

## WINE Talk: September 2025

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 137

Welcome to newsletter 137 for September, the ninth 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 story about new releases since our last newsletter, including the globally-rare wines of Mito Inoue;
- A translation and explanation of some French terms on a Marie Courtin Champagne label and a Mataburro label;
- A discussion of when is a grape considered ripe and what the various types of ripeness are;
- The Malbec grape variety explained.

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

### Four Wines and a Cider - Mito Inoue's Latest Releases



It has been a long time since we have had any of Mito Inoue's wines, which are the rarest of all the wines we import. Prior to covid we would organise to have our rental car registered with French Customs so we could collect our tiny annual allocation and deliver it to Hillebrand, ready for shipping with other wines. We expect that the staff's bemusement as our little car lined up next to the semi-trailers at Hillebrand's Beaune loading bays will be one of our most enduring and amusing memories of this life as Living Wines. The final wine we received, which arrived just before Australia's borders shut, was La Vague, from the 2017 vintage.

Late in 2019 we had been offered Flow, from the 2018 vintage, but we were not able to get to France to collect it and, unsurprisingly, in all the uncertainty of those early years of the pandemic, we think she sold it all in Europe. (We drank a bottle with Mito recently during a picnic by the river in Montaignut-le-Blanc, the village where she lives, and it was truly a magic moment.)

When we finally visited France post-covid in 2022 and again in 2024 we contacted her but she did not have any wine. We assumed that meant she had decided not to sell to Australia any more but in fact it literally meant she had not released any more wine since Flow.

Late last year, most unexpectedly, she contacted us to ask us if we would like some wine from three vintages. She offered a second cuvée from 2018. This is the first time we are aware of that she had made two wines in one year - we remember visiting her in April 2019 and being shocked to see so much wine (three full barrels)! She also offered us the wine she made in 2019 and 2020. The prices were enough to make us think twice, having quadrupled since the last time we had any wine from her, when they were already expensive. But we threw caution to the wind and decided to take 12 bottles of each cuvée plus 36 bottles of an apple and quince cider

(although as we subsequently discovered, according to Australian import regulations, it is not a cider because a cider can apparently officially only contain apple or pear juice).

A few months later, while the shipment was still being sorted out she also released the wine she made from the 2022 vintage so we decided to add that as well. Each bottle, while it might have been helping to break any semblance of a budget, was reducing the cost per bottle of sending a truck to collect such a small number of bottles to one of the more isolated regions we deal with. And now, after a few more challenges, they are finally here – four cuvées of wine and the cider.

Entranced by the wines of Pierre Beauger, Mito, who is Japanese, travelled between France, where she first became fascinated by wine, and Japan for nearly 10 years before eventually settling in Montaigut-le-Blanc within the iconic Puy-de-Dôme region, in the Auvergne, the same village where Beauger lives. By then she had also worked in other parts of France with other natural winemakers, including Giles Azonni. We think the first wine she made under her own name and the first we drank, was from the 2011 vintage, at Vivant in Paris, then owned by Pierre Jancou. It was impossible not to be entranced by her expressive, perfumed but so ethereally-light Gamays. We pestered her for several years before she finally sold us 6 bottles of Vespertine, the wine she made in 2014.

She has had vines in several locations in the region (we were especially blown away a few years ago when she took us to steep terraces of Pinot Blanc in Courgoul, another story for another time), but she now farms two small parcels, which are almost entirely Gamay d’Auvergne, but also with a few vines of unknown, ancient varieties. The parcel she is standing in in the photo below, where you can just see the vines, which are surrounded by grasses drying off in the warmth of July, is in the commune of Ludesse and had been abandoned before she acquired it in 2011. It is .76 ares (less than 1 hectare) and a mix of very old (70 years plus) and younger (50 year old) vines. The soil is clay, sand and limestone but not volcanic. The other, in the commune of Vic-le-Comte, still in the Puy-de-Dôme but further east, has volcanic basalt soil.



She makes no harsh chemical treatments, including no sulphur, to which she has an allergy, which means among other things mildew is always a risk. In spring she makes some biodynamic teas and treatments and cuts most, but not all of the grass. That's about it apart from the vibrations she creates by occasionally walking through the vineyard hitting this beautiful metal bowl with a soft gong. Feet are the only equipment which touch the ground. She does not have a tractor or other heavy equipment. She has the softest of impacts on her soil. At the top of the vineyard, where soil is more acidic, there is a protective forest (see final photo). Her main concern though, apart from birds and wild animals, is the field across the road you can see below, which is managed using conventional agriculture.



Her winemaking is very low impact too, in a tiny, unmarked cellar which was once used for aging Roquefort cheeses, one of about 140 historic unmarked cellars nearby, most of which are no longer in use.



Grapes are macerated for approximately one month, the juice is pressed and then the wine is usually aged for about 9 months in barriques. The exception is Traversée, the 2022 vintage, which spent well over two years in barrel. The barrels are not new so the wood is not noticeable even in these relatively young wines.

Her wines are bottled without racking using gravity then sealed with crown seals. There are, of course, no additions. The photo below, from the vast three-barrel 2018 vintage, shows the barrels raised on pallets to facilitate the bottling.



The four wines we have, all of which are made in the way described above, are listed below. They are all elegant, expressive and with a remarkable ability to feel ethereally light but still exhibit structure and length with enough tannins to suggest that while it would not be infanticide to drink them now they will offer even more with further age. We tried all four wines over a long lunch with friends recently. It was a joy to experience the wines this way, with good friends and food. Such was the interest in the wines and how they will develop that our table decided to keep the second bottle we have kept for ourselves so we can repeat it in two years. The wines are made with Gamay but somehow, apart from Résonance, which definitely exhibited some of the spiciness we associate with Gamay wines from the Auvergne, albeit tempered, because of its elegance, it actually felt more like we were drinking wines from Burgundy than the Auvergne.

**Prisme 2018 (SOLD OUT)**

This wine is from Ludesse and is a cuvée made from the younger vines (which are approximately 50 years old) at the top of the vineyard close to the forest. You can see the very top of the vineyard, surrounded by a small forest, in the photo below.



(Flow, the other wine from the 2018 vintage, which she released earlier, was made with grapes sourced from Ludesse and Vic-le-Comte.)

**Résonance 2019**

Résonance is from Ludesse and Vic-le-Comte.

**\$707 a bottle**

**Kansha 2020**

Kansha is from Ludesse and Vic-le-Comte. Mito thinks, of these four wines, Kansha is the best to drink now.

**\$707 a bottle**

### Traversée 2022

Traversée is from Ludesse and Vic-le-Comte.

### \$631 a bottle

### Twinkoing 2018

Mito began making cider because of the uncertainty of making wine. In the centre of France, the Auvergne is always at risk of frosts and in many years, if she was not affected by frost, she has subsequently lost most of her potential harvest to summer hailstorms. Cider is her plan B.

Twinkoing is 98% apple juice and 2% quince juice, sourced from an organic grower in La Roche-Blanche, just south of Clermont-Ferrand. She used the same press to crush and press the fruit as she uses for her wine. The cider, like her wines, is bottled without any additions.

