

WINE Talk: October 2026

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 149

Welcome to newsletter 149 for October 2026. We hope you continue to enjoy reading them. We certainly are continuing to enjoy writing them!

We have been able to put together **8 packs** to offer in this newsletter, but 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 our New Arrivals;
- A brief run-down on what is coming;
- The 8 packs with some interesting new arrivals and some exciting specialities with some age;
- Bits and Pieces covering several topics including news items from France, more restaurants and bars serving natural wines and short stories addressing aspects of grape growing and wine making;
- A story about the Bourgogne Passe-Tout-Grains wine appellation;
- Another set of French terms and their English equivalents.
- This month's grape variety is Ugni Blanc, one of the varieties that is widely planted in France.

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 – Mataburro

This month we have been releasing wines from that wonderful Roussillon team Laurent Roger and Mélissa Ingrand. Together they are Mataburro, an estate they created in 2017. The name Mataburro, derived from Catalan, basically means ‘donkey killer’ and commemorates the unfortunate fate of two local donkeys on the first day that a new train line, which is still at the bottom of their first vineyard, began service in 1910.

Laurent and Mélissa’s home and cellar is in Rivesaltes, just outside Perpignan and close to the Mediterranean Spanish border. You’ll see on their labels the location ‘Catalogne Nord’, a reminder that many people in this region on both sides of the border, including Laurent whose family has been here for generations, identify more as Catalan than as French or Spanish. Both of them are great chefs and for many years we have been lucky recipients of an annual lunch they both create while we try the new wines. The inspiration for their cooking is Catalan not French and it is always a highlight of our French visits.

Most of their approximately 6.5 hectare estate is in Rivesaltes and nearby Espira-de-l’Agly. They also farm a small parcel in Fourques on the other side of Perpignan which was previously tended by Alain Castex. Laurent and Melissa have looked after it since his untimely death. They work mainly with Grenache Noir, Merlot, Macabeu, Muscat à Petit Grains, and Muscat d’Alexandria, plus the Fourques parcel is mainly Grenache Gris with a little Carignan, Bourboulenc and other Mediterranean varieties.

Some of the vines were planted by Laurent’s grandfather and father, including the Merlot and most of the Grenache. They also have a plot of Macabeu which they added to their estate relatively recently without knowing at the time they were purchasing it that it was also planted Laurent’s grandfather. The family’s holdings were substantial, and largely devoted to making the sweet wines Rivesaltes is famous for, but in 2001 his father sold everything except for 3 hectares. It is lovely to see that history coming back to the family, albeit almost by accident.

Laurent worked for some time as a sommelier at the legendary Paris natural wine bar Le Verre Volé, a good place to get a training in drinking natural wine! Eventually, though, he returned to Roussillon with a plan to make wine – there were the three hectares of family vines as a starting point but for learning to be a winemaker the key influence was (and remains) Alain Castex. Laurent worked for him directly and he became a mentor for the creation of Mataburro. Even after Alain’s death in 2023 it’s always clear when talking to Laurent that he’s still there, looking over his shoulder, and helping him chart a path for both his viticulture and winemaking. He’s in the vines, especially the Fourques vineyard and in the cellar. Laurent uses some of his equipment in the vineyard and the cellar and talks of these pieces of equipment with veneration.

Having said that, Laurent and Mélissa’s path is definitely their own. They are not trying to reproduce Alain Castex’s wines. They constantly question and modify their approaches in the vineyard and cellar. It’s Castex who helped set their moral compass but their specific approaches evolve and change from vintage to vintage. It’s one of the reasons, apart from the delicious lunch, we particularly look forward to seeing them each year. Nothing stays still as they wrestle with drought and other climate-induced complications, trying to decide the best approach to coax what they seek from their vines, but a few fundamental basics

are sacred. Those fundamentals Laurent and Mélissa explain best in their own words in their Instagram feed (translated):

We work using artisanal methods, convinced that the essence of the emotion and energy we find in the wine originates in the vineyard. In the cellar, everything unfolds naturally, without any added inputs. We favour infusions and short macerations, highlighting freshness and drinkability while preserving the complexity of the soil and the fruit. Our aim is to offer wines that are vibrant, expressive, unconstrained, and full of energy and freshness!

These are wines with no additions, including no added sulphites, and of course no fining or filtration. In seeking the goal of freshness they rely on early harvests, when the sugar levels will still produce wines with low levels of alcohol (the sort of wines they love to drink), very short macerations of whole bunches with infusions of directly-pressed juices in fibreglass tanks, and after pressing aging mostly in neutral vessels such as concrete and stainless steel, but also with small amounts of wine (not entire cuvées) aged in old wood (last time we had a count they had 8 barrels) and amphora. Cuvées which are a blend are generally vinified separately because of the variations in picking dates.

This mix of varieties and vessels gives them, when the time comes, pieces of a jigsaw puzzle from which they can make individual wines. That time is, at least to date, always early. These 2025 wines we are releasing were bottled in February this year. They are lovely to drink now but in our experience if you're lucky enough to be able to hold on to a few bottles they develop over time into something even more glorious.

. We have three packs in the newsletter featuring these wines and a few available separately for sale.

Mataburro Memo 2025



The wine is made from approximately 70 year old Macabeu vines growing on clay and rolled pebbles of limestone in Espira-de-l'Agly. The vines were planted by Laurent's grandfather but they purchased the vineyard from a subsequent owner a few years ago, at the time without knowing who had planted them.

It is a mix of approximately 50/50 directly-pressed and macerated juice. But the short 5 day maceration was not with the purpose of making an orange wine. Laurent feels that this period of maceration (5 days) helps the finished wine to express some of the soil's complexities and also is insurance for a good fermentation.

Aging was in a mix of amphora, vat and barrel. We have classified it as white. It is fresh and lively, beginning with citrus and then a saline finish.

