

WINE Talk: July 2026

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 146

Welcome to newsletter 146 for July 2026. We hope you continue to enjoy reading them. We certainly are continuing to enjoy writing them!

We have been able to put together **7 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 7 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 Cote d’Auvergne wine appellation which is in central France centered on the city of Clermont-Ferrand;
- Another set of French terms and their English equivalents.
- This month the grape variety story is about the rare southern France and northern Spain variety called Lledoner Pelut.

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

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

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

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

New Arrivals

Some general comments first ...

Some of our new arrivals since our last newsletter have been wines which we sell by allocation – from Pupillin estates Domaine Bornard and Renaud Bruyere and Adeline Houillon. We did our best to ensure all of our regular customers received an offer for at least a bottle of any of these wines if they asked us about them in advance of us doing the allocations. Unfortunately, there were a small number of requests, from people who have not bought from us before, we were not able to satisfy for Renaud and Adeline's wines though.

Also, we only offered most customers a bottle or two. The wines are very limited and the interest is high from both retail and wholesale customers. It's a challenging job to do the allocations. For the future, all we can do is emphasise the importance of letting us know in advance when we say wines are coming (in the What's Coming section of this newsletter) if you would like an offer. However challenging it is to allocate the wines, it's nothing compared to the difficulty of trying to find someone a bottle once the offers are decided and we have begun to send them out. So, if you ask after you see a social media post it is usually too late.

And we're preparing everyone with news that the sale of our next release from Renaud and Adeline is, unfortunately, going to be slightly different from usual. It is a smaller allocation and so will be more difficult to share. We don't plan to ask customers for requests but will instead be allocating based on their previous purchases of Renaud's and Adeline's wines, the quantity and breadth of their purchases with us generally over the previous year or so and their payment history. This is not our preferred way of working but we think it's the only way to manage such a small allocation. This should be happening early in 2027.

The news for later next year is much better. We saw them recently and both 2023 and 2025 were particularly generous vintages, especially for the red wines. And they taste wonderful too.

We should receive the 2023 reds later next year and we're hoping to return to normal programming, with enough wine for everyone who is already a customer to have at least a bottle, as long as they ask in advance! Don't just rely on your past history to guarantee you a bottle.

We've described the wines we received this year in this newsletter so, if you are still interested in buying, you know what is out there. We sell a good proportion of the total release to wine shops so there should hopefully be some still available. Building a relationship with your local wineshop is another way to increase the likelihood of good allocations, not just from us.

Finally, there are a small number of packs available in the newsletter with some of the wines described below in them. We don't expect them to last long but it is a way for people who didn't secure an allocation to have a chance. All the packs this month are new wines.

Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon

Arbois Blanc Savagnin Les Nouvelles 2018

It's an indication of the generosity of the 2018 vintage that we have a 100% Savagnin from Les Nouvelles. This 30+ year old Savagnin is from a part of Les Nouvelles that Renaud and Adeline no longer work, with this 2018 being the final vintage, partly because its steep slopes are so difficult. The soil is calcareous clay with limestone scree. Whole bunches were directly pressed and then aged in barrels that were topped up for nearly 4 years. It was bottled in June 2022. It's

lively, fresh and Renaud says ready to drink, although it will still cellar well for a few more years. 13.5% ABV

Arbois-Pupillin Ploussard En Aspis 2021

The En Aspis lieu-dit in Pupillin is renowned for its heavy multi-coloured Triassic clays and marl. This wine is made using a similar process each year. The grapes are gently destemmed by hand in the vineyard, then put in tank for a period of semi-carbonic maceration. In 2021 it was for 27 days. When it's time to be pressed, the pressing is also manual and gentle, using an old press. The alcoholic fermentation is completed after the pressing. At bottling a tiny amount of CO₂ from the fermentation process is captured and helps with the preservation. The result is a slight prickle which dissipates in the glass. The colour is light, typical of the most ethereal ploussards. The wine is not filtered. 12% ABV.

This was also the wine we had the least bottles of so it will be the hardest to find. Blame the politicians who 30 or 40 years ago could have resisted the lure of fossil fuel lobbyists and done something to protect our planet's climate for the fact it was so limited. Frosts following a warm winter reduced the yields in 2021 to 15 hectolitres per hectare (not quite as bad as the 7 in 2017 but a long way off the best vintages.)

Arbois Blanc Chardonnay/Savagnin Les Tourillons 2020

Approximately 80% Chardonnay and 20% Savagnin, the vines in Les Tourillons, a vineyard overlooking Arbois, are co-planted. They are harvested and vinified together. It was aged for 2 years in 400 litre barrels (bottled in June 2022). The wine is very fresh and drinking this is a little like licking limestone which has been seasoned with lemons. 12.5% ABV. Renaud told us this time last year that you should keep it for at least 2 years before drinking it and it will reach its prime in 10 years. We've helped by delaying the shipment a little so one year has already passed! 12.5% ABV.

Domaine Bornard

Ploussard Au Fil des Générations 2021

Au fil des Générations is unfortunately a cuvée we are seeing more and more frequently. Tony Bornard prefers to make a unique wine from each vineyard but, since 2017, whenever the yields are severely reduced, like in 2021, he has combined all of his Ploussard into this one wine. It includes what would normally be in La Chamade, Point Barre, and Tony's Vin de Ploussard and Plou Plou. It's become a celebration of the four generations of Bornards who have made wine from these vines, with everyone's name on the label (Tony and his sister, his parents Philippe and Annie, Philippe's parents and Philippe's grandfather). Harvested at the end of September, it was a light vintage, so this wine is truly a light red, subtly evoking cherries. It was bottled in July 2022. Certified organic. 11.8% ABV.