Despite the quince being a tiny proportion of the cider, its compelling, highly perfumed aromas dominate both the nose and the palate. It's a joyful drink, a lovely accompaniment to apple or quince-based desserts or a refreshing aperitif. Its price is, of course, not so joyful. Perhaps this is the most expensive cider you can buy in Australia. However, according to the Australian government it is not actually a cider because a cider must contain 100% apple or pear juice. Because of that we paid excise duty rather than WET tax. Fortunately, because it is only 8% alcohol, the impact of that piece of bureaucracy on the price was positive.

### \$195 a bottle

We have halved our regular margin on these wines and the cider to try to make them less unaffordable but appreciate that even so, for most people, it is hard to justify the expense. Is it worth it? People pay many thousands of dollars for a bottle of DRC Romanee Conti. Is it worth it? Both are impossible questions to answer because everyone's priorities, finances and sources of enjoyment are different. All we can say is we would encourage you not to even consider ordering a bottle if in all conscience you know it will badly impact your finances. But if you are curious and wine is an important part of your life then we feel anyone who drinks a bottle of any of these wines will get great enjoyment from the moment. And you could certainly be sure it's a rare experience few people on earth will have. If you do it will probably be the most expensive bottle sealed with a crown seal you ever buy! At least, though, there is no risk of cork taint.

We will ship any bottle of the wine freight free – either alone or in a mixed box with other wines and offer our usual 10% discount on the wine and the cider if it is part of a box of 6 bottles.

If you would like to read more about Mito try Bertrand Celce's story on [WineTerroirs.com](http://WineTerroirs.com) while it is still easily available (unfortunately Typepad, which his site is built on, is closing down at the end of September **so it is only available for another day** and with it we will all lose easy access to his many years of detailed stories). His story about Mito was written in 2014, when her cellar was in Champeix, not where it is now, but there is still a lot of interesting information.

Please let us know if you would like to order any wine. Unlike our normal practice we cannot guarantee these prices indefinitely. If we don't sell the wines relatively soon and have to keep them for some time we will eventually reinstate our normal margins to cover some of the costs of keeping them for an extended period. That will not be for the next few months though.

## Mataburro's 2024 Wines

We have sent out most, but not quite all of our offers for the new 2024 vintage Mataburro wines which arrived recently and also have several packs available in this newsletter.

Fortunately, in the south of France, 2024 was not quite as difficult as other parts of the country but even so, Laurent and MéliSSa had 35% less quantity than they would normally hope for, mainly due to the impact of drought. Because of the diminished yield they decided to make a négoce cuvée to supplement their own estate wines and that is the 2024 Quartet Blanc, described below, which comes from vines in a vineyard about 500 metres from their Macabeu vines which they use to make Memo. We received most of the other cuvées we have had before but no Quartet Rouge and no Totem this year.

These light red wines, a rosé, and lightly macerated white wines are just made for summer so we're always happy to offer them in time to get them to you at this time of year.

Our first reports about 2025 are very positive – some good rain in the spring – and then an early May heatwave which killed any hint of mildew. They are also very happy with the success of the cover crops they planted this year, particularly a type of mustard plant, which has given much back to the soil. They showed us this photo when we visited in July, which was taken in mid-February, and shows one of their enormous, gnarly old Macabeu vines in Espira-de-l'Agly surrounded by abundant cover crops.



In the last two years they have also done some quite time-consuming, intense pruning designed to reenergise their vines which have had to work so hard during the years of drought. They made quite large cuts, following an old technique learned from an 80-year-old uncle of Laurent's who learned from Laurent's grandfather. It takes about 30% more time than the methods they have used previously and, because of the size of the cut, involves some risk, but they are confident it will "reorganise the energy in the vines" particularly because it will create new paths for the young tendrils to reach for the sun.

It's basically building a new plant, Laurent explained to us, which should help ensure the longevity of the older, precious vines. Laurent is one of the most thoughtful, restless vigneronns we know. He is not dogmatic in his ideas and always willing to adopt new practices if he thinks it

might be to the benefit of the vines and always wondering what new practices he can adopt that will improve the health of the vines. So much energy goes into their work in the vineyard it makes what happens in the cellar seem simple.

There have also been some subtle changes in the cellar though, notably the gradual addition of a small number of old barrels. He added three more last year (made between 2016 and 2017 so approaching all 10 years old). When we first met him he was thinking of stopping using the two or three barrels he had been using and going entirely to working with tanks but, as he often reveals to us, his thinking can change. He now has 8 old barrels and they are all part of the jigsaw puzzle of vessels he uses to vinify components of his wines which are brought together when he thinks the time is right.

All this makes for interesting conversations including in this visit delving into a treatise on winemaking in 1908 which he just happened to have to hand when we were talking about oiliness in wines. It's so interesting that a fault we thought was a relatively recent phenomenon in natural wine cellars is not actually new.

These are the wines we have just released and which should be in most of the shops which stock our wines, albeit in small quantities. Everything we have left is fully allocated at the moment but we don't have all responses back so there may be a few bottles available later in October if you are interested. And there are two packs in the newsletter. While, apart from Quartet Blanc they are familiar cuvée names, there are some subtle differences in how some have been made compared with previous vintages.

Below is a summary of the wines.

### Memo 2024

#### Macerated Macabeu

The wine is made from approximately 70 year old vines growing on clay and rolled pebbles of limestone in Espira-de-l'Agly. The vines were planted by Laurent's grandfather but they purchased the vineyard from a subsequent owner a few years ago. It is a maceration of macabeu. This year they made two passes through the vineyard, five days apart and macerated each pick in separate tanks. The early pick was macerated for four days and the second one for 5 days. After pressing the wine was aged in fibreglass. At the start of the palate it is all flowers and fruit but it finishes speaking of the soil, with a steely mineral statement. 10.5% ABV **\$68**

### Idoine 2024

#### Merlot (Red – Just)

Idoine, as usual, is 100% Merlot. It comes from 30 year old vines in Rivesaltes planted by Laurent's father on quite heavy clay soils. The meticulous pruning in this vineyard, and then strict disbudding in the spring has, Laurent thinks, contributed to much more even maturity this year. Whole bunches were macerated for 3-4 days (fewer than last year) but the wine seems slightly more concentrated this year. it was aged 80% in concrete tanks and 20% in wood. The wine is particularly juicy with aromas of ripe black cherries. "It's our Gamay" according to Laurent. 12.5% ABV **\$66**

### Otium 2024

Grenache Noir, Grenache Gris – Light Red

This year's Otium is made predominantly with the same Grenache it has always been made with, which comes from 80 year old Rivesaltes vines, farmed by Laurent's grandfather. Whole bunches were macerated for about 5 days before pressing. This year though 10% is Grenache Gris from a vineyard in Fourques that Alain Castex farmed until his death and which since then Laurent has tended. It was destemmed and separately macerated for a few days. After pressing, the two were blended and matured in one of Alain Castex's concrete tanks. It is a lighter than Idoine, very fragrant, and, as always, has a most compelling silky texture. 12% ABV **\$68**

### Mura Mura 2024

Rosé - Grenache Noir, Merlot, Mourvèdre, Muscat à Petits Grains, Muscat d'Alexandrie

This wine is made from several separate components, the result of which is a blend of Grenache Noir, Merlot, Mourvèdre, Muscat à Petits Grains, and Muscat d'Alexandrie. The Merlot and Muscat à Petits Grains were picked at the same time in early August, macerated together for 2-3 days, and then the combined juice was pressed. The Muscat d'Alexandrie was picked into two tanks. Whole bunches went into one and destemmed grapes into the other. Both tanks were macerated for several days and then pressed and kept separate. The next component was Grenache Noir, which was macerated (whole bunch) for two days. It was then pressed and also kept separate.

