

WINE Talk: April 2026

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 144

Welcome to newsletter 144 for April 2026. We hope you continue to enjoy reading them. We certainly are continuing to enjoy writing them!

We have been able to put together **12 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 New Arrivals;
- A brief run-down on what is coming;
- The 12 packs with many really interesting new arrivals and some older wines available;
- Bits and Pieces covering a number of topics including some news items from France.
- A story about soil bacteria and some positive effects they have on the soil.
- A story about the Maury appellation
- Another set of French words and their English equivalents.
- This month the grape variety story is about Grenache Blanc which we have written about some time ago, but now have more information to share with you.

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.

April New Arrivals

Domaine Derain



Now owned by Julien Altaber and his partner Carole Schwab the estate was created by Dominique Derain in the late 1980s. Dominique's first (and most) vines were in the immediate neighbourhood of Sant-Aubin, partly because his first purchase was a beautiful small holding in the Le Ban lieu-dit. Subsequently he added more Saint-Aubin vineyards, including some very special plots of premier cru Chardonnay (two of which are in this release – En Remilly, which Dominique planted, and Les Murgers des Dents de Chien). He also planted Aligoté for which he has become well known and extended the estate a little - further south (in Mercurey) and as far north as Gevrey-Chambertin (in the En Vosne lieu-dit).

Dominique was one of the first vigneron in the Côte de Beaune to work with biodynamics. Working with a community of friends they learned together, sharing experiences and knowledge with each other. Julien and Carole both worked for Dominique for many years. Eventually they became life and business partners and took over the estate when Dominique 'retired'. During the time he worked for Dominique Julien established his own label 'Sextant', a mix of small parcels he owned and grapes he purchased, with the wines being originally made in Dominique's cellars. Now, though, Sextant is entirely for négoce wines made with purchased grapes and Domaine Derain contains wine from all the vines they own, whether they were originally owned by Dominique or by Julien in the early days of his Sextant project.

We will have a release from Sextant later in the year. This one is entirely estate wines from Domaine Derain and also predominantly white wines. It includes long-time favourites such as the 2023 Bourgogne La Combe, which is from a parcel of Chardonnay planted by Dominique in the late 1980s in the heart of Puligny-Montrachet and the 2022 vintage of a 1er cru cuvée we rarely receive Les Murgers des Dents de Chien. We also have a small top-up of the 2022 1er Cru En Remilly and an allocation of the 2023 vintage of the same wine. We drank the 2022 En Remilly wine again a couple of weeks ago and it is an extraordinary white wine. Julien's white wines are about citrus, length, and minerality and often more reminiscent of Jura Chardonnay than Burgundy. Other white cuvées include the 2023 vintages of Bourgogne Landré and the estate's Saint-Aubin Blanc cuvée. And, as always, we have some Bourgogne Aligoté – the 2024 vintage – but sadly no 2025 Allez Goutons, either white or red, which would normally come around this time of year. The news from Carole and Julien was that while they were satisfied with the quantity of the 2025 harvest it was not quite generous enough to be able to make those two early release cuvées.

There are four red wines, all from familiar cuvées and all from the 2023 vintage – Bourgogne Les Riaux and Le Ban, Pommard Les Petits Noizons, and Mercurey La Plante Chassey.

Julien and Carole's winemaking is quite Juraesque. They age their white wines in barrels for longer than the reds, using giving them at least an extra year. They use older barrels so there is always a hint of oxygen in a Jura sort of way. This, combined with the complex limestone terroir in the vineyards around Saint-Aubin, particularly for the 1er Cru wines, creates Chardonnay that has the intensity and searing citrus notes you see more easily in Jura Chardonnay than in Burgundy. By lightly extracting and bottling early the reds, like in the Jura, have freshness and early drinkability.

Quite a few of these wines have sold out to the people who requested early notice but we have some in packs and still have availability of some wines.

Domaine Derain Bourgogne Aligoté 2024

The grapes for this wine, from the estate's oldest Aligoté plot, are harvested at the end of the vintage. This plot produces small golden grapes, which makes for an intense and rich wine. The vines are located in the lower part of Puligny-Montrachet, on clay-silt soil. The harvest is directly pressed then fermented and aged in barrels and a foudre for 6 months. 11.5% ABV. Total sulphites < 20 mg/l. \$68.

Domaine Derain Bourgogne La Combe 2023

This wine is from a parcel of Chardonnay in the heart of the village of Puligny-Montrachet, planted by Dominique Derain in 1987, when he was starting his estate. It has always been in biodynamics. The soil is clay and chalky limestone. The grapes were directly-pressed and then put in barrels for fermentation and aging. It aged on its lees for 18 months prior to bottling. 13.5% ABV. Total sulphites <16 mg/l. Sold out but available in packs.

Domaine Derain Bourgogne Landré 2023

This wine is from a parcel of 40 year old Chardonnay in the commune of Corpeau on a gentle north-facing slope. The soil is white clay which always gives the wine vivacity. The grapes were

directly-pressed and then put in barrels for fermentation and aging. It aged on its lees for 15 months prior to bottling. 13% ABV. Total sulphites 19 mg/L. Sold out.

Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 2023

This wine is from a parcel of Chardonnay in the Le Ban lieu-dit in Saint-Aubin which was replanted in 2007. The soil is gravelly clay and limestone and the vineyard is on a hillside and south facing. The grapes were directly-pressed and then put in barrels for fermentation and aging. It was aged for 18 months on its lees. 13.5% ABV. Total sulphites < 16 mg/l. Sold out but available in packs.

Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly 2022

This wine is made from Chardonnay vines planted by Dominique Derain in 1988 in En Remilly, one of Saint-Aubin's most renowned premier cru vineyards. It sits on the rocky part of Montrachet just above the iconic grand crus of Puligny-Montrachet. En Remilly sits between "Les Murgers Des Dents de Chien" and the N6, which is the main road for entry into Saint-Aubin. It is a very sunny south-facing plot and the rocky, very hard limestone is almost marble-like forcing the roots to grow between the fissures. The vines have always been tended using biodynamic methods. The grapes are directly-pressed and then put in barrels for fermentation and aging. It was aged for 18 months on its lees before bottling in April 2024. 13.5% ABV. \$189. Sold out.

Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly 2023

See above for a description of the plot. The 2023 vintage is 13.5% ABV and has 16 mg/l total sulphites. It was bottled in May 2025 so had slightly longer in barrel. \$189. Maximum 1 bottle.

Domaine Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux 2023

These Pinot Noir vines were planted on the plain of Corpeau in the late 1980s. They have always been cultivated organically. The soil is clay-loam with iron oxides. The grapes (70% destemmed) were macerated in a conical wooden tank for 20 days with daily punch downs for the last 10 days. They were pressed and racked to barrels where the alcoholic fermentation was completed. They were aged in barrel for 10 months prior to assembling and bottling. 13% ABV. 15 mg/l total sulphites. Sold out but in packs. Sold out but available in packs.

Domaine Derain Pommard Les Petits Noizons 2023

The Pinot Noir vines are aged between 30 and 55 years and are located on the upper slopes of Pommard on clay-limestone soil facing south-east. The grapes (50% destemmed) were macerated for 16 days in conical wooden vats. After pressing the wine was aged for 10 months on its lees in 228 litre barrels. 12.5% ABV. 21 mg/l total sulphites. Sold out but available in packs.

Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin Le Ban 2023

Le Ban is lieu-dit just to the west of Saint-Aubin and is classified as Saint-Aubin village. The Domaine Derain plot in Le Ban is the first vineyard Dominique Derain purchased. It is tiny and

now consists of 0.6 hectare of approximately 60 year old vines and .23 hectares of young vines, all of which are Pinot Noir. The exposure is southerly and the soil gravelly clay and limestone. For the wine, a mix of 80% destemmed and 20% whole bunches were macerated for 18 days, then pressed and aged in 228 litre barrels for 11 months. ABV 12.5%. 31 mg/l total sulphites. Sold out but available in packs.

Domaine Derain Mercurey La Plante Chassey 2023

These Pinot Noir vines are over a century old located on marl soils at the foot of the slopes facing east. The grapes (70% destemmed) were macerated for 15 days in conical wooden vats. After pressing the wine was aged for 10 months on its lees in 228 litre barrels. 12.5% ABV. 35 mg/l total sulphites. \$120. Maximum 1 bottle.

Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru Les Murgers des Dents de Chien 2022

The vines are approximately 35 years old located on the rocky slopes of Montrachet, just above the Grand Cru vineyards of Puligny-Montrachet facing south-east. The soil is very hard stony clay-limestone and the roots find their way through the fissures. The grapes are directly pressed and transferred to barrels for alcoholic fermentation. It is aged on its lees for 18 months prior to bottling. 13% ABV. 18 mg/l total sulphites. \$288. Maximum 1 bottle.

