

WINE Talk: December 2014

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 51

Welcome to the December 2014 newsletter. We have put out this shorter newsletter a bit earlier than usual to allow you to order special packs for Christmas. You will need to get your orders in straight away, however, because delivery firms get very busy around this time and deliveries always take longer.

For this month only we have a special Christmas pack of one dozen specially selected wines to get you through the holiday season for which there is a 20% discount.

We also have a 6 pack of sparkling wines, something it's always important to have in the fridge over the holidays.. There is also a pack of what we have called On the Fringe wines. These have all been unfiltered and unfinned and with no additions expect for one or two that have had tiny amounts of sulphur added. These are wines that are distinctly different.

We are also delighted to offer a pack of wines that all come in under 12% alcohol this month as well as another pack of wines made from obscure grape varieties. We are finding more and more customers are asking for something different.

And the final pack has only two bottles in it, but they are the two top cuvées from Loire Valley icon Jean-Pierre Robinot. We haven't been able to offer these wines to our retail customers before as they are always snapped up by the trade, but we have managed to hold a few back this shipment.

We also have some good news in this newsletter about shipping arrangements that might be useful for you.

And finally we have a short article on the Len de L'El (Loin de l'Oeil) grape variety for you.

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

http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Buy_wines.htm

There is a link to our order form for these packs and any other wines at the end of this newsletter. But there's no need to use the order form. Just send us an email listing the wines and/or packs you would like to order if that suits you better. We'll confirm the price by return email before processing your order.

Ordering for the rest of this month

Please keep in mind when ordering packs from this newsletter or anything else that December is the worst period of the year for shipping. There is always a big increase in freight thanks to the effects of Christmas and orders can be delayed so early ordering is always recommended.

Especially take into account that our courier Fastway shuts down between Christmas and New Year. We may, with good luck, be able to ship on 22 December to Melbourne, and have it arrive before Christmas and new year, but anything further afield would need to be shipped early on the week beginning 15 December and even Melbourne would be recommended this week to be certain.

We hope to hear from you in December but if we don't, thank you very much for your support during 2014 and we wish you a happy Christmas and new year.

New option for delivery to a parcel collection site

Many of our customers live in apartment buildings where it's often hard to receive deliveries or don't have somewhere safe where a parcel can be left if they are not home to receive it.

Our courier, Fastway, is now offering a new service whereby we can ship to a ParcelConnect location which has extended opening hours, including at weekends, and you can then collect the wine from there. The maps below show the extent of ParcelConnect locations around the inner suburbs of Sydney and Melbourne.





We now also automatically provide you with a tracking number when we ship your order so it's possible to easily check to confirm it's arrived at the ParcelConnect location we send it to before you go to collect it.

If you think ParcelConnect might be a useful alternative delivery option for you, visit:

<http://www.parcelconnect.com.au/locations/>

enter your address and see if there is a location that is convenient.

New arrivals in November

The new arrivals just keep on coming! Since the long list of arrivals in the last newsletter we have also received a shipment from Causse Marines which included new vintages of their lovely Les Greilles white wine and their Peyrouzelles red wine along with a really stunning pet nat called Raides Bulles which is a slightly sweet pink sparkling wine that is perfect for summer sipping. We also received a small supply of the extremely rare Dencon cuvée which is made from 100% Ondenc – a very rare grape variety from south-west France.

We also received our allocation of the 2013 vintage from talented Burgundian winemaker Dominique Derain. We have both his white and red Bourgogne wines (La Combe is the white and Les Riaux is his red), along with his Gevrey-Chambertin, Mercurey, Saint Aubin red and his new Saint-Aubin Premier Cru white.

And finally, we have also received a shipment from young rising Burgundy star Julien Altaber. We have a number of wines from him including his Bourgogne white and red ranging up to his new and exciting Saint Aubin Premier Cru white wine. We are also delighted with a wine he has called Métisse which is a mix of Gamay (95%) and Chardonnay (5%). This is a pure, vibrant and delicious wine.