11% ABV

RRP: \$65

Mataburro Idoine 2025



Idoine, as usual, is 100% Merlot. It comes from 30 year old vines in Rivesaltes planted by Laurent's father on quite heavy clay soils.

His meticulous pruning in this vineyard, and then strict disbudding each spring is, Laurent thinks, contributing to more maturity each year, and it's visible in the glass.

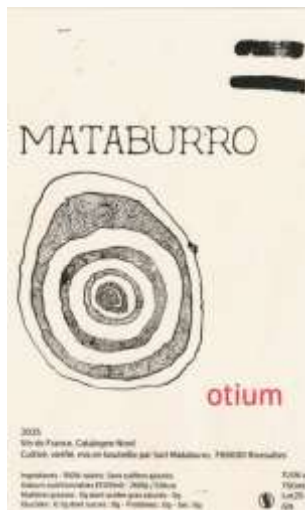
Although it's juicy, there is plenty of structure as well. Whole bunches were macerated for a few days and it was aged in a mix of fibreglass and barrels.

"It's our Gamay" according to Laurent. And, because it's not as dark as last year's vintage, it's another one of our new 'dark, light red' wines according to us.

12% ABV

RRP: \$62

Mataburro Otium 2025



This year's Otium is an infusion of Grenache Noir, (90% of the wine) picked from 80 year old selection massale vines planted by Laurent's grandfather in Espira d'Agly.

Laurent says it's an old variety of Grenache with nowhere near as strong a colour as newer clones and very little tannin, which allows the complexities the soil offers to be better expressed.

It was infused for 11 days with Grenache Gris (the other 10% of the wine) from the Fourques vineyard the previously Alain Castex farmed and aging was in a concrete tank which fittingly belonged to Castex.

It is pink and we possibly should have it as a rosé. The pinkness is deceiving though. It is complex with a slight bitterness to finish so we feel more comfortable thinking of it as a light red. It ideally should be served chilled.

11.5% ABV

RRP: \$65

Mataburro Totem 2025



The 60 year old Mourvèdre and Grenache Noir vines for this red wine grow on a very distinctive parcel of very black marl and shist. It is difficult to work and there were not enough grapes to make this wine in 2024.

Many were eaten by birds and some Mourvèdre which salvageable, and which extraordinarily was still at 11% in September(!), went into the 2024 Mura Mura.

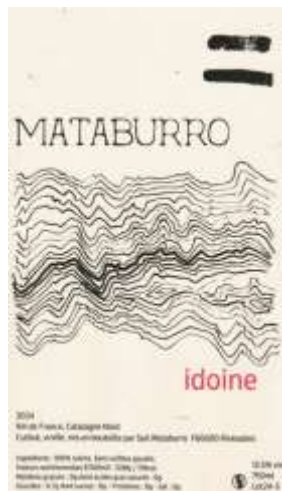
This 2025 vintage is, we think, the final vintage from this complicated plot as Laurent and Melissa have decided to stop renting it. (They have some nice plans for a replacement, but we will have to wait until next year to see the result.)

During maceration they did a little pigeage then the pressed juice was aged briefly in amphora, barrel, and tank.

12.5% ABV

RRP: \$71

Mataburro Idoine 2024



This is our second release of this wine. We loved it last year and couldn't resist the chance to buy a few more bottles.

100% Merlot, it comes from 30 year old vines in Rivesaltes planted by Laurent's father on quite heavy clay soils.

The meticulous pruning in this vineyard, and then strict disbudding in the spring has, Laurent thinks, contributed to much more even maturity this year.

Whole bunches were macerated for 3-4 days, which was less than 2023, but the wine seems slightly more concentrated this year.

It was aged 80% in concrete tanks and 20% in wood. The wine is particularly juicy with aromas of ripe black cherries.

"It's our Gamay" according to Laurent.

12.5% ABV

RRP: \$62.

What's Coming

The **not new news** is (i.e. expected new arrivals we have already mentioned in last month's newsletter):

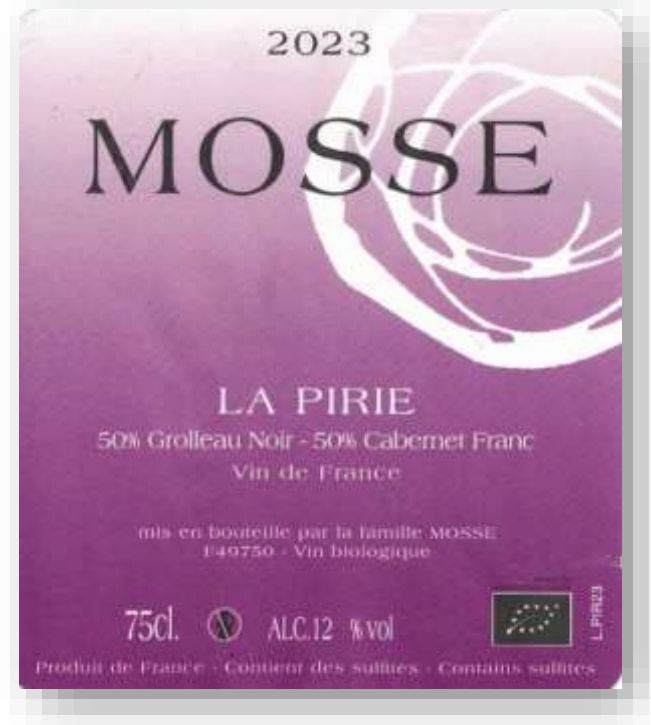
- We can confirm we will definitely be offering some **Robinot** wines by allocation during the last half of November. There will be a couple of **packs** in the November newsletter as well.
- We will be advertising **Gahier** wines in December. We're not taking early requests for these. We will let all our wholesale and retail customers know at the same time though so everyone will have a chance to order. There will be packs for Gahier too. If you want to give yourself a wine Christmas present these could be rather perfect.
- **Fanny Sabre** is arriving in January – please request early notification if you would like to get in early.
- **Mosse** is arriving in January - please request early notification if you would like to get in early.

