

## WINE Talk: May 2026

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 145

Welcome to newsletter 145 for May 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;
- Bits and Pieces covering a number of topics including some news items from France.
- A story about the Cassis wine appellation
- Another set of French words and their English equivalents.
- This month the grape variety story is about the progenitor of many famous grape varieties, namely Gouais Blanc.

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.

## May New Arrivals

### Montanet family wines – La Cadette and siblings

We are privileged to have secured a third release of the 2023 vintage of **La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine**, a pristine white Burgundy from the Montanet family. Their estate is based in Saint-Pere in the Yonne department in the far north of Burgundy. It has been such a delight to sell this wine. This is a small shipment, somewhat unexpected because we thought all the 2023 white cuvées were sold, which is why earlier this year we had received the 2024 La Soeur Cadette Bourgogne Blanc. After making that purchase we learned that there was both more La Châtelaine and also some more **2023 Montanet-Thoden Vézelay Galerne**, which we have had once previously, and which is also in this release.

Vézelay is one of the newest village level appellations in Burgundy, having been designated AOC status in 2017 (and more recently, in 2022, AOP which protects its name throughout Europe). The appellation only applies for wines which are made from Chardonnay in Vézelay and three neighbouring communes (Asquins, Saint-Père, and Tharoiseau). This was an upgrade from Bourgogne Vézelay, which the same Chardonnay vineyards had enjoyed since the late 1990s.

The third wine in the release is La Soeur Cadette's négoce Beaujolais, the 2024 **La Soeur Cadette Juliéna**s. It's one of the few wines La Soeur Cadette made in 2024. All the 2024 wines are négoce because the estate lost 95% of its potential harvest to frost and mildew and the 5% that was not completely a write off was not of sufficient quality to be worth harvesting and making an estate wine from. No doubt Valentin Montanet, who was the driver in the family of the decision in 2016 when faced with a similar bleak harvest, to begin making a négoce Beaujolais was particularly relieved to have gone down that path when again in 2024, the estate experienced another even more terrible year.

These three wines, three different names (La Cadette, Montanet-Thoden, and La Soeur Cadette) and three quite different styles of labels tell much of the family's story.



The estate, Domaine de la Cadette, was created by Jean and Catherine Montanet. They made their first vintage in 2004, and were given a huge boost when, from the start, American importer Kermit Lynch, sought Jean out. He knew him from when he sold his grapes to the local co-op but once he realised he was no longer involved he immediately found him and the rest is history. It also helped that in those early days of bistronomy the wines were on lists such as

Inake Aizpitarte's Le Chateaubriand, where we first tried them, and Yves Camdeborde's Le Comptoir du Relais Saint-Germain. In this shipment La Châteline is from vines that were part of the original Domaine de la Cadette.

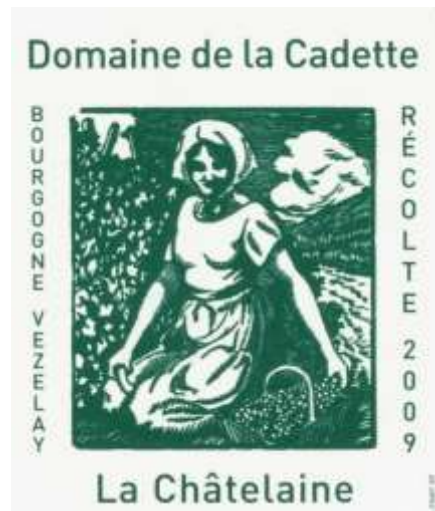
However, Catherine Montanet, Jean's wife also had an estate, established with vines owned by her own family, with a friend Tom Thoden. Domaine Montanet-Thoden made a red wine (Garance) and a white wine (Galerie). We have Galerie in this release.

Finally, the third part of the story is La Soeur Cadette. The business La Soeur Cadette was established initially by Jean and Catherine to use for their négoce wines, mainly to create a négoce Melon de Bourgogne, to supplement their own small Domaine de la Cadette Melon cuvée. These grapes were also sourced initially from nearby vineyards. However, as the climate became less predictable and difficult vintages more common, especially as a consequence of the effect of spring frosts, the négoce business expanded to include red and white Bourgogne wines from the south of Burgundy and Beaujolais. It was a big but important decision, partly also influenced by Valentin's love of Beaujolais.

In these early days when we ordered we would receive an invoice from each of Domaine de la Cadette, Domaine Montanet-Thoden and La Soeur Cadette and an awful lot of extra customs-type fees because our one or two pallets actually contained wines from three different entities. A few years ago the family created a different business structure which means now all the wines are sold to us by La Soeur Cadette (which means only one invoice and fewer extra costs). Technically that is probably how we should advertise them all, as La Soeur Cadette wines, but we choose to keep all three separate in the way we've described them below.

The differences in the labelling between the original wines and what we receive now are subtle. All the wines now have La Soeur Cadette on their back labels, because La Soeur Cadette is selling them not the estate. There is no real change for the négoce wines. But what used to be Domaine de la Cadette is now La Cadette and what was Domaine Montanet-Thoden is now just Montanet-Thoden. These names La Cadette and Montanet-Thoden are no longer official but they respect the provenance of the wines. The word 'Domaine' could no longer be used because the Domaine itself was no longer selling the wines to us and use of the word 'domaine' is highly regulated. Below, for comparison with the image above, is the 2009 vintage of La Châteline, the first one we received, which is when the estate Domaine de la Cadette sold its own wines.

This 2009 vintage was also during the period where the status of the vineyards was Bourgogne Vézelay. You can see the change of appellation in the La Cadette label above as opposed to the one below.



Below is a summary of each of the wines we are releasing, remembering that we have sold this vintage of both La Châtelaine and Galerne before.

### La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2023

La Châtelaine is an estate Chardonnay, aged predominantly in tank but a proportion in foudre. It comes from several different vineyards, which all have light, shallow, clay and limestone soils. The expositions of the vineyards, all in the commune of Saint-Père, are south-east and south-west. The vines are between 25-30 years old. The grapes are pressed using a pneumatic press, and after settling the juice is transferred to tank and foudre. Small amounts of sulphites were added after alcoholic and malolactic fermentation was completed and at bottling. It was not filtered. Certified organic. **\$65**

### Montanet-Thoden Vézelay Galerne 2023

Galerie is an estate Chardonnay sourced from parcels in the communes of Saint-Père, Tharoiseau, and Vézelay. After pressing and settling the juice was transferred to stainless steel tanks where it underwent fermentation and then aging on lees for about 10 months. Small amounts of sulphites were added after alcoholic and malolactic fermentation was completed and at bottling. It was lightly filtered on white clay. Certified organic. **\$65**

### La Soeur Cadette Juliéas 2024

Made with Gamay, the grapes are sourced from several south-facing vineyards within the Juliéas cru, all of which have well-drained granitic-sand soils. The vines are 70-90 years old. Whole bunches were fermented in vats with minimal intervention (no punching down). After pressing fermentation was completed in vats. The wine was then aged 50% in oak barrels and 50% in stainless steel tanks. Small amounts of sulphites were added after completion of alcoholic and malolactic fermentation, and at bottling. The wine was not filtered when bottled. **SOLD OUT: Only available in the packs in this newsletter.**

We can do no better than quote [Anthony Lynch](#), son of Kermit Lynch, the renowned Californian importer of Cadette wines in the USA, to describe this wine. He said recently "Now, several years into his Beaujolais venture, Valentin has learned a few tricks about working with Gamay. While his first vintages had a more "Burgundian" personality—elegant, thought-provoking—his

latest vintage makes it hard to tell he hasn't been making Beaujolais his whole life. His Juliéas, sourced from an organically farmed vineyard on granite soil, is textbook cru Beaujolais: very aromatic with loads of fresh Gamay fruit, it flows over the palate with a juicy buoyancy that simply makes it hard to resist."

If you would like to order any wines, please let us know. There is also a pack in this newsletter with two bottles of each wine that has a 15% discount.