Wine of the month: Causse Marines Les Greilles



Causse Marines Les Greilles is wine made, in part with Len de l'El (Loin-de-l'Oeil), our grape variety of the month. It also has some Mauzac and a little Muscadelle as well.

The grapes come from a number of low-yielding parcels in their stunning vineyards in the Gaillac region of south-west France. The maximum yield is a low 35 hectolitres per hectare and it results in increased fruit intensity that shines through in this wine. It has an almost lactic richness that makes it a good match for spicy foods such as dishes from Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, India and Sri Lanka but without sacrificing freshness and vivacity.

And it has a very entertaining label too; a reflection of winemakers Patrice Lescarret and Virginie Maignien's quirky sense of humour. The clown's face on the front label (with its grey nose for Les Greilles and red nose for its red sibling Peyrouzelles) is in response to local people's reaction when Patrice began to farm biodynamically. They thought he was a clown! There's also a "No Badger" sign on the back label, meaning 'Badgers shouldn't drink this wine'. In some parts of France, the French word for badger 'blaireau' can also colloquially mean something similar to our Australian slang 'bogan'. It gives this wine something in common with Tasmania's delicious Moo Brew beer, which has a slogan 'Not suitable for Bogan's'.



We have a few bottles of the 2012 left and a good supply of the newly-arrived 2013 vintage so there is a chance at the moment to compare the two vintages.

Return to Terroir – Melbourne 28 February and 1 March 2015

Causse Marines' winemaker Patrice Lescarret is one of at least three of our producers we anticipate will be attending Return to Terroir, a wine tasting with approximately 40 of the world's leading biodynamic winemakers. Being held in conjunction with the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, it's not to be missed, ticketing information is here <http://www.melbournefoodandwine.com.au/event-calendar/return-to-terroir-5572>

Pack 1: Christmas special pack 12 bottles



We have arranged a special pack of wine for your Christmas drinking. We have taken into account the relaxed approach to eating over this season so have chosen wines that will accompany many types of food and moods. And to make this pack even more attractive we are giving a once-off 20% discount for this pack.

Belluard Savoie AYSE AOP Brut Les Perles du Mont Blanc – A lovely sparkling wine made from 100% Gringet, a traditional grape of the Savoie region. Dominique is a master of the art of making sparkling wine and his wine shows that complex, fresh, mineral-driven sparkling wines can be made outside the Champagne region. This wine is left for two years on lees before it is disgorged thus adding to the complexity of the wine.

Causse Marines Raides Bulles 2013 – The Raides Bulles is a Petillant Naturel wine, that is, one that has been fermented in a tank and then bottled to continue the fermentation. Some wine makers disgorge the dead yeasts in the bottle other leave the lees in the bottle to add complexity to the wine. This one is especially complex and interesting and great with berry-based desserts.

Champagne Piillot Père et Fils Cuvée de Reserve Extra Brut – There has to be Champagne at some time during this season. Roland Piillot has amazing skills in producing Champagnes from his vineyards in the southern regions of Champagne. He sells the wines to us at a very reasonable price and we pass this on to our customers.

La Paonnerie Coteaux Ancenis Rosé Le Rosé d'Ancenis 2013 – The Domaine la Paonnerie Coteaux d'Ancenis Rosé 2013 is made from 100% Gamay Noir a jus Blanc. The wine is fermented with natural yeasts and is neither filtered nor fined. This is a light, lively delicious, quite dark rosé, almost a light red, that is perfect for sipping at any time and is also a great match for a wide range of foods as it will not overpower them. It also has a very attractive mouthfeel and a lingering finish.

Le Temps de Cerises Vin de France La Peur du Rouge 2013 – Axel Pruffer can definitely be described as a low interventionist winemaker. This incredibly complex Chardonnay is like no other we have ever tried (except perhaps the incredible Chardonnays produced by Michel Gahier in the Jura). It is packed with minerality and is totally expressive of the vineyard from which the fruit has been derived. Only a wine made from perfect fruit grown without sprays, irrigation and artificial fertilisers could possibly taste like this.