The final component was some Mourvèdre from a vineyard with distinctive dark black soils. This year, inexplicably, the grapes refused to budge beyond a certain point of ripeness for over a month and so, despite most of the harvest being in August, including all the other components for this wine, it was not picked until mid September, mainly to save it from being completely eaten by birds!

Eventually the separate components were racked and blended to make the wine (it seems a bit like the completion of a jigsaw puzzle!). 15% of it spent time in a large old Stockinger barrel and the rest in fibreglass. 11.5% ABV **\$68**

### Quartet Blanc 2024

Macerated Grenache Gris and Viognier

This is a négoce wine, possibly a one-off, made with grapes purchases from a neighbour whose vines are in Espira-de-l'Agly, about 200 metres from Laurent and Melissa's Macabeu vineyard from which they make Memo. The vines in red clay are some of the earliest to be certified organic in the region. The wine is made in two parts. At first viognier was directly pressed. A few days later, while it was still fermenting, destemmed Grenache Gris was added to the juice. (This is unusual. Mostly they work with whole bunches.) After a few days it was pressed. We've classified it as 'bacerated' because of that short period on skins.

It is 40% Viognier and 60% Grenache Gris. Laurent describes the Grenache Gris as adding tension and the Viognier imparting richness, but of course tempered by the Grenache Gris. 11% ABV **\$66**

## What's Coming (in brief)

We like to keep this section brief particularly when we talk about wines that are a few months away from release. We include it so you know what is coming over the next 3 months or so and can let us know if you would like advance notice of anything's release or, when applicable, an offer for any allocation wines. However, unusually nothing we plan to release in the next few months will be allocated. It will all be advertised so let us know if you want early notice. We don't reserve wines we advertise.

Our next arrivals will be from the Mosse family, including some early-release 2024 wines like Bangarang, Bisou and Magic of Juju. These were meant to arrive in September but with the boat they are on frustratingly sitting just off Port Phillip Bay since last week it will now be late in October by the time they get to us.

We don't think we will have any new arrivals in November but in December we should have some wines from Le Temps des Cerises (Axel Prufer) and Le Bouc à Trois Pattes (Wim Wagemans). Because of all the shipping delays at this time of year it may be only our Tasmanian customers that get to see these before the new year, but we may release them and allow people to order them for January shipping.

Following that, quite a lot is happening. We're expecting a new shipment from La Soeur Cadette, which hopefully will also arrive before the end of the year, that will include our third arrival of the 2023 La Soeur Cadette Bourgogne Rouge, our second arrival of the 2023 Melon and the first of the 2024 wines.

The estate bottled no wine in 2024, (all that was left after frosts was eventually destroyed by mildew) so all the 2024 wines will be négoce. The wine in this shipment is the 2024 Bourgogne Blanc.

In other good Cadette news, a couple of months after that we will have some more 2023 Vézelay cuvées. Due to a misunderstanding we were under the impression they were sold out when we placed our current order or we would have included some. It was too late to change things once we realised so we've scheduled what will surely be a last shipment of 2023 La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2023 and Montanet-Thoden Galerne 2023 for around March. There will also be some 2024 Soeur Cadette Juliéna.

We'll start to have some new Jura wines early in the new year – first Michel Gahier's annual shipment, with typical quantities of all cuvées (except a little more Montibulles than usual) and then some l'Octavin. The l'Octavin shipment will have small quantities of many wines. There are 20 wines, with the quantities ranging between 6 and 36 bottles. We will be advertising both the Gahier and Octavin but can give you early notice if you let us know. We're hopeful that a couple of other Jura shipments will be ready by January, but the orders are not finalised yet.

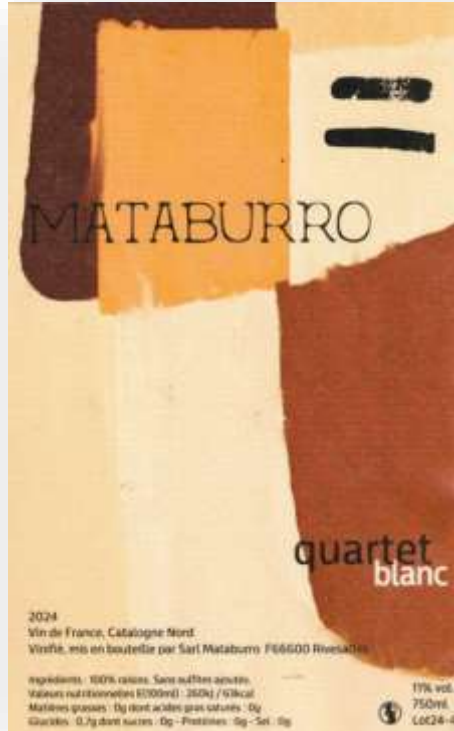
We have also just finalised orders for some Marie-Courtin Champagnes, only a couple of cuvées but slightly more of each than usual, and Fanny Sabre. The Sabre release will include a unique "Black Label" 2024 Bourgogne Rouge which, because of all the tiny harvests in each vineyard, will include what would normally also make her Pommard, Volnay and red Clos des Renardes cuvées.

As Fanny describes it, each vineyard has brought something different to the wine – structure from Pommard, prettiness from Volnay and sweetness from Clos des Renardes. It is something

beautiful to come from what was her most difficult vintage ever. We will also have 2024 Bourgogne Blanc and Bourgogne Aligoté in this shipment as well as small quantities of several village wines. Both of these will also be in Australia early in the new year.

## Pack 1 – New Arrivals: Large Mataburro Pack

(10% Discount - 2 Packs Only)



Each year when the Mataburro wines arrive there is a flurry to get the wines out to those who have put their names down for an allocation. We love these wines and every year we visit Melissa and Laurent to find out what exciting new ideas they have had to make their wines even more wonderful. As usual we have also put aside a few wines for newsletter packs.

The Memo, Idoine, Otium and Mura Mura are each made with Melissa and Laurent's grapes and are similar to the beautiful wines in previous vintages. The Quartet Blanc is a negociant wine made with directly-pressed Viognier and destemmed Grenache Gris, sourced from neighbour who practices organic agriculture.

