

WINE Talk: March 2026

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 143

Welcome to newsletter 143 for March 2026. We hope you continue to enjoy reading them. We certainly are continuing to enjoy writing them!

We have been able to put together **13 packs** to offer in this newsletter, but most of these packs have only one or two available, so we expect them to sell out quickly.

The newsletter also has:

- A story about the wines that will be arriving over the next few months which also addresses the problems everyone is having with shipping from Europe at present;
- An Introduction which explains what's in the thirteen packs in this edition of the Wine Talk newsletter;
- Our Friends' Upcoming Wine Parties
- Bits and Pieces covering a number of topics including some news items from France.
- A story about the Chorey-lès-Beaune wine appellation.
- Another set of French words and their English equivalents.
- This month the grape variety story is about the Tourbat grape variety which is also known as Malvoisie du Roussillon.

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

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

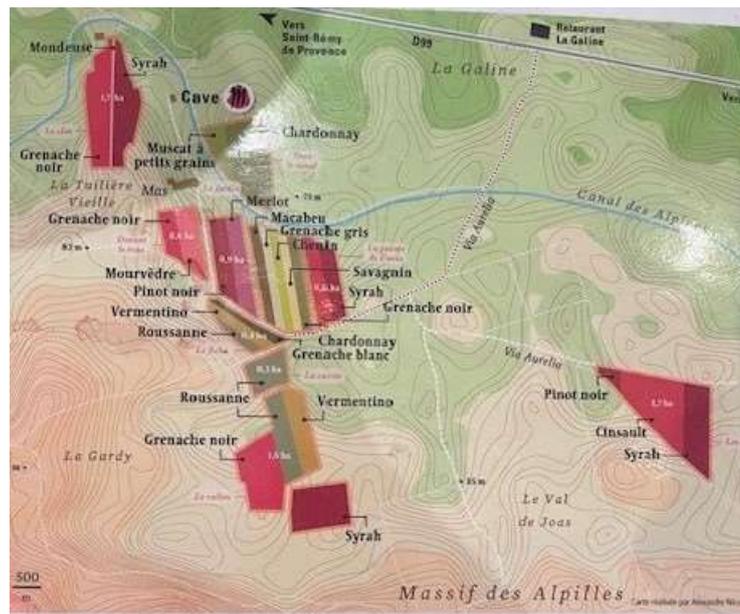
There's an easy way to order our wines. Just send us an email listing the wines and/or packs you would like to order or even just a budget and your style and region preferences. We confirm a plan by return email before processing your order.

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.

News About What's Coming

We usually begin our newsletters with a list of new arrivals, but we have no new wines to release this month. There was a big shipping delay in December prior to a recent shipment leaving France and then another one has just been announced at this end of its journey. The end result is wine we should have had early this month and have had a chance to look at won't be here until mid April.

Ever since our shipping company stopped using the Suez Canal it's taken much longer (and so been much more expensive) for wines to arrive in Australia but this shipment might beat all records for the slowest journey ever!



Map showing spread of grape types at Domaine Milan

We described in some detail in the last newsletter what our next releases will be, so we won't repeat everything here but the wines we hope to release next are from Domaine Milan and Domaine Derain. We will be advertising them not allocating them. After that we will be releasing a top-up of La Soeur Cadette 2023 Vézelay wines (the 2023 vintages of La Châtelaine 2023 and Galerne) plus the 2024 Juliéna and a long-awaited shipment from l'Octavin.

The l'Octavin release will have many wines but small quantities of each of them. It's a mix of estate and négoce cuvées. The estate wines include P'tit Poussot 2024, Tamino 2021, a non-vintage Corvée de T, Dorabella 2023, Elle Aime 2022 and tiny quantities of 2017 Cherubin, a vinegar and a marc. The négoce wines include some regulars and some surprises. The cuvées are Clé à Molette 2023, Ivre de Vivre 2023, Cariboom 2022, Charlot 2023, Ganache 2022, Grenabar 2023, Tour de France (mainly with 2024 grapes) Gros Lot 2024, Synain 2022, and, from the Jura, Hip Hip J ... Poulsard 2023. There are also two sparkling wines from the 2024 vintage - Betty Bulles Blanc and Rouge. We'll have more to say about these closer to their release, hopefully in May.

It is now looking like the next Bornard and Bruyère-Houillon offers will be happening in June. Unless there is a major hiccup they should arrive together which may make it easier for shipping given the quantities will be small but not quite as small as if we had them one at a time. This is

probably the last time we will mention these so if you would like an offer let us know. With Adeline and Renaud's wines particularly, it's likely we will only be offering to customers who already buy from us.

Introduction to this month's packs

One of the consequences of having no new wines to release this month is that we have no new arrival packs. The combination of not having new wines, which means a little more time to investigate, and having very little to sell, has led us to do our deepest dive yet into our cellared wines, including some which perhaps we should have relinquished sooner than this.

Almost all the packs in this newsletter are in three-bottle packs. We've done that deliberately so we could end up with quite a range of prices making them available to as many people as possible. Because of being 3-bottle packs they also mostly have no discount (except for the odd bottle which is likely past its best). However, should anyone buy a pack and add three extra bottles from our current list to the order then all 6 bottles would be discounted by 10% as usual. And, while the wines are not discounted, the majority of them are older bottles and these prices are their original prices, from a time when wines were less expensive to buy and less expensive to get here, so they still represent good value.

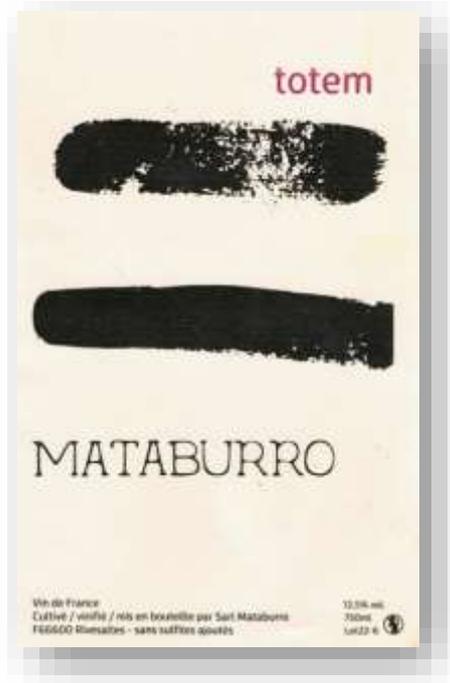
These packs of older wines tend to sell very quickly so if you are ordering more than a few minutes after we send out the newsletter we would recommend giving us your order of preferences up front if you have a second or third preference should the pack you particularly want already be sold. We always process these requests in the order we receive them.