## Octavin Arrivals

This doesn't happen very often – a release of Alice Buvot's l'Octavin wines – and we don't have many bottles, especially after the people who requested early access put in their orders. But we are so very happy to finally have some something from Alice to offer. Almost everything is sold out but we have 6 packs in this newsletter which have l'Octavin in them.

Alice Bouvot trained originally as a classical musician (a passion which explains the name of her estate and some of her cuvées) but later turned to wine. After formal training and travel to learn more she returned to the Jura, where she was born (in Besançon), and eventually in 2005 established Domaine de l'Octavin with her then partner Charles Dagand. We began working with them in 2013. Not long after that Alice and Charles separated and Alice continued with their tiny estate alone. It was then about 2 hectares. She now has about 6.5 hectares (4 hectares owned and 2 rented and is still planting more).

Because the Jura has become an increasingly difficult region to make wine in as a result of the impact of climate change (mainly earlier flowering than in the past resulting in catastrophic losses when there are late frosts) she has also turned to friends in other regions to buy grapes from. As a result she has an extraordinary collection of wines drawn from many parts of France. Her energy and commitment is extraordinary because for all her négoce projects – which, depending on the vintage, could extend from Roussillon to Provence in the south, the Alsace in the north and the Loire to the west - she and her team harvest the grapes and take them back to her Arbois cellar to make wine from them. It means many hours on the road with a precious cargo and no time to rest once she returns to Arbois.

This release has a mix of both estate and négoce wines. For a bottle you have in your hand you can also tell from the label which is which, and it is not quite what you might expect. If, on the back label, it says the wine is bottled by 'SAS l'Octavin' it is a négoce wine and if it is from 'EARL Les Vins d'ABCD' it is an estate wine. ABCD is an abbreviation of Alice and Charles' initials and is the original business they established. SAS and EARL are different types of business entities and they also hold a clue. EARL (Exploitation Agricole à Responsabilité Limitée) is highly restricted and only applies for agriculture-based businesses, meaning you are selling what you have grown. SAS (Société par Actions Simplifiée) is much more flexible and can be used for many types of activities. Since we last received Alice's wines she has made the distinction even clearer by writing the description 'raisins cultivés, vinifiés, et mis en bouteille' on the labels for estate wines, which explains that the wine is made from grapes she grew, vinified and bottled. So while, generally the presence of a gnome on a l'Octavin label can be a hint that the wine is a négoce wine, the name of the entity is a much more accurate way to be sure.

Alice's own vines are closely spread around the outskirts of Arbois. She has plots in some of Arbois's most famous vineyards including Les Corvées, En Curon, and La Mailloche. Because she

doesn't work in the appellation any more you will never specifically find these names on her wines but often she identifies the vineyard as part of the lot number. (Alice's lot numbers are an incredibly useful source of information because they also often contain an abbreviation for the variety and/or vintage as well.) She has always worked organically and also practises biodynamic viticulture. Similarly, the growers she buys from are all certified organic or work organically.

She adds absolutely nothing to her wines and uses no filtration or fining at the time of bottling. She vinifies almost every cuvée in fibreglass tanks, her preferred vessel because it gives nothing of itself to the wine (plus there are benefits in "sort of" being able to see through the tank). There are no compromises – they are all "pur jus". It is the way she began making wines with Charles and she has never veered from those principles, always making wines that she loves to drink rather than chasing wines which will appeal to a broad market.

Below is a summary of the wines. We've marked the ones we know are sold out, indicating if they are in packs, but it's possible others will be by the time we get this out so the only guaranteed way to buy from us is to secure one of the packs we have reserved for newsletter customers. However, we have started our shipping to wholesale customers so they will soon be in many of the venues and online shops which stock our wines. That's why we include descriptions of the sold out wines in the newsletter – so you know what to look for in other places.

(\*) indicates it is an estate wine.

Wine	Region	Type	Variety	ABV	Status
l'Octavin P'tit Poussot 2024 (*)	Jura	White	Chardonnay	10.5%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Tamino 2021 (*)	Jura	Macerated	Chardonnay, Savagnin, Plousard	12%	Sold out
l'Octavin Clé à Molette 2023	Bugey	White	Molette	11%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Ivre de Vivre 2023	Provence	Whiteish	Vermentino, Roussanne, Marsanne	10.5%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Corvée de T NV (22/23) (*)	Jura	Red	Trousseau	12%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Dorabella 2023 (*)	Jura	Red	Poulsard	11.5%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Elle Aime 2022 (*)	Jura	Red	Pinot Noir, Chardonnay	13%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Cariboom 2022	Provence	Red	Carignan, Grenache	12%	Available and in a pack

Wine	Region	Type	Variety	ABV	Status
l'Octavin Charlot 2023	Ardèche, Provence	Red	Merlot, Syrah, Carignan	12%	Available and in a pack
l'Octavin Ganache 2022	Provence	Red	Grenache	13%	Available and in a pack
l'Octavin Grenabar 2023	Provence	Light Red	Grenache	12.5%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Gros Lot 2024	Loire	Red	Grolleau Noir	10%	Available and in a pack
l'Octavin Hip Hip J ... Poulsard 2023	Jura	Red	Poulsard	11%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Synain 2022	Loire, Roussillon	Light Red	Chenin Blanc, Syrah	11.5%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Tour de France 2024 (23/24)	Provence, Alsace, Jura	Light Red	Mourvèdre, Cinsault, and others (negoce and estate)	10.5%	Sold out but in a pack
l'Octavin Betty Bulles Blanc 2024	Provence, Roussillon	Sparkling	Vermentino, Roussanne, Marsanne, Muscat à Petits Grains	11%	Available and in a pack
l'Octavin Betty Bulles Rouge 2024	Provence, Roussillon	Sparkling	Grenache, Grenache Blanc, Syrah, Mourvèdre, Muscat à Petits Grains	11%	Available and in a pack

Below is a detailed description of each of the wines. The wines that are still available have a price in the description – if there is no price then it indicates that we have sold out of that cuvée.

### **l'Octavin P'tit Poussot 2024**

From the lieu-dit en Poussot, this Chardonnay is from Alice's estate. 15% was destemmed and macerated for 20 days. The remaining 85% was direct pressed. Despite the macerated part it drinks like a white wine so we have classified it that way. It's remarkably refreshing for a Chardonnay, a good wine for resetting palates during a long meal. It was bottled in May 2025. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Tamino 2021**

This estate wine, which we expect will be a one-off cuvée, is from the iconic La Mailloche lieu dit just outside Arbois. It is a blend of 60% Chardonnay, 30% Savagnin, and 10% Poulsard, harvested and vinified together. The grapes for this wine usually make the wine Potion Magique but Alice felt it was not sufficiently typical of this cuvée to use that name (because there was so little poulsard) so she called it Tamino instead (recycling one of the original Octavin label designs which reflected her background as a musician). We normally classify Potion Magique as a light red but this wine feels much more like a wine made from macerated white grapes, even though there is a little poulsard. Quoting from French distributor Marée-Haut "The wine strikes a balance between tension and fruit, between freshness and depth. Citrus, white fruit, and a touch of spice are present. The palate is vibrant, saline, and energetic." Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Clé à Molette 2023**

Clé à Molette is made with Molette from Domaine Trichon in Bugey. It was directly pressed and aged in tank. Intensely citrus, this wine is refreshing and full of energy. "Cordial for people who like alcohol in their cordial" is another way of looking at it. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Ivre de Vivre 2023**

All the grapes for Ivre de Vivre are from Claude Ughetto, whose vines are in Saint-Pierre-de-Vassols, a small village near Carpentras in Provence. 50% is Vermentino and the rest is a mix of Roussanne and Marsanne. The majority of the Vermentino was directly-pressed. Whole bunches of Roussanne and Marsanne were macerated for seven days in a bath of more Vermentino. The two vinifications were assembled after fermentation was complete. The three different varieties in this wine are beautifully balanced - not one of them dominates the wine. It was bottled in June 2024. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Corvée de T NV (22/23)**