Trousseau Le Gingle 2022

This is the Bornard Trousseau made for joyful not-too-serious drinking, as opposed to the more thoughtful Garde-Corps. The name is derived from "guiguer", which means to jump. From red

marl vineyards in Pupillin it was harvested on 19 September and 100% destemmed. It spent 3 weeks being macerated with pumping over once a day and a light punching down. Aged predominantly in tank (90%) unusually a small proportion was also aged in old barrels. It was bottled without filtration after 9 months. The ABV is quite high (14.1%) but there is still noticeable acidity. It has no additions and, despite being the glou glou Trousseau, this vintage particularly, has potential to age. Certified organic.

We do have a few spare bottles of this wine. The price is \$88.

Savagnin Les Chassagnes 2018

Named for the vineyard where the vines for this wine grow, Les Chassagnes is located in the Côtes du Jura, just outside the boundary of Pupillin in the commune of Buvilly. However Tony has worked outside the appellation for several years now so the recent vintages have been Vin de France. The vines were planted in 1990 and the exposure of this vineyard, rich in iridescent Keuper marl from the Triassic period is easterly. Les Chassagnes is an ouillé (topped up) Savagnin. In the case of this vintage that topping-up process continued for six years! We have met this wine many times over the years, and all the while it kept moving, fermenting slowly in its own good time. A bountiful vintage, the directly-pressed juice wine was initially in vats and then transferred to several types of vessels - two foudre (one old and one new), one 500 litre barrel and a 700 litre tank. It was finally assembled for bottling in August 2024, much to Tony's relief, particularly because, as he said to us "you can feel the clay". It is nutty and complex but still fresh, a truly exceptional wine. It has no additions and Tony thinks it will happily age for at least 10 years. Certified organic. 13.5% ABV.

Savagnin Les Marnes 2018

This wine is more about terroir than variety, as its name reflects. From two lieu-dits Aspic and Les Plantées, the soils are a complex mix of black marl (marne) with banks of sandstone, and iridescent green, grey, pink, and white marl from the Triassic period. The vineyards have a southerly and south-westerly exposition and are within the Côtes du Jura, just outside the boundary of Pupillin. The wine though, is a Vin de France but its aging followed the same principles as for Vin Jaune. It was topped up for the first year then aged in barrels under a veil of yeast for five years. It was bottled in September 2024. It has no additions and Tony thinks it will happily age for 10 years or more. His description captures his intent making the wine beautifully. "This cuvée is a true geological interpretation of the Jura vineyards. Produced from iconic plots where black marl and sandstone banks abound, it draws its complexity from a unique soil of iridescent marl dating back to the Triassic period. This Savagnin, patiently aged under a veil, transcends its grape variety to become the messenger of a thousand-year-old subsoil. Oxidative aging emphasizes the straightforward, saline structure provided by the sandstone, creating a masterful balance between aromatic power and mineral tension." Certified organic. 14.9% ABV.

Côtes du Jura Vin Jaune 2013

From the Les Chassagnes lieu-dit, this Savagnin is from vines planted in 1990. Just outside Pupillin, the vineyard is actually in the commune of Buvilly. Time is the great contributor here.

The wine spent 9 years under the veil in 228 litre barrels, allowing its complexity to emerge. It was bottled in January 2022 without any additions. Certified organic. 14.8% ABV.

There was very little of this but we may have some more of this vintage next year so if you would like a bottle let us know.

Julien Fremont Ciders and Calvados



We have also just released some new ciders and Calvados from our Normandy friend Julien Fremont. They are all available for purchase and we have also created three packs.

The ciders are all from the 2023 vintage, except for Piterne, a newish cuvée which is always a blend of two different vintages.

The general process is simple. Apples are picked late in the year and then aged in a loft for a few weeks to intensify the flavour. They are pulped, pressed, aged in various vessels, then bottled at a time where there will still be just enough fermentation to produce the gentle bubbles that his ciders are known for while still capturing the essence of the fruits and where they came from.

Made in Julien's ancient cidrerie, in use by the family since the 1750s, it is hard to explain just how much of an artisan he is. Even his machinery, such as his press, constructed in 1920 and bought by his grandfather (which has recently been repaired after catastrophic damage), requires a lot of hands-on effort to build the layers of apple pulp, separated by cloth, on a rack which is then moved inside it and pressed.



His bottling unit looks more like what a serious amateur home brewer might have than a professional. And a colony of bees lives inside the roof of the building where he stores his bottles for packing. It is hard to imagine a place more different from the soulless factories where bulk cider is made.



These are the ciders we have as well as his iconic 50 cl Calvados.

Quevrue 2023

Apple Cider

The juice for Quévrue comes from plots close to the forest of Quévrue at the back of the property, where Julien has bittersweet varieties planted. It was macerated then fermented and aged for 8 months in an Italian amphora prior to bottling. 6.6% ABV. \$52.