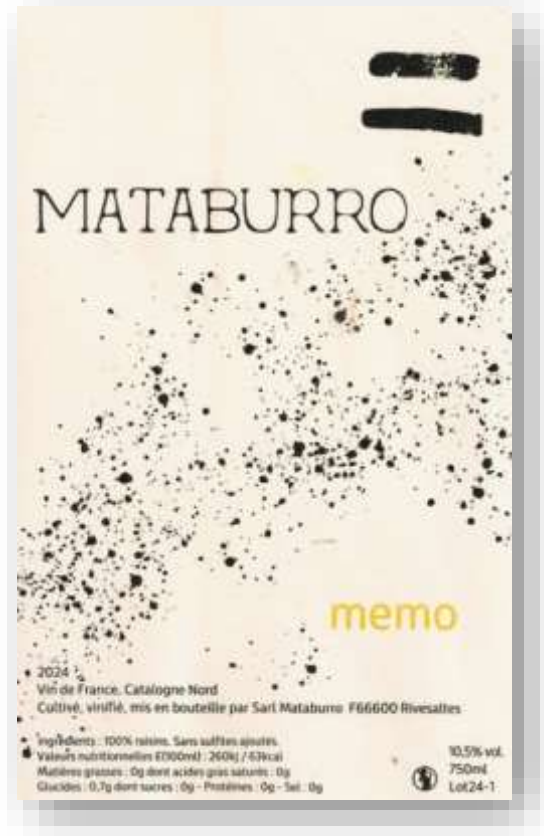
**This pack has some of everything we received. These are the wines:**

- Mataburro Memo 2024
- Mataburro Idoine 2024 – **2 bottles**
- Mataburro Otium 2024
- Mataburro Mura Mura 2024
- Mataburro Quartet Blanc 2024

The RRP for this selection of **6 bottles** is \$402 but the pack price is only **\$361.80**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

## Pack 2: Mini Mataburro Pack – 3 bottles

(No Discount - 2 Packs Only)



This is a smaller three-bottle pack of some of the newly-arrived Mataburro wines. The Memo is made from Macabeu grapes harvested from approximately 70 year old vines growing on clay and rolled pebbles of limestone in Espira-de-l'Agly. The Otium was made from 90% Grenache this year which was macerated for 5 days. This year they also added 10% Grenache Gris to produce a light, fragrant wine with a silky texture.

The Mura Mura is a complex but delicious wine made from Grenache Noir, Merlot, Mourvèdre, Muscat à Petits Grains, and Muscat d'Alexandrie. Each variety was managed separately until they were finally combined to produce this very appealing wine.

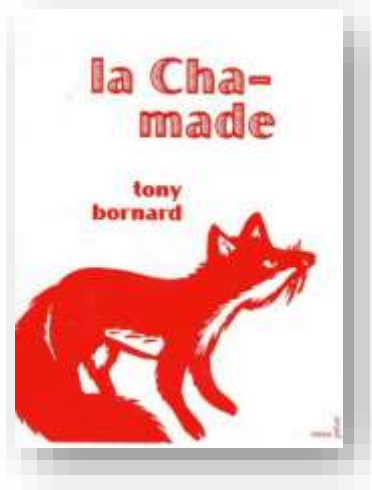
**These are the wines:**

- **Mataburro Memo 2024**
- **Mataburro Otium 2024**
- **Mataburro Mura Mura 2024**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$204.00**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

### Pack 3: A Very Beautiful Mixed Collection

(13.5% Discount - 1 Pack Only)



This is a slightly revised version of what was in pack 7 in last month's newsletter, which we were surprised to find didn't sell, so it may sound familiar. We've modified it a little by taking out the most expensive white wine and added a bottle of Michael Gahier's most treasured Trousseau cuvée (Les Grands Vergers, which had been reserved for a customer who did not eventually go ahead and order so it became available again this month).

This pack includes other unearthed treasures too, including from the Jura a Bornard Ploussard and an Octavin Trousseau (quite different from Michel's). It still has one stunning, pure white Burgundy (Fanny Sabre's Mercurey Blanc) and two thoroughly enjoyable unusual wines that, unless you take care when you are drinking them, tend to disappear very quickly. MaMaMia from Sextant is macerated Pinot Gris from the Côte Chalonnaise and Totem, from Mataburro, whose new wines we have just started selling, is mainly Mourvèdre with a little Grenache from a vineyard of startlingly-black schist with limestone and quartz in Roussillon in France's Catalan country. Despite its southern origins the wine is fresh and low in alcohol (12.5% ABV). We didn't receive any Totem this year because it wasn't made so it's made these last few bottles we have even more precious.

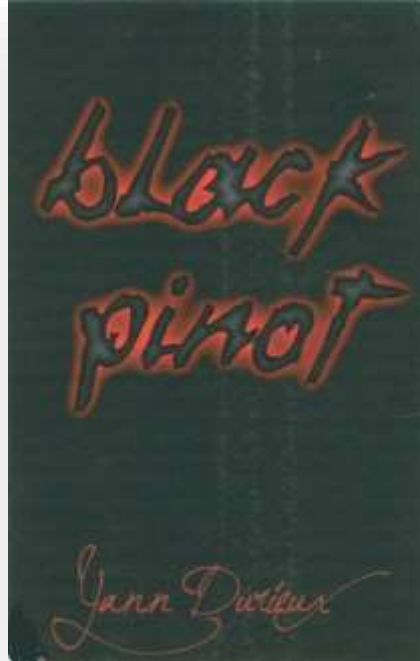
**The pack has one bottle of each of these wines:**

- **Sextant - Julien Altaber MaMaMia 2022**
- **Fanny Sabre Mercurey Blanc 2022**
- **Mataburro Totem 2022**
- **Domaine Bornard Ploussard La Chamade 2020**
- **l'Octavin Corvée de T 2020**
- **Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Les Grand Vergers 2022**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$558 but the pack price is only **\$482.00**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

## Pack 4: 2 Red Treasures + a Belluard Sparkling Pack

(3 Bottles - Almost 5% Discount – 1 Pack Only)



As we were creating this month's packs, we seemed to be in the mood to let go of a few things (actually Roger's pretty sanguine most of the time and more practical about the importance of a business needing to sell the stock it buys, but one of us struggles to part with some wines, despite also understanding how businesses work.) This is one of the packs we've created to celebrate the fleeting moment where Sue let go of a few things.

This pack has two wines, both of which have been stored in our temperature-controlled warehouse for many years. They are only available as a pack and there is only one pack available.

As well as two wines released from our clutches there is a bottle of Belluard's Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019. It is equally special in its own way. Dominique died in 2021 and this is the last wine we have for sale that was crafted by him. It's a glorious sparkling wine (méthode traditionnelle) and would be a perfect and unusual alternative to Champagne during the festive season.

The two wines from the cellar are from Yann Durieux and Domaine Bornard.

Yann Durieux's 2018 Black Pinot is an extremely rare Pinot Noir from his vines in the commune of Nuits-Saint-Georges. It's intense, maybe even wild, but all that intensity comes from the fruit not wood. Yann, who worked for many years at Domaine Prieure Roch, does not make typical Burgundies. The wine is not filtered and has no added sulphites. It's also 13.5% ABV an indication of the generosity of the 2018 vintage.