Domaine Derain Chut ... Derain 2023

Although this sparkling wine is made with méthode traditionnelle it cannot be labelled a Crémant de Bourgogne because the requirement is for at least 30% Pinot Noir or Chardonnay and this, happily, is 100% Aligoté. It comes from a plot in the commune of Corpeau. The soil is clay and chalky limestone, a combination supporting acidity and freshness, making the grapes very suitable for this type of vinification. It was aged for 12 months sur lattes, disgorged but with no dosage.

12% ABV. Total sulphites 6 mg/l. \$80.

Jean-Pierre Robinot Années Folles 2023

We are also releasing the 2023 vintage of Jean-Pierre Robinot's Les Années Folles, a Loire Valley pet-nat made this year only with directly-pressed Pineau d'Aunis. (Sometimes it is a blend of Chenin Blanc and Pineau d'Aunis.). It's a négoce cuvée, with the grapes coming from a vineyard in Touraine from where Jean-Pierre sources grapes every year.)

We normally allocate this wine, offering people just a bottle along with the remaining Robinot wines we release at the same time. But this wine is being released alone. It arrived last year but wasn't ready to sell until now. Because it is being released separately from any other Robinot wines we have decided to advertise it rather than allocate it. We apologies in advance because it may mean a small number of customers who usually buy it on allocation may miss out.

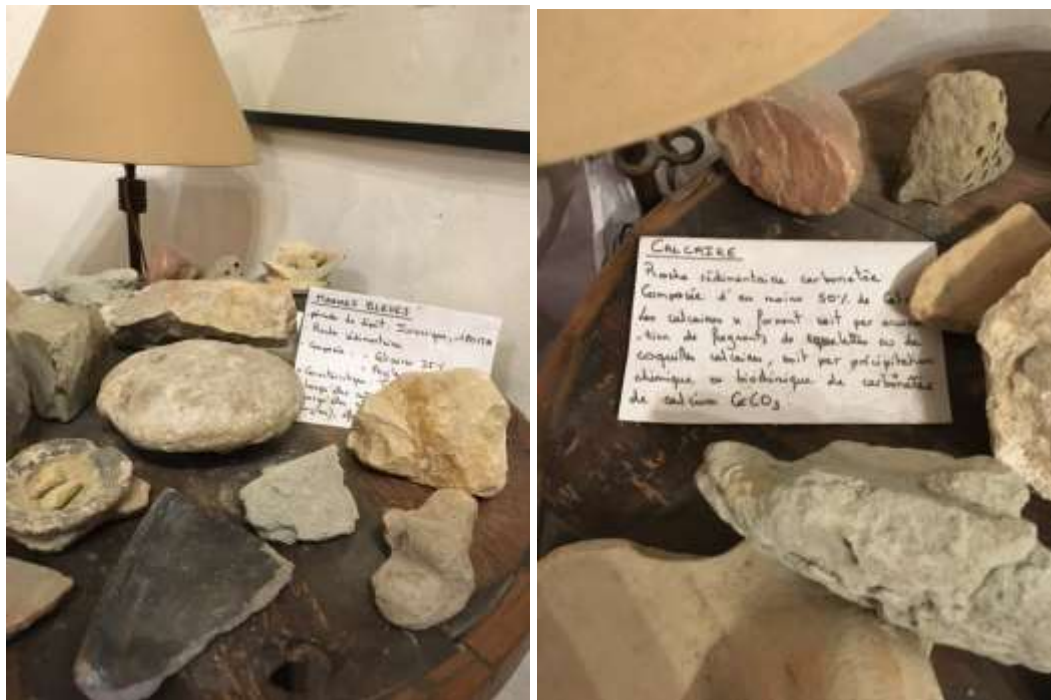
ABV 10%. \$77. Maximum 2 bottles.

Domaine Milan

Domaine Milan, which occupies prime real estate in the beautiful Provencal town of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence, is shielded and framed by the *Chaîne des Alpilles* mountain range. Les Alpilles provide climatic protection for the vineyards and always seems to amplify the sense of magic surrounding this historic, sunny, hot part of France so beloved by post-impressionist painters such as Vincent van Gogh.

The estate was created in 1956 by Robert Milan but it was his son Henri who, from the late 1980s, converted the vineyards from chemical farming to organic viticulture and over time replaced many of the vines that had only been farmed conventionally with new vines, grown organically from their youth.

Suspecting that his terroir had the potential to make great wines he also enlisted the help of renowned microbiologist Claude Bourguignon to analyse the structure of his soils. This research helped identify the parts of the estate where Jurassic blue marl and limestone dominate. These soils are particularly important in imparting freshness and salinity, a counter to the richness from ripe grapes which hot, dry summers always deliver. Le Carrée, which is 100% Roussanne, and Le Grand Blanc, which is a blend of Chardonnay, Muscat à Petit Grains, Grenache Blanc, Rolle, and Roussanne, are perfect examples. The photos below show samples of both.

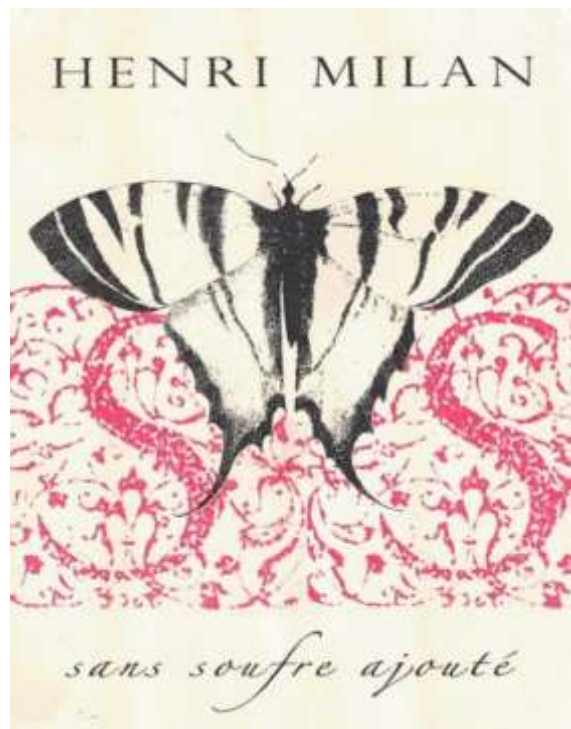


Until around 2000 the varieties were what you would expect to see in the south of France, including Grenache, Mourvèdre, and Syrah for red wines and Macabeu, Grenache Gris, Grenache Blanc, Rolle, and Roussanne for whites. But as time went on, Henri, being always curious and unconventional, has planted Merlot and Pinot Noir, both of which are used to make single variety cuvées, as well as smaller plantings of Savagnin, Chenin Blanc, Mondeuse, and more.

The viticulture is organic, following biodynamic practices and cycles. While from the beginning Henri's profound respect for nature and the soil ensured he would go down the path of

organics, it was a visit to Claude Courtois in the Loire Valley in 1996, which led to him overlaying biodynamics to his work in the vineyard and cellar.

The viticulture relies on no commercial yeasts, with wines fermenting naturally using yeasts present in the vineyard and the cellars (with the exception of a Champagne yeast used to start the second fermentation of one sparkling white wine). They also do not filter or fine their wines. In its early years Domaine Milan wines always contained some added sulphites. But from the early 2000s Henri developed a taste for wines without added sulphites. He did not throw away the work he had done, keeping cuvées such as the iconic white wine Le Grand Blanc, but he began to make cuvées specifically with the intent that he would not add sulphites. These are the Papillon cuvées, the wines with a butterfly (the French for Papillon) on the label. As well as a butterfly the design has a distinctive S S woven into it. The words below the illustration “Sans Soufre Ajouté” explain its meaning - without added sulphites. We have three of the Papillon cuvées in this release.



Now, the running of estate, including decisions about new cuvées and new winemaking techniques, is now largely in the hands of Henri's son Théophile Milan and his American wife Natalie, as well as long-time cellar master Sébastien Xavier, but Henri is still very much involved. He still lives on the estate in a house that overlooks his beloved Clos Milan, a vineyard he had converted from conventional farming but which was completely replanted about 12 years ago. We have worked with Domaine Milan since 2010 and it has been a great joy for us to watch the evolution of the estate over that time as Théo and Natalie gradually took on more and more responsibility for its future, but always with observations, advice and opinions from Henri.

As well as the original estate, the Milans now have several hectares in Eyragues just north of Saint-Rémy-de-Provence and in Orgon, just to its east. Both are only about 15 minutes away from the main estate. They continue to work all the vineyards organically, using horses for

ploughing in spring and autumn. These two photos, both in the Orgon vineyard, are of young Grenache Blanc and old Carignan vines planted in 1967, the oldest vines they work with.



