

Wine Talk: June 2014

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 46

This newsletter heralds the arrival of our second shipment of wines from talented Languedoc winemaker, Mylène Bru. She has stunningly beautiful vineyards deep in the hills inland from the seaside town of Sete. Here she has some very unusual grape varieties for the area including the white grape Chasselas, more commonly cultivated in Switzerland and Tempranillo, more commonly found in Spain. We have a special pack of her wines to celebrate their arrival.

We have also been writing a lot lately because there are many interesting issues that have arisen including misinterpretations of orange wines by the press and wine industry associations. We have included an article addressing this issue.

And, of course, it is time again for the Tour de France. We have a special six pack that we have assembled from regions that the tour goes through. Read more about the route in the description of Special Pack 2 below.

Given the time of year, we have again created a special pack of "Winter Warmer" red wines to ward off the cold. This pack has some great wines from many different parts of France.

We have a premium pack from Burgundy, including a lovely Pommard, a stylish Gevrey and a delicious Beaune 1er Cru. We have another Burgundy pack consisting of three white magnums to trot out on special occasions.

We are also repeating the no added sulphur pack from the last newsletter due to the interest currently being expressed in these wines. And finally we have a third Burgundy pack named "The Master and The Apprentice" which combines the wines of rising star Julien Altaber and his long-time mentor Dominique Derain

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.

New arrivals: Mylène Bru



We are delighted to have received a new shipment from talented Languedoc producer Mylène Bru who tends her vines high in the hills inland from the Mediterranean coastal town of Sète.

She has beautiful vineyards in very rugged terrain where winds whistle down the steep hills from the mountains of the Parc naturel régional du Haut-Languedoc.

She has two very unusual vineyards. One is a plot of fifty year old Chasselas vines and the other is a small plot of Tempranillo (her grandmother was Spanish). She also has

Grenache, Syrah, Carignan and Cinsault and also a little Marselan and Aubun.

We have tried all of the wines from this shipment when we met up with her at the Renaissance event in Angers earlier this year and we think they are the best wines she has made yet. The reds have an elegance and subtlety not normally associated with this area. We have a special pack of her wines for you to try this month.

If you're looking for something unusual for a special occasion, we also have three different cuvées in magnums, including Monts et Mervilles 2012, made from a special parcel of Syrah, which was only bottled in magnum.

Imminent arrivals

We are looking forward to some old favourites as well as wines from a new supplier arriving soon.

Philippe Bornard



We have sold out of nearly all the Philippe Bornard wines in our warehouse, however more is about to arrive. We will have good stocks of most of his wines except for the pet-nats. The sparkling production has been curtailed due to the poor growing conditions last year. All the wine was needed for still wine production. However we will have

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some magnums of the delicious Tant Mieux, that pale pink sparkling Ploussard with the very low alcohol content that so many of you (and we) have enjoyed in years past.

In this shipment we will have a wine that Philippe has not made before. It is called “Une Fois n'est pas Coutume!” (literally, “once in not usual”), signalling perhaps that we shouldn't get used to it being around. It is a blend of Chardonnay and Savagnin, a common blend in the Jura but not for Philippe.

New vintages of Point Barre, Le Ginglet, Les Marnes, Le Blanc de la Rouge, Melon le Rouge Queue and Les Chassagnes will all be in the shipment as well.

Jean-Paul Robinot – Les Vignes de l'Angevins & l'Opera des Vins



We have secured a shipment of the wonderful wines of Jean-Pierre Robinot from Les Vignes de l'Angevin and l'Opera des Vins. These wines come from the village of Chahaigues which is just a short drive north from the city of Tours. Jean-Pierre works with just two grape varieties, Pineau d'Aunis for red wines and Chenin Blanc for white wines.

We have been enjoying his complex white for a long time, however a very long evening at the wonderful wine bar l'Entrée des Artistes in Paris saw the proprietor digging deep into his cellar to offer a group of us some Chenin Blancs from Jean-Pierre with some age – and they were outstanding! Amazingly complex, amazingly fresh and vibrant and just the right level of oxidative qualities to make them even more interesting.