Domaine Bornard Ploussard Au Fil des Générations 2017 is from a vintage where almost all the harvest was lost before it had started due to spring frosts. We've seen this wine two more

times (2019 and 2021 and may also do for 2024) but this was the first one. It combines all the Ploussards which normally would make separate cuvées.

**These are the wines:**

- **Recrue des Sens (Yann Durieux) Black Pinot 2018**
- **Domaine Bornard Ploussard Au Fil des Générations 2017**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**

**The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$453 but the pack price is only \$432.45. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.**

## Pack 5: White Treasures + a Belluard Sparkling Pack

(3 bottles - nearly 6% Discount - 1 Pack Only)



This pack consists of three amazing white wines from three amazing wine producers. The first is from Alice and Olivier de Moor from the Chitry appellation which abuts the very famous Chablis white wine appellation and shares the geology and climate.

The second wine comes from Fanny Sabre from a plot in the Meursault Limozin vineyard which is often referred to as a secret location due to the fact that the Limozin climat is very small. The Meursault appellation lies south-west of the city of Beaune in arguably one of the best white wine areas in Burgundy (Meursault is right next to the famous Puligny-Montrachet).

The final white wine is the amazing sparkling wine made from the Savoie's rare Gringet grape which was one of the last wines Dominique Belluard made before his untimely death.

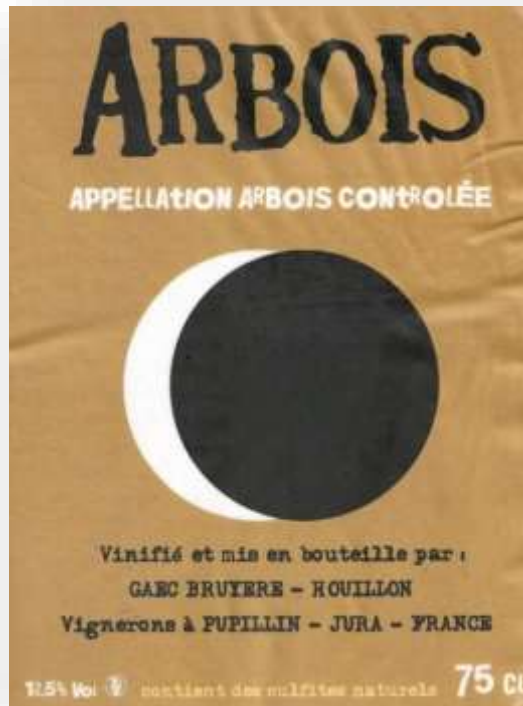
**These are the 3 wines:**

- **Alice and Olivier de Moor Bourgogne Chitry 2019**
- **Fanny Sabre Meursault Limozin 2018**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is \$350 but the pack price is only **\$329.45**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

**Pack 6: Mainly Unicorns + a Belluard Sparkling Pack**

**(3 bottles - No Discount - 1 Pack Only)**



We don't think this pack needs much of a description, except to say we don't do this very often. It is firmly in the "if you know you know" territory.

These are the wines:

- **Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon Arbois Blanc Les Tourillons 2018**
- **Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon Arbois Pupillin Ploussard 2018**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$312**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

**Pack 7: Quite a Mix 6 Pack**  
**(Almost 20% Discount – 1 Pack Only)**



This pack is, as the name we gave it suggests, quite a mix. For a start there are 2 sparkling wines, 2 reds and 2 whites.

Three of the wines (the Robinot Fêtebulles Chenin Blanc pet-nat, the Bornard Triffaut Le Ginglelet, which is Trousseau, and the Domaine Derain La Combe Chardonnay) are reluctantly released from our personal collection.

The last three (the Belluard sparkling, Dominique Derain's Metissage (a juicy blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache from the south of France), and the Mosse Le Rouchefer (a complex Chenin Blanc from the Loire Valley) are from our current list.

There is a complication though. The Bornard Le Ginglelet has leaked slightly through the wax top and the wax itself is not a perfect seal (someone was obviously not concentrating that day because these wax seals are done by hand). For that reason this wine is discounted by 50% and it comes with some risk. It is one of our (and Tony Bornard's) favourite Le Ginglelet vintages ever, a wine with substance and complexity, so it could be very rewarding. Or it may have lost its life. Generally, though, these bottles where the wine peaks slightly through the cork, which happened with several bottles of this wine, have been perfectly good to drink but it is a while since we last had one. It is definitely a risk though.

**These are the wines:**

- **Jean-Pierre Robinot Fêtebulles 2021**
- **Philippe Bornard Triffaut Le Ginglelet 2018**
- **Derain Bourgogne La Combe 2018**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**
- **Dominique Derain Métissage 2023**
- **Mosse Le Rouchefer 2021**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$514 but the pack price is only **\$416.35**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

**Pack 8: Rare 50% Sale Pack**  
**(Rare 50% Discount – 8 Packs Available)**



The wines in this pack are rare, by virtue of the small quantities we bring into the country of any of our wines. But the 50% discount is what makes this pack rare. It's time for a clean out before lots of new wines arrive, including from some of these estates. We would like to ship the last few bottles of a few cuvées we are almost sold out of. The smallest number of bottles left is 8 so that is the limit to the number of packs we can do.

It is another very mixed collection without anything to suggest a theme!

**WHITE**

**Karnage Zak 2020** – Made with Mauzac from the south-west this is a collaboration between Stephane Planche (from the wineshop Les Jardins de Saint Vincent in Arbois) and Charles Dagand (Alice Bouvot of l'Octavin's former life and business partner - he is the DG, which is part of the company name, on the back label of estate l'Octavin bottles). It seems like it is going to be a touch pétillant but it is a still white.

**RED**

**Le Bouc à Trois Pattes French Press Shiraz 2021** – Despite the name this wine is predominantly Merlot but that is only 50% of the story. As well as the Merlot it has Syrah, Muscat de Hambourg, Terret Bourret, Alicante Bouschet, Muscat à Petits Grains Blanc, Chardonnay, and Grenache Gris. It's wild enough to benefit from a quick carafe but even so remains very energetic and drinkable.

**Fanny Sabre Anatole Rouge 2023** – Pinot Noir from the wrong side of the tracks, this is the most elegant of the three red wines, but not complicated. It is also fine to drink now. If appellated it would be from the IGP Sainte Marie La Blanche, which is on the eastern side of the A6 autoroute which hugs the eastern edge of the Côte de Beaune. Fanny Sabre now sells it as Vin de France.

**Domaine de la Garrelière Le Rouge des Cornus 2021** – Cabernet Franc from the Loire Valley. This is a juicy, highly perfumed wine from the estate's youngest Cabernet Franc grapes. Aged in stainless steel it is ready to drink now.

### MACERATED

**l'Octavin La Cigogne Green 2021** - Highly aromatic, this wine is made by Alice Bouvot in Arbois from Gewurztraminer and Pinot Gris picked by Alice at Marc Humbrecht's Alsace estate Domaine Humbrecht. It's a brilliant match with any sort of spicy food.