Most of their fermentations are done in old concrete tanks which are permanent fixtures built into the cellar. Aging is done in a variety of vessels including oak barrels, foudre, fibreglass, concrete and stainless steel. You can see some of the concrete tanks in the background of the photo below. The contraption in the foreground is a dynamiser in which a biodynamic preparation is being readied. No electric motors are needed here!



Domaine Milan makes many different styles of wine ranging from a very easy drinking Nouveau cuvée using carbonic maceration to make a wine ready to drink at the time of Beaujolais Nouveau day, just a few weeks after vintage, through to complex wines which have had many years of aging prior to release, and will continue to age. In this release, for example, Le Grand Blanc is from the 2019 vintage, bottled only after one year in barrels and then a further four years in concrete tank. It may be the best vintage of this wine we have ever had! There are reds made with some classic southern French blends including Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah, but also single variety, single vineyard cuvées, including a Pinot Noir, a Merlot, and a Roussanne, all of which are wines with great aging potential.

Below is a summary of all wines we are releasing followed by detailed descriptions of each wine. Many of them are in packs in the newsletter and of course you are welcome to order any combination yourself.

Wine	Type	Variety	Price	ABV
Milan Brut Nature Blanc 2023	Sparkling	Macabeu, Grenache Gris	\$63	12%
Milan Le Grand Blanc 2019	White	Chardonnay, Muscat à Petit Grains, Grenache Blanc, Rolle, Roussanne	\$94	14%

Milan Le Grand Blanc 2017 Magnum (1 bottle per customer)	White	Chardonnay, Muscat à Petit Grains, Grenache Blanc, Rolle, Roussanne	\$182	14.5%
Milan Luna and Gaia 2022	Macerated	Grenache Blanc, Rolle, Roussanne	\$68	13.5%
Milan Le Carrée 2022	White	Roussanne	\$130	14%
Milan Haru Rouge 2024	Red	Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Carignan	\$58	12.5%
Milan Papillon Rouge 2023	Red	Grenache, Syrah, Nielluccio, Carignan	\$68	12.5%
Milan Le Vallon 2022	Red	Grenache Noir, Syrah, Nielluccio	\$68	12%
Milan Le S&X 2022	Red	Grenache	Sold out	14.5%
Milan Clos Milan 2022	Red	Grenache Noir, Syrah	\$89	12.5%
Milan Le Premier 2022	Red	Pinot Noir	\$146	14.5%
Milan Le Jardin 2021	Red	Merlot	\$130	14%
Milan Nouveau Rouge 2025	Light Red	Mourvèdre, Grenache, Syrah	\$52	13%
Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2023	Sparkling	Grenache, Syrah, Alicante Bouschet	\$58	11.5%

Milan Brut Nature Blanc 2023

The still wine which is the base for this wine is made from directly-pressed Macabeu and Grenache Gris grown in clay and limestone soils, under blue clay in Saint-Remy-de-Provence. The vines are about 16 years old. It was aged in concrete tanks with no added sulphites then bottled without dosage or added sulphites but with the addition of a Champagne yeast to start the second fermentation. The bottles were then aged for 2 years sur lattes, which has added to its complexity. The finished wine is not disgorged so there is a small amount of sediment. It is ideal as an apero or to finish a meal. It is one of the three wines we have with the Papillon Sans Soufre Ajouté label.

Milan Le Grand Blanc 2019

Perhaps Domaine Milan's most iconic cuvée, Le Grand Blanc is a wine which can age for up to 20 years. The domaine does the first part of this aging. This 2019 vintage spent 12 months in old oak barrels and then a further 5 years in a concrete tank. It was bottled in May 2025. It is a blend of Chardonnay, Muscat à Petit Grains, Grenache Blanc, Rolle, and Roussanne, all of which are direct-pressed and co-fermented. The vines are approximately 35 years old and grow in silty clay on a subsoil of blue marl.

The Milans tasting notes describe it beautifully "Exceptionally fresh. Aromas of fennel and garrigue dominate the nose and palate, with a long, stony finish that underscores its minerality." But we also love longtime cellar master Sébastien Xavier's description when we tasted it with him last year. He simply said "it gives me goosebumps". He's helped make this wine for 20 years and this is definitely one of the best.

Milan Le Grand Blanc 2017 Magnum

See above for a general description of this iconic wine. The 2017 vintage was aged in old barrels for 2 years and 4 years in concrete. We only have a small number of bottles. Maximum order - 1 bottle.

Milan Luna and Gaia 2022

Luna and Gaia, named after the dogs of the estate, represents the moon and the earth, white and black - the yin and yang, as its label suggests. The name for this relatively new cuvée was chosen to represent the equilibrium between the substance of the tannins and the freshness of the juice.

The Rolle and Roussanne vines, which were approximately 11 years old, are planted on clay and limestone on blue marl subsoil just behind the Le Carrée vineyard. The Grenache Blanc is from Eyragues. Whole bunches were macerated for three weeks with daily five minute pump-overs before pressing and incorporating into the free-run juice. It was aged for one year in concrete tank before bottling. Its heady aromas are reminiscent of fresh apricots.

Milan Le Carrée 2022

Le Carrée is a small plot, just .4 of a hectare, planted only with Roussanne. The soil is clay with blue marl subsoil. Its square shape gives the cuvée its name. It was planted in 1991 with densely-planted vines (4000 vines/hectare). The grapes were directly-pressed and the juice fermented and aged in four 500 litre barrels for a year. Three had been used once before and one was new. It was bottled in March 2024. The wine is concentrated with potential for aging, with a freshness not often seen in this variety, and its richness balanced by good acidity. The Milans tasting notes "Complex aromas of bitter orange, exotic fruits, and mint compose the aromatic bouquet, which tends to evolve". The finish is quite saline.

Milan Haru Rouge 2024

Haru is a word used to represent springtime in Japan. It connotes the start of a new season, freshness and renewal. The Haru cuvées (there is a white and a red) are made to fit with that zeitgeist. This wine is fresh, energetic, low in tannins, easily chillable on a warm day, but also complex enough to drink at cellar temperature with grilled lamb.

The vines for this wine are on average 20 years old and the soil is clay and limestone.

The winemaking for the Mourvèdre was full carbonic maceration and semi-carbonic maceration

for the remaining varieties. After pressing it was aged briefly in concrete tank then bottled in March 2025.

Milan Papillon Rouge 2023

Papillon Rouge is made with no added sulphites. Many of the classic Milan wines, including Le Grand Blanc, are made with the addition of small amounts of sulphites. That is how Henri Milan began. But over time he decided he wanted to make and drink wines with no added sulphites as well. The Papillon (butterfly) label is reserved for these wines, a representation of renewal, and this cuvée was one of the first experiments. It was first made in 2007 and the journey making wines with no additions continues today.

The majority of the grapes are from Eyragues from vines which were planted between 1997 and 1999 growing on red clay and limestone soils, plus there is a small amount of Carignan from the Saint-Remy-de-Provence plots. Whole bunches had a short 5 day semi-carbonic maceration in a concrete tank before pressing. Fermentation finished and the wines were aged in concrete tanks. It was bottled in March 2024.

Milan Le Vallon 2022

The vines for this wine are on average 20 years old and grow on clay and limestone with a subsoil of blue marl. For the winemaking whole bunches were macerated for approximately 5 days then pressed. Fermentation was completed in concrete tanks, where the wine aged for one year. It was bottled in March 2023. The wine has spicy notes typically of Provence and the Mediterranean. The tannins from the fruit are there but literally only just and in a very elegant way.

Milan Le S&X 2022

This wine, which has been made since 2016, is from a small parcel on the Milan estate cellarmaster Sébastien Xavier identified as being special (hence the name SX!). He thought it was special enough to convince Henri Milan to stop putting it in their blended red wines and make a 100% Grenache wine from this place. The soil is limestone scree with a subsoil of blue marl and the vines were planted in 1992.

For the winemaking whole bunches were macerated for approximately 5 days then pressed. Fermentation was completed in old barrels, in which the wine aged for one year before bottling. The Milan tasting notes describe initial spicy aromas followed by crushed strawberry, with a hint of liquorice, almost blood orange. They also recommend carafing to add air to ensure the full range of aromas are experienced. This is sold out but available in packs.

Milan Clos Milan 2022

This cuvee has a long history, with the grapes for it coming from a vineyard in front of Henri's house. The older vintages are made from very old vines but the vineyard was replanted relatively recently and Clos Milan is now being made from the young vines, now approximately 12 years old. The soil is stony clay and limestone with a subsoil of yellow sand.