From the renowned Arbois lieu dit "Les Corvées", this is Alice's lighter trousseau that is more suited to early drinking (having said that we drank a 2011 not so long ago and it was still very much alive). Whole bunches were macerated for two months, prior to pressing. The wine was bottled in April 2024. Aged in tank. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Dorabella 2023**

From the Arbois lieu dit En Curon, this Poulsard was harvested in September 2023, destemmed by hand and then macerated for 20 days before pressing. It was briefly aged in stainless steel before bottling. It's light, almost as if there was some directly-pressed juice (which there isn't) with hints of not quite ripe strawberries. Despite the light weight, it has plenty of length and finishes feeling like it's very connected to where it came from. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Elle Aime 2022**

Entirely from the Arbois lieu dit En Arces, the wine is 90% Pinot Noir and 10% Chardonnay. The grapes are harvested together and macerated for three weeks prior to pressing. 75% were

whole bunches and 25% were destemmed. Aging was in stainless steel. It was bottled in April 2023. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Cariboom 2022**

Cariboom is made with grapes from Claude Ughetto (Saint-Pierre-de-Vassols, Provence). Whole bunches of Grenache were macerated in a bath of directly-pressed Carignan for 20 days. After pressing the wine was aged in tanks. It was bottled in May 2023. Certified organic. **\$77**

### **I'Octavin Charlot 2023**

A blend of 40% Merlot, 45% Syrah, and 15% Carignan. The Merlot is from Jean-Benoit Plagnol, who is in Les Salelles in the Ardèche. The Syrah and Carignan are from Claude Ughetto in Saint Pierre de Vassols in Provence. The Merlot was macerated for 10 days and the Syrah for 8 days (both whole bunches). The Carignan was directly-pressed. Each variety was treated separately initially but then assembled after everything was pressed. It was aged in tank and bottled in November 2023. Certified organic. **\$71**

### **I'Octavin Ganache 2022**

This wine is made entirely with Grenache from Claude Ughetto (Saint-Pierre-de-Vassols, Provence). Whole bunches of a part of the wine (25%) were macerated in a bath of directly-pressed Grenache for 7 days. The other 75% was macerated for one month more traditionally. It was bottled in June 2023. Certified organic. **\$71**

### **I'Octavin Grenabar 2023**

This wine is made with grapes from Claude Ughetto (Saint-Pierre-de-Vassols, Provence). Whole bunches were macerated more 10 days prior to pressing. It was bottled in June 2023. it might be psychological based on the name but this wine reminds us of Pomegranate (grenadine in French). Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Gros Lot 2024**

This is the first time we have had a wine from Alice made entirely with grapes from the Loire Valley. And they are not just any grapes. These are from Sébastien Dervieux, better known as Babass, whose vines are in Beaulieu-sur-Layon. Harvested on the last day of September, whole bunches were macerated in two parts. 2/3 had 10 days of maceration and 1/3 had four weeks, both in stainless steel tanks. Both parts were assembled in April 2025, after fermentation was completed. It was bottled in May 2025. The wine is very fresh and energetic with crisp notes of red fruit. The viticulture is organic but if you want to know why the certification is not on the label ask us. The answer isn't appropriate for print. **\$77**

### **I'Octavin Hip Hip J ... Poulsard 2023**

This négoce wine is made with Arbois Poulsard. The vineyard is organic in conversion. A part was vinified as whole bunches and a part was destemmed (50/50). Both were macerated for 10 days prior to pressing and blending. It was aged in tank and bottled in June 2023.

### **I'Octavin Synain 2022**

The colour of peach, this wine is 50% Chenin Blanc and 50% Syrah. The Chenin Blanc is from Domaine du Verger in Faye d'Anjou. The Syrah is from Vincent Lafage in Canet en Roussillon. Both parts were directly pressed and aged in tank. They were assembled not long before bottling in October 2023. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Tour de France NV (23/24)**

As the name implies, this wine is sourced with grapes from several parts of France, including Alice's estate. 37% is Mourvèdre and 13% is Cinsault from Claude Ughetto in Provence. The remaining 50% is a melange from the 2023 harvest, both négoce and estate. To complicate things, part of the Mourvèdre is from 2024 and part from 2023 and all of the Cinsault is from 2023 so the majority of the wine is from the 2023 vintage (we think!). It is quite textural and opens up beautiful over the life of the bottle. Certified organic.

### **I'Octavin Betty Bulles Blanc 2024**

The wine is 80% Vermentino, 9% Roussanne, 9% Marsanne, and 2% Muscat à Petits Grains. It is mostly sourced from Claude Ughetto in Provence but the Muscat is from Vincent Lafage in Roussillon. The grapes were directly pressed (each variety separately) and the juices were assembled just before bottling. It was bottled with approximately 15g of sugar. It was disgorged by hand in December 2024. **\$71**

### **I'Octavin Betty Bulles Rouge 2024**

Most of the grapes are from Claude Ughetto in Provence but the Muscat is from Vincent Lafage in Roussillon. Each variety was vinified separately with short macerations. The pressed juices were assembled just before bottling. It was bottled with approximately 15g of sugar. It was disgorged by hand in January 2025. **\$71**

## **What's coming**

The wines we advertise are going to be very limited over the next couple of months as we mainly have allocation wines arriving.

We will be allocating Bruyère-Houillon and Bornard in June and de Moor in late July and early August. We'll have some Fremont ciders and calvados to advertise in late in June or early July and La Petite Empreinte in late in July.

If you would like advance notice about either of those advertised releases please let us know. We should have news about more arrivals in the second half of the year in the July newsletter.

**Pack 1: La Cadette and Siblings New Arrivals 6 Pack**

**(15% Discount –2 Packs Only)**



This pack has 2 bottles of each of the three wines we are releasing this month from the Montanet family. There are two Vézelay Chardonnays (Galerie and La Châtelaine) so four whites in total and one Cru Beaujolais, the 2024 Julié纳斯, which is 100% Gamay. There is a detailed description of the three wines and more information about the family and the relatively new Vézelay Burgundy appellation in the New Arrivals section.

**These are the wines:**

- **La Cadette Vézelay La Châtelaine 2023 (2 bottles)**
- **Montanet-Thoden Vézelay Galerie 2023 (2 bottles)**
- **La Soeur Cadette Julié纳斯 2024 (2 bottles)**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$376 and the sale price is **\$319.60**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

## Pack 2: First Magnum Pack

(15% Discount - 1 Pack Only)



There is a what may be an apocryphal expression, but which is attributed to Winston Churchill, that “A magnum is the perfect size for two gentlemen to share over lunch, especially if one of them isn't drinking.” Setting aside the misogyny we couldn't possibly encourage such behaviour because we have a liquor licence to protect but that doesn't mean we can't smile at a sentiment which is supportive of the idea of drinking large bottles. It just needs at least a few people. We can, without risk, support the idea based on our anecdotal evidence that everything does taste better from a big bottle!

We have two magnum packs in this newsletter so if you order one please make sure you tell us the pack number and the name, which for this one is the imaginatively titled “First Magnum Pack”.

The white wine in this pack is a serious wine. 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 2017 vintage spent 2 years in old oak barrels and then a further 4 years in a concrete tank. 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. If you like complex white Burgundies and Jura whites then this wine for Provence is likely to be appealing as well. The wine is certified organic and does have some sulphites added so is not for the zero-zero drinkers.

The other two are both red but on the lighter side and verging towards rosé in the case of the Mosse Gros Bisou.

Axel Prüfer's Le Temps Des Cerises Avanti Popolo is made with the harvest from new vineyards he purchased in 2022. They are currently in conversion to organic and each year he adds a little more colour back into the label to signify progress in the vineyard.

Once the vineyard is fully organic the label will revert to the original colour. It is at 60% for this vintage. It is a quite a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Alicante Bouschet, and Grenache Noir. The Alicante Bouschet (red juice), Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon were directly-pressed and used to infuse most of the Syrah, which was destemmed.

A subsequent pick of Syrah was fermented using carbonic maceration. After pressing aging was in two large tanks - one fibreglass and one wooden - but there is a strange twist in this cuvée, a legacy from an experiment Axel made in 2022. In 2022 he experimented by leaving 4 demi-muid (400 litre) barrels filled with Grenache, Cinsault, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon (one for each variety) outside. These were grapes not juice!