### SPARKLING

**Milan Pet'Nat Rosé 2021** – It has been a challenge to sell this wine because it is difficult to open the bottle without losing some of it and we always warn potential buyers. That's usually the end of the conversation! But with care it can be done and, at this price, even if you lose a little, you will still be ahead. It is an absolutely delicious rosé pet-nat from Provence made with Grenache Noir, Muscat and Alicante. The secret is to have the wine very cold and upright for some time before you open (a day if possible) then open it with a jug at hand. Let the wine pour into the jug as it fizzes and eventually it will settle. Pour the first glasses from the jug. Easy!

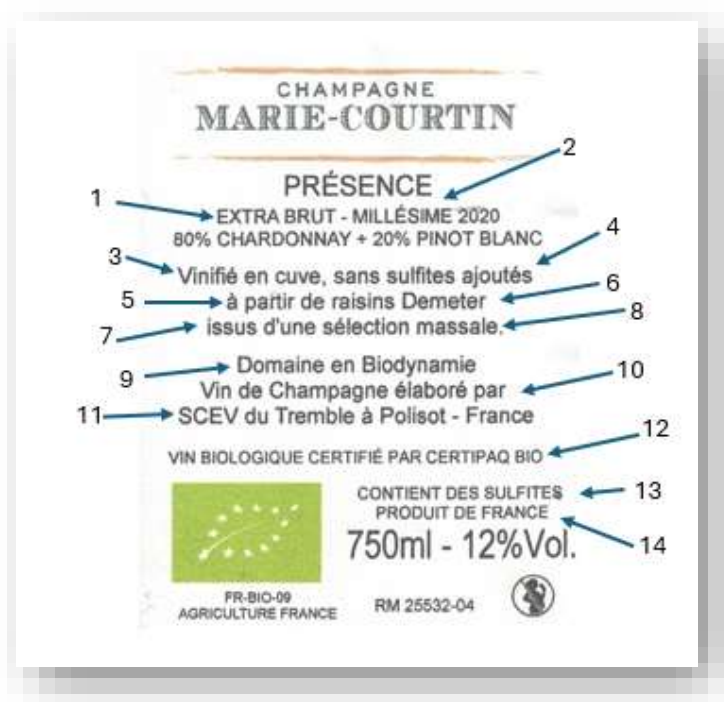
**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$370 but the pack price is only \$185. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.**

## French wine terms

This month we are going to provide a translation of the back label of a Marie Courtin Champagne (the Présence cuvée) to continue our explanation of French wine terms. We have also included a translation of the back label of one of the Mataburro wines that have just arrived.

### Marie-Courtin Millesime 2020

Here is the back label with the numbers pointing to the specific pieces of text where we have provided a translation.



| No | French                | English                                                                                                                                                                        |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Extra Brut            | Extra Dry ie a very low sugar content                                                                                                                                          |
| 2  | Millésime 2020        | Vintage 2020                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 3  | Vinifié en cuve       | Vinified in vats/tanks                                                                                                                                                         |
| 4  | Sans sulfites ajoutés | Without added sulphites – note the words here. They make it clear that no sulphites have been added, but there can always be sulphites that are created naturally in the wine. |
| 5  | à partir              | from                                                                                                                                                                           |

|    |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----|------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6  | de raisins Demeter                       | Demeter grapes – Demeter is one of the leading certifying authorities for biodynamic wines. They also certify vineyards and wine production in Australia.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 7  | Issus                                    | from (a different word this time but same meaning as 5)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 8  | d'une selection massale                  | Sélection massale, or massal selection, is a traditional vineyard propagation technique where cuttings are taken from desirable and diverse vines within an existing vineyard to create new vines to replace those that are dead or dying or when expanding the vineyard. This is an important task in France as many appellations require that no more than 20% of the vines in a vineyard are dead or unproductive. |
| 9  | Domaine en Biodynamie                    | Biodynamic Estate                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 10 | Vin de Champagne élaboré par             | Wine of Champagne produced by                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 11 | SCEV du Tremble à Poliset – France       | SCEV is an abbreviation for Société Civile d'Exploitation Agricole. It is a type of company which can be set up for running a vineyard or other type of agricultural venture. The company name is Tremble. This company was created when the wines of Piollot and Dominique Moreau's Marie-Courtin were combined commercially. 'à Poliset' means, in effect, in the village of Poliset.                               |
| 12 | Vin biologique certifié par certipaq bio | Organic wine certified by certipaq bio – Certipaq is an organisation that certifies agricultural organisations as organic.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 13 | Contient des sulfites                    | Contains sulphites                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 14 | Produit de France                        | Product of France                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

## Mataburro Quartet Blanc 2024

We have just received another shipment of the fabulous Mataburro wines and a new cuvée called Quartet Blanc 2024. The label is packed with information in French so we thought we should provide a translation of the information at the bottom of the label.



| French                                       | English                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vinifié, mis en Bouteille par Sarl Mataburro | Vinified, bottled by Sarl Mataburro. The word SARL is an abbreviation for “Société à Responsabilité Limitée”. It means it is a limited liability company. (It’s similar to Pty Ltd in Australia, except the structure type is at the start of the name.)                                                                    |
| 100% raisins. Sans sulfites ajoutés.         | 100% grapes. No added sulfites or anything else!                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Valeurs nutritionnelles                      | Nutritional values                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Matières grasses                             | Fats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 0g dont                                      | 0 gram of which                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| acides gras saturés                          | Saturated fatty acids                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| glucides                                     | Carbohydrates                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| dont sucres                                  | Including sugars                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Protéines                                    | Proteins                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Sel                                          | Salt                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Lot24-4                                      | This is the lot number for the Quartet Blanc which is created by the owners and can be in virtually any format. Here Laurent and Mélissa start the lot number with Lot24 indicating that it is a wine made from the 2024 harvest and the 4 means that the Quartet Blanc is the 4 <sup>th</sup> wine made from that harvest. |

## When are grapes ripe?

We had to decide what to write about after the three articles we published in the June, July and August newsletters on the subject of Autolysis which investigated how, as wine matures in the right environment, it changes due to different chemicals being created as a result of yeast cell walls breaking down allowing chemicals to enter the wine and combine with other chemicals and so on.

The third article contained quite a bit that verged on the science of autolysis. This month we thought we would take a small step back and talk about the start of the process that ends with autolysis. We are going to examine the seemingly simple task of how a vigneron or vigneronne can tell if the grapes are ready to pick!

There are, of course, non-scientific issues that have to be taken into account such as when will the pickers be able to start, is it likely to be raining on the day chosen to start, given that the grapes are approaching ripeness are they likely to be attacked by wildlife such as insects, birds or wild pigs before they are able to be picked.

Now, there are some other complications here right from the start because there are different types of ripeness such as sugar ripeness, acid ripeness and phenolic ripeness. We will discuss each of these in turn.

### Sugar ripeness

Sugar ripeness is relatively simple to explain and to work with. There is a relatively simple process that can be implemented as the grapes are ripening to measure how much sugar is in the grapes. This is measured using a scale called BRIX, which is often written °Brix, standing for degrees BRIX.