The **new news**. These are finalised orders, either in transit or about to be collected, but we're not quite ready to predict the arrival date yet. They will all be in the first quarter of 2027 though.

- Our first release in several years from Ardèche vigneron **Sylvain Bock**. It will include several new cuvées including G-Buxa, Ella m'a Serre, Merlomania and Agatha de Blouge, and cuvées more familiar to those who have enjoyed Sylvain's wines in the past, including the joyful Grenache-based Neck and Raffut, his sublime old vine Ardèche Syrah aged in oak. We will advertise these so if you want early notification let us know.
- Some wines from Julien and Carole. It's mainly new vintages of **Sextant** wines including Métisse 2025 and the 2024 vintages of Bourgogne Blanc, Bourgogne Rouge and Coteaux Bourguignons, but there are also small quantities of other wines. We planned to make it entirely Sextant but we couldn't resist a top up of **Domaine Derain** 2023 Bourgogne Blanc La Combe when we found they still had a few available bottles and some 2025 Derain Bourgogne Aligoté. There will be a bigger order from Domaine Derain later in the year. We will advertise these so if you want early notification let us know.
- It's been some time since we have had a release of Jura vigneron Etienne Thiebaud's **Domaine des Cavarodes** wines. We will be selling these by allocation so if you would like an offer, the safest way to ensure one is to make a request relatively soon (there's no need to rush and we will remind you again). The offers will be slightly different from usual this time though because there is no Côtes du Jura Savagnin Pressé or Chardonnay Lumachelles, two wines we usually have in relatively good quantity, and none of his Vin de Pays de Franche Comté Blanc, in the release. But what we will be able to offer will still be some of the best value wines in the Jura. It's exciting for us to have these so soon after Michel Gahier's wines and we're hoping for more confirmed Jura news next month. We may restrict offers to people who have purchased something in the previous 12 months.

Pack 1: Suitable for Celebrations Pack

(15% Discount – 3 Packs Only – Subsidised Freight)



We're getting in early as the year enters its final months and thoughts turn to summer and celebration with a practical pack to support such thoughts. This pack has two sparkling wines, one light red, a real red, and two whites.

The Domaine Derain Chut sparkling Aligoté, made like a Champagne, is suitable for serious celebratory drinking with the added advantage of being very rare. Aligoté is mainly grown in Burgundy but if someone makes a méthode traditionnelle from 100% Aligoté they cannot call it a Crémant de Bourgogne. It must have Chardonnay in it to use the appellation and that's what most estates would do. So, Chut! (which translates as shhh ... it's a secret) has to be a Vin de France. The other sparkling is a joyful dark pink pet-nat made with Grenache, Syrah, and Alicante Bouschet. It's the Alicante Bouschet which gives it its colour, the Grenache its perfume and the Syrah a touch of spice. You could just drink this or it would go well, in a great Australian tradition, with roasted turkey.

The Mosse Bang Nouveau, made to be drunk young, is a very light red, best chilled and very quaffable. There's no need for food matching notes with this one because it doesn't need it. It's an unlikely blend of Grolleau Gris, Merlot and Muscat à Petits Grains – so good luck if anyone wants to blind taste it and try to guess what it is made from! The real red, the Mosse La Pirie 2023, is a 50/50 blend of Grolleau Noir and Cabernet Franc grown side by side by the Mosse family in the Loire Valley. It's one for matching with red meats.

The final two are Chardonnays from La Soeur Cadette. The Chablis appellation, in the north of Burgundy, has name recognition – one of the most famous appellations for Chardonnay

in the world. The other one is an incredibly good value wine made with grapes grown nearby. The vineyard was once classified as Petit Chablis but its derogation was changed some years ago. The appellation is much less famous, less sought after, has less limestone (which is one of the main reasons why it's less sought after) and is less familiar (so good fun for visitors who think they have drunk everything). We wrote about its appellation IGP Yonne, which covers the Yonne department (to which the commune of Chablis belongs) in our last newsletter. Both are lovely Chardonnays, and, given the winemaking is the same by the same person (Valentin Montanet) for both but the terroir is quite different, very interesting to try side by side if the people at your table like wine conversations!

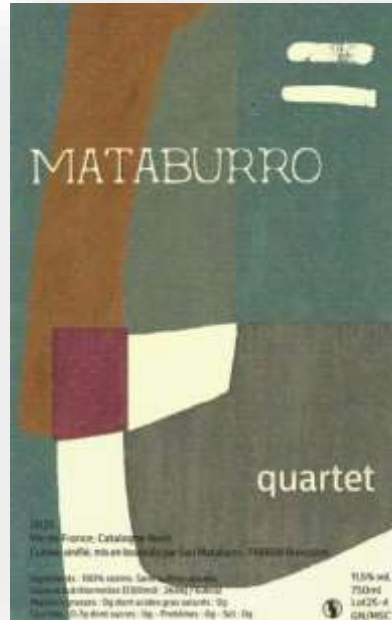
These are the wines:

- **Domaine Derain Chut ... Derain 2023**
- **Milan Brut Nature Rosé 2023**
- **Mosse Bang Nouveau 2025**
- **Mosse La Pirie 2023**
- **La Soeur Cadette IGP Yonne 2025**
- **La Soeur Cadette Chablis 2025**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$367.00 and the discounted price is **\$311.95.
Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.**

Pack 2: A Little of Everything Mataburro Pack

(10% Discount - 2 Packs Only - Subsidised freight)



It's hard to imagine a better pack of wine for summer than these 6 new Mataburro wines, direct from the Mediterranean Sea (well nearly – Mataburro is based in Rivesaltes which is about 20 kms inland from the coast). Everything is lovely drunk with a bit of a chill, even Totem, which is a juicy red (and which we only received 60 bottles of so it's rare too). The alcohol levels are all low – mostly 11, 11.5 and 12% (Totem is bigger – it's 12.5%) – and everything is very fresh.