At the moment the limit is a maximum of two packs per customer. 2 packs of 3 would also mean a 10% discount on all the wines that currently don't have a discount. However, usually we sell most of the packs people want to buy during the first 24 hours so if we have any unsold after 24 hours we will remove that limit. If you are interested in more than 2 packs in the event some don't sell please let us know which ones and your preference.

We hope those who buy these packs will end up with some memorable conversation-inducing wines. If the shipping gods are a little kinder in the coming months it could be some time before we do something like this again!

Pack 1: Bornard, Mataburro, l'Octavin 3 Pack

(No Discount –1 Pack Only – Freight subsidised)



This pack has a bottle of the super-rare Bornard macerated Savagnin from the 2016 vintage, just at the time Philippe was handing over to Tony. Philippe made several experimental cuvées of macerated Savagnin, each with different vessels (ceramic egg (this one), Georgian amphora, and Italian amphora). The wine has lots of complex umami and it is not filtered (in an obvious way!). It's definitely recommended with food, like a spice-charged roast chicken.

The Mataburro Totem is a red wine, a blend of Mourvèdre (mainly) and Grenache. Both varieties are from a vineyard of startlingly-black schist with some limestone and quartz. It is the only true red wine Laurent makes but is still fresh and juicy with good acidity.

The l'Octavin is an estate wine from the parcel "En Arces". It is 75% Pinot Noir and 25% Chardonnay so a very light red. The whole bunches were infused in pressed juice for two months prior to pressing. It was bottled in June 2022.

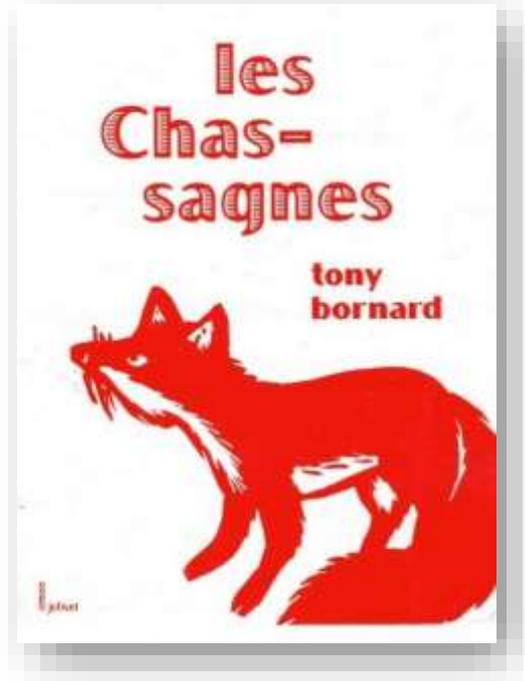
These are the wines:

- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Oeuf Mammouth Télécabine 2016**
- **Mataburro Totem 2022**
- **l'Octavin Elle Aime 2021**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is **\$339**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 2: Dreyer, Bornard, Octavin 3 Pack

(No Discount - 1 Pack Only – No Freight Subsidy)



All the wines in this pack are made from white grapes. One is a white wine and the other two are macerated. They are all from the eastern edge of France – one from Alsace and two from the Jura. Alsace vigneron Jean-Marc Dreyer is a master of maceration, using short 10 day to 2 week macerations to vinify most of his white grapes, and always with no additions of any sort.

Bornard Les Chassagnes Savagnin is an ouillé cuvée (i.e. it is topped up). However, the old foudre that a part of this wine is always aged in does mean that, relatively speaking (compared with if it was aged in a tank or new barrel) a certain amount of oxygen is involved. Even so it is fresh with mouthwatering acidity.

The final wine is a négoce wine from Alice Bouvet of l'Octavin but made with Jura grapes. They are from the famed leu dit La Mailloche, just outside Arbois, where Alice also has vines. The grapes were destemmed and then macerated in glass for eight months before pressing and bottling in September 2021. It's intense and compelling, a wonderful, rare cuvée for lovers of orange wines.

These are the wines:

- **Jean-Marc Dreyer Vin d'Alsace Riesling Origin 2021**
- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Les Chassagnes 2021**
- **l'Octavin Hip Hip J Chardonnay (macerated) En Jarre 2020**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is only **\$261**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 3: de Moor, Belluard, Bornard 3 Pack

(No Discount - 1 Pack Only)



We've released a "big gun" in this pack – the 2018 vintage of Alice and Olivier de Moor's Chablis Coteau du Rosettes. One of our greatest Chardonnays, it should be approaching a perfect drinking window now.

There is a bottle of Dominique Belluard's rare sparkling wine, the Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019 (his last), which is made from Gringet and rivals Champagne.

The third is a 2021 Bornard Pinot Noir – the cuvée L'Aide Mémoire. Tony Bornard makes three Pinot Noir cuvées and this one is the one intended for aging. One white, one red, one sparkling – it has the makings of the skeleton around which to build a perfect autumn dinner party!

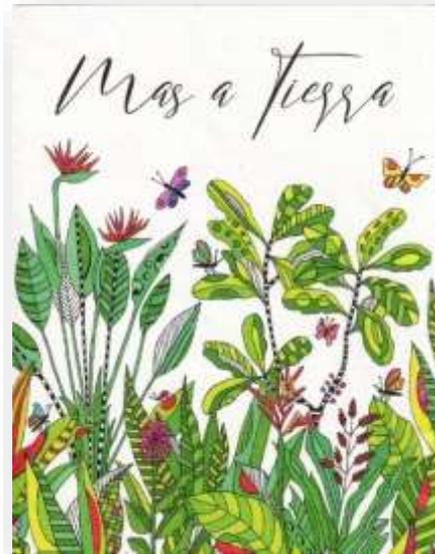
The pack has the following wines:

- **De Moor AOC Chablis Coteau du Rosettes 2018**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**
- **Bornard Pinot Noir L'Aide Mémoire 2021**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is only \$309. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 4: Pinot Noir Pack

(17% Discount - 1 Pack Only)



As this pack demonstrates the same grape variety can make many different wines. There are two recently-arrived Burgundies that are classic red wines – the la Soeur Cadette 2023 Bourgogne Rouge and Fanny Sabre’s special 2024 Bourgogne Rouge. We wrote about them in recent newsletters.