He removed the heads of the barrels, filled them with grapes, then put the heads back on the barrels. They spent 12 months outside. The juice from subsequently pressing these grapes spent two years in a stainless steel tank and was then added to this 2024 vintage (12 hectolitres in 85 hectolitres). If you taste some wood in this wine that is the reason. It is also the reason why there are far more tannins than is usual in one of Axel's wines. It is a rustic wine that can definitely stand up to food.

Gros Bisou is a blend of most of the varieties that the Mosse grow. It's a great park wine, although for some of us park weather has just about retreated for the winter months. It is 30% Grolleau Noir, 30% Grolleau Gris, 15% Cabernet Franc, 15% Côt and 15% Chenin Blanc. Each variety was vinified separately with short whole-bunch macerations between 7 and 10 days. After pressing it was aged in a mix of foudres and barrels before assembling prior to bottling in April 2025.

The wine is light, fruity and tangy. The Mosse tasting notes are "Raspberry colour. An expressive nose of cherry and cranberry, and white pepper." The Mosses recommend a perfect serving temperature is about 12 degrees but if it's a choice between room temperature and refrigerated choose refrigerated every time! This wine is not filtered. It's only 10.5%, which is lovely for large bottles you might share with a crowd.

Three very different wines – all in 1.5 litre bottles!

**These are the wines:**

- **Le Temps des Cerises Avanti Popolo 2024 Magnum**
- **Milan Le Grand Blanc 2017 Magnum**
- **Mosse Bisou 2024 Magnum**

**The RRP for this selection of 3 Magnums is \$382 but the pack price is only \$324.70. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.**

### Pack 3: Second Magnum Pack

(15% Discount - 1 Pack Only)



We never have a lot of magnums so we had to forage a bit to make up this second pack. Two of the wines are from our current list and one is from our personal collection.

The wine from the archives is the 2022 Geschickt Vin d'Alsace Phénix. Predominantly Pinot Gris (80%), it also has some Pinot Auxerrois and some lees from Pinot Noir which was picked earlier that week and then pressed (for the colour). It was macerated for 1 month in stainless steel then, after fermentation, aged for 8 months in foudre. It has no added sulphites. Magnum bottles are beautiful things but Alsace magnums are something else. In Alsace the 750ml bottles are much longer and thinner than typical bottles (anyone who's packed mixed orders with Alsace bottles in them will be acutely aware of that). The magnums are different too – longer than a typical magnum but thinner. With this bright pinky-red wine it's even more spectacular. We don't generally sell wine based on the appearance of the bottle but this one is a bit of a show stopper.

The other two wines are equally special.

The second wine is the same 2017 Milan Grand Blanc in the previous pack and is described in the notes for that pack. It is a wine that demands food, such as a roast chicken or a bigger bird. The final wine is the

The third wine is a gamay. Méliッサ and Romain have a tiny plot of Gamay (just 0.1 of a hectare) on a Kimmeridgian limestone ridge in the commune of Vincelottes, which is just south of Saint-Bris. They only make one barrel each vintage and only when they have enough to make a wine – there was nothing in 2024. They also only bottle it in magnums. Whole bunches are macerated

## **WINE Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines**

for about 2 weeks with no attempt at heavy extraction. It is a wine made with drinkability first and foremost in mind.

These three wines are all very special and all very different.

**The pack has the following wines:**

- **Geschickt Vin d'Alsace Phenix 2022 Magnum**
- **Milan Le Grand Blanc 2017 Magnum**
- **La Petite Empreinte Gamay 2023 Magnum**

**The RRP for this selection of 3 Magnums is \$552 but the pack price is only **\$469.20**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.**

## Pack 4: Pinot Noir Pack

(15% Discount - 1 Pack Only)



This pack has six Pinot Noirs from six different estates. Technically that's true although as most of our customers would know Domaine Derain and Sextant are both owned by Julien Altaber and Carole Schwab so the Derain Les Riaux and Altaber Bourgogne Rouge were made by the same person albeit from a different vintage.

Two of the wines are from the Côte de Beaune (Fanny Sabre's Beaune Clos des Renardes and the Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux (which is from the commune of Corpeau). The Sextant Bourgogne Rouge is from Mâcon, just a little south of the Côte de Beaune and La Petite Empreinte Côteaux Bourguignons is also from Burgundy, but from its far north in the Yonne department (the vines are close to Vincelottes).

The last two are not from Burgundy. Etienne Thiebaud's Domaine des Cavarodes Pinot Noir is from the Jura, although his vineyards are closer to Beaune, the heart of Burgundy, than La Petite Empreinte's. Much of the Jura is just an hour's drive from Burgundy. The last wine though is from a very "left-field" place to grow Pinot Noir, Domaine Milan, in Provence.

The vines, though are from a massale selection made by a friend of the Milans, the renowned Burgundy winemaker Emmanuel Giboulot, so Burgundy is their source. Grown on clay and

limestone with a sub soil of blue marl, this wine is elegant, almost ethereal, and an interesting challenge for people who like identifying variety and location in a blind tasting.

**These are the wines:**

- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne Les Riaux 2022**
- **Fanny Sabre Beaune Rouge Clos des Renardes 2023**
- **La Petite Empreinte Côteaux Bourguignons Mès a Tierra 2023**
- **Milan Le Premier 2022**
- **Domaine des Cavarodes Côtes du Jura Pinot Noir Lumachelles 2022**
- **Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Rouge 2023**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$492 but the pack price is only **\$418.20**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

## Pack 5: On The Wilder Side Pack

(18% Discount - 1 Pack Only)



It's fair to say that this pack is an experiment in every way. Many of the wines in the pack are fairly experimental, except perhaps the Robinot, which is Jean-Pierre's premium pet-nat made from Pineau d'Aunis and Chenin Blanc, which we only ever have a small allocation of. It is something he makes regularly.

But, given their age, drinking all of them will definitely be an experiment. Even the Robinot pet-nat, because it is now more than 8 years old and may have lost some of its fizz and energy. We haven't drunk most of them for some time but did try the Les Temps des Cerises Brutal again recently. It's a true red wine. We never confirmed the exact grape variety but think it is mainly or entirely Grenache. It's a volatile, as Axel's wines often are, but, with no added sulphites, still very much alive. It's more a food wine than a glou glou wine.

There are other issues too. We're fairly certain the l'Octavin Le Roi des Cepages is 2017, based on our remaining inventory, but the lot number on the label where Alice includes the vintage, is damaged so it's impossible to guarantee it.

The final wine is Karnage's Zac, which is made with Mauzac, a grape from the south-west of France. (Karnage is a négoce project between Charles Dagand (formerly Alice Bouvot's husband and originally her partner in Octavin) and Arbois wine merchant and former sommelier Stéphane Planche, whose excellent wine shop is in the middle of Arbois. You can tell they didn't quite know what Zac might become. It's a still white wine but sealed with a crown seal, suggesting they were worried it might continue to ferment. It didn't but it still comfortably fits the "wilder side" theme of this pack.

We can definitely say that some of our customers, who appreciate more classic flavours in wines, would not enjoy the wines in this pack, but we are sure there is someone out there who would find it fascinating. The discounts are all over the place, but the end result is an average of 18% off.

These are the wines:

- Le Temps des Cerises Brutal 2018
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Po à Po 2018
- Sextant - Julien Altaber Clin d'Oeil 2018
- l'Octavin Le Roi des Cepages 2017
- Karnage Zak 2020
- Jean-Pierre Robinot l'As des Années Folles 2017

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$389 but the pack price is only **\$318.95**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

## Pack 6: Derain and Sextant Archive 3 Pack

(1 Pack Only – No Discount)



There was lots of love for our release of Domaine Derain wines in April, so we decided to make a cellar pack of three older Derain and Sextant wines.

The two Derain wines are some of the first made after the sale of Dominique Derain's estate to Julien Altaber (if a label says Domaine Derain it's from the new era).