La Soeur Cadette Vin de France Melon de Bourgogne 2013– This wine is a great favourite of ours. It is made from some of the few remaining vineyards of Melon de Bourgogne in northern Burgundy. It is a perfect holiday food wine marrying well with many flavours, but it comes into its own with terrines, parfaits, charcuterie and other light meat dishes.

Causse Marines Gaillac Les Greilles 2012 – Les Greilles is a classy white wine blended from local Gaillac grapes Mauzac and Loin-de-l'Oeil (aka Len de L'El – see story on this grape variety later in the newsletter) with a little Muscadelle thrown in. To us it an amazing wine of great complexity and with nuances that make it a perfect wine to match with a very wide range of foods. It is a perfect aperitif wine as well as being an ideal accompaniment for a range of foods such as charcuterie, including cured meats and many spicy foods such as those from Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, India and Sri Lanka.

La Paonnerie Vin de France La Blanc de la Jacquerie 2013 Sans Soufre – The La Blanc de la Jacquerie is a 100% Chenin Blanc picked from the Clos de la Jacquerie which the Carroget's own exclusively. The grapes are picked when the Chenin Blanc has reached the desired level of ripeness. This is quite a complex wine that displays beautiful Chenin character that the Loire region is so famous for.

Hervé Villemade Cheverny Rouge 2013 – This wine keep getting more and more interesting with each vintage. We love visiting Hervé Villemade's winery in Cellettes in the Loire Valley to try the new vintages! An assemblage of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Gamay, it is a funky, fresh, flavoursome wine with a compelling liveliness that shows off the two grapes perfectly.

Fanny Sabre Bourgogne Rouge 2013 – The grapes for this wine are sourced from a number of her plots around the historic town of Beaune therefore it has no specific vineyard or appellation. We always love Fanny's Bourgogne wines and this year is no exception. It is made from 100% Pinot Noir and the resulting wine is both expressive and lively, and dare we say pretty, with excellent underlying structure.

Henri Milan Vin de France MGO2 Rouge – This assemblage of Henri's favourite red grape varieties is a light, silky beauty. The grapes are Grenache, Shiraz, Mourvèdre, Cinsault and Cabernet Sauvignon but with more Grenache than usual. The letters MGO stand for Milan Grand Ordinaire which is a humorous allusion to the Bourgogne Grand Ordinaire appellation that has recently been discontinued.

Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Le Vigne du Louis 2013 – This wine is a Trousseau that is light in colour but has a vibrant freshness and hints of smokiness. The fruit is sourced from young vines which usually produce lighter wine styles of less complexity than older vines, but wines that are pleasant drinking nevertheless. A small amount of sulphur was added to this wine when it was bottled. It has good structure, very good length and is quite juicy - hence is very drinkable.

The RRP for this selection of 12 bottles of wine is \$459 but the pack price is \$367.20 including freight.

Pack 2: Summer Sparkling 6 pack



We have put together a six pack of sparkling wines from across France that represent quite different winemaking styles. All are delicious and refreshing and perfect for summer drinking.

Cause Marines Vin de France Raides Bulles 2013 – This wine has been made using the technique known as Méthode Ancestrale whereby the wine is fermented in the bottle and the yeast is not disgorged. It is made from Shiraz, Duras, Braucol, Jurançon Noir and a little Mauzac. It is semi-sweet.

Les Capriades Vin de France Pepin La Bulle 2011 – The Pepin La Bulle is a sparkling wine that was disgorged about a year ago after spending 2 years on lees to develop complexity. It contains 70% Chardonnay, 20% Meslier and 10% Menu Pineau.

Les Capriades Vin de France Pet'Sec 2013 – The Pet'Sec is a dry version of the pétillant naturel wine produced by Pascal Potaire and Moses Galouche. This vintage sees Chenin Blanc at 80% and Cabernet Franc at 20%.

Domaine Mosse Vin de France Moussamoussettes 2013 – We love this wine. It is light, delicious, limpid, very slightly sweet and the perfect aperitif for a spring or summer lunch or evening aperitif. It's also a great breakfast wine. This year it is made mainly from Grolleau Gris with a little Cabernet Franc which have been co-fermented. It was bottled at only 8g residual sugar making pleasant sweetness to match the acidity in the wine.