There is a bottle of Domaine Derain’s village cuvée Le Ban from Saint-Aubin. This has had several years aging but will age further. It’s a cuvée long-associated with the early days of natural winemaking in Burgundy because the vineyard is the one of the first that Dominique Derain purchased.

Two more are also from Burgundy but quite different from the other wines. They are both from La Petite Empreinte. Arrosé is a rosé made with Pinot Noir, and Màs a Tierra, from the same generous 2023 vintage, is a gloriously unique wine. The whole clusters were covered with directly pressed juice for the period of their maceration. This has resulted in an incredibly juicy very light red wine on the surface but with underlying structure on the back of the palate. It’s confusing in the best of ways.

The final wine is a still red wine from the Champagne district, made by the Piollot family. This Coteaux Champenois is also quite fresh and quite joyful to drink. We’ve given a slightly larger discount to the four wines in this pack which we have had for a while hence the strange % discount.

These are the wines:

- **La Soeur Cadette Bourgogne Rouge 2023**
- **La Petite Empreinte Arrosé 2023**
- **La Petite Empreinte Côteaux Bourguignons Màs a Tierra 2023**

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- **Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge Cuvée XXIV 2024**
- **Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin Le Ban 2022**
- **Piollot Coteaux Champenois Rouge Les Petites Mains 2020**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles normally \$607 but the subsidised price is **\$502.66**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 5: Sabre, Belluard, Bornard Pack

(No Discount - 1 Pack Only)



This pack features a premier cru Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge (Volnay Premier Cru Les Mitans from the 2017 vintage). It should be lovely drinking now.

Even older is a bottle of the rarely-made 2016 Bornard Les Marnes, which is an oxidative Savagnin, from a barrel which would have been originally created not knowing whether it was going to be Vin Jaune or this wine. At some point it would have been designated as Les Marnes but not before it had had several years of aging sous-voile. We received it midway through 2021 so it was probably bottled late during 2020. It's in a normal 750ml bottle and is, of course, a perfect wine to pair with cheese.

The final wine is Dominique Belluard's beautiful sparkling Gringet, the Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019, which we often use to top up these packs, on the basis every home is better off with one of these at the ready in case of needing something for an unexpected celebration.

These are the wines:

- **Fanny Sabre Volnay Premier Cru Les Mitans 2017**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**
- **Domaine Bornard Arbois Pupillin Savagnin Les Marnes 2016**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$435**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 6: Durieux, Belluard, Bornard Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



Yann Durieux’s history is inextricably linked with one of Burgundy’s great names, Prieure Roch, where he worked and from where he learned for many years. But he was never going to just be a follower. You can trace his history in his own wines, particularly in the meticulousness of his winemaking, but they are uniquely his with vibrancy, perfume and an energy that reflects his personality.

We very rarely offer a bottle of his wines because now all we have is very limited personal stock so it has to be wrenched from us but have decided to part with CR, a relatively new cuvée from Chorey-lès-Beaune, which we think should be in a good drinking window. The wine was made with a reasonably long maceration of whole bunches and subsequently aged for a year in tank to maintain freshness and vibrancy. Yann also calls this wine “powerful and aromatic”.

This pack also includes a bottle of the 2020 Domaine Bornard Savagnin Amphore Mammouth Géorgien, a Savagnin macerated and aged in a Georgian qevri. which Philippe buried beside the cellars under his house. This 2020 vintage is possibly the last because the vessel suffered some damage when it was subsequently moved to the cellar’s new location at the other end of Pupillin.

The final wine is a bottle of Belluard Mont Blanc, the glorious sparkling wine we have included in several packs.

These are the wines:

- **Recrue des Sens (Yann Durieux) CR 2018**

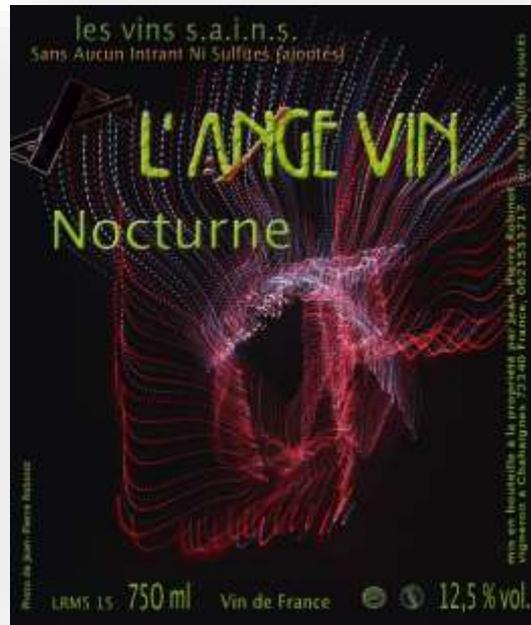
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- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**
- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Amphore Mammouth Géorgien 2020**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is **\$535**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 7: Mosse, Derain, Robinot

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



With Pack 7 we've investigated a part of our warehouse that we've apparently studiously ignored for at least 6 years based on the age of the wines it houses. So, enjoy these pre-covid prices from a period when the world was so much simpler and less dark. This pack has two whites and one red. Each are single variety wines and beautiful representations of the variety.

The 2018 Mosse Savennières is a Chenin Blanc from one of the most renowned appellations for this variety.

The Derain La Combe is a Bourgogne Blanc and 100% Chardonnay. It's always the white cuvée from this estate which sells first (we have more than usual coming in April's shipment so perhaps they will last a little longer this year). 2016 is also a lovely vintage – in Burgundy and the Jura when we visited after that harvest everyone talked about how it was a return to more classic wines.

The last wine is Jean-Pierre Robinot's Nocturne. It is made from Pineau d'Aunis grown in the Coteaux du Loir, a grape variety which perhaps JP has done more than anyone to elevate from obscurity. The wine is structured and brooding but always with a delicate touch that reflects his light hand in the cellar. It is a wine to think about and one we put away for a very good reason.