Memo, the white, is slightly saline and citrus – perfect with any summer seafood. The light reds and rosés - Otium, Idoine and Mura Mura - are the sorts of wines you don't need food for – you can squeeze them in for a refreshing moment during a meal, open them at a picnic, or drink them as an apero when you just feel like a glass of wine.

There's more information about all the wines in the News Arrivals section.

These are the wines:

- Mataburro Memo 2025
- Mataburro Idoine 2025
- Mataburro Otium 2025
- Mataburro Mura Mura 2025
- Mataburro Quartet Rouge 2025
- Mataburro Totem 2025

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$389.00 and the discounted price is **\$350.10**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 3: More on the Pinkish Side Mataburro Pack

(No Discount - 2 Packs Only – No Subsidised Freight)



This pack has the three pinkest wines in our new Mataburro release. Mura Mura, a blend of Grenache, Merlot, Muscat d'Alexandria, and Muscat à Petits Grains, is definitely a rosé.

Otium is probably a rosé too. You can see its colour in the glass in the photo above when we were first trying it with Laurent and Mélissa at their house in July. We're officially calling it a light red but the jury is out. It's a blend of Grenache Noir and Grenache Gris (for those who follow the iconic names the Grenache Gris is from a vineyard formerly worked by Alain Castex, Laurent's mentor).

The third wine is at the darker end of the lightish red spectrum. We've called Otium a 'dark light red'. It's 100% Merlot which explains the colour and the juiciness, but we can safely say it's not like your average Merlot!

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

The pack is only 3 bottles, so there is no discount but if you buy the pack with 3 other wines of your choosing, then they would all be discounted by 10%.

The pack has the following wines:

- **Mataburro Idoine 2025**
- **Mataburro Otium 2025**
- **Mataburro Mura Mura 2025**

This selection of 3 bottles is \$191. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 4: More Red than Pink Mataburro Pack

(No Discount – 1 Pack Only – No Subsidised Freight)



There is only one of these packs of the reddest Mataburro wines mainly because Totem, one of the wines, is also very rare. We only received 60 bottles in total so you're not going to see it about in many places. It's a true red wine, made with Mourvèdre and Grenache Noir grown on two tiny plots in Espira-de-l'Agly. A part (0.5 hectares) is the striking black schist and marne rocks (there is not really any soil) you can see in this photo.

The other 0.3 hectares, just metres away, is limestone and quartz. These vines have been very challenging and Laurent and Mélissa have now decided not to continue with them (there was no Totem in 2024 but plenty of happy boars who ate the fruit) so it's possible, this extremely delicious 2025 vintage is the last. Also in this pack is Idoine (a dark light red) and Quartet (a light red).

The pack is only 3 bottles so there is no discount but if you buy the pack with 3 other wines of your choosing, then they would all be discounted by 10%.

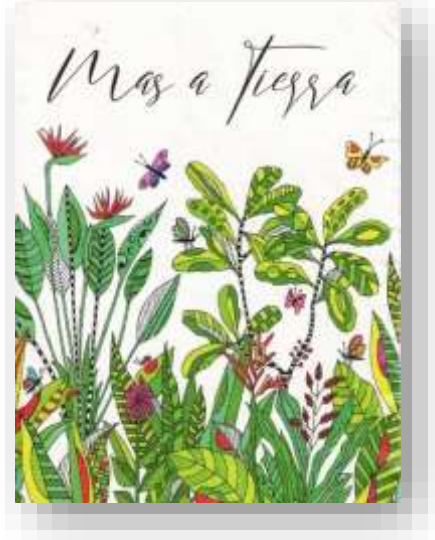
These are the wines:

- **Mataburro Idoine 2025**
- **Mataburro Quartet Rouge 2025**
- **Mataburro Totem 2025**

This selection of **3** bottles is **\$195**. Check with us for the freight charge to your location.

Pack 5: A Very Special Red Pack

(1 Pack – 12.5% Discount - Subsidised Freight)



We have put together a couple of stranded bottles from allocation offers that eventually that went bad (the Bornard and Alice and Olivier de Moors' super rare négoce Le Vendangeur Masqué Bourgogne Rouge (we never get red wines from them!), included of a bottle of our second shipment of Mataburro Idoine 2024 which we are releasing this week, added the last bottle of Julien and Carole's Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Rouge 2021 and the last bottle of La Soeur Cadette Beaujolais Villages Rouge 2025, and completed the pack with the second last bottle of Romain de Moor and Mélissa Bazin's stunning and highly drinkable Côteaux Bourguignons Màs a Tierra 2023 to make a very special pack. Needless to say, there is only one.

There are three Pinot Noirs (the Bourgogne Rouge and the Côteaux Bourguignons), one Gamay (the Beaujolais Villages), one Trousseau (it's in the name!) and one Merlot (the Mataburro), but lighter and juicier than most wines made with this grape.

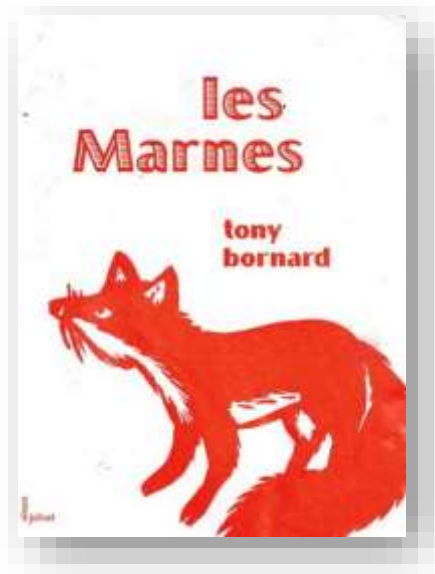
These are the wines:

- **Mataburro Idoine 2024**
- **Sextant - Julien Altaber Bourgogne Rouge 2021**
- **Domaine Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2022**
- **Le Vendangeur Masqué Bourgogne Rouge 2024**
- **La Soeur Cadette Beaujolais Villages Rouge 2025**
- **La Petite Empreinte Côteaux Bourguignons Màs a Tierra 2023**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$445.00 and the discounted price is **\$389.50**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 6: Not Quite a Jura Pack

1 Pack Only - No Discount – Subsidised Freight



This pack has two wines from Domaine Bornard. One is a red (the 2022 vintage of Le Ginglet Trousseau) and the other is an oxidative white, made in the same style as Vin Jaune, Les Marnes, from the 2018 vintage. The latter would be a great wine at any celebratory table where a cheese course is planned.