Terres Dorées Vin de France FRV 100 2012 – This Gamay-based sparkling wine made in the pétillant naturel style is very low in alcohol at only 7.5%. The low-alcohol, however, does not detract from its interesting flavour of berry fruits and minerals coming from the granitic soils. Lovely with dessert.

Domaine Vincent Carême Vouvray Brut 2012 – The Brut is a natural dry sparkling wine with no sugar added at any stage in the process. Despite that there is a little left in the wine (even though it qualifies for the Brut nomenclature) which is balanced by beautiful acidity which runs through each mouthful. The Chenin Blanc vines give this wine a fruity character and it exhibits very fine bubbles.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$229 but the pack price is \$194.65 including freight.

Pack 3: On The Fringe 6 pack



We love all the wines we import. They range from beautifully made, clean, precise wines through to exciting no sulphur, cloudy, unfiltered wines of great complexity and interest. This pack is full of the latter variety for those of you who have developed a love for this style of wine.

Domaine la Paonnerie Vin de France Voila du Gros Lot 2013 – The "Voila du Gros Lot" is made from 100% Grolleau Gris (also called Groslot in the Loire) grown in granitic soils. The grapes are hand harvested and then whole bunch fermented. The skins are left in contact with the juice for around 20 days as per the Italian tradition of creating orange wines.

Le Petit Gimios Vin de Table Muscat Sec des Roumanis 2013 – This wine is unlike any other Muscat you are likely to have tried. The Lavaysse family add nothing to their wine to change the essential characteristics of the Muscat a Petit Grains grape variety. As such they produce a wine of great interest and complex characters. The wine smells as if it is going to be sweet but finishes quite dry.

Le Temps de Cerises La Peur du Rouge 2013 – This incredibly complex Chardonnay from Axel Pruffer is like no other we have ever tried. It is packed with minerality and is totally expressive of the vineyard from which the fruit has been derived. Only a wine made from perfect fruit grown without sprays, irrigation and artificial fertilisers could possibly taste like this.

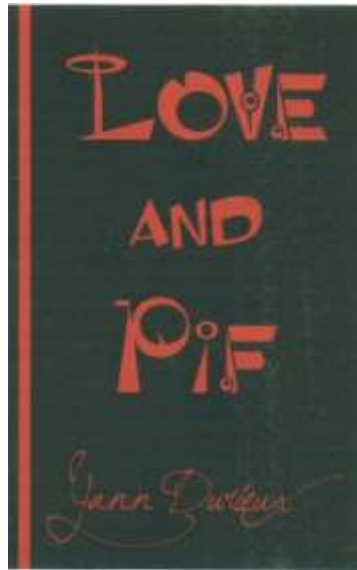
Michel Guignier Beaujolais Villages La Bonne Pioche 2012 – This is a beautiful, lively expression of the Gamay grape which is picked from vines over 45 years old and then pressed in an old basket press. It is such a joy to drink wines made by a master winemaker such as Michel where wood, sulphur and extraction just don't feature!

Nicolas Carmarans Vin de France Maximus 2013 – The Maximus is a fresh, vibrant red wine that sees 16 days of carbonic maceration to ensure the freshness and flavour that you expect from a wine made using this process. It is lower in alcohol, lighter, fresher and more elegant than before. But flavour has not been sacrificed. The wine is made from local grape Fer Servadou.

Sextant Vin de France Métisse 2013 – This is a new wine for Julien Altaber which he has called Métisse because it is a mix of both white and red grapes. It is made from 5% Chardonnay and 95% Gamay sourced from the Beaujolais region, which explains its designation. It is a bright, lively and delicious (and very smashable) wine.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$248 but the pack price is \$210.80 including freight.