These are the wines:

- **Mosse AOC Savennières Arena 2018**
- **Derain Bourgogne La Combe 2016**
- **Jean-Pierre Robinot Nocturne 2015**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$244. There is no subsidised freight charge.

Pack 8: Simonutti, Belluard, Mosse Pack

(1 Pack Only – Approx 4% Discount)



Pack 8 is also from the nether regions of the warehouse.

Although it's only a 3 pack we have discounted the Pascal Simonutti Gamay because it is likely to be past its best, although still interesting.

The two white wines, a 2012 Belluard Gringet and the famed Mosse Initials BB (a 2015 Chenin Blanc) should still be much more than interesting though. Ideally, we should have rediscovered the Belluard a little sooner but it was very tucked away.

These are the wines:

- **Pascal Simonutti Vin de France Noire 2012**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie AOP Blanc Gringet Les Alpes 2012**
- **Mosse Initials BB 2015**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$194 but the discounted price is \$185.60. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 9: Sextant, Bruyère-Houillon, Belluard Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



It's appropriate to put the Sextant Intuition Les Fas and the Bruyère-Houillon old vine Chardonnay in the same pack as both are white wines which have had extended barrel aging and required extraordinary patience on the part of the winemakers to hold them for so long. Burgundian Julien Altaber has in the last few years been working more like the Jura vigneronns we work with, aging white wines for longer and releasing red wines when they are still fresh.

Intuition Les Fas is as far as we know, at least to date, a unique cuvée where Aligoté was given extended barrel-aging. We received this in 2023 not too long after it was bottled.

From 70+ year old vines, Adeline and Renaud's Arbois-Pupillin Vieilles Vignes Chardonnay is a cuvée that will soon be no more because in 2016 they planted young Chardonnay in the same plot. From 2022 the juice from these young vines has been included with the juice from the old vines so the Vieilles Vignes cuvée has ended. We received this wine in June 2023.

The final bottle is a 2019 Belluard Mont Blanc Brut Nature, which as we said above, can never go astray.

This pack is not available if you buy pack 12.

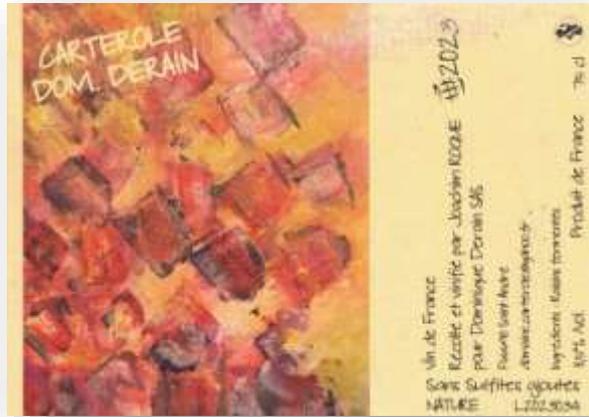
These are the wines:

- **Sextant - Julien Altaber Intuition Les Fas 2018**
- **Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon Arbois-Pupillin Blanc Chardonnay Vieilles Vignes 2016**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$414**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 10: Tidying Up Sale Pack

(4 Packs Only – 20% Discount)



We have less than a dozen bottles of each of the wines and the vinegar in this pack and only four of one of them so there can only be four packs. We decided to put them together and give them a 20% discount to help finish off the last of some cuvées which means some special wines at a very special price.

There are two white wines from the 2023 vintage. Arena is the Mosse Savennières Chenin Blanc, a wine with lifted acidity which will last for many years. Fanny Sabre's Beaune Blanc Clos des Renardes is predominantly Chardonnay, but she also planted a few rows of Pinot Blanc just after she bought the vineyard in 2016. The juice from some of those vines is also in this wine.

There are two reds. The Domaine Derain wine is a 100% Pinot Noir Bourgogne Rouge made by Julien Altaber. The other red, Dominique Derain's Métissage 2023, is one of Dominique Derain's (who sold his estate to Julien) retirement projects. It's a really juicy, crunchy blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Grenache from a friend's vineyard in Roussillon. Note that the label has Carterole which indicates the estate that the grapes came from. Unhelpfully the cuvée name Métissage is not mentioned but it is what Dominique calls it!

The final wine is one of our favourite Sextant cuvées - the 2023 Sextant Po à Po. It is also made by Julien Altaber (Sextant is he and partner Carole's négoce business). It is macerated Aligoté. The grapes are sourced from Fanny et Damien Gressard in the Côte Chalonnaise, who supply Julien and Carole with grapes for several of their négoce wines each year.

The final bottle in this pack is a La Guinelle vinegar. It's only 250mls but guaranteed to inject large amounts of flavour into vinaigrettes and anything else that needs a finishing-touch of acidity. We always have it nearby when cooking.

These are the wines:

- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux 2022**
- **Domaine Mosse AOC Savennières Arena 2023**
- **Dominique Derain Métissage 2023**

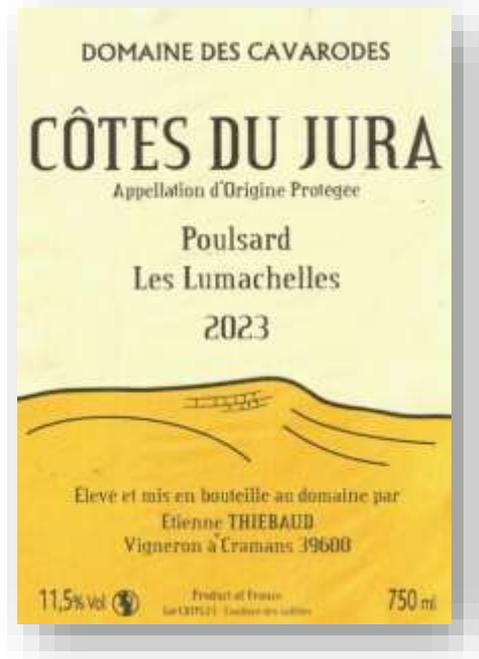
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- Fanny Sabre Beaune Blanc Clos des Renardes 2023
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Po à Po 2023
- La Guinelle Vinaigre de Muscat 25cl

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$530 but the discounted price is **\$424**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 11: Domaine des Cavarodes and Belluard Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



This pack has two Belluard wines both made with Gringet. Les Alpes is a still white from the 2012 vintage and the other is the sparkling wine which is in several in other packs in this month's newsletter.

