacteria will get to work deactivating the fungi causing the problems.

In case this being a bacteria, you are worried about it swarming over the vines and grape bunches, *Bacillus subtilis* is often added to foods such as yoghurt, for example and is found in fermented foods such as kimchi, Egyptian kishk, fermented soy and miso, all of which are foods that are eaten daily somewhere in the world.

The name of the pathogen causing the problems is *Plasmopara viticola* which is the causal agent of grapevine downy mildew, is a heterothallic oomycete that overwinters as oospores in leaf litter and soil.

Oomycetes are filamentous, microbial eukaryotes that morphologically resemble fungi. They are also known as “water molds” and cause problems with many plant types.

Now the authors of the paper sum up the role of these enzymes when released into environments where there are pathogens at work.

The antimicrobial activity of B. subtilis could also be due to the production of cell wall degrading enzymes such as chitinases, glucanases, and proteases, which efficiently hydrolyze the major components of the fungal and bacterial cell walls and limit their growth or activity.

We will be interested to talk with our producers, so many of whom suffered so much fighting downy mildew last year, to see if they have investigated this research and if the product is viable within the restrictions of their organic certifications.

The Muscat de Hambourg grape variety

Muscat is one of the oldest documented grape varieties in the world. It is also one of the grape varieties that have been crossed with many other varieties to produce a range of varieties with the aromas and flavour of Muscat.

So, why have we chosen this grape variety? Well, there are a number of Muscat varieties and they have a significant effect on the aromas of the wines.

We also thought it would be interesting to explore the aromas as they are just so striking. And this will provide an opportunity to explore the chemicals in the grape that lead to these pronounced aromas.

There are a number of Muscat grape varieties including:

- Muscat Blanc à Petit Grains
- Muscat à Petit Grains Rose
- Muscat d’Alexandre
- Muscat de Hambourg (Hamburg)
- Muscat Fleur d’Oranger

In Italy Muscat de Hambourg is called Zibibbo Nero.

There is a good description dating back to 1860 by Robert Hogg of the Muscat de Hambourg variety:

“Bunches above medium size, compact, and shouldered. Berries rather large, varying from round to oval. Skin tough, but not thick, deep purplish-black, covered with thin blue bloom. Flesh tender, very juicy, rich, and sugary, with a fine Muscat aroma.

This excellent grape may be ripened in a house subjected to the same amount of heat as is generally given to the Black Hamburg, and it has also been ripened in a cool vinery.”

Muscat de Hamburg grapes are an excellent source of vitamins A and C. The grapes are also a good source of minerals, including calcium, iron, and magnesium, and contain some vitamin K. They therefore make an excellent table grape as well as an interesting wine grape.

Where did Muscat de Hambourg come from?

Black Muscat (or Muscat Hamburg) is a red *Vitis vinifera* grape variety derived from the crossing of the Schiava Grossa and Muscat of Alexandria by Seward Snow, Head Gardener to Earl de Grey at Wrest Park, Bedfordshire UK in 1850, according to the Vitis International Variety Catalogue.

As you will see below, the crossing with Schiava Grossa provided the red/black skin colour.

Schiava Grossa grapes, which originate from the Alto Adige region of Northern Italy, are known for their dark purple to almost black colour. They are also sometimes described as having a dark red or purple hue. The berries are medium to large and form in large bunches.

A photo of a bunch of Muscat de Hambourg grapes is shown below:



You can see that the grape bunches are reasonably loose, thus allowing wind to pass through the bunches therefore reducing the likelihood of diseases developing within those bunches. You will also notice that the individual grapes vary in size quite considerably. Also, unlike many other Muscat varieties these grapes are very dark thus being classified as a red grape variety.

A photo of a leaf of Muscat de Hambourg is shown below:



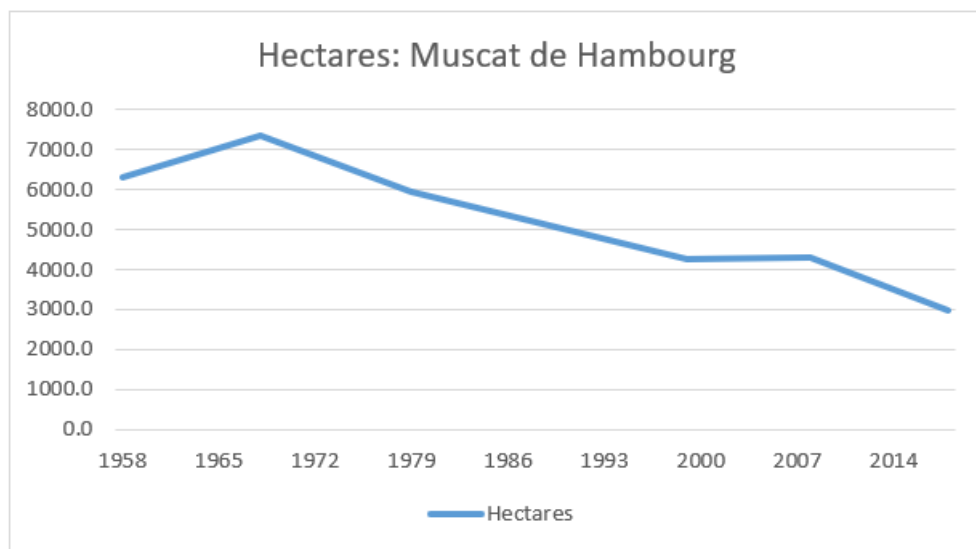
The leaf is a regular five lobe leaf. You can see that it has a pronounced petiole sinus – this is the gap at the back of the leaf where the petiole joins the leaf to the nearest shoot. On either side of this sinus are two lobes known as basal lobes.

The apical lobe at the front of the leaf is quite pronounced and has noticeable serrations. The lateral lobes (the ones in between the apical lobe and the basal lobes) are quite noticeable and, if you look carefully at the right-hand leaf in the above photo you can see that they have quite a deep sinus in between the lateral lobe and the apical lobe on both sides.

Muscat de Hambourg has had a decline in popularity in recent years and this is reflected in the associated graph below.

The graph shows quite clearly what has happened over the past 50 years. You can see the steady decline in the popularity of this variety as other more modern varieties have been bred to provide better features.

You can also see that the decrease levelled off between 1999 and 2007 and then the decrease continued and is now around 3000 hectares in total.



We have a wine that is comprised of 15% Muscat de Hambourg called French Press which was created by Wim Wagemans in the Languedoc near the village of Bédarieux. He made it with 50% Merlot and it only has 10% Syrah as well as about 8 other varieties with rare varieties including Terret Bourret and Alicante Bouschet. However, he wanted to use English on the label and he thought French Press Shiraz sounded better in English than French Press Merlot!! However, the use of the Muscat de Hambourg certainly adds an interesting aroma and a hint of spiciness that is very appealing.

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.