For the winemaking whole bunches were macerated for approximately 5 days, with a daily pump over and then pressed. The juice was aged for one year in old oak barrels and then one year in tank. It is highly recommended with lamb prepared any way!

Milan Le Premier 2022

Called Le Premier because the plot of Pinot Noir from which it is made is always the first to be picked, the early picking preserves balance between ripeness and acidity. The vines are from a massale selection made by a friend of the Milans, the renowned Burgundy winemaker Emmanuel Giboulot. A part was grafted on to two existing rows in 2012 (with the original vines, which were Syrah and Merlot, planted in 2002) and the remainder was planted in 2014. The soil is clay and limestone with a sub soil of blue marl.

For this vintage whole bunches were macerated with light punch-downs towards the end. After pressing fermentation was finished in tanks before aging in 600 litre barrels, two of which were new, for 1 year. The extraction was light and the wine is elegant, almost ethereal.

Milan Le Jardin 2021

The journey that led to Le Jardin, a 100% Merlot from a .5 ha plot, is long. Around 2000 Henri Milan had decided to replace some vines with different varieties. As a Burgundy lover his dream was to plant Pinot Noir but the nurseryman did not have his preferred rootstock and suggested Merlot and that's what happened.

Initially it was included in other cuvées, blended with southern varieties. But too often it overpowered everything. At one point they made a rosé from it. But in 2010, partly as a consequence of a conversation with a young sommelier student who pointed out that its blue marl soils were also found in Pomerol, including at Pétrus, Henri had a light globe moment. And so began his aspiration to create a wine with the reputation of Pétrus in Provence by vinifying the Merlot as a separate cuvée. That was the beginning of Le Jardin. In early vintages it was aged only in new oak barrels and, for a while, hand-destemmed. More recently, including this vintage, whole bunches had a short five-day maceration in concrete tank. Aging was for 12 months in 500L barrels.

It is an elegant but powerful wine, with fine, silky tannins, that calls for meat to absorb its rich aromas of black fruits and truffle. In the Milan tasting room when we tried it last year the discussion turned to Côte de boeuf so the red juices from the meat could mingle with the wine. Presumably that is something that happens in the mouth!

Milan Nouveau Rouge 2025

The vines for this wine, which are approximately 40 years old, are on clay-limestone soils with a subsoil of blue marl. The Mourvèdre is vinified with carbonic maceration and the Grenache and Syrah with semi-carbonic maceration. All parts happen in concrete tank and are quick! It was bottled in late October 2025, to be ready for release at the same time as the Beaujolais Nouveaux, which is always a big night in French wine bars (on the third Thursday each November). Like Beaujolais Nouveau this wine is fresh, lively and juicy, best served slightly chilled. It's a fun apero, especially with charcuterie.

Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2023

This wine is a pet-nat made with no added sulphites. It was made with directly-pressed Alicante Bouschet and Grenache from the vines in Eyragues. Alicante Bouschet is a teinturier variety, which means it has red juice, so it contributes most of the colour. It has rich in raspberry aromas with very nice acidity.

What's Coming

We're kept this brief because this newsletter is quite a long one.

Next month we will be advertising some l'Octavin (many estate Jura wines and also négoce cuvées from the Jura and other parts of France) and three Cadette wines (two 2023 La Cadette and Montanet-Thoden Vézelay whites we have had before and the 2024 La Soeur Cadette Juliéna from Beaujolais).

We can also now confirm the release date for the long-awaited Julien Fremont Calvados is July. We will be advertising these too, so let us know if you want early notice for any of these. Sorry we did at some stage indicate Fremont would be here much sooner but ordering and shipping is challenging at the moment.

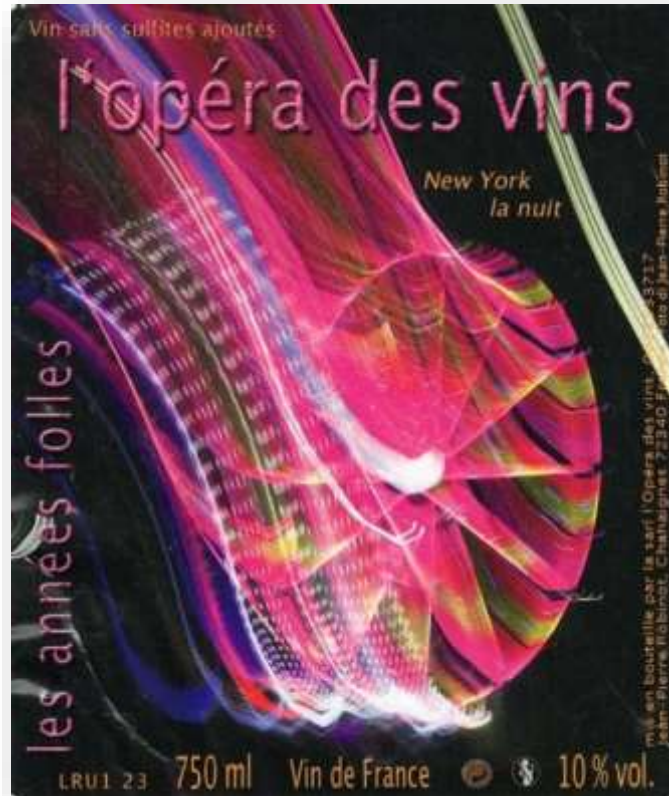
In August we anticipate arrivals from de Moor and La Petite Empreinte. We will allocate de Moor and advertise La Petite Empreinte, which includes the 2022 Saint-Bris cuvée, Persévérance et Patience, a Sauvignon Blanc which floored us when we tasted it in France last year.

If you would like a de Moor allocation you are welcome to request one. Because it is a smaller allocation than last year, it is possible this year we will only be allocating de Moor to customers who buy from us regularly and/or who have always taken a de Moor allocation, so if you are a relatively regular customer and you would like a de Moor allocation please let us know in the coming weeks to ensure you don't miss out. There is no rush. Similarly, if you would like early news about La Petite Empreinte let us know and we will put you on our request list.

Because of all the devastation in the north of Burgundy in 2024 there are only two wines in this release – the 2024 Mas a Tierra Pinot Noir and Persévérance et Patience. There will be no 2024 Tapis Rouge and no magnums of Gamay. (We do still have a few 2023 magnums of Gamay available though.)

Pack 1: New Sparkling 6 Pack

(15% Discount –2 Packs Only)



We've been struggling to keep up a good supply of sparkling wines, so it is wonderful to be able to offer this eclectic, rare collection. Two are made using méthode traditionnelle, which means using a technique similar to the making of Champagne, where the wine is fermented until dry in a tank, barrels or other vessel then, at bottling, fed extra yeast which causes a secondary fermentation in the bottle and captures the bubbles.

That's the technique for the Milan Brut Nature Blanc, which is a blend of Macabeu and Grenache Gris, and also for Derain Chut, which is a very rare sparkling Aligoté. Made by Domaine Derain in Burgundy this wine can't be labelled a Crémant de Bourgogne, even though it is made the way crémants are made, because a Crémant de Bourgogne must have a % of Pinot Noir or Chardonnay and this wine has neither. It's called Chut because it is something of a secret.

The other two are pet-nats, wines which are bottled before the original fermentation is complete. Fermentation continues in the bottle, thus producing the bubbles. Cult Loire Valley vigneron Jean-Pierre Robinot's Les Années Folles 2023 is, for this vintage, 100% Pineau d'Aunis. It has been directly pressed though so is closer to white than pink in colour. The final pet-nat is very much a rosé and comes from Provence, the heart of French rosé country. It's made with Grenache Noir, Syrah, and Alicante. There are two of these in each pack.

WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

This is a perfect pack if you are the sort of person who always feels better knowing there is at least one sparkling wine at the ready in the fridge, even if yet you don't know why you will be opening it!