Pack 4: Less than 12% alcohol 6 pack



The Christmas and New Year holiday is the time when most of us drink and eat more than we do during the rest of the year. Here's one way, without any sacrifice at all, that you can minimise how much you drink. At the moment we have the most amazing selection of lower alcohol wines we've ever had at one time. And they taste delicious – fresh and vibrant and, in the case of the reds, with a surprising amount of depth. And lower alcohol doesn't just mean less likelihood of a hangover, it's also fewer calories too, which can't be a bad thing. There's one sparkling, two whites and three reds, six different producers, many different grapes, including Fer Servadou, Aligoté, and Melon de Bourgogne and many regions from the wild Aveyron in the centre of France to the Jura. These six wines are all less than 12% alcohol.

Michel Gahier Cremant du Jura 2011 – This sparkling wine is made in the Champagne style, hence qualifying for the appellation of Cremant du Jura. The wine is made from 100% Chardonnay, a grape that Michel has a particular affinity for. This wine has fine bubbles, some yeast, a lively fruit flavour and a good, long finish. **11%**

La Soeur Cadette Melon de Bourgogne 2013 – This grape is common in the Muscadet appellations found around Nantes near the Atlantic coast, however it has almost disappeared from Burgundy. This wine is a great favourite of ours especially given the price considering how little is produced. It is a perfect food wine marrying well with many flavours, but it comes into its own with terrines, parfaits, charcuterie and other light meat dishes. **11%**

Recrue des Sens (Yann Durieux) Love & Pif 2013 – Yann Durieux is one of the most exciting young winemakers in France at the moment. This Aligoté, from his vineyard in the Hautes-Côtes de Nuits, is full of life. **11.5%**

Jean-Michel Stephan Plain de Condrieu Vin de France 2013 – We're down to our last few cases of this highly-limited Syrah from the northern Rhone. Jean-Michel has added no sulphites and, as a devotee of Jules Chauvet, uses carbonic maceration, all unusual in this region. **11.5%**

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Nicolas Carmarans Aveyron Maximus 2013 – This wine, made with Fer Servadou, is gentle and easy to drink but has plenty of length. Made with minimal extraction, it hasn't been pressed to within an inch of its life. **11%**

Michel Guignier Mélodie d'Automne 2013 – This is a light, ethereal wine that gradually engulfs you with waves of flavour from the purity of its fruit. Michel often makes a lighter, fresher wine which he macerates for only 6 or 7 days rather than the longer 10 to 15 days for his more structured wines such as the Fleurie. It makes for a perfect summer read wine. **11.5%**

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$260 but the pack price is \$221 including freight.

Pack 5: Less Familiar grapes 6 Pack



We've put together a pack of wine made with grapes that are not commonly used to make wine in Australia. It's a pack you can use over the holiday season to explore less familiar grapes such as Gringet and Fer Servadou or even Negret de Banhars. Or, if you have to deal with wine snob relations at Christmas, you may just want to have at hand some wines made with grapes they will struggle to guess. There are three whites and three reds and they come from many different regions.

Dominique Belluard Vin de Savoie AOP Blanc Gringet Les Alpes 2012 – From the Savoie, Les Alpes is made with Gringet, a grape only grown in this region, and in commercial quantities only by Dominique Belluard. It was Belluard who proved it existed and wasn't just a synonym for Savagnin by having DNA tests on samples from his vineyards.

Mylène Bru Lady Chasselas 2013 – Chasselas is most commonly used to make wine in Switzerland and is also used in small quantities in France, most notably in the Pouilly-sur-Loire appellation. But this wine comes from the Languedoc. The vineyard is over 50 years old and was actually planted for table grapes but Mylène Bru now makes this delicious wine from it.

Hervé Villemade Cour-Cheverny Les Acacias 2012 – This wine is made with Romorantin, the only grape allowed in the Cour-Cheverny appellation. It's Hervé Villemade's most beloved grape variety and this vineyard, metres from his cellar, is surrounded by acacia trees.