Piterne 22/23

Apple Cider

Piterne is named for an old Norman legend, like a presence that lives in farms, presses and apple attics. It is a blend of two vintages of ciders, 2022 and 2023, with the apples from both years, as usual, aged in the attic above the cider press and aging rooms for some time prior to pressing. The component from 2022 was aged until fully fermented for one year in a 400 litre Calvados barrel, still rich in Calvados tannins. It was then assembled with still fermenting juice from 2023 in a 50/50 assembly. It's the most powerful and intense drink in this collection. 7% ABV. \$54

Perpète 2023

Pear Cider

Perpète is the new name (and label) for Julien's pear cider (Poiré). Feeling more like a wine than a cider, it has a very fine, energetic bead with an aromatic nose and complex flavours. It's a beautiful aperitif. It is disgorged just before shipping because after a year of aging it makes a big deposit. The new name (Perpetual) acknowledges the 200-300 year old pear tree from which much of the fruit comes and also is a play on 'pear'. 6% ABV. \$51

Silex 2023

Apple Cider

Silex is made from the apples picked from trees that grow in flint (silex in French) soils on the higher slopes of Julien's orchard above the cellars where the ground is littered with flint "cailloux" (small rocks). It is the driest and most savoury of the ciders, and very good with food. This year it is a particularly-intense orange colour (the sort of colour that stops you in your tracks if you pass a glass). 5.9% ABV. \$43

Par Nature 2023

Apple Cider

Par Nature is made with assembly of apples from different parts of the orchard - both the clay (argile) at the bottom which produces sweeter juice and the silex, which provides structure. It makes for a very balanced easy-to-drink cider. 5.6% ABV. \$45

Calvados 50 cl

Julien Fremont's Calvados is a Réserve, meaning it is aged for at least 3 years in oak barrels. He uses old 400 litre barrels, ensuring that the overwhelming sensation when drinking it is apples not wood. Despite its 44.9% ABV the intense flavours from the underlying fruit carry the alcohol with ease. A truly remarkable hand-made Calvados. \$142

What's coming

This section of the newsletter has been very repetitious in the last few issues so it's good to have confirmed news about new things we're expecting to release in the coming months but first a reminder that our next round of allocations will be **Alice and Olivier de Moor's** Chablis and Aligoté cuvées. This is your last chance to request an offer but we will only be making offers to people who buy from us at least occasionally.

After that we will be advertising new wines from the **Montanet** and **Mosse** families. All the Montanet wines are from their **La Soeur Cadette** label. We will have several familiar 2025 cuvées, including Melon, Bourgogne Blanc and Bourgogne Rouge as well as Chablis, Bourgogne Aligoté and an IGP de l'Yonne (Chardonnay). There is also some Beaujolais – more Juliéna 2024 and a 2025 Beaujolais Villages.



From the Mosses we have many cuvées, all of them familiar including Bang Nouveau, Bangarang (including for the first time in magnums), Bisou (also in magnums), Moussamoussettes, Chenin, Cabernet Franc and some more 2023 Pirie.

We have confirmed our 2025 release of **Mataburro** wines, which we will be allocating late in October or November. If you would like an allocation please let us know. There is plenty of time to tell us about these if you decide you would like some.

Following that we will have new vintages of **Robinot** wines, also to be allocated. We've split our Robinot order in two this year so each one will be slightly smaller with commensurate smaller offers. Please tell us if you want one.

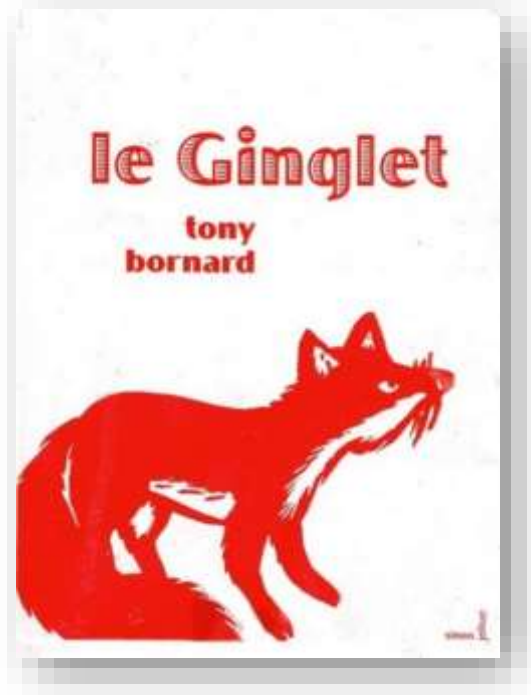
A note about the packs

Please don't try to order packs 1, 2, 3 or 4 if you have already bought the wines which are in it directly from us as a result of an offer. We want to share the wines as widely as possible and support all our newsletter readers, recognising that some are not as organised as others who plan ahead and ask for an offer.

The wines here are only available in the packs not separately, although as mentioned in the new arrivals section there are a few spare bottles of Bornard Le Gingle in addition to what is here.

Pack 1: Mixed Bornard 3 Pack

(No Discount –2 Packs Only)



This pack has a single bottle of three of the wines from our most recent release from Pupillin's Tony Bornard. Two are white, both Savagnin from the 2018 vintage. Les Chassagnes is topped up, but aged partly in an old foudre so gaining some oxidative notes over those many years, and Les Marnes is oxidative, made like vin jaune, so they are a fascinating contrast. Le Ginglet is a Trousseau, and like many of the 2022 reds from this region we've tried, unusually powerful and we think good to keep.