They are also two of the estate's most important Chardonnays – La Combe and the 1er Cru En Remilly. La Combe is from the 2017 vintage and En Remilly from 2018. They are quite dramatically different vintages. 2017 was a classic Burgundy vintage, with not too much heat during the critical ripening season, and 2018 was a particularly hot year so the wines are generally richer, more concentrated and more powerful.

We've also included one of Julien Altaber's Sextant wines, also from the 2017 fresher vintage, his Bourgogne Rouge which is 100% Pinot Noir.

There is no discount or subsidised freight for this 3 pack, but if we have other wines you are interested in, you are welcome to make it up to a 6 pack, in which case all the wines, including these, will get our normal 10% discount.

**These are the wines:**

- **Derain Bourgogne La Combe 2017**
- **Derain Saint-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly 2018**
- **Sextant - Julien Altaber**

**The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is \$277. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.**

**Pack 7: On the Whiter Side l'Octavin 3 Pack**

**(1 Pack Only – No Discount)**



This pack has three of Alice's whiter wines. P'tit Poussot is an estate Chardonnay and the other two are négoce wines. There is a detailed description of all these wines in the New Arrivals section. There is no discount or subsidised freight for this pack but should it be ordered with other wines our normal discount and freight subsidy for 6 bottle orders would apply.

**These are the wines:**

- **l'Octavin P'tit Poussot 2024**
- **l'Octavin Clé à Molette 2023**
- **l'Octavin Ivre de Vivre 2023**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$271**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

**Pack 8: Mixed Octavin 6 Pack**

**(1 Pack Only – 15% Discount)**



This pack has a nice mix of estate and négoce wines, including Alice’s iconic Dorabella Poulsard. It’s also a mix of styles too – one sparkling, three reds, one light red and one white. There is a detailed description of all these wines in the New Arrivals section.

**These are the wines:**

- **l'Octavin P'tit Poussot 2024**
- **l'Octavin Dorabella 2023**
- **l'Octavin Cariboom 2022**
- **l'Octavin Charlot 2023**
- **l'Octavin Grenabar 2023**
- **l'Octavin Betty Bulles Blanc 2024**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$562.00 but the discounted price is **\$477.70**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

## Pack 9: Touring France with Alice Pack

(2 Packs Only – 15% Discount)



This pack, which is various shades of red, has wine from many different parts of France. Apart from the obvious choice to include Tour de France, which as well as Mourvèdre and Cinsault, has juice from the pressings of other estate and négoce fruit, there are wines from Provence, the Loire, the Jura, as well as wines which blend the Ardèche and Provence, and the Loire and Roussillon. We can guarantee these are unique cuvées. They are all négoce wines, even the Jura cuvée, although the grapes for those wines come from very close to Alice's cellar.

There is a detailed description of all these wines in the New Arrivals section.

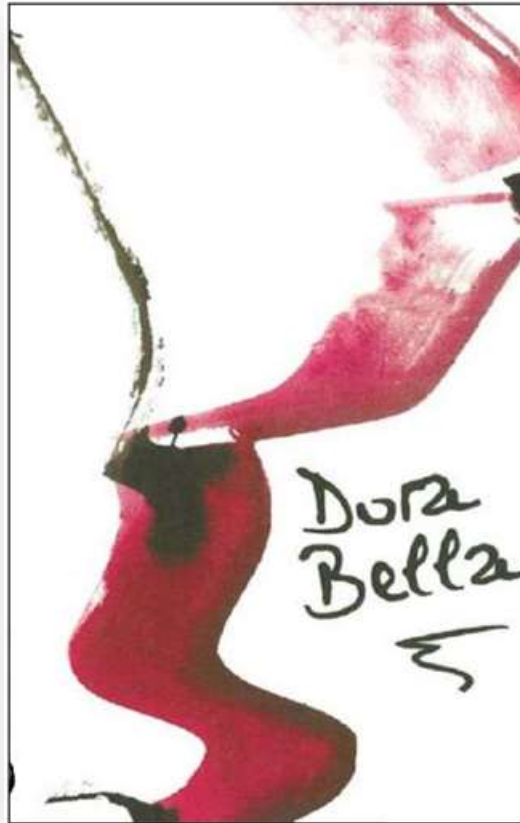
**These are the wines:**

- **l'Octavin Charlot 2023**
- **l'Octavin Ganache 2022**
- **l'Octavin Gros Lot 2024**
- **l'Octavin Hip Hip J ... Poulsard 2023**
- **l'Octavin Synain 2022**
- **l'Octavin Tour de France 2024 (23/24)**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$492 but the discounted price is **\$418.20**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

**Pack 10: l'Octavin Estate 3 Pack**

**(1 Pack Only – No Discount)**



This pack has three of Alice's estate wines in it. All are from renowned Arbois lieu dits, just out of the town. P'tit Poussot is Chardonnay from en Poussot, Corvée de T is Trousseau from Les Corvées and Dorabella is from En Curon. There is a detailed description of all these wines in the New Arrivals section. There is no discount or subsidised freight for this pack but should it be ordered with other wines our normal discount and freight subsidy for 6 bottle orders would apply.

**These are the wines:**

- l'Octavin P'tit Poussot 2024
- l'Octavin Corvée de T NV (22/23)
- l'Octavin Dorabella 2023

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is **\$377**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

**Pack 11: l'Octavin Reds 6 Pack**

**(1 Pack Only – 15% Discount)**



Most of the wines in this release were red wines so we decided to create one pack just with reds. All of Alice's wines have a freshness about them and good acidity so we're not talking big, big, reds here. But we can imagine them all being particularly delicious with the right late-autumn and winter dish. Elle Aime (Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) and Corvée de T (Trousseau) are estate wines and the rest are négoce, with varieties including Carignan, Grenache, Merlot, Syrah, and Grolleau Noir. There is a detailed description of all these wines in the New Arrivals section.

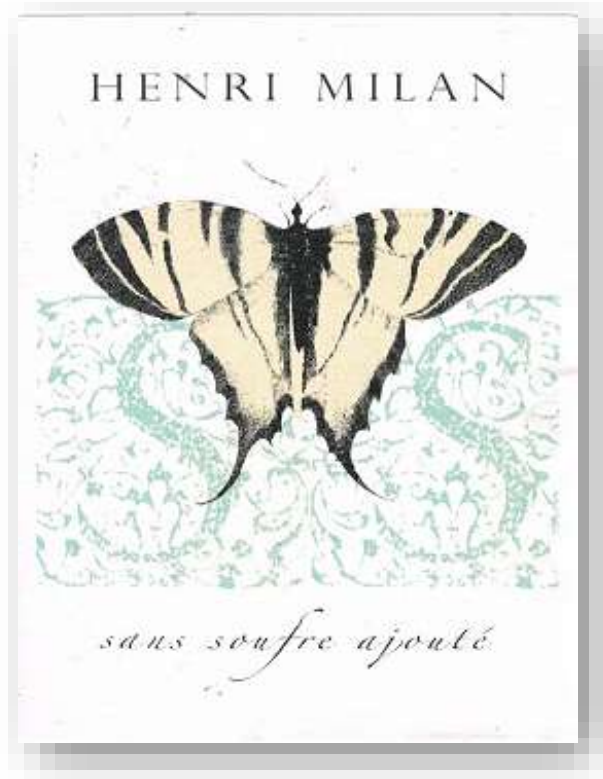
**These are the wines:**

- **l'Octavin Corvée de T NV (22/23)**
- **l'Octavin Elle Aime 2022**
- **l'Octavin Cariboom 2022**
- **l'Octavin Charlot 2023**
- **l'Octavin Ganache 2022**
- **l'Octavin Gros Lot 2024**

**The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$542. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.**

**Pack 12: Small Bubbly 3 Pack**

**(1 Pack Only – No Discount)**



This pack has one of each of our new l'Octavin pet-nats and a white sparkling made using méthode traditionnelle from Domaine Milan. Both l'Octavin wines are blends of several varieties – one white and one a deep, juicy red - and the Milan Brut Nature Blanc is a complex white wine made from Macabeu and Grenache Gris. It has no dosage and, like the l'Octavin wines, no added sulphites. There is a detailed description of the l'Octavin wines in this pack in the New Arrivals section.