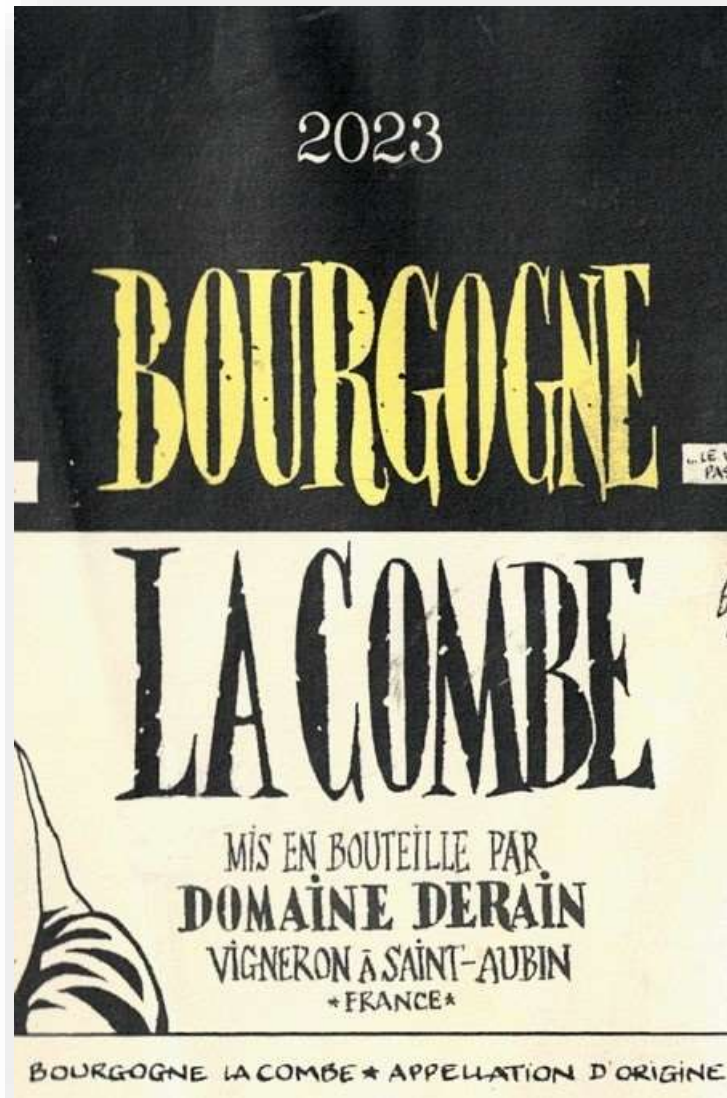
These are the wines:

- **Jean-Pierre Robinot Les Années Folles 2023 (2 bottles)**
- **Milan Brut Nature Blanc 2023**
- **Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2023 (2 bottles)**
- **Domaine Derain Chut ... Derain 2023**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$413 and the sale price is **\$351.05**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 2: Mixed Derain 6 Pack

(15% Discount - 2 Packs Only)



We've made a mixed pack of four white wines and two reds from our new release. It contains two of Derain's most iconic cuvées – Bourgogne La Combe, which is Chardonnay, and Saint-Aubin Le Ban, which is Pinot Noir.

It also ranges from their highly drinkable Aligoté to an epic white Saint-Aubin 1er Cru, the 2023 En Remilly. This complex, razor-sharp citrus-tinged saline, wine is one we salivate in anticipation for each year. The third Chardonnay is the Saint-Aubin 2023, a village wine which sits somewhere between La Combe and the En Remilly in terms of complexity.

The final wine is another Pinot Noir, the Bourgogne Les Riaux. This wine is a delight to drink while young.

WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

Several of the wines in this pack are sold out so no longer available any other way, including La Combe for which we have turned down the most orders. As always, we never know if the packs will sell out. We do have requests for some of these wines already in the event a pack isn't sold but if there is something you would like but you don't want the full pack let us know in case we eventually cancel the pack.

These are the wines:

- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne Aligoté 2024**
- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne La Combe 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin Le Ban 2023**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$664 but the pack price is only **\$564.40**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 3: Derain New Arrivals Premium 3 Pack

(10% Discount - 2 Packs Only)



Normally when we only have three wines in a pack we don't offer a discount and often don't offer subsidised freight but we have made an exception for this one, because of its value (it also didn't help that without a discount it was going to be \$666 and the superstitious one of us was uncomfortable with that!).

It contains two premier cru Chardonnays, the 2023 Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly and the 2022 1er Cru Les Murgers des Dents de Chien 2022, which is the ultimate expression of white wine from this estate. The red, 100 % Pinot Noir, is from the upper slopes of Pommard, the 2023 Les Petits Noizons, and is now only available in this pack.

There is more information about these wines in the new arrivals section.

The pack has the following wines:

- **Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru Les Murgers des Dents de Chien 2022**
- **Domaine Derain Pommard Les Petits Noizons 2023**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$666 but the pack price is only **\$599.40**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 4: Derain Red Arrivals 3 Pack

(No Discount - 1 Pack Only)



Most of our new arrivals from Derain were white, either Chardonnay or Aligoté, with very few reds so we decided to create a pack just of the reds because we knew there was a risk they would sell out fast. That is what happened and most of the red wines are sold out, including most in this pack.

Given the winemaking is very similar it's an interesting pack to look at the impact of terroir. Les Riaux is a Bourgogne, so from one of the simplest Burgundy classifications and the other two are village level wines. Le Ban is from Saint-Aubin. It is the first parcel Dominique Derain acquired.

La Plante Chassey is from Mercurey. All three are Pinot Noir but the Mercurey La Plante Chassey also has some Pinot Beurot (Pinot Gris) which grows in the same vineyard.

There is more information about all the wines in the New Arrivals section.

These are the wines:

- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Saint-Aubin Le Ban 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Mercurey La Plante Chassey 2023**

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

Pack 5: Mini Sparkling 3 Pack

(No Discount - 2 Packs Only)



This pack is for anyone who read the description of pack 1 and maybe thought “that sounds interesting, but I don’t need 6 bottles of sparkling wine at once” or “that sounds interesting but it’s too expensive”.

This pack has one each of three of the four wines in the main sparkling pack. The downside is that it has no discount or subsidised freight.

These are all new arrivals so you can find out more about all of these wines in the New Arrivals section.

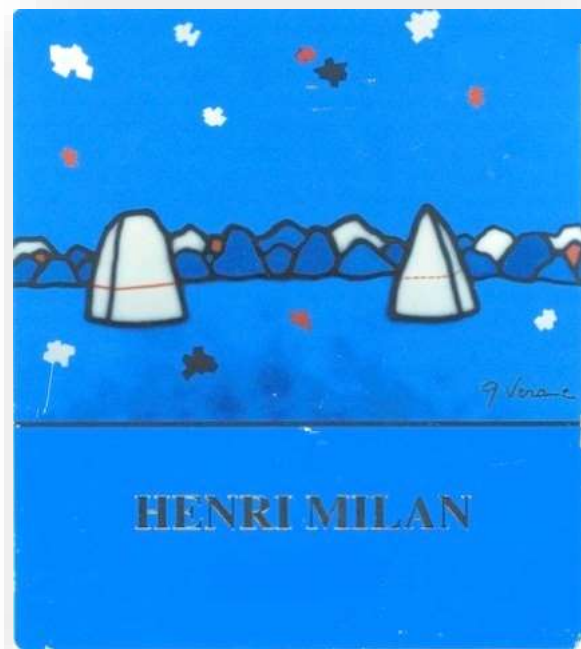
These are the wines:

- **Jean-Pierre Robinot Les Années Folles 2023**
- **Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2023**
- **Domaine Derain Chut ... Derain 2023**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$215**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 6: Milan Premium New Arrivals 3 Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



This is one of two quite similar packs featuring some of the Milan premium wines, both of which are in three-packs to keep the total price down (see also pack 9).

Le Premier is 100% Pinot Noir. Le Carrée 2022 is the estate's top white cuvée, made from Roussanne grown on blue marl, which gives it freshness and acidity. Le Jardin is 100% Merlot – Henri Milan has always aspired to make something which can be put up against Pétrus. His alternative is much more affordable.

There is more information about these wines in the New Arrivals section.

These are the wines:

- **Milan Le Premier 2022**
- **Milan Le Carrée 2022**
- **Milan Le Jardin 2021**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$406. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 7: Milan Red 6 Pack

(1 Pack Only – 15% Discount)



We had quite a few red wines in our Domaine Milan release so we thought there might be some red wine drinkers, especially as we approach winter, interested in a pack. Some of the wines like the S&X have sold out so a pack may be the only way to buy them.

These wines, which span four vintages, are all made from classic southern French varieties you would find in the Rhone Valley and the Languedoc, and, apart from S&X, which is 100% Grenache, are all blends.

Milan Nouveau, which is Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Syrah, is a very light red, made in the style of Beaujolais Nouveau (with carbonic and semi-carbonic maceration). The others are more typical reds.

- Clos Milan is Grenache and Syrah.
- Papillon Rouge, which has no added sulphites, is Grenache, Syrah, Nielluccio, and Carignan.
- Le Vallon is Grenache, Syrah, Nielluccio
- Haru Rouge is Grenache, Syrah, Mourvèdre, and Carignan

There is more information about the wines in the New Arrivals section.