What does “degrees BRIX” actually measure? It is a unit of measurement that indicates the concentration of dissolved solids, primarily sugars, in grape juice or must, expressed as grams of sucrose per 100 grams of liquid. One degree Brix equals 1 gram of sugar per 100 grams of solution. This is measured using a simple device called a Refractometer.

The winemaker extracts some juice from the grapes and the refractometer is used to beam light through the juice. The more solids the light beam encounters the more it “refracts”, and this is the measure used to tell how much sugar is present.

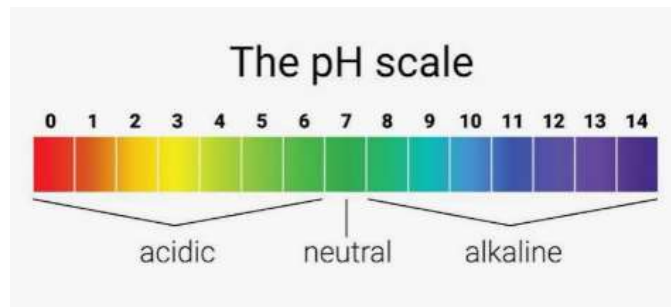
A value of around 18 or 19°Brix is considered suitable for sparkling wines and red wines may be harvested in the range 23 to 25°Brix, although it also depends on the values of the acid ripeness and the phenolic ripeness explained below.

### Acid ripeness

The next form of ripeness is acid ripeness. To measure this, we use the Ph scale which places the juice on a scale from 0 to 14 where under 7 means that the juice is acidic and 0 means very acidic (as an example lemon juice, which is high in ascorbic and citric acid usually has a Ph reading between 2 and 3).

Over 7 means that it is alkaline and 14 means very alkaline. As an example, if you dissolve some baking soda in water it would read about 9.3 on this scale and hence be regarded as basic.

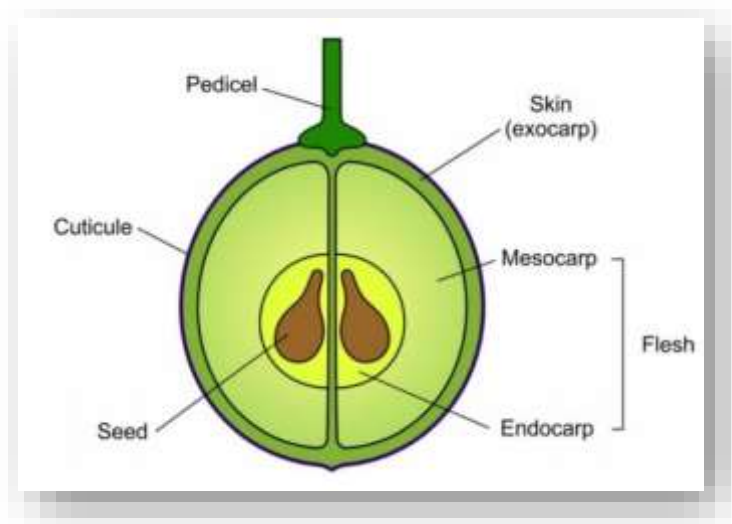
A reading of 7 represents a reading of neutral which a substance such as pure water would read. This is summarised in the diagram below.



## Phenolic ripeness

Now we consider phenolic ripeness.

The main components in grapes that provide phenolic content are anthocyanins, stilbenes, flavonols, proanthocyanidins, tannins and phenolic acids. These compounds are not evenly distributed throughout the grape - the skin harbours anthocyanins and stilbenes, the seeds have flavan-3-ols and proanthocyanidins, and the flesh contains phenolic acids.



In everyday practice it is the anthocyanins and tannins from the above list that focus the most attention. But it is more complicated than just determining if the phenolic compounds are present, but how those molecules are configured (degree of polymerization, pigment-tannin complexes, seed lignification, etc.), because those structural features strongly control bitterness, astringency, colour stability and ageing potential.

Now, some of these can be quite difficult to measure or require expensive equipment, so require simple methods to measure ripeness. For example, most people become quite good at examining the colour of the pips/seeds in the grapes as they change colour from green to light brown to darker brown as the grape ripens. The same applies to the skin (exocarp) colour for red grapes which change from green when unripe to deep purple when fully ripe.

But there are other considerations to take into account. The phenolic compounds behave differently as ripening occurs. For example, the anthocyanins start to develop as the grape approaches veraison (which we have discussed in previous newsletters) and continue to develop as the grape ripens. However, as the grape approaches phenolic ripeness, the anthocyanin concentration starts to decrease. For grapes that are to make a red wine the winemaker usually wants to pick as close to phenolic ripeness as possible so that the vibrant red colour in the skins is preserved.

On the other hand, the tannins start to decrease from the time of veraison and the decrease continues throughout the ripening phase providing a change from initial harshness and bitterness to eventual softness and suppleness.

Phenolic ripeness (also called phenolic maturity or physiological ripeness) refers to the stage in berry development when the phenolic compounds we mention above (mainly anthocyanins which are skin colour pigments and various tannins in skins and seeds) have reached the concentrations and structural state that whoever is making the decision considers optimal for the wine style they want to make.

## Malbec Grape Variety

Malbec is a grape variety that originated at least 2000 years ago in South-West France in the district of Cahors. It became the grape of choice for both French and English royalty during the Middle Ages.

Malbec has many other names – in fact the organisation responsible for grape names in France has 400 alternative names that have been used over the years and in different locations.

In the Loire Valley, for example, the name Côt is always used. The Vitis International Variety Catalogue uses Malbec as the cultivar name and Côt as the prime name for this variety.

It was also taken to Bordeaux in the 1700s where it was used to add a deeper red colour to the “claret” produced there. It became very popular in England as a result.



In the book ‘Manuel du vigneron: exposé des divers procédés de culture de la vigne et de la vinification dans les vignobles les renommés ...’ published in 1821 (see above), Alexandre-Pierre Odart mentions Noir de Pressac as being the same grape as Malbeck.



Cyris Redding is the book “French wines and vineyards” published in 1860 mentions Malbec (Malbeck) as growing alongside Carmenet, Carmenère and Verdot in the Medoc region of Bordeaux and being held in ‘high estimation’.

Victor Rendu mentions Malbec eleven times in his Ampelographie Francaise published in 1857.

In their Ampélographie published in 1901, Viala and Vermorel devote pages 5 to 15 to Côt which they also refer to as Malbeck.

As with all the grape varieties they discuss a beautiful picture of the grape bunch and leaf is included which we have reproduced here. Here they show that the grape bunches are somewhat loose with the grapes themselves being quite round.

The leaves have a deep petiolar sinus where the petiole connects to the leaf. Another characteristic of the Malbec leaf is that it has a pronounced lateral lobe (at the opposite end to the petiolar sinus).