For Les Marnes, the domaine's translated description is "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."

The third wine, l'Octavin's Ganache, is another red from the 2022 vintage, made from Grenache sourced in Provence from close by the town of Carpentras. However, like all Alice Bouvot's wines, it was made in her Arbois cellar in the heart of the Jura.

The pack is only 3 bottles so there is no discount, but if you buy the pack with 3 other wines of your choosing, then they would all be discounted by 10%.

These are the wines:

- **Domaine Bornard Trousseau Le Ginglet 2022**
- **Domaine Bornard Savagnin Les Marnes 2018**
- **l'Octavin Ganache 2022**

This selection of **3** bottles is **\$312.00**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Pack 7: Boxes of Vinegar Pack

15% Discount – Subsidised Freight



La Guinelle Vinaigrerie, tucked into a narrow crevice in the hills above Banyuls sur Mer is one of the most beautiful places we visit each year. Founded by Nathalie Lefort in the late 1990s it has grown side-by-side with the natural wine movement. In fact all our early experiences with La Guinelle were buying bottles in natural wine shops to bring home with us from France and our first official tasting of the vinegars was at La Dive, the famous natural wine salon held in Saumur in Loire Valley at the end of each February.

The desire not to have to carry it in our suitcases plus a collaboration between Philippe Bornard and Nathalie, which resulted in a vinegar made from Savagnin, were the main impetuses for us to approach her to see if we could start importing small quantities. She said yes and we have been enjoying them ever since.

In 2022 Nathalie retired and sold her business to Chandra Brune. Chandra is young, in her early 30s now, but she worked with Nathalie for 10 years, beginning when she was 18, so she was better equipped than any other successor could have been to respect and continue Nathalie's way of working.

The vinegars begin life as natural wines with no additions of any sort. They then spend time in the barrels exposed to the elements under a carport-like structure until they have the right level of acetic acid. Each barrel has a large hole cut in it which is draped with a colourful cloth to allow airflow and protection from insects. Yeasts form a protective layer in the same way as they do for an oxidative wine.

You can see the yeast in a barrel Banyuls Rouge in one of the photos above. At just the right time the vinegar is transferred into glass demijohns which are out in the open with absolutely no protection from the incredibly hot summer sun. You can see both stages of production in one of the photos. We feel incredibly privileged to have access to these truly artisanal products.

Normally we sell the vinegars in very beautiful small 25cl and 50cl bottles but each year we also buy a few 3 litre BiBs (Bag in Boxes) of Chandra's classic Banyuls rouge vinegar (made mainly with Grenache) and the Muscat (made with Muscat à Petits Grains). They are not as elegant as the small bottles, but they are very practical and last for ages.

We use both regularly, decanting from the boxes into bottles so both are always easily at hand. The red wine vinegar is perhaps the best base we know for a vinaigrette destined for tomatoes and the aromatic muscat is a brilliant way to liven a mayonnaise or finish a butter-based sauce for fish but the possibilities in the kitchen are endless.

(On our alcohol-free days, we often make a drink with a shot of Banyuls Rouge vinegar filled with sparkling water. It does well as a substitute for alcohol maybe because once it was).

This pack is a way for you to ensure you don't run out during your summer cooking or might provide a special gift for a cook in your life. These boxes are also great in restaurant kitchens.

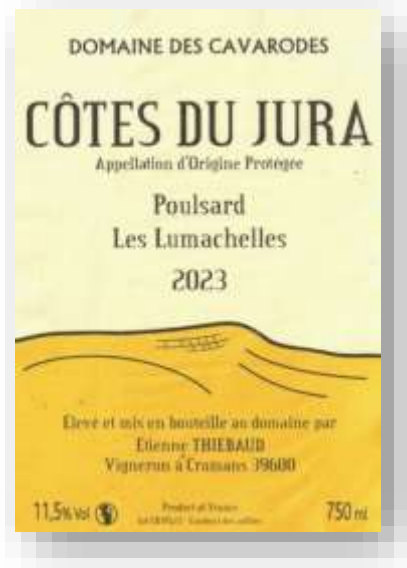
These are the vinegars:

- **La Guinelle Vinaigre de Banyuls Rouge BIB 3 litres**
- **La Guinelle Vinaigre de Muscat BIB 3 litres**

The RRP for this selection of 2 boxes is \$233 and the discounted price is **\$198.05. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.**

Pack 8: Things We Found Pack

1 Pack Only – Approx 12% Discount – Subsidised Freight



We feel this pack should begin with an apology because inevitably someone has asked us for one of these wines and we've said that at the time they were sold out, but now, it seems they are not.

For various reasons we've been able to find a single bottle of each of these wines and can offer them as a pack. It's quite a mix – the Mosse, Mataburro, and Le Temps des Cerises are delicious easy to drink light reds. The Mataburro would be a chance for you to test our theory, without waiting, that these wines love some rest before they are drunk.

The other three are more serious – a profound Pineau d'Aunis from Jean-Pierre, a bottle of the 2022 vintage of the much-loved Derain La Combe cuvée, a complex Chardonnay with spends much longer on your palate than its Bourgogne Blanc designation would expect and, finally, a magic, light in the mouth but lingering Poulsard from Etienne (Domaine des Cavarodes).