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

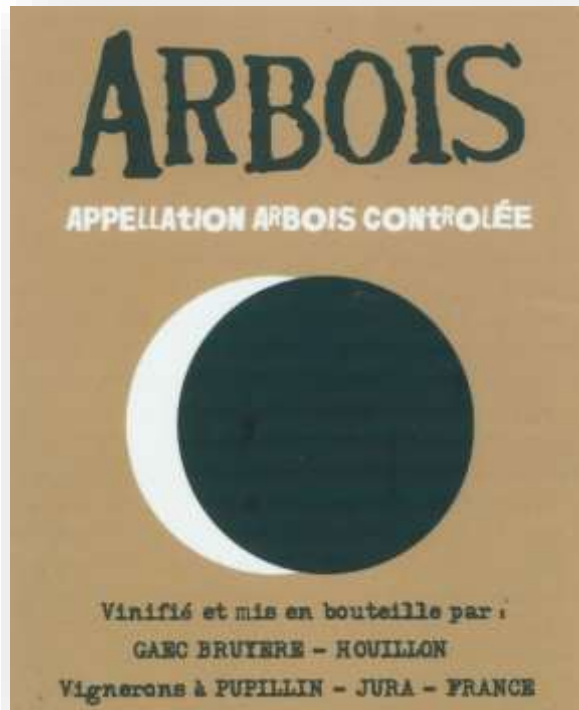
These are the wines:

- **Domaine Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2022**
- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Les Chassagnes 2018**
- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Les Marnes 2018**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is **\$380**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 2: Mixed Jura Whites Pack

(No Discount - 2 Packs Only)



This pack has three Jura Savagnins, all from the 2018 vintage. It includes the two Bornard wines in Pack 1 and a bottle of Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon's Arbois Blanc Savagnin Les Nouvelles.

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

These are the wines:

- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Les Chassagnes 2018**
- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Les Marnes 2018**
- **Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon Arbois Blanc Savagnin Les Nouvelles 2018**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is **\$463**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 3: Mixed Jura Reds Pack

(No Discount - 1 Pack Only)



This pack has two Ploussards from the tiny frost-damaged 2021 vintage. The wines are the Bornard Au Fil des Générations, which is all the Ploussard from all the parcels (typically it would make three different wines) and Renaud and Adeline's Arbois-Pupillin Ploussard En Aspis 2021. These are the two rarest wines in the release. The third wine is the Domaine Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet. Arbois-Pupillin Ploussard En Aspis 2021.

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

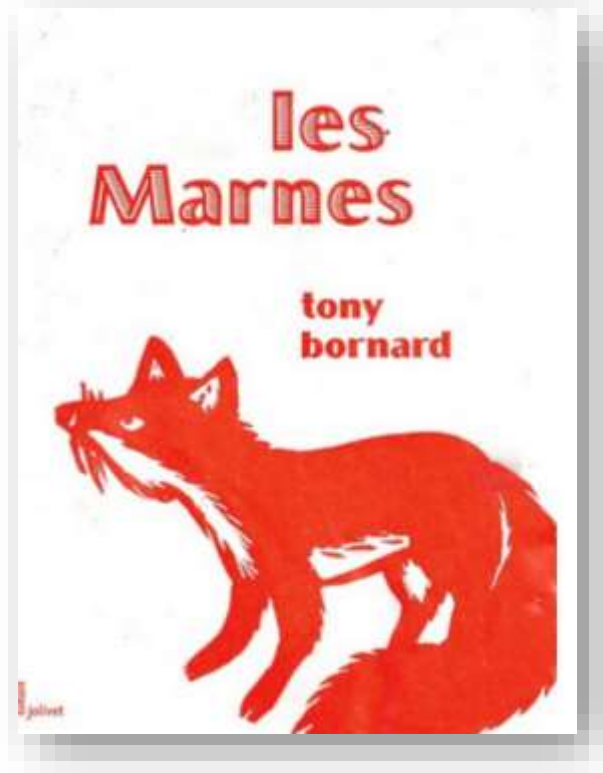
The pack has the following wines:

- **Domaine Bornard Ploussard Au Fil des Générations 2021**
- **Domaine Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2022**
- **Renaud Bruyère and Adeline Houillon Arbois-Pupillin Ploussard En Aspis 2021**

The RRP for this selection of 3 bottles is only **\$352**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 4: Oxidative Jura Whites Pack (Cheese Lovers Pack)

(No Discount – 2 Packs Only)



This pack has a rarity in it – a bottle of Bornard Vin Jaune. It's the 2013 Côtes du Jura Vin Jaune, a wine which spent 9 years under the veil in 228 litre barrels (although topped up in larger barrels for its first year or so), allowing its complexity to slowly emerge. It was bottled in January 2022 without any additions. The second wine, Les Marnes, is made in the same way as Vin Jaune but with a shorter lifespan.

They are both extraordinary wines and brilliant accompaniments to cheese, particularly the equally iconic Comté from the same region.

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

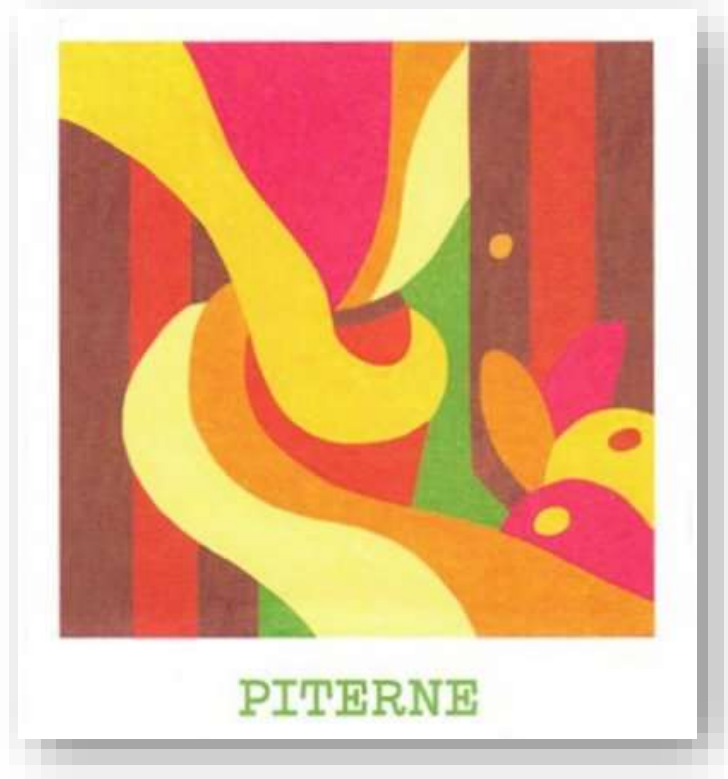
These are the wines:

- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Les Marnes 2018**
- **Domaine Bornard Côtes du Jura Vin Jaune 2013**

The RRP for this selection of **2** bottles is **\$402**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 5: Mixed Fremont Ciders 6 Pack

(15% Discount - 3 Packs Only)



This pack is for cider lovers. It has five bottles of Julien Fremont's apple cider (four different cuvées) and one pear cider. These are ciders which taste of the fruit and soil from where they come, not just refreshing drinks.

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

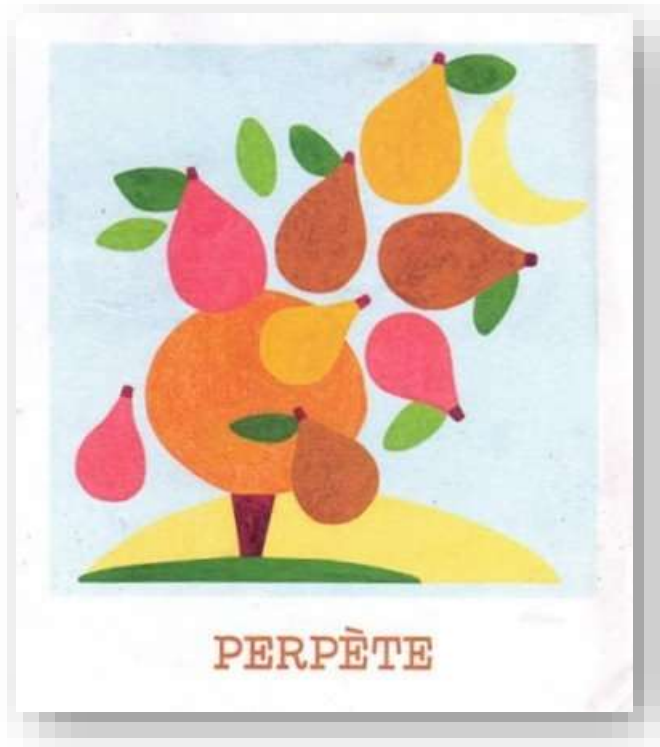
These are the wines:

- **Julien Fremont Quevrue 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Piterne 22/23**
- **Julien Fremont Perpète 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Silex 2023 (2 bottles)**
- **Julien Fremont Par Nature 2023**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$288 but the pack price is only **\$244.80**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 6: Fremont Ciders and Calvados Large Pack

(2 Packs Only – 15% Discount)



We never disagree with anyone who says Julien Fremont's Calvados is their favourite and aren't surprised when someone says they never drink spirits except for this Calvados. Its only problem is it is very delicious and with an ABV of 44.9% that is dangerous. The problem is mainly because, despite the alcohol, the overwhelming, beguiling taste is of apples! The warning we are legally obliged to put in our newsletter particularly applies here. The pack also has one of each of Fremont's ciders.

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

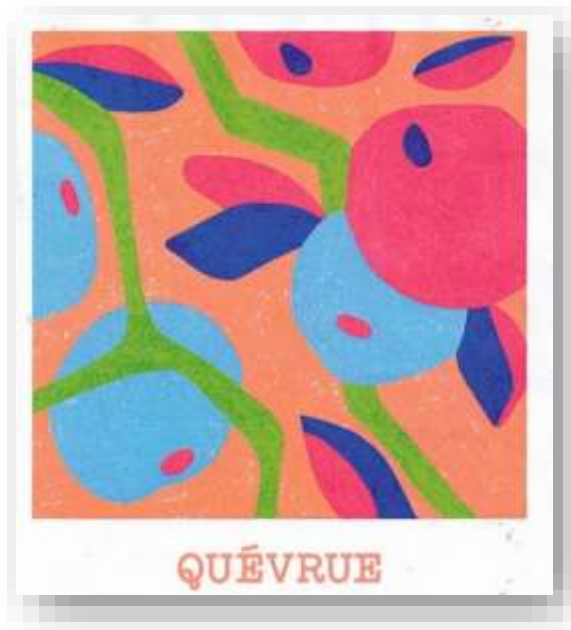
These are the wines:

- **Julien Fremont Quevrue 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Piterne 22/23**
- **Julien Fremont Perpète 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Silex 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Par Nature 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Calvados 50 cl**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$387 but the pack price is only **\$328.95**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 7: Fremont Cider and Calvados Small Pack

(2 Packs Only – No Discount)



This pack has the Calvados described in Pack 6 and two of Julien Fremont's delicious ciders - one apple and one pear.

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

These are the wines:

- **Julien Fremont Quevrue 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Perpète 2023**
- **Julien Fremont Calvados 50 cl**

The RRP for this selection of **3** bottles is **\$245**. 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, April and May newsletters we described 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.