These are the wines:

- **Milan Nouveau Rouge 2025**
- **Milan S&X 2022**
- **Milan Clos Milan 2022**

WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

- **Milan Papillon Rouge 2023**
- **Milan Le Vallon 2022**
- **Milan Haru Rouge 2024**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$429.00 but the discounted price is **\$364.65**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 8: Milan Mixed 6 Pack

(2 Packs Only – 15% Discount)



We've made up a pack which is a good representation of the range of wines that Domaine Milan produces. It has one white wine, one sparkling, one macerated wine and three reds so it is also a good pack if you're interested in a pack with quite a mix of wines styles, even though they are from the same family. Between the wines there are 11 different grape varieties.

There is a detailed description about all of these wines in the New Arrivals section but it does include the 2019 vintage of the estate's iconic Le Grand Blanc cuvée, which is a blend of Chardonnay, Muscat à Petit Grains, Grenache Blanc, Rolle (Vermentino), and Roussanne, and also a bottle of 100% Grenache – the 2022 vintage of the cuvée S&X, a wine which like Le Grand Blanc, has potential to age.

The macerated wine, Luna and Gaia, is a blend of Grenache Blanc, Rolle, and Roussanne.

Brut Nature Rosé 2023 sparkling wine is made from Grenache, Syrah, and Alicante.

The last two red wines are Papillon Rouge 2023, which is a wine made with no added sulphites from Grenache Noir, Syrah, Nielluccio, and Carignan, and Nouveau Rouge 2025, which is more of a light red and made from a classic southern blend - Mourvèdre, Grenache, and Syrah.

These are the wines:

- **Milan Nouveau Rouge 2025**
- **Milan Papillon Rouge 2023**
- **Milan S&X 2022**

WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

- **Milan Le Grand Blanc 2019**
- **Milan Luna and Gaia 2022**
- **Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2023**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$434.00 but the discounted price is **\$368.90**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 9: Milan Single Variety 3 Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



This pack is similar to Pack 6. Both have two reds and one white and they are all single variety wines but a slightly different combination. Le Jardin (Merlot) and Le Carrée (Roussanne) are in both packs but this one has the Milan S&X, which is 100% Grenache, and is sold out apart from the packs. Pack 6 has Le Premier, the Pinot Noir. There is a detailed description of all of the wines in the New Arrivals section.

These are the wines:

- **Milan S&X 2022**
- **Milan Le Jardin 2021**
- **Milan Le Carrée 2022**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$354. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 10: Bornard, Robinot, Sabre 3 Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



With two new releases this month there wasn't much time to delve into our treasure trove to see if there were any wines we had squirreled away that we were willing to part with, but we did manage a brief excursion into the depths of the cellar.

This 3 bottle pack has one bottle each from Bornard, Robinot and Sabre, so has wines from three different regions.

From the Jura, the Philippe Bornard Arbois Pupillin Pinot Noir Aide Memoire 2015 is a Pinot Noir, made by Philippe a couple of years before he sold the estate to his son Tony.

From the Loire, Jean-Pierre Robinot's Les Vignes de l'Ange Vin Camille 2013 is Pineau d'Aunis from his oldest vines.

And the final wine is Fanny Sabre's 2018 Meursault Les Charmes Premier Cru, so from some of Burgundy's greatest terroir for growing Chardonnay.

There is no discount with this pack. The prices are the original prices and we have had all these wines for some time so they represent a very different time as far as pricing is concerned. However, if it is purchased with three other wines they would all have our normal 10% discount.

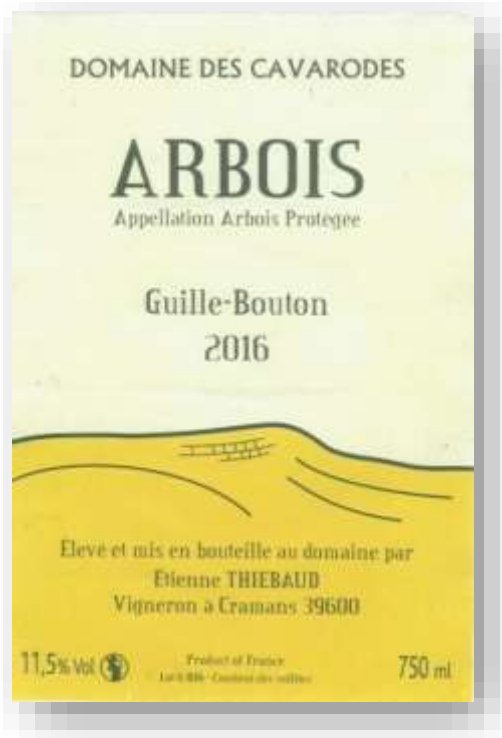
These are the wines:

- **Philippe Bornard Arbois Pupillin Pinot Noir Aide Memoire 2015**
- **Jean-Pierre Robinot Les Vignes de l'Ange Vin Camille 2013**
- **Fanny Sabre Meursault Les Charmes Premier Cru 2018**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$509. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 11: Domaine des Cavarodes, Derain, Belluard 3 Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



This pack has a white, a red and a sparkling.

The white is rare Jura Chardonnay from our first shipment from Etienne Thiebaud. The Guille Bouton vineyard is a mix of blue and grey marl and limestone, a mix which imparts freshness and salinity to this grape variety. We are letting this one go because we still have one more in our cellar so feel it's only fair now to let someone else have a chance to look at it. We have only drunk it earlier in its life, but we suspect it will still be very rewarding with a few years age.

We feel it's time to drink the 2018 Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux. The vineyard, which is on the plain of Corpeau, was planted in the 1980s and has always been cultivated organically.

The last wine is a bottle of Belluard Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019, a Savoie wine made with Gringet, a grape indigenous to the region. We always have a bottle of this at the ready in case of an unexpected celebration.

These are the wines:

- **Domaine des Cavarodes AOP Arbois Chardonnay Guille Bouton 2016**
- **Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux 2018**
- **Belluard Vin de Savoie Ayse Mont Blanc Brut Nature 2019**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$284. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 12: Octavin 3 Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



This pack has a white, a red and a sparkling.

Because we are planning an Octavin release next month we thought it would be a good time to release a pack of three of Alice Bouvot's older wines. This pack has a white, light red, and orange wine.

The white is négoce wine made with grapes she purchased from a local Jura vigneron. It is a blend of Chardonnay and Savagnin. Alice makes a number of Hip Hip Jura cuvées and this is one of them.

The light red (Elle Aime) is from Alice's tiny estate. It is a blend of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay grown together in the vineyard En Arces, just outside Arbois.

The orange wine, made by macerating Jacquère, is also négoce. Alice purchased the grapes from Savoie vigneronne Nathalie Montagnon.

There is no discount for this pack but if it is combined with 3 other wines our normal 10% discount would apply to all of the wines.

These are the wines:

- **l'Octavin Joker Macérée 2020**
- **l'Octavin Elle Aime 2018**
- **l'Octavin Chardonnay / Savagnin Hip Hip J 2018**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$247. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Bits and Pieces

5 More Places outside Paris to enjoy natural wines

In the March newsletter we introduced 5 wine bars outside Paris that we visit when we are driving around France. This month we list another 5 places that are also favourite places for us.

Petit Grill Basque – Petit Grill Basque in the South-West city of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, is a relatively new restaurant for the famous Parisian chef Iñaki Aizpitarte. He is now cooking here most of the time and the food and ambience are wonderful. Check out the Basque seafood and rice dish – it is sensational. The wines are all natural.

4 Rue Saint-Jacques, Saint-Jean-de-Luz

Le Canon – This long term restaurant in the city of Nice is a great place to enjoy organic food from surrounding farms and nearby Italy and natural wines from their impressive cellar. The food is always cooked with skill and care and the chef is also particularly impressive when he is dealing with freshly caught fish. The owner is always happy to choose a bottle of wine to suit your requirements or you can spend some time choosing one yourself from the walk-in cellar.

23 rue Meyerbeer, Nice

Micro Sillon – This is an amazing bar and bottleshop in the centre of Lyon, run by Mathieu Rostaing-Tayard and Joanna Figuet. On our most recent trip we enjoyed an evening sitting under the trees outside eating beautifully-prepared food and drinking from the excellent selection of natural wines.

6 Pl. Fernand Rey, Lyon

Le Bas Alpin – Forcalquier is a moderate sized town in the département of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence which extends from the western end of the Luberon to the Italian border. Forcalquier sits at the western end of this département. It is here that you will find Le Bas Alpin which serves excellent food and a nice selection of natural wines – we both chose a glass of Andrea Calek's biodynamic A Toi Nous which matched beautifully to the food. It is a great place for lunch.