These are the wines:

- **Mataburro Otium 2024**
- **Mosse Bangarang 2024**
- **Le Temps des Cerises Avanti Popolo 2023**
- **Jean-Pierre Robinot Nocturne 2022**
- **Domaine Derain Bourgogne La Combe 2022**
- **Domaine des Cavarodes Côtes du Jura Poulsard Lumachelles 2023**

The RRP for this selection of **6** bottles is \$452 and the discounted price is **\$397.45**. Check with us for the subsidised freight charge to your location.

Bits and Pieces

European Free Trade Agreement (or not)

We are waiting eagerly to see what the outcome of parliamentary approval (or not) of a trade deal with the European Union will be. Agreement was reached in March, but the arrangement must pass both houses of Federal Parliament for it to become law. Initially, it sounded like this would happen but now it is on shaky ground with at least the leader of the National Party saying the Coalition will not support it (apparently it is not good enough for them) and the Greens still have not declared one way or the other.

Should it go ahead it would mean our wine prices would come down slightly. It would not make a huge difference (a massive change to the Wine Equalisation Tax (WET) is the only thing that could do that) but at a time when the cost of shipping wine is increasing significantly it would be a nice development to have one input to our total costs removed. We pay 5% import duty on an aggregated total which includes the cost of the wine and the cost of the international freight. That is the tax which would be removed. The saving would be slightly more than the amount of the tax itself though because it's the first tax imposed and so becomes part of the costs on which other taxes (WET and GST) are imposed.

Our fingers are crossed for a good outcome!

Restaurants bars and shops outside Paris

We have some more bars, shops and restaurants in France (outside Paris this time) serving or selling natural wines for you this month.

Vigne en Foule - Gaillac

Vigne en foule is named after a very old method of close planting grape vines that has long since been abandoned in France. This pleasant bistro in the centre of the city of Gaillac (about 50 kilometres north-east of Toulouse) serves up delicious, seasonal produce-driven food at amazing prices. The wine list highlights the growing number of natural wine makers in south-west France and beyond.

When you walk in from the pleasant central square you will notice jars of preserved grapes above the kitchen - these are examples of ancient varieties from the area that local growers are trying to restore to their former glory (Gaillac was one of the most beloved wine producing areas in Europe centuries ago).

We like this area as attention is now being given to varieties such as Braucol, Duras, Ondenc, Prunelard, Jurancon, and Alicante rather than the standards found everywhere such as Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

The wine list however explores more widely than Gaillac with old favourites such as the wines of the Mosse family, the amazing Substance Champagne from Jacques Sellose, a very old Fleurie from Jean Foillard and the Elian Da Ros from the nearby Côtes du Marmandais appellation, to name just a few.

The owner chef here is very capable. There are interesting starters such as mussels, a ballotine of foie gras and buffalo mozzarella. we've eaten duck, a fish dish served with "coco de Paimpol – which are our favourite of all the shelling beans" and a beef hamburger

served with tomme de brebis (sheep's milk cheese). Coco de Paimpol beans were, apparently, the first in fresh vegetable in France to be rewarded an AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) in 1998 and are now designated PDO (Protected Designation of Origin) which is European protection.

Address: 80 Place de la Libération, 81600, Gaillac

Web site: vigneenfoule.fr

Sézanne, Alsace

Sézanne is an exciting épicerie and wine bar in the Alsace town of Colmar (about an hour south of the capital, Strasbourg) which we try to visit when we are in the area. An épicerie is a shop which sells a range of goods related to food and wine (in Australia we would call it a delicatessen).

They have an excellent selection of wines especially from the local area (but also natural wines from elsewhere such as those from Axel Prufer, for example), a wonderful Jura selection, although these are less available then in the past, as well as many of the items you would expect to find in a delicatessen such as pate, cheeses, stunning hams, dried pasta and much, much more.

It is open from 9am to 7pm from Monday to Saturday and you can go here just to buy items to take away, or you can also visit the bar, always a better way to start if you're hunting for special wines!.

Address: 30 Grand Rue, Colmar, 68000

La Courtille, Tavel, Rhone Valley



La Courtille is one of our favourite restaurants in France for a number of reasons. First, it has a wonderful aspect, being housed in a beautiful old building in the Rhone town of Tavel. Second is the restaurant's walled garden setting where seating is arranged outside in

summer beneath the beautiful, old courtyard trees that provide shade from the sun. Third is the wonderful food cooked by Natalia Crozon and Marie Lézouret who both have spent time at Parisian restaurant Le Baratin under chef Raquel Carena. And finally, we love it because of its connections with Tavel legends the Pfifferling family from Domaine de l'Anglore. Natalia is Thibault Pfifferling's partner and the family aided in creating the restaurant. .

Every meal we have had here has been delicious and the wine we have been recommended from the l'Anglore stable has worked perfectly with the food. It is a must-visit venue!

208 Chem. des Cravailleux, 30126 Tavel

Finding Gris in Burgundy

In France, there has been a long history of growing the Gris mutant of many of the common grape varieties, often interplanted with their ancestors. Pinot Gris, a mutant of Pinot Noir, was traditionally planted to provide variation in Burgundy vineyards. Sauvignon Gris is often found growing alongside Sauvignon Blanc in northern Burgundy especially in the Saint Bris appellation where white wines can be made using either grape variety or a mixture of both.

Indeed, even the rules for the AOC Romanée-Conti, the appellation which governs the most famous vineyard in Burgundy, that produces its rarest and most expensive wines, state that the planting must be least 85% Pinot Noir but can have up to 15% Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris as accessory grapes.

We have walked through many vineyards in France, and in Burgundy in particular, where Pinot Gris is planted among Chardonnay or Pinot Noir vines. It's most easily observed just before harvest, especially with Pinot Gris, because the grapes take a most beautiful almost grey-purple blush.

French winemakers predict lowest harvest for 30 years

An article in *The Guardian* newspaper reported that French vineyards are expected to produce the lowest harvest in 30 years.