The final wine is a beautiful Poulsard from Jura vigneron Étienne Thibault (from Domaine des Cavarodes), definitely some of the best value wines available from this region and a glorious expression of the variety. We have drunk this wine a couple of times and it is very hard to force yourself to drink it slowly enough to fully appreciate it.

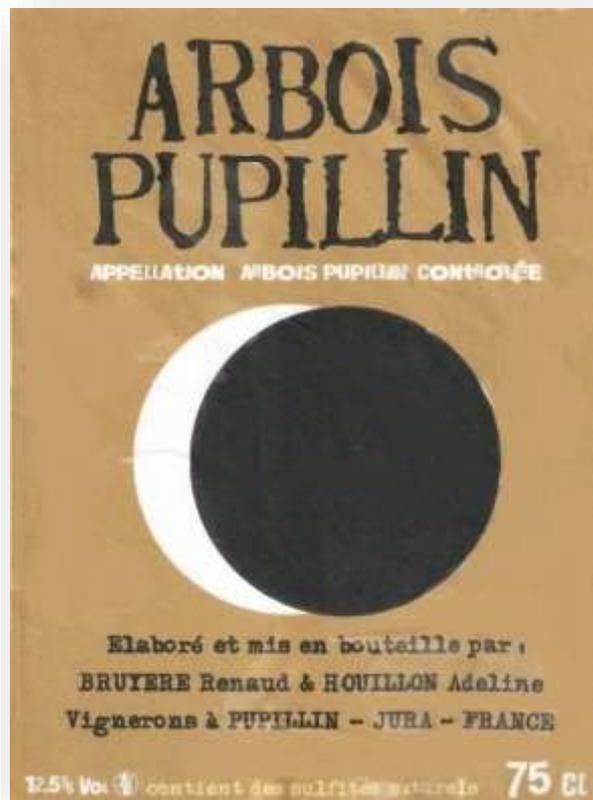
These are the wines:

- **Domaine des Cavarodes Côtes du Jura Poulsard Lumachelles 2023**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie AOP Blanc Gringet Les Alpes 2012**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$260**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 12: La Petite Empreinte, Belluard, Bruyère-Houillon Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



If you have read about the first 11 packs in this newsletter you have read about these wines so this description is brief. La Petite Empreinte Côteaux Bourguignons Mas a Tierra 2023 is a very light (because of a component of directly-pressed juice) but structured Pinot Noir from Romain de Moor and his wife Mélissa Bazin. The Belluard sparkling is made in the style of Champagne and a worthy substitute. The grape variety is Gringet. Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon's wines don't really need much introduction but refer to the description of Pack 9 if you are yet to read it and would like more information about this cuvée. It and Pack 9 it will probably sell in the first minute after we release the newsletter based on what usually happens when we part with one of their wines so it may not be available for long!

This pack is not available if you buy pack 9.

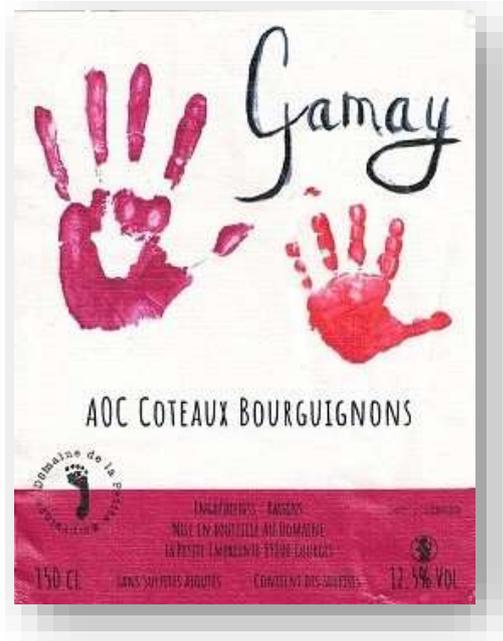
These are the wines:

- **La Petite Empreinte Côteaux Bourguignons Mas a Tierra 2023**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**
- **Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon Arbois-Pupillin Blanc Chardonnay Vieilles Vignes 2016**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$384. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 13: 3 MAGNUM Pack

(1 Pack Only – 15% Discount – Subsidised freight)



If you are like us and feel nervous if you don't have any magnums at hand, then this is a good value way to stock up. All of these are reddish but in a "chilled red" sort of way – i.e. not very red and best at a temperature which is "recently out of the fridge".

If you don't have temperature-controlled storage which can fit magnums at home (that's most of us) then chill any of these but remove the bottle from the fridge at least 30 minutes before you plan to drink it, to allow it to warm up a little and reveal its complexities. The pack is 3 magnums but has 12 grape varieties.

The La Petite Empreinte magnum is 100% Gamay, from a tiny plot of 10 ares (1/10 of a hectare) in the north of Burgundy in the Yonne Department. Romain and Mélissa only make this wine in magnums.

Axel Pruffer's Le Temps des Cerises Avanti Popolo magnum is a blend of an array of grape varieties including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Alicante Bouschet, Grenache, and Cinsault.

The last wine, the Mosse Gros Bisou, is from equally diverse varieties - Grolleau Noir, Grolleau Gris, Cabernet Franc, Côt and Chenin Blanc, all from the Mosses' estate.

These are the wines:

- **Le Temps des Cerises Avanti Popolo 2024 Magnum**
- **La Petite Empreinte Gamay 2023 Magnum**
- **Mosse Bisou 2024 Magnum**

The RRP for this selection of 3 Magnums is \$438 but the discounted price is \$372.30. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Our Friends' Upcoming Wine Parties

We couldn't join these events because you need to have a decent amount of available wine to have a wine party but it's too good a collection of people not to publicise them.

It's a collaboration between our wine importer friends Andrew Guard, Campbell Burton, Giorgio De Maria, Godot Wines, Halle Aux Vins, Vivant Selection, and Vino Mito, as well as NSW Wholesaler Wet Dreams, Black Market Sake and Tina (soft drinks) and, a great opportunity to also meet fellow Tasmanian Rory Duggan of R.D'meure wines and taste his wines. We love Rory's Tasmanian wines and take every chance we can to recommend them.