Aux Saints Jus – This lovely restaurant sits in the centre of the town of Saint-Julien-le-Faucon, which lies south-east of the city Caen. We were looking forward to dining here as we were on our way to visit our cider and cognac producer Julien Fremont, and our research had shown that this venue ticked all the boxes for us such as working with organic and biodynamic vegetable producers and cider and wine producers including Julien. The meal that we had here was delicious! They also have a very well-chosen cellar of natural wines and ciders that you can take away. An early-summer chilled courgette soup here was one of our favourite dishes during a recent trip to France.

29 Rue de Lisieux, Saint-Julien-le-Faucon, 14140

Silo – Named after the iconic silos which store the grains grown in the Perche region, Silo is a tiny, but lovely cave (wine shop) and café in the centre of Mortagne-au-Perche, a village which lies about 150 kilometres south-west of Paris and 70 kilometres north-east of the city of Le Mans in the attractive Perche region of France. The food here is straightforward but made from quality produce and there is a very interesting cellar at the rear where you can peruse their selection of natural wines to take away or to drink there. Given its small size, the collection of magnums is impressive.

Silo, 21 Rue du Général Leclerc, Mortagne-au-Perche, 61400

L'Ormoie – L'Ormoie is a very new restaurant in the countryside of the Perche region of France. When we visited this venue, they had only been open for a week, but the dishes were complex and interesting, and the service wonderful. They have planted a garden and some of what we ate came from it (served very proudly). We accompanied our meal with a new wine for us, a delicious bottle of Bourgogne Aligoté from Les Horées, made by Catharina & Guilham Sadde.

L'Ormoie, Perche-en-Nocé, 61340

D'une île – One of the advantages of spending the first few days of our France visit in the Perche region is that the village we stayed in was only 10 minutes from the country offshoot of Bertrand Grébaut et Théophile Pourriat, the owners of the famous Paris locations Septime, Clamato, Septime La Cave and Tapisserie. We had a beautiful meal here sitting outside in the evening heat, with the highlight chicken roasted in a cocotte, seasoned with intense herbs. The offering of natural wines is deep. Our choice was the delicious Les Bottes Rouge Léon Chardonnay 2022.

But, less than two weeks later we were in Paris, only for our normally joyful arrival to be muted with the incredibly sad news that Bertrand Grébaut, one of the most, if not the most in our view, important chefs in the last two decades had died the night before. He had been very ill, so it was not a surprise but when someone so talented and young (44) and by all accounts such a wonderful person dies it is heartbreaking news.

He and his business partner and team at Septime laid the way for much of what is best about modern dining, following in the footsteps of the likes of Yves Camdeborde, a generation earlier. They removed the stuffiness without sacrificing the refinement and placed greater emphasis on the sourcing of produce. And they gave many of the less familiar natural wine makers a place to shine. The first time we ate at Septime not long after it opened, a then largely unknown Dominic Belluard's Perles de Mont Blanc was being served by the glass.

That's a big diversion from a country restaurant in the Perche but news of Bertrand Grébaut's death made us value the experience even more than we might have.

D'une île, L'Aunay, Rémalard, 61110

Le Doyenné - As you can tell from the four places above, we started our annual trip to France in the Perche region. The second area we had arranged to visit was the Jura, which is on the other side of France. Our route to the Jura took us (with a small diversion) close to one of the most exciting restaurants you will find in France, which is run by two Australians James Henry and Shaun Kelly. It is the now famous Le Doyenné. This is a must-visit restaurant for us on every trip to France, made more delightful this time by the weekend summer market (Saturdays and Sundays) where they were selling produce from the garden as well as beautiful pastries to the public. It's a great way to experience Le Doyenné if you're travelling on a budget but would like to visit and also a great contribution to the local village (Saint-Vrain). The meal, based almost entirely from the extensive gardens overseen by Shaun, apart from guinea fowl from Burgundy (from no less than Prieuré Roch) was as magic as ever. Sommelier Romain Rieu worked some magic of his own and an Australian known to many of our newsletter readers Nicola Calvert, oversaw everything. It is always hard to leave.

If the market continues next year, in future we will try to orchestrate our annual itinerary so we do some vegetable shopping at Le Doyenné just before we head-off into the country. It was fun to cook for our friends in the Jura with a combination of produce from Le Doyenné and their own goat sausages and goat cheeses.

5 Rue Saint-Antoine, 91770 Saint-Vrain

Solar panels in Vineyards

A recent article in the journal *Plants and People* discussed an experiment carried out in a European vineyard where solar panels were installed over the top of the vines.

The panels provided shade for the vines and reduced the ambient temperature surrounding the vines. This is similar to the effect that planting fruit trees or other tree types that is now common in vineyards in Europe.

One of the important outcomes of this experiment is the protection of the grapevines from the sun thus protecting them from some of the heat generated in the middle of the day.

The outcome was that the grapes developed "better acidity" leading to higher quality wine without reducing the quantity of the harvest.

The vines, in turn, released moisture into the air reducing the ambient temperature around the panels, thus improving their efficiency.

And while the story didn't mention it, we can only assume that by slowing the ripening the grapes would have produced much more interesting phenolic compounds, a topic we have written about before.

Soil snippets

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 most vineyards in France and most vineyards in Australia is that in much of France, because of the French appellation rules, 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.¹

For example, a paper by Coipel et al² 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, 2006¹; and Trought et al., 2006³.

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

¹ 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.

² 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*.