Based on the way the vines looked in September this year they are expecting that the overall harvest will be around 34 million hectolitres which will be 17% less than the average yield from 2021 to 2025.

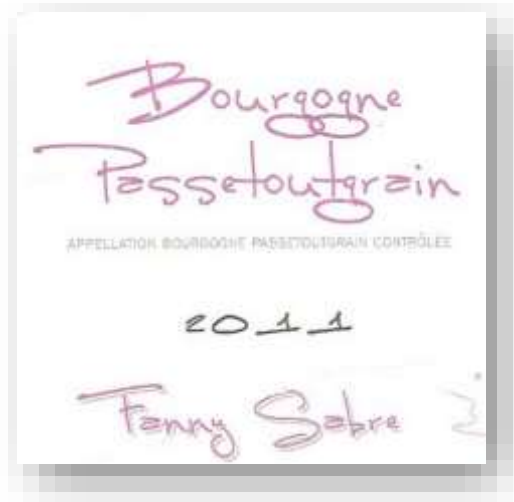
The Guardian quoted Agreste which is the French government's statistics body for farming which said that the low harvest predictions were based on the extreme weather conditions. The newspaper reported that half the area of France experienced temperatures on or over 40 degrees C!

It also reported soil drought, sun scald, defoliation and grape wilting which will all reduce harvest volumes. Another aspect was the damage from smoke from the fires which caused smoke taint in the grapes.

Fortunately, our news is not quite so disastrous, with many of the people we work with relieved and relatively happy to have some through with decent yields. Time will tell.

Bourgogne Passe-Tout-Grains wine appellation

This month we have chosen the Bourgogne Passe-Tout-Grains appellation as it is an unusual one for the Burgundy region, but the process for making the wine is quite specific and produces red wines with a lighter more delicate flavour due to both the winemaking process that is required and the combination of grapes that must be used.



First, this appellation has been there from the start having been adopted in July 1937. The appellation has very specific rules with the main one being that this wine can only be made within the Burgundy region – which is hardly surprising considering its name!

The next surprise is that this wine can be made in the Yonne department in the north of the Burgundy region. The reason we think it is a surprise is because one of the grape varieties that must be used is Gamay, which is not grown very much in this northern region.

However, in this modern era it is quite common for winemakers in one region buying grapes from other regions. For example, Valentin Montanet from La Cadette in the Yonne did some of his apprenticeship in the Juliéna region of Beaujolais and got to love wines made from Gamay, so he has been buying Gamay grapes from that region (Juliéna in particular) for a number of years and making beautiful Gamay wines as a result.

So, now to the other important rules for this appellation.

Wines produced under this appellation must be either red wines or rosé wines. White wines are not permitted.

The rules for the varieties specify compulsory grapes and grapes that may be used. The compulsory grape varieties are Pinot Noir and Gamay. The non-compulsory varieties are Chardonnay, Pinot Blanc and Pinot Gris.

The wine must contain at least 30% of Pinot Noir and 15% of Gamay. It is possible to make up the rest of the wine with these two, provided the minimum is exceeded for both grape varieties.

The following is a quote from the AOC rules:

The grape varieties planted consist primarily of two black-skinned grapes: Gamay N and Pinot Noir N. These varieties are likely indigenous and closely related (belonging to the "Pinot" family), having been selected and adapted to local conditions since the Middle Ages.

In accordance with established practice, the wines are produced from a mandatory blend of Gamay N and Pinot Noir N, with proportions that allow for the combined aromatic expression of both varieties.

As of 2008, the vineyard area covers approximately 600 hectares, with an average annual production of 32,000 hectolitres, consisting mainly of red wines.

Notice that it makes quite clear that the required proportions for the Gamay (15%) and Pinot Noir (30%) have been chosen to allow each to influence the aroma of the wine.

The primary purpose of the other three grape varieties is to ensure that there is some variance in the plants in the vineyards. In fact, the rules specifically state that the three non-compulsory grapes should be planted in among the Pinot Noir and Gamay.

The reason for this is that it is much easier for pathogens to move quickly through a vineyard that is planted to just one species. As with all agriculture biodiversity is something to be encouraged.

An added complexity in the rules is that of any of the non-compulsory grape varieties are used, then the total must not exceed 15% of the plantings.

The other rules for the plantings are very similar to all the other appellations in Burgundy. For example, the minimum allowable density of the plantings is 5,000 vines per hectare and the distance between the rows must be less than or equal to 2.2 metres.

The rules also require that the vines are supported by stakes or a trellis system.

As with all of Burgundy appellations, Section VI (6) Conduit du Vignoble (Vineyard Management) sub-section 3 which refers to rules about irrigation, it is very simple - *L'irrigation est interdite*. (Irrigation is forbidden).

There are also very specific rules for harvesting, with sugar content being less than 171 grams per litre for grapes for red wine and 161 grams per litre for rosé wines. The wines must also have an alcohol reading greater than 10%.

French wine terms

This month we have chosen French words used during the grape harvest, known as **les vendanges**, include specific terms for the people, tools, and actions in the vineyard.

Les vendanges

The grape harvest or the harvest season.

Le ban des vendanges

The official start date or proclamation allowing the harvest to begin. In most appellations this is decided by the authorities not by the vignerons.

Un / Une vendangeur (-euse)

A grape picker or harvester.

Un sécateur

The pruning shears or hand shears used to cut the grape clusters off the vine.

Une grappe de raisin

A bunch of grapes.

Récolter

To harvest

La moisson

The harvest

La récolte

The harvest crop

Une hotte

The large backpack basket or pannier often worn by workers to collect harvested grapes in vineyards which are harvested by hand.

Le ramassage

The act of collecting and gathering the grapes.

Fouler le raisin

To tread or crush the grapes.

Un égrappoir

A destemmer machine used to separate grapes from their stems after picking.

Le millésime

The vintage, meaning the specific year the grapes were grown and harvested.