Tickets have been released for Sydney and Melbourne via Eventbrite. The dates are Sydney on 17 March at Kiln (the Ace hotel) and Melbourne on 24 March at Hope Street Radio. There is also an event scheduled for Brisbane but the tickets have not been released yet. You can find more details about any of these events and links for tickets by visiting the Instagram profile of one of the participants like [Giorgio de Maria Fun Wines](#).

In addition, there are trade tastings for wholesale customers on the same day and, although it doesn't say it on the invitations wholesale customers will have received from some of the participants, we will also be gatecrashing the Melbourne trade tasting on 24 March. (It's not a gatecrash if you're on the poster.)

Bits and Pieces

News from France

There is grim news from the French wine scene in 2026 due to a variety of reasons among which are included the following:

- significant financial crises among many winemakers;
- Government introducing regulations relating to overproduction of wine grapes including the introduction of a permanent “vine pulling” plan which pays vigneronns to uproot vineyards that do not pay their way;
- Producers adopting climate-resilient viticulture which, for some time, leads to a drop in production;
- Young people turning to other types of drinks including beer instead of wine;
- The French Government paying vigneronns to sell unsold older wine stocks for use in cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Those areas covered by a formal appellation such as an AOP saw prices dropping by an average of 1.1% (but some regions such as Bordeaux dropped by a huge 18.1%) and areas without a formal appellation coverage dropped by an average of nearly 7%.

There is some good news for French vigneronns, however and that is that international markets are still seeing French wines dominating sales, particularly wines from Burgundy and Champagne.

Many of these issues were discussed at this year’s Wine Paris trade fair.

5 Places outside Paris to enjoy natural wines

Last month we wrote about 10 restaurants and wine bars in Paris to enjoy natural wines. This month we provide 5 restaurants and wine bars outside Paris for those of you who plan to hire a car and tour around the wine regions. Next month we will provide another 5 and so on until we think we have exhausted all the ones we recommend.

Bistrot des Claquets – We put this Arbois institution first on our list as it is the place we eat at most often outside Paris during our many trips to the Jura. It’s a restaurant at lunchtime and a bar at night. For lunch, make sure you book as the place is always packed by 1 minute past 12. The food is fresh and made on the premises and Wednesday there is a tasty vegetarian main course offering. There is a buffet entrée (where you will never see people piling their plates too high as if there is no tomorrow), and a single main course and dessert. Many of the people sharing space with you here will be winemakers. The wine offerings are displayed in the restaurant and are natural. Wines by the glass usually include something from Michel Gahier and something from Domaine des Cavarodes.

33 place Faramand, Arbois

Circus – A couple of doors down the street from the Claquets is a newish restaurant called Circus which is providing great food and an interesting array of natural wines. Our meal here

this year was excellent. Reservations are essential except for a small number of seats at the bar which cannot be reserved. It's wise to arrive right on opening if you would like one of these.

43 rue Faramand, Arbois

Le Cercle Rouge – This is one of the most famous natural wine bars in France and a gathering place during the wine salons held in the Loire during winter. Our friend and wine supplier Joseph Mosse is now a part owner of this venerable establishment that serves charcuterie, cheese and a well-chosen array of natural wines – including, of course, some Mosse wines.

4 Rue des 2 Haies, Angers

Manat – This is a delightful restaurant in the Roussillon town of Perpignan. The Japanese-inspired food is prepared by Yuka and Marc Meya, both highly experienced chefs and our experience over several visits is that every dish they serve tastes sensational. If their rice and clam dish is available make sure you order it. The wine selection will also appeal to natural wine lovers, especially the local wines from Mélissa and Laurent of Mataburro which are always wonderful.

3 Rue Cité Bartissol, Perpignan

Baston – Baston is another wonderful place in Perpignan where you can enjoy a range of dishes but most diners stick to the amazing pizzas that are great examples of the genre! They also have a very deep wine list here with exemplary wine storage (essential given the summer temperatures in this part of the world).

72 Av. Louis Torcatis, Perpignan

Coteaux Champenois



You may have noticed in Pack 4 this month that we included a wine from Champagne that is a still red wine. This may be a bit confusing for those who think that only sparkling wines are produced in that region.

Still red and white wines are also legal provided they are made from the same grape varieties that are permitted for the sparkling wines, namely Arbane, Chardonnay, Meunier, Petit Meslier,

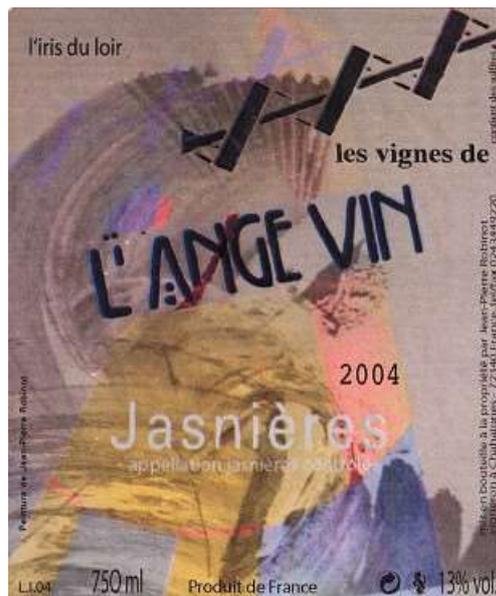
Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir (and recently-added Chardonnay Rose). It is also permitted at present to use small amount of a grape called Voltis to test its adaptation to climate change.

The label must display the name of the appellation as Coteaux Champenois rather than Champagne.

The Loir versus the Loire

One potential confusion when talking about grape growing in the Loire Valley is the fact there is a Loir River as well as a Loire River. Both have grapes growing close to the rivers and for the Loire River this occurs almost all the way from the source to where it spills into the Atlantic Ocean.