1 rue Plauchud, Forcalquier

La Cave du Centre – This wine bar is run by an important figure in the France natural wine scene, namely Aaron Ayscough who is a writer (a regular Substack column and an important book entitled *The World of Natural Wine*), a wine producer and now a chef and wine bar owner. His venue is in the southern Burgundy wine town of Chagny and it is well-worth a visit. We thoroughly enjoyed a long Sunday lunch here on our most recent visit to France. You can place yourself in Aaron's hands for wine selections as his knowledge is deep.

2 rue de Beaune, Chagny

What is the difference between Arbois and Arbois-Pupillin on a Jura label?

These are two different communes that are very close to each other where one of them, the small village of Pupillin, has the right to add its name to the broader appellation title of Arbois.

The difference is that the commune of Pupillin borders the Arbois commune, therefore the appellation document for the Arbois commune which was first announced in 15 May 1936, has

a special clause in Section II Dénominations géographiques et mentions complémentaires part 3 which states the following:

3°- Le nom de l'appellation d'origine contrôlée peut être suivi de la dénomination géographique complémentaire « Pupillin » pour les vins répondant aux conditions de production fixées pour cette dénomination dans le présent cahier des charges.

When translated into English we get the following:

3°- The name of the controlled designation of origin may be followed by the additional geographical designation "Pupillin" for wines meeting the production conditions set for this designation in these specifications.

It is interesting that there are 12 communes that can use the Arbois appellation, (Abergement-le-Grand, Arbois, Les Arsures, Mathenay, Mesnay, Molamboz, Montigny-lès-Arsures, Les Planches-près-Arbois, Pupillin, Saint-Cyr-Montmalin, Vadans et Villette-lès-Arbois) but only the Pupillin name can be added to Arbois if the grapes used to make the wine have entirely come from the Pupillin commune.

As you can see from the map below Pupillin and Arbois share a common boundary. They also share very similar geology which is why the appellation names are conjoined.



Notice that, for example, the Les Arsures commune also borders the Arbois boundary, but is not permitted to attach their name to the Arbois designation. Only Pupillin is permitted. All these other communes produce wines which can only use the Arbois designation.

Champagne and global warming

In this long running newsletter, we have often mentioned the effect that global warming is having in the wine industry, particularly in Europe. So it was with interest that we read about the effect that climate change is having on the onset of bud burst in Champagne in an article we

found on the Champagne Education Web site which was established by the Comité Champagne organisation.

Before we look at the specifics of the effect of climate change on vines in France, we need to explain why frosts may be more severe despite higher spring temperatures while vines are budding.

The article raised a number of salient points including:

- February this year was significantly warmer than average in Champagne;
- Chardonnay began to “bud” some 20 days earlier than the average for the past ten years due to the higher temperatures this year;
- The early budding increased the risk of exposure to frosts as the higher temperatures occur during the day and the frost and associated lower temperatures occur at night;
- The frosts were particularly severe with temperatures dropping to minus 7°C in late March and early April during the night in a counterpoint to the higher temperatures during the day.
- Both Champagne and Chablis reported substantial losses with early reports that frost had destroyed 40% of the vine buds between late March and mid-April.

We will not see the outcome of these frosts for a few years as it takes a number of years between when the grapes are picked and the final champagne is ready to sell.

What are the characteristics of “healthy” soil?

The answer to this question is quite complex, but there are some things that every winemaker should be aiming for in their vineyards if they want the soil to deliver the maximum benefit to their vines.

Here are some of the most important ways to ensure that the soil can deliver the required benefits.

- **Organic matter** – The presence of organic matter such as grasses, leaves and other organic items creates food for bacteria as it decays and starts releasing nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and sulphur. This process also improves the soil structure and the ability of the soil to hold the necessary amounts of water for the vines.
- **The acidity of the soil** – Getting the acidity of the soil in the right range is a very important part of improving the soil. Most papers that we have read suggest the best range of pH is greater than or equal to 6.0 (which is in the acidic range) but lower or equal to 6.5 (which is also in the acidic range). If the value starts to become too acidic (that is getting down to 5.9 to 5.0 or less) then the soil cannot play its role in providing essential nutrients to the vines such as nitrogen and phosphorus, because the nutrients cannot be dissolved into the soil at these levels of acidity. The other problem is that acidic soil releases high levels of manganese and aluminium which are toxic to the vines.
- **The problem of alkaline soils** – The other problem is if the pH of the soils reaches alkaline values, that is above 7.0 which is considered to be neutral. These high pH levels bind up micronutrients hence making them unavailable to the vines. An example of one of the problems caused is iron chlorosis which causes the leaves on the vines to go yellow and reduces plants’ ability to carry out the all-important photosynthesis.
- **Addition of lime to the soil** – Adding lime to soils reduces problems with the acidity of soils and also releases two important nutrients into the soil, namely calcium and magnesium.
- **Improvements to the soil structure** – Getting the structure of the soil right is also very important. Soil with the right structure is better able to hold water and provide better drainage as well as holding nutrients in the soil.

To do this the soil must deliver large and small “pores” to help water and gases to move through the soil and allow roots to move down through the soil to access the nutrients. Bacteria, fungi and most importantly worms and collembola all help create the right structure.

As the climate changes and rainfall becomes more intense but less frequent, with more long periods of dry weather, we can only imagine that this will be more important.



We should add here that everyone talks about the benefits of worms in soils but don’t know about the work of collembola which are extremely active in Australian soils and are especially good at breaking down plant matter in soils. Here on the left is a photo of a collembola.

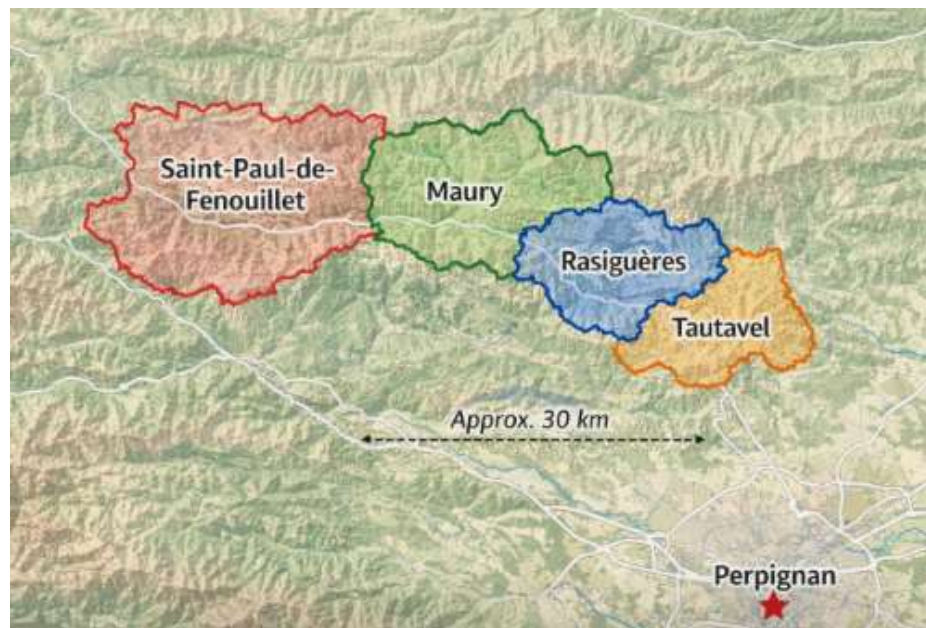
Maury wine appellation

This month we have chosen to write a story about the Maury appellation which lies about 35 kilometres to the North-West of one of our favourite cities in the world, namely Perpignan in Roussillon, France.

Maury is the name of a commune where some excellent sweet wines as well as dry white wines are permitted.

As we have discussed before, usually when an appellation is created, one commune takes the naming rights, but then some or all of the surrounding communes are also able to produce and sell wines under the same appellation, providing that commune is listed in the rules for that appellation in Section IV. The document is called the “Cahier des Charges” (in English Specifications) for the appellation.

In the Maury Cahier des Charges the communes listed in Section IV are Maury, Rasiguères, Saint-Paul-de-Fenouillet and Tautavel which are each adjacent communes to Maury. You can also see in the map below that these 4 communes are just to the north-west of the city of Perpignan.



Now to the grape varieties permitted here. We chose the Maury appellation this month because our grape of the month is Grenache Blanc and this is a key variety permitted in the Maury appellation for making what the French call “vin doux naturels” or “naturally sweet wines”.

The vin doux naturel wines from this appellation can be made with either white grapes or red grapes. The white grapes apart from Grenache Blanc are Grenache Gris, Macabeu and Tourbat. These can be supplemented by smaller amounts of Muscat à Petits Grains and Muscat d’Alexandrie (which is locally called Muscat Romain).

The red sweet wines are made from Grenache Noir supplemented by Grenache Blanc, Grenache Gris, Carignan, Macabeu and Syrah.