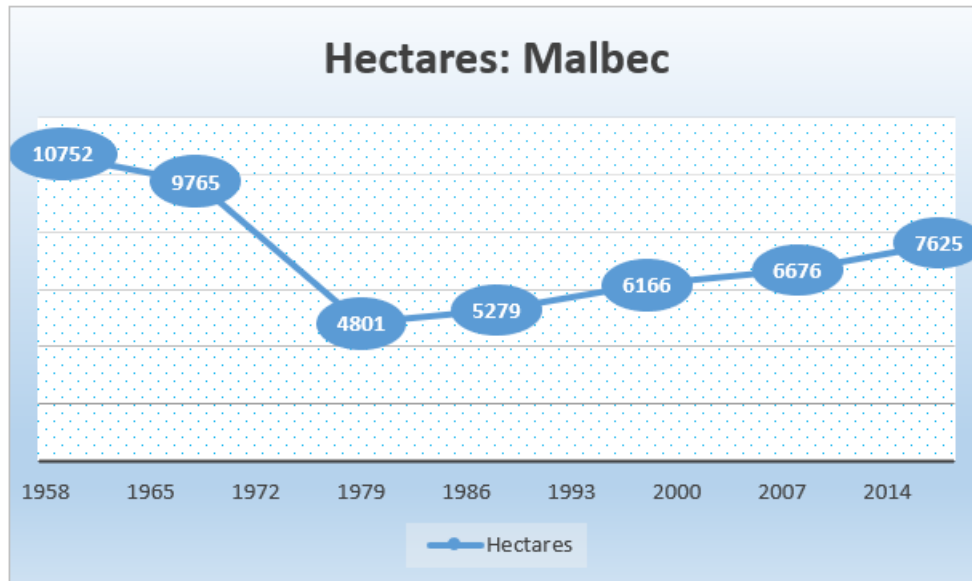
In the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century cuttings were taken to Argentina where the variety thrived in the climate there and spread widely in that country. In fact, Argentina now has the most extensive plantings of this grape variety of any country according to the quote below which comes from a paper by Urvieta and others<sup>1</sup>.

*Today, Argentina has the highest acreage of Malbec vineyard, representing approximately 77% of the world production, followed by France, Chile, and the United States. The Malbec variety is emblematic for Argentina’s winemaking industry, being the most cultivated in the country with an area of 43,000 ha. Eighty-five percent of the total production is located in the province of Mendoza.*

But let’s return to France. In the late 1960s and through the 1970s the area planted to Malbec started to decline in France as can be seen in the graph below. At the end of the 1970s, however, Malbec experienced a slight rise in planted area, which has recently dropped down to around 6000 hectares from the figure of 7625 hectares in 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> Urvieta, R et al (2021) Terroir and vintage discrimination of Malbec wines based on phenolic composition across multiple sites in Mendoza, Argentina. Sci Rep 11:2863.



The year of 1971 saw some changes occurring. Up until this time Malbec was somewhat of an outlier in both Bordeaux and Cahors. However, that year saw the Cahors AOC being introduced with Malbec being the key grape variety for the red wines. Even after the revisions in 2011 Malbec (called Cot Noir in the appellation documents) held its place.

Below is the extract of Section V which always contains the rules about which grape varieties can be used and in what circumstances.

**V.-Encépagement**

**1° Encépagement :**  
Les vins sont issus des cépages suivants :

- cépage principal : cot N (également appelé malbec) ;
- cépages accessoires : merlot N et tannat N.

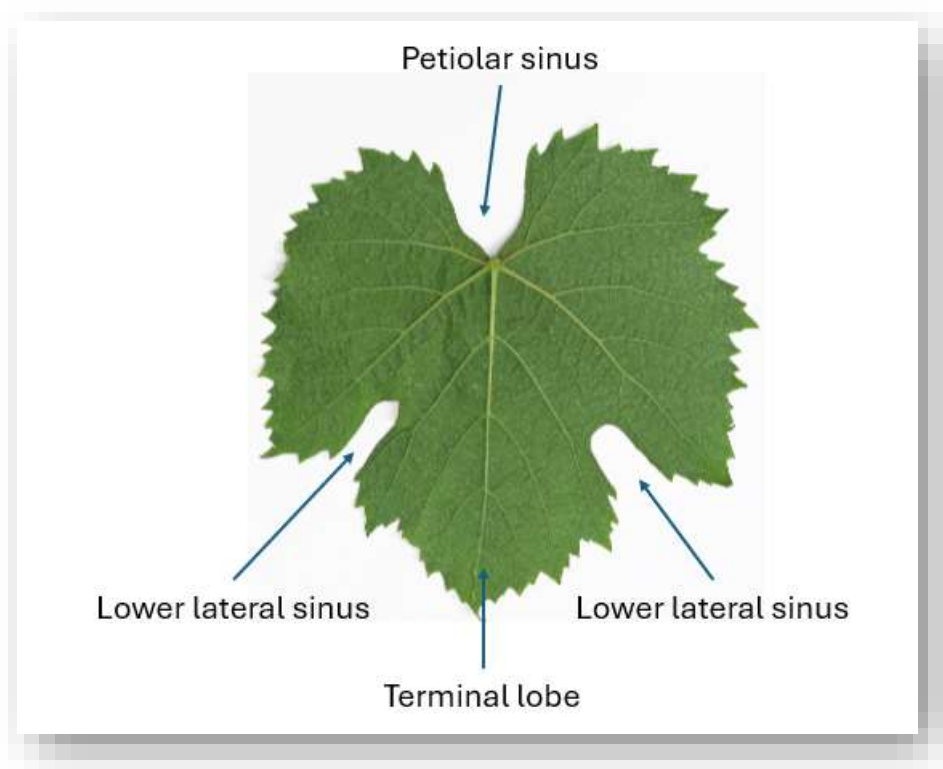
**2° Règles de proportion à l'exploitation :**  
La proportion du cépage cot N est supérieure ou égale à 70 % de l'encépagement.  
La conformité de l'encépagement est appréciée sur la totalité des parcelles de l'exploitation produisant le vin de l'appellation.

You will see in section 1 on grape varieties (Encépagement) that the main (principal) grape variety is cot N (Cot Noir also called Malbec) and the other two allowable grape varieties are Melot and Tannat.

In Section 2 which is where the rules for the proportion of each nominated grape variety are spelled out, the first line of the rules clearly states that the proportion of Cot Noir must be more than or equal to 70% of the grapes used.

Below is a photograph of a Malbec leaf. You can see that the Petiolar sinus (the gap where the petiole/stem joins the leaf) is quite pronounced.

The leaf of the Malbec plant is also missing the lateral sinus which is usually about half-way down each side of the leaf. The sinus that helps identify the basal lobes from the lateral lobes which are both combined in the Malbec leaf. The lower lateral sinuses clearly identify the terminal lobe.



Below is a picture of a bunch of Malbec grapes. The first thing you will notice is that the grapes are almost perfectly round as opposed to many other grapes which are slightly elongated or quite elongated.

The grapes are also approaching black in their colour which provides extra colour to the wine if the grapes are macerated on their skins for some time.

You will also notice that the bunches are somewhat “loose” – you can see gaps between the grapes. This is actually a good thing if the vines are planted in a windy area as the wind blowing through the bunches helps reduce the results of mildew and similar problems.



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## **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.