Grape Variety: Ugni Blanc

The grape variety that the French call Ugni Blanc is probably originally from Italy where it goes by the name of Trebbiano toscano. It is also likely to be the same grape that in Portugal is called Talia.

We have decided to write about this grape variety because it is one of the most widely planted varieties in France even though it doesn't have the exposure of other white grapes such as Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc and Riesling. The reason why will be revealed later in this story!

Ugni Blanc has had an interesting history and to understand fully how this grape became planted widely in France we need to know about Trebbiano in Italy.

The earliest historical records of the Trebbiano grape family in Italy usually refer to ancient Roman times, with the earliest document that references this variety written by the famous Pliny the Elder in the 1st century AD. He referenced a prolific white vine known as *Vinum Trebulanum* cultivated in the then current-day Campania.

But it was an historic religious stand-off that saw Trebbiano get a foothold in France. How did this come about?

In 1305, there was intense political turmoil and uncontrolled outbreaks of fighting on the streets of Rome. That year saw the election of a new pope, Clement V (a Frenchman) who refused to move to Rome due to the unstable nature of the city. He therefore moved the entire papal court to Avignon in southern France.

The popes and their large Italian entourages preferred the wine of their homeland, leading them to import Italian agricultural goods—including grapevines.

It was during this time that Trebbiano arrived in France near Avignon and acquired the name Ugni Blanc. Later in this story you will see a graph which shows that there are significant plantings still in France, and the reason will be made clear soon!

Records from Bologna in northern Italy in 1303 CE mention a grape under the name Tribiana which is thought by historians and ampelographers such as Pier de' Crescenzi to be the same grape as Ugni Blanc.

Over the centuries plantings of the Ugni Blanc variety in France have gradually spread out from the area around Avignon, particularly towards the West and even to Bordeaux where it is still grown.

It can also be found in many areas of the south including Roussillon, Languedoc and Rhone Valley and further north in the Touraine region of the Loire Valley.

Examples of interesting wines made with this grape variety are one by Romain le Bars called La Clau which is made from 100% Ugni Blanc in the Rhone Valley.

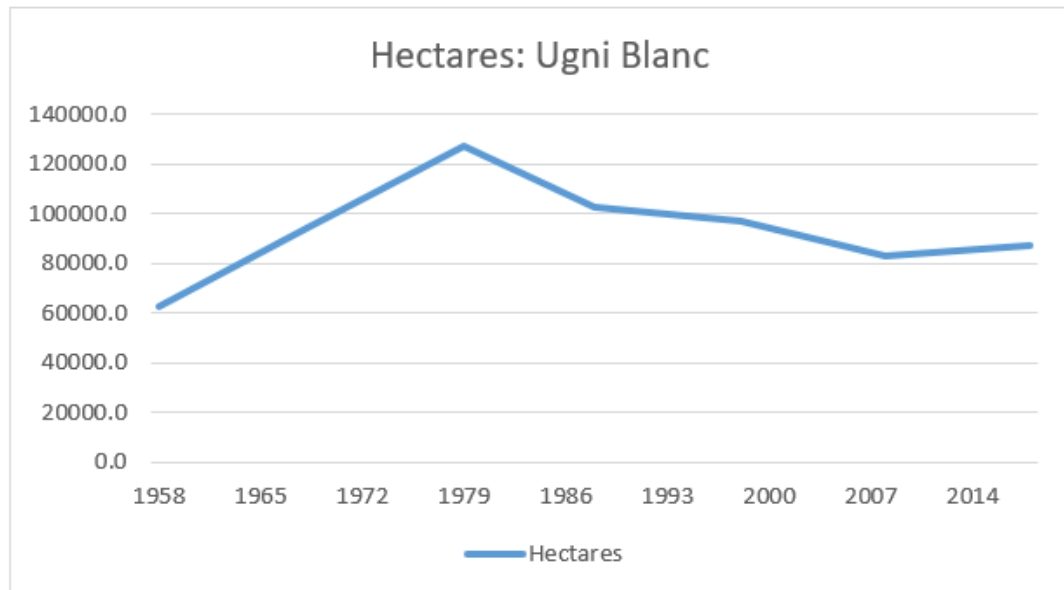
A producer from the Ardèche who we will be receiving wines from soon is Sylvain Bock (see the What's Coming section of this newsletter) makes two of his delicious wines with Ugni Blanc as one of the feature varieties. These are Ella m'a serré which has 25% Ugni Blanc and G-BUXA which has 33%.

Laurent Saillard (Touraine in the Loire Valley) produces a single-varietal Ugni Blanc white wine crafted with low intervention and natural fermentation.

Despite these examples and although Ugni Blanc is one of the most widely planted white grapes in France, there is not a huge percentage of white wines made from this variety.

The reason is that while it is only used in white wines in moderate numbers it is a key component of both Cognac and Armagnac which are substantially made using high percentages of Ugni Blanc.

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



Ugni Blanc area in France by year

As can be seen in the above graph, the plantings underwent a sharp increase from the nineteen fifties up until 1980 and then slowly declined towards 2007 and since then have been rising again due to the increasing popularity of spirits. To put it in perspective, the area given over to this variety is over 80,000 hectares which is very significant. The area planted in France to Chardonnay is only 51,000 hectares!!

Now for what the grapes and leaves look like. The grapes are quite rounded and display the occasional brown spot on an otherwise clear light skin as shown in the photo below.

The brown “splotches” can easily be seen, but there are also many grapes in the photo that are free of these brown areas or only have quite tiny spots.



An Ugni Blanc grape bunch

Another feature of the grapes is that the bunches are not as tight as many varieties. This is generally a good thing as it allows wind to get in among the grapes and hence reduce the chances of diseases settling on the grapes.



An Ugni Blanc leaf

The pointed leaves of Ugni Blanc are quite clear as are the fairly prominent lateral inferior sinuses (the indents at 4 o'clock and 8 o'clock) on either side of the lobe at the bottom of the picture. The small teeth are prominent all the way around the leaves.

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.