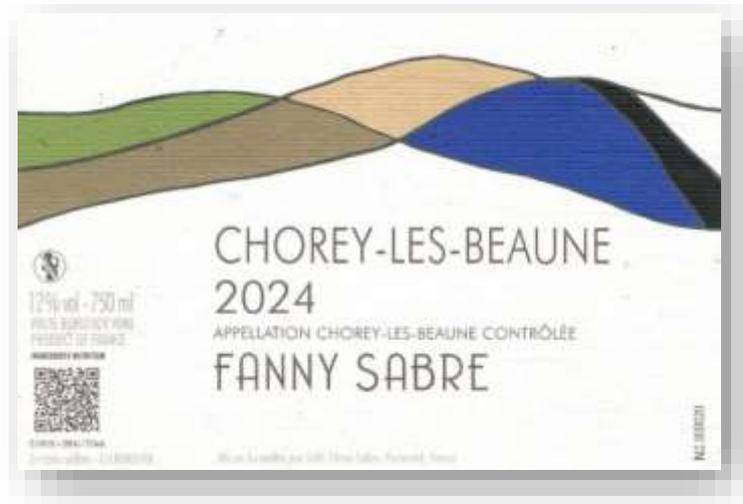
The Loir River is not even directly a tributary of the Loire River. It flows from above the Vendôme region past the town of Vendôme around the Coteaux du Vendomois appellation, then the region encompassed by the Jasnières and Coteaux du Loir appellations. Jean-Pierre and Noella Robinot live in this area. If they worked in the appellation their Chenin Blancs would be Jasnières and the red wines they make from the little known Pineau d’Aunis grape variety would be Coteaux du Loir. Some of their older wines from the early 2000s actually have the appellation name on the label.



The Loir eventually joins the Sarthe River north of Angers. The Sarthe River, with the Mayenne River, forms the Maine River, and it is the Maine, which runs through the middle of Angers, which brings all these waters into the Loire River.

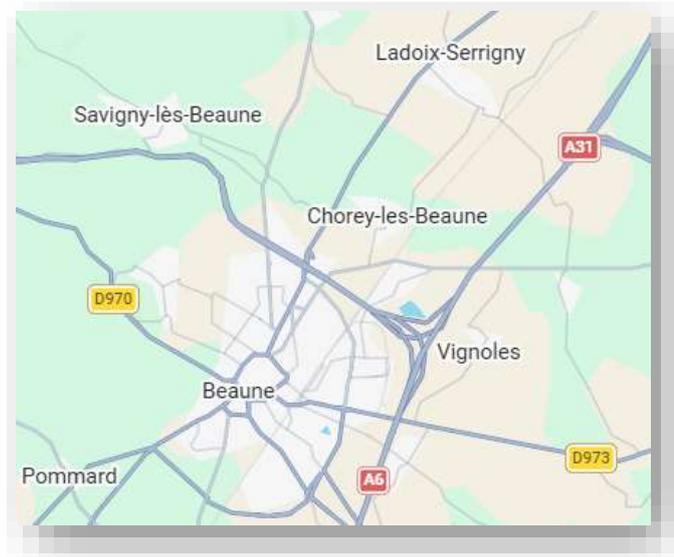
Next month we will write a little about the Loire River and the many appellations which are in the Loire Valley.

Chorey-lès-Beaune wine appellation



We recently received a shipment from Fanny Sabre which included a small quantity of wines from a vineyard near the village of Chorey-lès-Beaune which is part of the larger Côte de Beaune region but which has its own appellation and therefore its own set of rules governing all aspects of how the vineyards and winemaking needs to be carried out if the appellation is to appear on the label.

Chorey-lès-Beaune is situated about 5 kilometres to the north-east of the city of Beaune in the region that is famous for the quality of the red wine produced here.



The appellation is one of the first appellations created in 1937 and allows the production of both white wines and red wines. The appellation rules allow for white wines to be made from Chardonnay but can be supplemented by up to 15% Pinot Blanc. This is because it has been traditional in Burgundy for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir to have other vines interspersed among them.

The vines must be planted at a minimum density of 9,000 vines per hectare which is reasonably dense planting. The spacing between the rows must not be more than 1.25 metres (which is quite close) and the spacing between the vines in the same row must be greater than or equal to 0.5 metres.

There are no particular rules about how the grapes can be picked which is somewhat unusual, however it is unlikely that machines can be used given that the rows are so close together.

There is a rule in Section VII that says that the grapes must be covered while being transported to the winery to ensure that rain can't fall on the grapes and hence get transferred into the wine itself during crushing.

Another interesting rule that is designed to assist with the quality of the wine relates to the yields from the vines. These are deliberately set to a low number of kilograms per hectare. The reason for this is that the higher the yield the lower the quality of the fruit. In France, it is uncommon for vigneronns to exceed these levels as watering of the vineyards is not permitted as another rule which is applied to ensure quality.

In the case of Chorey-lès-Beaune the yield for red grapes is set at 58 hectolitres per hectare and for white grapes at 64 hectolitres per hectare. Note: A hectolitre is 100 litres.

There is also a rule about how long the wine must mature for. Remembering that the harvest is now carried out in August or September depending on where in France the vineyard is, the red wines be aged until at least June 15th of the following year and the white wines until at least April 15th of the following year.

During the aging process the temperature in the winery must be kept at all times on or below 25 degrees Centigrade. Once the bottles are stored for longer aging, they must be kept at or below 22 degrees Centigrade.

French wine terms

Ampélographie

French term for the study and identification of grapevine varieties.

Assemblage

Refers to the winery's blending of various grape varieties or plots.

Juponé

After only a few years in bottle, a champagne cork will expand when opened, giving it a mushroom-like shape known as "juponé".

Levure indigene

This term roughly translates as wild yeast, not yeast that you buy in packets to ferment wine.

Packet yeast has the disadvantage of inserting new flavours and aromas into the wine thus overriding those of the natural yeasts that get blown by the wind onto ripening grapes and stick to the grapes due to the thin veil of wax that forms on the ripening grape.

Liqueur de tirage

A solution of wine, sugar and yeast added to a bottle of still base wine to begin the traditional method of making Champagne, or méthode traditionnelle. The addition of the liqueur de tirage triggers the secondary fermentation which gives sparkling wine its bubbles.

Monopole

This term usually refers to a single identifiable vineyard which has a single owner.

Moût

Grape "must" which includes the skin, fruit, pips and juice.

Négociant-éleveur

A négociant, or wine merchant, that plays a larger role than just buying and reselling wine. In the major winegrowing regions, a négociant-éleveur will purchase wines in the early stages of production and will carry out the blending, maturation and aging processes up until the wine is bottled.

Grape Varieties – Malvoisie/Tourbat

This month we have a complicated grape variety for you. As you can see from the title, we have chosen to call this variety by the name used in some areas of France, namely Tourbat. However, there are some regions where it doesn't go by this name, particularly in the Rivesaltes region of the Roussillon département in the south of France, where it is used to create a lovely sweet wine and goes by the name of Malvoisie du Rivesaltes.