There is no discount or subsidised freight for this pack but should it be ordered with other wines our normal discount and freight subsidy for 6 bottle orders would apply.

**These are the wines:**

- **l'Octavin Betty Bulles Blanc 2024**
- **l'Octavin Betty Bulles Rouge 2024**
- **Milan Brut Nature Blanc 2023**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$205**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

## Bits and Pieces

### 5 More Places outside Paris to enjoy natural wines

In the April 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.

**Livingston, Marseille** – Livingston is an offshoot of La Mercerie in Marseille and a place we like very much. It is less formal than La Mercerie but the food is interesting and the wines natural. It is well-worth a visit if you plan to explore this exciting city.

The pizzetta was pure indulgence and the chicory, grilled over charcoal, smothered with anchoiade and then showered with Parmesan is only the sort of dish you could offer if you are 100% confident in the quality of your produce. It would not make sense to make the whole dish based on one vegetable unless it was extraordinary, which it was.

The food is beyond delicious, with some dishes, like the mussels, having you feeling that eating them will boost your wellbeing.

*5 Rue Crudère, Marseille, 13006.*

**Les Becs à Vin, Orleans** – This is a favourite haunt in the Loire Valley city of Orleans. It stocks only natural wines and the food is simple but very tasty.

We were very lucky to book a lunch here which turned out to be a special occasion - it was the chef's birthday. We were treated to a lovely lunch, the centrepiece of which was a parmentier of rabbit served in a large rectangular baking tray. It was a great dish! We enjoyed a bottle of Macon from Gilles and Catherine Verge with an entree salad of lentils and a Domaine le Briseau Les Mortiers Coteaux du Loire with the rabbit. Both were excellent.

*8 Place du Châtelet, Orleans, 45000.*

**Auberge de Chassignolles** – Chassignolles is a remote village which lies at almost 1000 metres above sea level in the mountains south of the city of Clermont-Ferrand in the heart of the Auvergne. You drive up through winding, mountainous, forested roads to reach this tiny hamlet.

The Auberge nestles comfortably in the square of the tiny village opposite a solidly-built and very old (11th century?) church. The welcome here is warm and friendly, the food delicious and the natural wine selection excellent. What more could one ask for?

You will be served a meal that is unfussy but truly memorable. The vegetables are grown in their extensive garden which is only a very short walk from the hotel.

Just walk across the square, say hello to the goats, then to the pigs and beyond you will find row upon row upon row of vegetables that are sensitive to the season.

And while you enjoy your meal you will be able to choose from some wonderful local natural wines (it would be crazy to serve anything else when so much care is taken to serve organic food here).

We usually start with a local Festejar sparkling wine, one of the best sparkling wines from the Auvergne area. We just love this wine. The pale pink beauty melded perfectly with the pale sunshine on this autumn afternoon as we sat on the terrace in front of the hotel. We then moved on to other local wines that suit the food being served on the evening.

The breakfasts here are also most enjoyable with the bread sourced from a village down the road and house-made preserves, eggs, sliced meats and other excellent products to get the day started.

*Auberge de Chassignolles, Chassignolles, 43440.*

**Le Temps des Vendanges, Toulouse** - Toulouse can lay claim to a wine bar with one of the best selections of natural wines you are likely to find. It is called Le Temps des Vendanges. Here you can enjoy a bottle of interesting wine while snacking on simple, but delicious, light food. The owner has an encyclopaedic knowledge of natural wines and is keen to promote their cause.

But back to the wines. Heading the list is the Jacques Selosse and occasionally the hard-to-find 'Substance', followed by a stellar line up including Domaine Vouette et Sorbée and Domaine Ruppert Leroy.

Domaines Overnoy and Ganevat represent the Jura, there is a stellar Loire line-up including Domaine Mosse and Domaine Thierry Puzelat. From Burgundy, Domaine Alice et Olivier de Moor takes its place alongside the Domaine Derain both of which we import. There is also a strong selection from the Rhone Valley

*9 Pl. de l'Estrapade, Toulouse, 31300*

**Aux Crieurs de Vin, Troyes** - In the heart of the city of Troyes, this is a great place to visit. There's a substantial menu with a choice of four or so entrées, mains and desserts and of course excellent cheese. They're mostly classic bistro dishes, but usually with a touch of lightness. So, a grilled Laguiole sausage might be served with steamed eggplant, roast lamb is flavoured with cumin and the starters might include a beetroot tartare with fresh chèvre. And always start with the charcuterie and order cheese. This is also one of the best places to order andouillette. They're made by the renowned local butcher Daniel Thierry, whose andouillettes appear in many of the places we like to eat, all around France.

Wines that we have tried here include the wonderful Cuvee Juliette from Jean-Pierre Robinot and a bottle of the Domaine le Briseau Patapon Coteaux du Loir - a wonderful slightly sweet white wine of considerable funkiness and deliciousness.

*4 place Jean Jaures, Troyes, 10000*

## Water and soils

Information about soils in vineyards is plentiful, but it needs to be interpreted carefully due to the variations of important factors such as soil type, soil depth, water content, soil density, soil firmness and many more.

One variable that can make a big difference is water content. A difference between the vineyards in France and the vineyards in Australia is that in most French appellations irrigating vineyards is strictly forbidden.

One of the reasons this is enforced is that there is a lot of research which shows that the higher the water content in the vineyard soils the lower is the quality of the wines. And, paradoxically, vines that have experienced water stress tend to produce higher quality wines.<sup>1</sup>

For example, a paper by Coipel et al<sup>2</sup> states that in their research:

*“the grapes with the highest potential for making quality red wines were obtained on the soils with the lowest water holding capacity.”*

This further adds credence to the rules in France about not allowing watering of vineyards in most of the appellations.

But there are many other factors affecting wine quality. One of these is soil depth and clay fraction which together have a strong influence on grapevine development and yield according to Bodin and Morlat, 2006<sup>1</sup>; and Trought et al., 2006<sup>3</sup>.

These papers make the point that soil depth is an important factor in grapevine development as is the percentage of clay in that soil with the higher percentage of clay leading to higher quality wines.

### Surfactants explained

The term surfactants is derived from the words SURFace ACTing AgeNTS and mainly relates to the world of agricultural sprays which, in Australia, encompasses the use of sprays in vineyards. There are many other roles for surfactants including in laundry detergents, kitchen detergents, hair and skin shampoos, skin care products, toothpaste and many, many more.

They are an additive to the sprays such as dicamba, glyphosate, paraquat and many, many more which are widely used in agriculture.

In the case of grapevines, the purpose of the surfactants is to add to the “efficiency” of these sprays by helping them spread out over the leaves of the grapevines and to increase the “stickiness” of the spray. This means the spray stays on the leaves longer and spreads to all parts of the leaves to increase the amount of spray that is absorbed by each leaf.

The content of these surfactants can be quite complex with up to 30 individual chemicals used in some of them.

The problem is that these surfactants are just making these dangerous chemicals even more efficient in the field ensuring that there is more in the food you eventually eat or the wine you eventually drink.

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<sup>1</sup> Bodin F. and Morlat R. (2006): *Characterization of viticultural terroirs using a simple field model based on soil depth - I. Validation of the water supply regime, phenology and vine vigour, in the Anjou vineyard (France). Plant and Soil, 281(1), 37-54.*

<sup>2</sup> Coipel, J et al (2006) *"Terroir" effect, as a result of environmental stress, depends more on soil depth than on soil type (Vitis vinifera L. cv. Grenache Noir, Côtes du Rhône, France. Vol. 40 No. 4: Journal international des sciences de la vigne et du vin.*

<sup>3</sup> Trought M., Dixon R., Mills T., Greven M., Agnew R., Mauk J.L. and Praat J.P. (2006): *The impact of differences in soil texture within a vineyard on vine development and wine quality, pp 133-138. In Proceedings of the VIth International Terroir Congress, France.*

## Soil Microorganisms

In the past we have often written about the importance of healthy soils for the maintenance of healthy grapevines. In those writings we have discussed the importance of the composition of the soils, the role of water and the role of living creatures such as worms in aerating the soil.