Bainbridge and Cathcart Rouge Aux Levres Vin de France 2012 – This wine is 100% Grolleau Noir, a variety that was apparently created in 1907. Given the vines are about 87 years old, as Bertrand Celce points out in his delightful article on Toby Bainbridge on his indispensable website www.wineterroirs.com, they are probably some of the oldest plantings in existence. "Rouge Aux Levres" **means red lips!**

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Nicolas Carmarans Aveyron Mauvais Temps 2013 – Unless you've drunk this wine you've almost certainly never drunk Negret de Banhars because as far as we know Mauvais Temps is one of the few wines made with this grape, which is named after a hamlet close the village of Campouriez. It's almost certainly the only wine imported into Australia made with it. And if Negret de Banhars wasn't enough, this wine also has a substantial proportion of Fer Servadou, a slightly more common grape in France but also not so familiar here.

Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Les Grands Vergers 2013 – The least rare of the grapes varieties in this pack, Trousseau is one of the principal red grape varieties in the Jura. It's also grown in Spain and Portugal where it's called bastardo. There are even small plantings of it in Australia. This is Michel Gahier's top cuvee of trousseau, made with vines that are approaching 90 years old.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is **\$263** but the pack price is **\$223.55** including freight.

Pack 6 - Bucket List 2 pack



We recently received our second shipment of Jean-Pierre Robinot's amazing Loire Valley wines, which he makes with either Chenin Blanc or Pineau d'Aunis. The first shipment was never released publicly – the wines sold out to a small number of restaurant and wine shop customers. You may have drunk some of them.

Most of the second shipment, almost entirely a reprise of the same wines, sold out within days of arrival too. But we do have enough of his two aged cuvées – Juliette and Camille – left to make this offer. Both have an intriguing complexity and depth. The Chenin Blanc is explosive and powerful; the Pineau d'Aunis gentler and with just a subtle but deeply appealing savoury bitterness. They are wines to savour each mouthful, which is a very good thing, because they are not cheap so you don't want the experience to end quickly!

And if you're wondering whether wines made without sulphites in any stage of the winemaking can age these two bottles are a perfect illustration of the fact that they can.

Offering these wines in a pack is likely to be a one-off and they would both be very special to drink over Christmas. It's a **two pack** comprising one bottle of Camille, which is a Pineau d'Aunis vintage 2009 and one bottle of Juliette, a Chenin Blanc, vintage 2008.

The RRP for this selection of 2 bottles of wine is \$320 but the pack price is \$272 including freight.

Grape variety: Len de l'El

Len de l'El is one of the most “under the radar” grape varieties that we know. It is a native grape of the Gaillac area in south-west France and, as far as we can tell, it is only a permitted variety in that appellation and no other.

In Gaillac it is a principal variety in still white wines (along with Mauzac and Muscadelle) as well as the Vendages Tardives wines (late harvested sweet wines) that the region is famous for.

First, we should explore the name of this obscure grape. The name “Len de l'El” is actually formed from two words in the Occitan language which is the ancient language of the south-west region. The word Len means far and the word El is the word for eye.

The word eye is also used for the place on the vine where the bud appears. The bunches of elliptical grapes for this variety have long stems so that the grapes end up “far from the eye”.

In French the equivalent words are Loin and Oeil so we often see the variety named “Loin de l'Oeil”. The official name used by the governing body for wine in France, the INAO, is the Occitan version of the spelling so that is what we have adopted here.

The total area planted to Len de l'El has increased from 112 hectares in 1958 to slightly over 700 hectares in 2006¹ due to the hard work of some local vigneron such as the Plageole brothers and Patrice Lescarret among others.

Len de l'El is an early ripening variety and produces wines that are quite dry with low levels of acid. When added to sweet wines it gives flavours of dried fruits and honey.

A wine that contains Len de l'El is the Causse Marines Les Greilles that we featured earlier in this newsletter.

How to order

You can order any of these packs by sending us an email to wine@livingwines.com.au

Or for other wines you can use our order form or just describe the wines in an email. http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Order_Form_Current_2014.pdf

¹ Note that we have just found some official figure for 2010 and the area planted appears to have shrunk to 629 hectares due to some vigneron wanting to convert to Sauvignon Blanc which is now allowed under the INAO changes in 2011.