They can also make a “normal” red wine in this appellation. Grenache Noir is the main grape variety supplemented by Carignan, Mourvèdre, Syrah and Lledoner Pelut.

WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

An interesting difference in the Maury appellation to others such as Champagne, Burgundy and the Jura is that the Maury vine densities requirement is much lower at 4000 vines per hectare as opposed to, say, Chénas which has a minimum density of 6000 vines per hectare and Margaux in Bordeaux which requires a minimum density of 7000 vines per hectare.

French wine terms

Vieilles Vignes

Vieilles Vignes denotes a wine made from old vines. Interestingly, the term is not legally defined. Some growers label their wines “vieilles vignes” when the vines are 35 years of age, while others consider the term appropriate for those vines only well over 50. Vines can live to be over 100 years old!

Translates to old vines, which are highly prized for their lower yields and concentration of flavours.

Dénommé

This word translates as “named” and is often used in France in documents where one grape variety is called by different names in different areas of the country. For example, the grape called Malvoisie du Roussillon in the Maury appellation is called Tourbat in many other regions of France, so the “cahier des charges” for the Maury appellation lists the grape as Tourbat but then places in brackets after the name Tourbat (dénommé localement malvoisie du Roussillon).

Coulure

We have chosen this word because it doesn’t really have an English translation, but rather we have just adopted the French term.

Coulure is essentially what we would call “poor fruit set”. Essentially, this means that the vine does not deliver as many grapes as expected and therefore yields are lower than normal. It happens when flowers on this vine do not fertilise properly or when young berries fall off the vine after flowering. The reasons for this happening can be various environmental factors such as a very rainy period or snap cold spells, over-vigorous shoot growth and poor soil condition.

The other thing to note about coulure is that some grape varieties are more prone to this problem than others. Some examples are Grenache, Merlot, Malbec, Muscat Ottonel, Gewürztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel.

Une Serpette

A pruning knife.

Le cul de la bouteille

The bottom of the bottle. This term might be used if commenting on the fact that sediment has precipitates out of the wine to the bottom of the bottle.

Un vigneron

To continue the theme, this is the term for “winemaker” if the winemaker is a man. If the winemaker is a woman, the term “une vigneronne” would be used.

Un bourgeon

A bud on a grape vine.



Marcottage

Marcottage (French) or layering (English) is a vineyard propagation technique that forces a branch of a vine to develop roots while still attached to the parent plant using the technique of stripping a ring of bark and covering it with moist material. This causes a new, identical plant to mature within 2-3 months. Once planted the new plant grows independently and has all the characteristic of the plant it was derived from including its age!

Provignage

This is an older technique which is rarely practised any more. Vignerons used to lie a vine down on the ground and wait for shoots to develop along the length of the vine. They would then detach them and plant them.

Pépinière

A nursery, where young vines are grown for those who don't use the above techniques.

Cracher

A word you hear a lot during tastings in France. It refers to spitting the wine out after tasting it.

Égrappage

The term Égrappage refers to destalking the grapes before crushing and fermentation. If the winemaker uses what in English we would call "whole bunch maceration" the term would be "grappes entières".

Floraison de la vigne

Refers to the appearance of flowers of the grapevine.

Levure indigène

This term is used for the "wild yeasts" found in the vineyard. One way this happens is as the grapes ripen they begin to exude a wax onto their skin. As the wild yeasts float through the vineyards they become stuck to the grapes and hence are brought into the winery where they ferment the juice to make the wine. The alternative for more conventional winemaking is to buy yeast and add it during the winemaking process.

Grape Variety: Grenache Blanc

Let's get straight to the point. Even though Grenache Noir is one of the most popular grape varieties in France, Grenache Blanc is not all that far behind it in popularity in that country.

Grenache Blanc or "white" Grenache is a very important grape variety in France where it is the fourth most widely planted white variety after Ugni blanc, Chardonnay and Semillon. This makes it more popular than other varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc, Savagnin, Riesling, the widely used Muscat à Petits Grains, Gewurztraminer and Sylvaner.

We have decided to write about this variety again (the last time was almost ten years ago in Wine Talk 61) due to the widespread use of this variety and its use in some interesting wine styles.

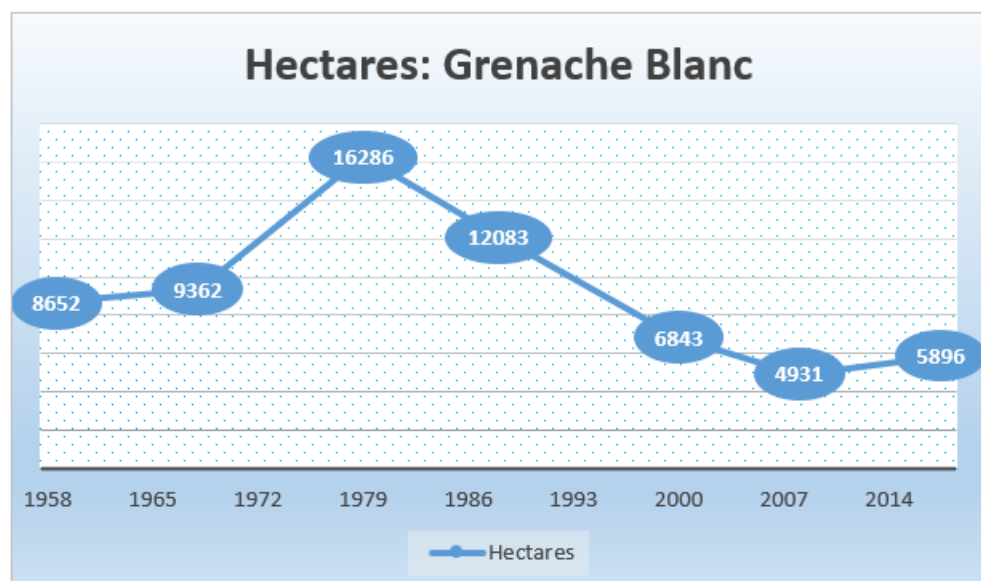
In one of our 2016 newsletters we wrote a very short story about Grenache Blanc, so we thought we should provide a more detailed explanation of this grape variety as it is a key component of the very special Domaine Milan Le Grand Blanc which has just arrived in Australia.

Grenache Blanc is certainly not as common as Grenache Noir, however it is a mutant of that grape along with Grenache Gris (grey). It was thought to have first been discovered in Spain in the Provinces of Barcelona and Tarragona.

In the Middle Ages, due to its popularity in Spain, as the Kingdom of Aragon expanded into southern France and Sardinia so did Grenache Blanc. Eventually it reached Croatia where it is known as Belan and Hungary where it is called Feher Grenache.

After the Second World War it became an important component of the Roussillon sweet, fortified wines, reaching its highest area in the late 1970s as can be seen in the graph below. Grenache Gris reached its most widespread plantings in 1979, then declined to about 25% of this figure by 2007 and then rose slightly by 2018.

It also became an authorised component of white Châteauneuf-du-Pape wines in the Rhone Valley and, as a result, it is the most widely planted white grape in that region with a little over 90 hectares currently planted there.



One of the most interesting features of the Grenache grape in general is the types of soil that it favours. For example, it is one of the grape varieties that does NOT thrive in limestone soils, hence its absence from the entire area of Burgundy.

This was enunciated early in the 19th Century in the books entitled Ampélographie by Viala, Vermorel and others who published 7 amazing volumes covering in detail all of the French grapes and others. They had this to say (our google translation) about Grenache, soils and climate in Volume 6:

Grenache Blanc is a grape variety that thrives particularly well on dry, clay, sandstone, gravelly, or schistous slopes. Limestone soils are not favourable to it. In rich, cool soils, it grows excessively, but its lifespan is much shorter; it quickly withers there; moreover, the wines it produces are of poor quality. This grape variety is pruned to resist drought; its thick, supple shoots also withstand the harsh blasts of the Cers, Sirocco, and Mistral winds very well; it is one of the best grape varieties for slopes exposed to strong winds¹.

A grape bunch for Grenache Blanc is shown below and, as can be seen, the bunches are relatively tight and hence survive best in areas where there are strong winds to blow away any moulds or powdery mildew that might accumulate on the grapes. This is one reason why it is a popular grape in the famous Chateauneuf du Pape region as it is quite close to the Rhone River where the Mistral winds blow down towards the south quite strongly at times.



Grenache Blanc grape bunch

¹ Viala, P, Vermorel, V et al (1901 – 1910) Ampélographie. Tome 6, page 287.

The leaves of the Grenache Blanc vines are relatively simple to describe. They have a somewhat deep petiole sinus where the leaf attaches to the stem with the other sinuses being relatively small.



There are relatively pronounced yet small “teeth” around the leaf.

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.