³ 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*.

Côtes d'Auvergne wine appellation

This month we have chosen an appellation from the centre of France as we have just driven through there and tried some of the wines at our favourite restaurant in that region namely Harry Lester's Le Comptoir Central des Bazzars.

The Côtes d'Auvergne appellation was inaugurated in May 1951 and was updated in October 2011 and November 2013.

The broadest reference to this area is Cotes d'Auvergne, however there are five qualifying additions that are possible which are references to the following five regions:

- Boudes
- Chanturgue
- Châteaugay
- Corent
- Madargue

The wines that can be produced in the area cover the full gamut of red, rosé and white wines. However, Boudes, Chanturgue, Châteaugay and Madargue can only be added to Côtes d'Auvergne for red wines that meet all the requirements for those 4 regions.

Similarly, the commune Corent can only be added for rosé wines that are made from grapes grown in that region and which conform to all the other rules required.

The following map shows the distribution of these communes around the central city of Clermont-Ferrand.



However, it gets more complicated, because the communes named in the rules above sometimes allows neighbouring communes to be incorporated.

For example:

Boudes includes Boudes, Chalus, Saint-Hérent

Chanturgue includes Cébazat and Clermont-Ferrand

Châteaugay includes Cébazat, Châteaugay and Ménérol

Corent includes Les Martres-de-Veyre, La Sauvetat and Veyre-Monton

And, Madargue includes Riom.

The grape types

The white wines are made from Chardonnay exclusively.

The red and rosé wines are made from Gamay (the principal grape variety) with Pinot Noir as an accessory grape. The principal variety (Gamay) must comprise 50% or more of the wine. The Gamay grown in the Auvergne, Gamay d'Auvergne, typically has darker red fruit than Gamay in other regions, and is spicier and more savoury. It also ripens later.

The plantation rules

The vines must have a minimum density of 4400 vines per hectare. Note that in the French legal documents the concept of a vine is referred to as a "pied" or foot – hence the text refers to "4400 pieds per hectare".

The text also refers to the distance between rows and the distance between "feet" within the rows.

These vines have a row spacing of 2.50 meters or less and a spacing between vines within the same row of between 0.90 meters and 1.40 meters.

Another rule is that the maximum percentage of dead vines is set at 20% unless the number of vines per hectare exceeds 8800 per hectare in which case 30% of dead vines is permitted.

The wine rules

Wines that use the appellation on their labels must adhere to other rules as well. White wines and rosé wines must have at least 165 grams per litre of must and red wines the value must be 175 grams per litre minimum.

If the wine is to have the following commune names added Boudes, Chanturges, Châteaugay or Madargue then 185 grams per litre of must is the minimum requirement. In the case of Corent, 175 grams is the minimum requirement.

All wines must have at least a minimum alcoholic content of 10.5%. Those that have Boudes, Chanturges, Châteaugay, Corent or Madargue following Côtes d'Auvergne on the label must be at least an alcoholic content of 11%.

The minimum yield is set at 55 hectolitres per hectare and the maximum yield is 60 hectolitres per hectare.

Geological information

Section 10 (X – Lien avec la zone géographique) has some interesting information concerning the choice of the various communes within the département of the Puy-de-Dôme.

The following is taken directly from Section X – 1 – a) of the AOC for the Côtes d'Auvergne.

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The renowned and distinctive character of complementary geographical designations such as "Boudes," "Chanturgue," "Châteaugay," "Corent," and "Madargue" clearly illustrate this diversity.

For instance, the "Madargue" site, located in the commune of Riom, consists of a white, marly hillock dedicated to viticulture.

The vineyard of the "Chanturgue" geographical designation—emblematic of the "Côtes d'Auvergne" and bearing a name of Celtic origin derived from *cantalo* (meaning "brilliant") and *clarus* (meaning "clearly visible")—occupies the steep slopes (exceeding 25%) of a basalt plateau.

The vineyard plots within the "Châteaugay" geographical designation occupy the slopes of an ancient basalt flow that has fragmented into several small plateaus. The "Corent" geographical designation derives its renown from a *puy* (volcanic cone) formed during the most recent eruptions, featuring dark-coloured soils rich in volcanic colluvium.

Vineyard plots within the "Boudes" geographical designation occupy a vast limestone hill capped by a basalt flow.

The plots delimited for grape harvesting feature soils derived from a wide variety of materials, such as marl, basalt, volcanic colluvium, granite, and gneiss.

However, all the soils are characterized by excellent thermal properties and low water-holding capacity, and the plots generally enjoy favourable exposure.

The geographical area benefits from a semi-continental climate. The Foehn effect, caused by the presence of the Chaîne des Puys and the Sancy massif, shields the area from moist air masses arriving from the west and maintains higher temperatures than those found in the surrounding region.

Conclusion

If this story has sparked your interest in this area you should also keep an eye out for our mention of another restaurant in this region that we also visited this year.

And, of course, for many years we have been importing the delicious wines of Mito Inoue and still have some of her current shipment available. They are Vin de France, because she does not seek to comply with any rules, but they are our most expensive wines.

French wine terms

Chapeau

The solids that swell upwards during fermentation to form a 'crust' on top of the fermenting liquid.

Chaptalisation

The process of adding sugar to grape juice before fermentation to increase the alcohol content. Named after Jean-Antoine Chaptal. This is a legal addition in France.

Climat

This term is somewhat difficult to explain easily. We find that it is best to actually define a related but different term and then come back to the definition of climat.