What we have not devoted a lot of time to is one of the most important things in the soil for making soil productive. Here we are talking about microorganisms and in particular bacteria, although actinomycetes, protozoa, fungi, protozoa and algae.

So, in this first attempt at explaining what small creatures do to help the soil we will briefly explain some of the areas where bacteria play a vital role.

- Bacteria are responsible for fixing nitrogen in the soil thus dramatically reducing the need for fertilisers;
- We are amazed by bacteria that are called root nodule bacteria that can store and fix nitrogen from the atmosphere in nodules in clover, for example, which obviates the need to add fertiliser;
- Similarly it has been discovered in Australia that they are also responsible for transferring nitrogen from the soil into the root nodules of legumes thus helping those plants grow;
- Bacteria containing phosphobacterin - a substance that is a useful fertiliser has been used by scientists to improve soil fertility;
- Bacteria provide service to the soil that fungi and actinomycetes are unable to at depth as they rely on oxygen as opposed to bacteria;
- Certain types of bacteria (those classified as psychrophiles) can provide these services in soil in Arctic zones where there are extremes of climate;
- Bacteria are generally found in much greater numbers in soil in the area called the rhizosphere which is the area most densely populated with roots of plants, and in much lower numbers in areas where there are no or low numbers of roots.

We will write more about the effect of bacteria and other agents in the soil in forthcoming newsletters.

## Cassis wine appellation

We have chosen the Cassis appellation in Provence which sits right on the Mediterranean coastline as our appellation for this newsletter because here they produce some excellent white wines. It is also possible to produce rosé wines and red wines, but we prefer the delicious white wines from here.



The first thing to comment on about the rules for this appellation is that only grapes picked from vines that grow in the Cassis commune can be used to make wines for this appellation. It is quite common for appellation rules to include a number of neighbouring communes, but in this case it is only the one commune.

The main white grapes that are used in Cassis are Clairette and Marsanne. These two grapes must constitute at least 60% of the wine. The rest can be made from the grapes Doucillon Blanc, Pascal Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Terret Blanc and Ugni Blanc! But there are more rules for the white wines as well.

Marsanne can comprise anywhere between 30% to 80% of the total for a Cassis white. Terret Blanc must be less than or equal to 5% on the total!

This means that if the winemaker chose to use only 30% of Marsanne, then the minimum amount of Clairette would also be 30% or it could be up to 70% and then only those two grape varieties would be required.

It would also be possible to produce a wine with Marsanne 40%, Clairette 20% (thus just satisfying the 60% rule), Terret Blanc 4%, Doucillon Blanc 10%, Pascal Blanc 7%, Sauvignon Blanc 8% and Ugni Blanc 11%. We just made this up, but it does conform to the rules!

It is also possible to produce rosé wines with Cinsault, Grenache, Mourvèdre (which must contribute at least 70% of the total) and Barbaroux and Carignan as the red wines (we must write about Barbaroux one day in this newsletter!) and any of the white wines comprising the remainder.

For the red wines the principal grapes are Cinsault, Grenache and Mourvèdre with the accessory grape varieties allowed being Barbaroux, Carignan and Terret Noir. The principal grapes must comprise at least 70% of the wine and the remainder, if any, can comprise the accessory varieties provided the Terret Noir is less than or equal to 5% of the total.

The rules set out by the appellation authorities about how the vines must be planted are quite specific. We have translated the rule about the density of planting of the vines to show you how specific they get.

*Each plant has a maximum area of 2.50 square meters. This area is obtained by multiplying the distances between rows and the spacing between plants within the same row. The spacing between rows cannot exceed 2.50 meters, and the spacing between plants within the same row cannot be less than 0.80 meters.*

The unusual feature of this rule is that the maximum area rule means that if the space between the rows is 2.5 metres (which is the maximum allowed) then the plants in a row must be a maximum of 1 metre apart or less.

The reason why the space between rows is usually larger than the space between vines in the same row is that many vigneronns want to be able to drive small tractors along between the rows.

Another area that most appellation rules address is the number of dead vines in a vineyard. Partly, the reason is that dead vines can be a source of diseases in the vineyards. The maximum number of dead vines is limited to 20% in Cassis.

A very interesting rule is that soil must not be added to a vineyard unless it is sourced from within the Cassis commune boundary.

Another rule that is very clear is that there is a maximum “rendement” or yield allowed which is fixed at 45 Hectolitres per hectare. This prevents excessive fertilising or watering to encourage the vines to produce more than a normal quantity of grapes.

## French wine terms

In reading the appellation document for Cassis this month we decided to make some of the words that we came across in that document the words for this month's French wine terms as they are terms from the wine industry.

Cassis is a delightful town on the Mediterranean shores not too far along the coast from Marseille. Between Marseille and Cassis are a number of inlets which the French call Calanques and in some of these there are restaurants serving the famous fish stew called Bouillabaisse.

When you drive down the hills that circle Cassis you are treated to the wonderful site of vineyards sweeping towards the sea having in many cases been planted right up to the edge of the cliffs.

Cassis is well worth a visit if you are driving around that part of Provence. There is a map showing the relationship between Marseille and Cassis in the previous story about the Cassis appellation.

Now to the French words:

### Disposition

Arrangement

### L'appellation d'origine contrôlée

The protected designation of origin which is how the French refer to an appellation in this case the Cassis appellation. Literally, it means appellation of controlled origin, meaning that if you want to put a word used in the appellation name on either the front or back label then you have to get approval from the appellation authorities. For example, if your vineyard is in the Cassis commune and you don't want to comply with the rules of the appellation but you do want to put your address on the back label, the appellation authorities would most likely not allow to do it.

### Tranquilles

"Still" referring to the type of wine – all wines in the Cassis appellation are still ie "tranquilles" – no sparkling wines can use the Cassis appellation even though they are made with grapes from that area.

### Récolte

This translates as "harvest" and refers to the fact that the grapes must be harvested within the boundaries of the Cassis commune.

### Dérogation

While the "récolte" or harvest must be carried out in Cassis picking only from vines planted in the formal area of the commune of Cassis, because it is such an expensive commune to live in there is an unusual "derogation" or "exemption" in English, that allows winemakers to make

their wine in the nearby commune of Roquefort-la-Bédoule which is the closest commune to Cassis.

### Dénommé

This translates as “named” and occurs a few times in the document because the allowable grape varieties for this appellation are listed by the approved standard names, but the local names are also listed if the grapes are called something different in Cassis.

An example is one of the white grapes that are permitted is Bourboulenc, but in Cassis the locals called it Doucillon.

### Moyenne

The term Moyenne is used often in the section of the document which provides the rules for how the vines must be planted and how far apart they are planted in the rows and how far apart the rows must be. The literal translation is “average”. So, in some appellations the rule will be something like “Moyenne 2.5 metres”, for example.

### Coursions

The word “coursions” in French depends very much on the context within which it is used. In the appellation rules for Cassis it is used when describing how the vines must be planted and pruned. As an example, the phrase “6 coursions par pied” is used when describing how the vines must be pruned. This phrase in English means “6 spurs per foot” – this refers to the number of spurs for each vine with the term pied referring to the base of the vine trunk.

### Pentes

We haven’t used this word for a long time even though it is a fairly easy one. Pentes is the word for slopes, where it refers to the slopes around Cassis having the perfect exposition for ripening the grapes, particularly for Clairette and Marsanne varieties.

### Revendication

The simplest translation of this term is “claim” – the Cassis appellation document points out that anyone using the Cassis appellation on their wine labels must fill out a form called “Déclaration de revendication” which is a statement of claim that must be completed claiming that you have satisfied all the requirements in the 11 page document.