It appears that in the 19th Century it was a relatively popular grape variety in France as many of the wine books in our library from that time mention either Tourbat or Malvoisie du Roussillon.

The books where you will find this variety mentioned include the following:

- Julien – Topographie de tous les vignobles connus (1816);
- Odart – Ampélographie Universelle (1840–1856);
- Hardy – 1848 viticulture works;
- Rendu – 1857 studies on vines;
- Guyot – 1866 viticultural surveys;
- Bury – 1880 works on grape varieties; and
- Pierre Viala & Victor Vermorel – Ampélographie (1901–1910).



These are just some of the books written in the 19th and early 20th centuries about wine in France.

They are interesting because they show just how old some of these grape varieties are and how long specific wines (such as the Malvoisie de Rivesaltes) have been made for.

Some of these books are written specifically for the wines of France whereas others cover all of the wines and grape varieties of the Mediterranean basin (and sometimes beyond to such exotic places as Australia, South Africa and the United States).

All of these books are interesting, however none of them provide the exhaustive coverage of grapes and their characteristics in the depth covered by the series of books published in the early 20th Century by Pierre Viala and Victor Vermorel with their series of Ampélographie books which

covered thousands of pages of information as well as brilliant drawings of the vines leaves and the grape bunches.

In the book “Ampelographie Francaise” shown above which was written by Victor Rendu in 1857 there is a mention of Malvoisie/Tourbat as follows:

La Malvoisie a les feuilles petites, fines, tourmentées, presque arrondies, à cinq lobes peu accusés, d'un vert jaunâtre; sa fleur coule peu ; sa grappe, de Moyenne grosseur, est ailée, allongée et garnie de grains peu serrés, gros ,

légèrement ovales , d'une belle couleur dorée, transparents, d'une saveur exquise, à peau fine et mûrissant de bonne heure.

In English you can see that the description is quite detailed and fits current images of the Tourbat/Malvoisie grape variety shown in the photos towards the end of this story.

Malvoisie has small, thin, twisted, almost rounded leaves with five shallow lobes, of a yellowish green; its flower is sparse; its medium-sized cluster is winged, elongated, and filled with loosely packed, large, slightly oval berries of a beautiful golden colour, translucent, with an exquisite flavour, a thin skin, and ripening early.

The modern use of the name for this grape depends on the geographical location with either Malvoisie du Roussillon being used in the Roussillon département and Tourbat in most other regions where it is found.

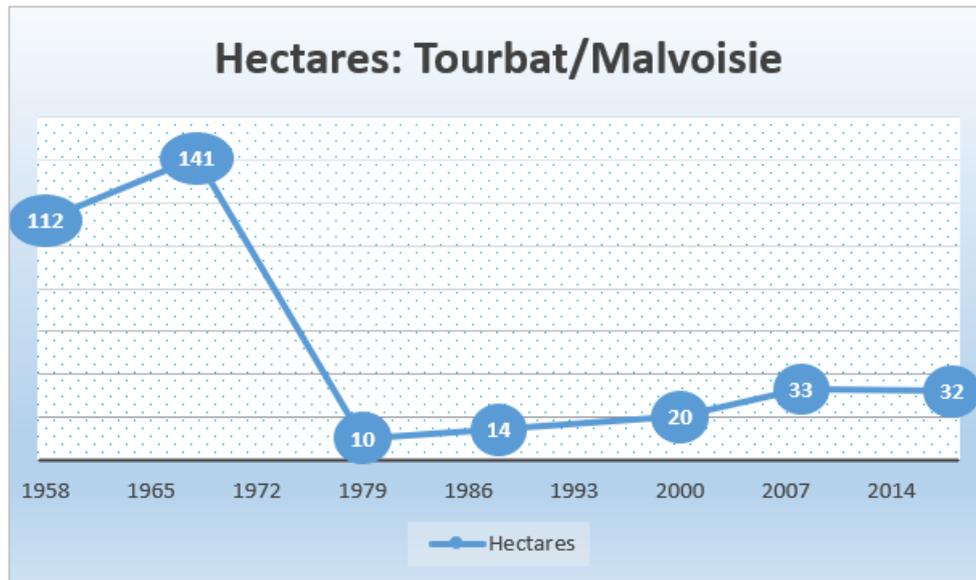
However, care needs to be taken when using these terms because the term Malvoisie de Rivesaltes is used in the region around the town of Rivesaltes for an amber **wine** made from the Malvoisie/Tourbat grape variety which has an amber (ambré) colour and which has been aged oxidatively in a similar way to Spanish-influenced wines in the Jura.

As an aside, there is also an appellation called Grand Roussillon which is also for rancio style¹ wines which have been aged in an oxidative way for at least 2 years. This appellation is broader than the Rivesaltes commune. An interesting feature of these wines is that they can be made from a wide range of grape varieties including Muscat Blanc, Muscat d'Alexandrie, Grenache Noir, Grenache Blanc, Grenache Gris, Macabeu and/or the very rare Listan variety. This rancio approach is also common in the Catalunya region of Spain which sits directly over the Roussillon border as shown in the map below.



¹ Rancio wines are deliberately oxidised by partially filling old barrels or glass demijohns with wine and then exposing them to the sun outdoors for an extended period to develop notes of coffee, leather, spices and nuts.

The change in area planted to Tourbat/Malvoisie in France is shown in the graph below:



As can be seen in the graph above, the Tourbat grape variety extended over between 100 to 150 hectares between 1958 and 1970 but then declined rapidly during the period when “unwanted” grape varieties were being aggressively pulled up. The graph also shows that since 2005 there has been a slight increase in the area due mainly to some extra plantings around the Rivesaltes area where the Malvoisie de Rivesaltes/Tourbat wines are gaining popularity.



As can be seen in the photo of a bunch of Malvoisie/Tourbat grapes above, they are quite white with a few brown spots, with the bunches themselves being relatively loose which is good for allowing the wind to get in between the grapes and helping remove any diseases.



The leaves of the Malvoisie/Tourbat grape variety are quite “round” without the highly pronounced sinuses (except for the petiolar sinus where the leaf is attached to the vine which you can just see in the photo). Even the “teeth” around the edges of the leaf are not very pronounced!

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.