We like to start by referring to the definition of a “lieu-dit” which is a named parcel of land that is registered at the town hall as a technical cadastral unit (for taxation purposes). Notice that it is a unit of land which is defined locally but has legal and financial implications.

A climat is more of a grape-grower's notion of a particular parcel with certain attributes. Climat finds its origin in the Greek “klima” meaning “incline” which conveys the notion of exposure to the sun. The two are not mutually exclusive. A climat can be comprised of several lieux-dits; a single lieu-dit can also be a recognized climat. The term “climat” is largely reserved to parcels ranked as Premier or Grand Cru in Bourgogne—the best and most favourably situated vineyard parcels.

Contre-etiquette

Back label on a bottle of wine.

Coopérative Vinicole

A winery that is owned by winemakers in a cooperative, also known as a wine producers' union. Approximately half of all French wine is now sold by cooperatives or cooperative unions. We do not buy from cooperatives but some of the people we work with originally sold their wines to the local cooperative. We also work with some people who make negociant wines from grapes they buy from growers who also sell to the cooperatives. (In some case the growers, realising their cooperatives did not particularly value their organic grapes, have switch completely to selling to small negociant natural winemakers.

Typically a co-operative is associated with a particular village and will be one of the dominant structures in the village, especially in the south of France where so much French wine is made.

In the Jura the term is slightly different but the intent is the same. The cooperatives are called Fruitière Vinicole. There is one in the town of Arbois and another in the village of Pupillin, just 4 kilometres away.

Grape Variety: Lledoner Pelut

The Lledoner Pelut grape variety is a mutation of Grenache Noir and can be identified particularly via its “villosity” a rare term which refers to the “hairs” on the bottom side of the leaf – a feature of which is shared by both Grenache and Lledoner Pelut.

This grape variety almost became extinct in the early 20th Century but has been revived and is slowly extending its reach in both Spain and southern France, although it is still fairly restricted in its extent.

This variety is also found in Spain where it is referred to as “Garnacha Peluda”. This is somewhat ironic as the Spanish term for Grenache is Lledoner!

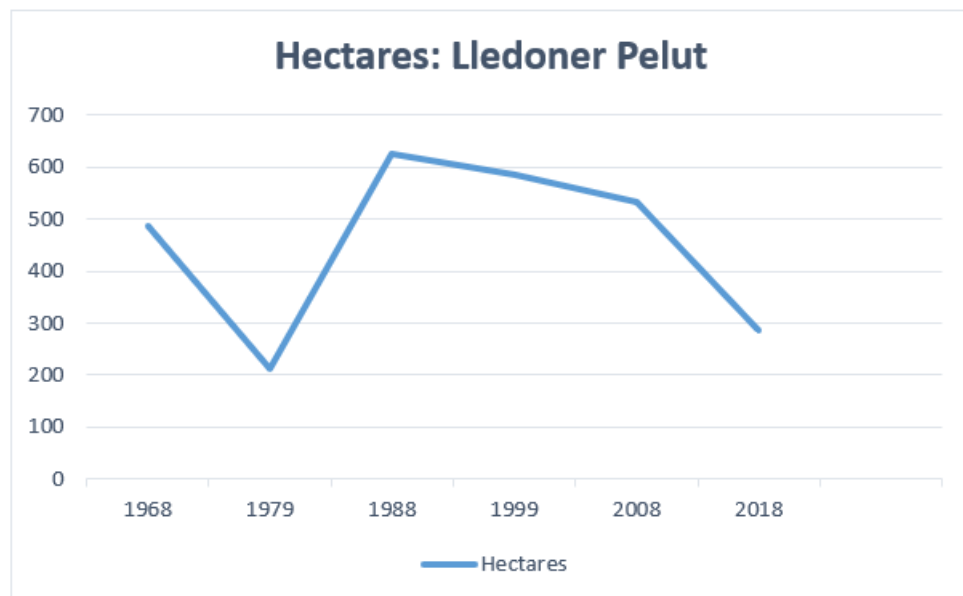
Its new appeal is due to the fact that it can be used to create savoury red or rosé wines which have a low alcoholic content with higher than normal natural acidity.

Another reason that vigneron are turning to this grape variety is that it grows well in areas of higher temperature thus being favoured in areas where climate change is having a strong impact such as Roussillon and Languedoc in Southern France and Catalonia in northern Spain.

In fact, one of the rare occasions when Lledoner Pelut is nominated as a principal grape variety in the formal appellations documents is for the Corbieres appellation in the Languedoc where it is nominated as a principal grape for both red wines and rosés.

In addition, Lledoner Pelut along with Grenache, Mourvèdre and Syrah must consist of at least 50% of both red wines and rosé wines for the Corbieres wines.

The rise and decline of this grape variety is shown in the graph below:



As can be seen above, it saw a brief increase from the late 1970s to the late 1980s and then a slow decrease since then. It is likely, however, that we might see an increase again when new figures are released.



The Lledoner Pelut grape bunch

The Lledoner Pelut grape bunch is quite dense meaning that the wind cannot get “inside” the bunch which means that it cannot blow out the powdery mildew that tends to form inside the bunch.



The Lledoner Pelut leaf

Notice that the Lledoner Pelut leaf has small “teeth” and three sinuses comprising the petiole sinus at the top in this picture where the petiole “stem” joins the leaf and two lateral inferior sinuses (the small indents at 4 o’clock and 8 o’clock) on either side of the inferior lobe at the bottom of the picture.

Another feature of this leaf is that the veins are virtually invisible even though they exist and provide structure to 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.