## Grape Variety: Gouais Blanc

We have resisted the temptation to write about Gouais Blanc for the past 143 newsletters, because despite the massive impact it has had over the past centuries, we can't find anyone who still uses this variety to make wines in France (or anywhere else for that matter, except for one quite obscure planting here in Australia – more about that in a moment).

First to the known history of this obscure variety. It is thought to have been brought to France via Croatia by invading Romans during the time of Emperor Marcus Aurelius Probus<sup>4</sup> (276 – 282). This is quite likely due to the fact that France was substantially owned by the Romans during the rule of Probus.

He also ruled at a time when many of his predecessors had been killed by their army (it also happened to him!). To ameliorate this problem, he made up “busy work” for them such as draining marshes and building the famous Roman roads and canals when they were not fighting, so they were less likely to sit around plotting against him. It didn't work!

We have also explored the work of French medieval poet Eustache Deschamps who mentioned Gouais in his poems in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. When we say he mentioned Gouais, it was usually when praising Pinot Noir for its finesse while contrasting it to Gouais Blanc as a peasants' grape!!

However, we decided to write about Gouais Blanc because it has had a significant influence on the wine industry in France by crossing with many of the most important grapes currently planted, such as Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Aligoté, Melon de Bourgogne and Riesling to name just a few.

There are also some small plantings of a grape in the Jura called Enfariné (of which Domaine des Cavarodes has some in a small plot) that is an alternative name for the related Gouais Noir! Even the French word “gou” at the time was a term of derision.

When we are writing about the history of grapes that have been around for a long time, we turn to our digital and, in particular, the Ampélographie series which were published at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century from 1901 to 1906. We found a description of Gouais Blanc in Volume 4 of this series, starting at page 94.

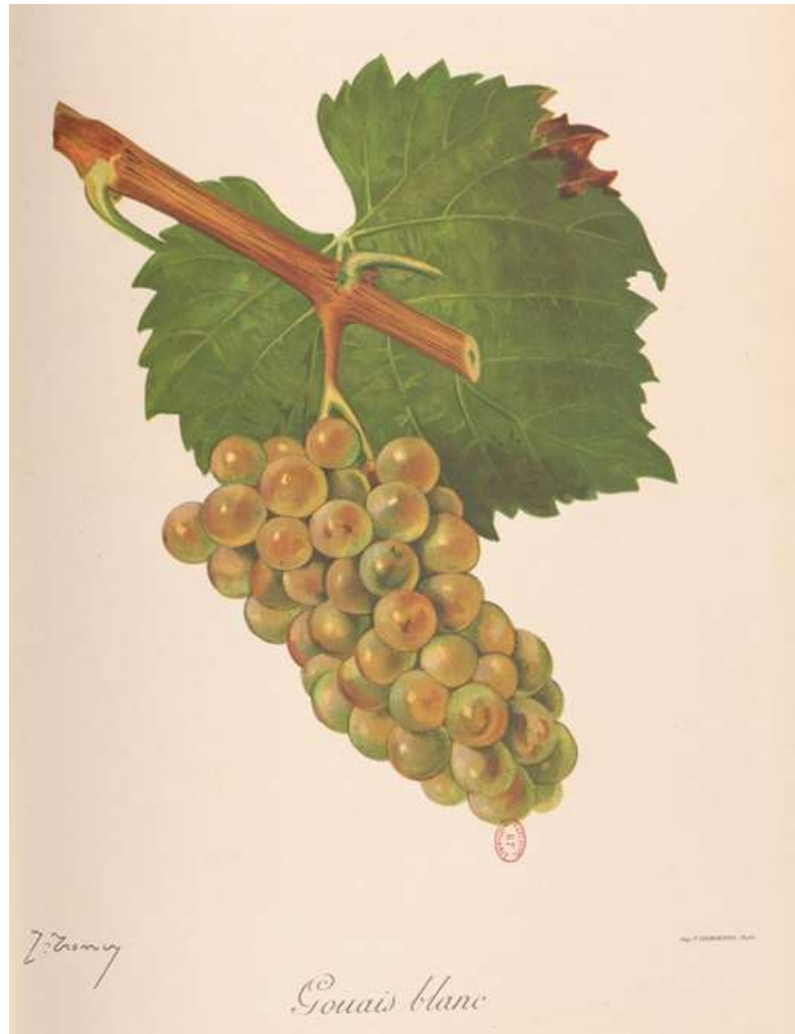
There was also one of their amazing drawings which we have included below:

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<sup>4</sup> THIS, P.; LACOMBE, T.; THOMAS, M. R.; 2006: *Historical origins and genetic diversity of wine grapes. Trends Genet.* 22, 511-519.

<sup>5</sup> MAUL, E.; SCHUMANN, F.; TÖPFER, R.; 2010: *Vom Spätburgunder zum Riesling - Ein Beitrag zur Entstehung unserer Rebsortenlandschaft. Dt. Weinbau Jahrbuch 2011, 106-117.*

*We have translated the title of the German paper (with the help of Google) to: “From Pinot Noir to Riesling – A contribution to the development of our grape variety landscape. German Viticulture Yearbook”*



As you can see the grape bunches are reasonably tight and the leaves have one rounded petiolar sinus, but not the more usual 3 or 5 sinuses.

Just a reminder here that the sinus where the leaf joins on to the vine is called the petiolar sinus because that is where the leaf joins to the petiole stem which in turn is attached to the stem of the vine.

We were also interested in a paper entitled “Le Gouais, un cépage clé du patrimoine viticole européen” written by Boursiquot, Lacombe, Bowers and Meredith in 2004 where they do find space to praise this grape variety in the following way:

*“In light of recent work on molecular analysis using microsatellite markers, this grape variety has proven to be a particularly important and efficient parent.”*

We have described some of the varieties that descended from Gouais Blanc below.

In the European Union, Gouais Blanc is officially called "Branco Valente" in Portugal, "Heunisch Weiss" in Germany and Liseiret in Italy.

Back to Gouais Blanc in France. It eventually reached most parts of France, where it gets interesting. It became a work horse grape in Burgundy and beyond by the Middle Ages and it

eventually was crossed with a number of grapes already existing in France to produce the following grapes we now know well:

- Chardonnay (cross between Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc);
- Gamay (also Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc)
- Aligoté (also Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc)
- Riesling (Gouais Blanc and an unknown variety, but may have been related to Traminer)

It is also believed to be a parent of many other important varieties such as Melon de Bourgogne which was, in the Middle Ages, planted in Northern Burgundy, but is now reduced to about 15 hectares, including some grown by one of our producers, Domaine La Cadette.

Plantings of Gouais Blanc for commercial winemaking in France are now virtually non-existent, having been largely eradicated by phylloxera.

Today, the variety survives almost exclusively in ampelographic preservation collections, such as the INRAE Domaine de Vassal in Marseillan.

We can't display a graph of the rise or fall of the area planted to this grape variety, because there is virtually none that is commercially planted any more.

But we can show you what the grapes and vines look like. The photo below shows a bunch of the Gouais Blanc grapes.



As can be clearly seen in the photo above, the grapes are quite clearly white grapes with a complete lack of other colours which sometimes creep into white grapes.

The bunches are wider at the top and narrow down to a quite pointed end to the bunches. This type of bunch is called “long cylindrical” from the shape it displays.

The bunches are not very tight, and this is quite useful as it allows the wind to get in among the grapes and blow away and deposits that diseases have left.



And, to the left we have a photo of the leaf of this rare grape variety.

The leaf has “teeth” surrounding it and has only one pronounced sinus, namely the petiole sinus where the petiole (which joins to the central stem) connects to the leaf.

The petiole sinus in the leaves of Gouais Blanc are generally more open than that shown in the photo here.

The leaf has many “teeth” around the periphery but no pronounced lateral sinuses, unlike most other grape varieties grown in France.

You can see in the photo below both the top and bottom view of a leaf of Gouais Blanc.



In these photos the very narrow petiole sinus is shown on the right and on the left you can clearly see where the petiole “stem” joins to the bottom of the petiole sinus. On the left you can also see the “veining” on the leaf. Notice that there are no identifiable lateral sinuses.

## **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.