We will have reasonable supplies of two of his sparkling Chenin Blancs, namely the Fêtembulles and the Les Années Folles. The Fêtembulles is 100% Chenin Blanc which was grown on red flint soils, hand harvested and then fermented naturally before being disgorged without any dosage or filtering or fining or the addition of any sulphites. The other sparkling is quite a rich, deeply-flavoured wine.

We will also have small quantities of some of his still wines such as Charme, Iris and Juliette Robinot which are all white wines and Lumière des Sens, Nocturne and Camille which are made from the local, indigenous Pinot d'Aunis. All these wines are made without the addition of any sulphites.

We look forward to them arriving!

Champagne Piollot

Following the outstanding success of the introduction of Roland Piollot's amazingly good-value Champagnes into Australia we are looking forward to the arrival of his

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Extra Brut Cuvée de Reserve which has no dosage. We will also be receiving another allocation of his amazingly pure Pinot Blanc Champagne that has been causing such a stir around the world. There are very few Champagnes made exclusively from this grape variety, but Roland is lucky enough to have an old plot of excellent Pinot Blanc vines in his Cotes de Bars vineyards.

Two successful events in Melbourne recently

We were delighted to be invited to pour our wines at the recent HANDMADE event at the Builders Arms Hotel in Melbourne along with a number of other importers and local producers of natural wines.

We were, however, unprepared for the onslaught which occurred! At exactly 12:30 the room suddenly filled with eager consumers who crowded around each of the tables anxious not to miss out on trying the array of wines available. The crush in the room did not abate until well past the advertised closing time for the event.

We were delighted that people wanted to try wines made from unusual grapes from little known appellations and we were well-placed having a number of different vintages of the remarkable wines made from the rare Gringet grape by Dominique Belluard.

We were also showing the outstanding unsulphured Beaujolais wines made by Michel Guignier from the village of Vauxrenard.

Two days later we matched a number of our wines to local and imported cheeses at new natural wine hotspot, Clever Polly's. This was a most interesting and enjoyable event and the number of questions asked by attendees was very gratifying.

We are always enthusiastic to be involved in events such as this so if you are thinking of holding one, feel free to contact us.

Pack 1: Mylène Bru New Arrivals 6 pack



The wines of Mylène Bru are truly special. She is a talented winemaker who is passionate about her vineyards and the wines that she produces.

Mylène Bru Vin de Table Lady Chasselas Blanc 2013 (2 bottles) – The plot where Mylène has her Chasselas vines is a site of amazing beauty. There is a long view over the short-cropped vines to the mountains beyond. The vines are at least 50 years old and face East North East. Chasselas is almost unknown in this region so this is a very rare wine, but one of some delicacy and with a really lovely mouth-feel. The clay and limestone soils give the wine a persistent minerality that is very appealing. The finish is quite dry.

Mylène Bru Coteaux du Languedoc Far-Ouest Rouge 2011 – Far-Ouest has a film connection because of Mylène's passion for film from an early age. She loved Clint Eastwood in 'The Good, The Bad and The Ugly' and also admires French New Wave director Francois Truffaut who used the metaphor of the Wild West to shape his films. It is a blend of all the red grapes so it has some Grenache, Syrah, Carignan and Cinsault but might also have a little Marselan and Aubun depending on the vintage.

Mylène Bru Vin de Table Les Moulins De Mon Coeur Rouge 2013 – This fresh, lively red wine was made from whole bunches placed in fibreglass tanks so that Mylene can easily see what is happening to the wine. She placed a layer of Cinsault then a layer of Carignan and then a layer of Syrah and repeated this until the tank was full. Maceration took six days before pressing. The resulting wine has an amazing depth of colour, beautifully fine tannins and a lovely up-front freshness and lightness.

Mylène Bru Vin de Table Rita Rouge 2012 – The Rita is Mylène's latest wine and is named after her Andalusian grandmother and also St Rita the saint of desperate causes! The wine is made from 100% Carignan from 50 year old vines which is not unusual in her area because it is quite close to Saint Chinian where Carignan is revered.

Mylène Bru Vin de Table Karm Rouge 2012 – Mylène found a plot of Tempranillo in her vineyards and her Spanish heritage made her determined to release a wine made from those grapes. The vines are 40 years old and benefit from good aspect and great terroir. She presses whole bunches to make this wine and it is a rich, satisfying and quite compelling result.

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

Pack 2: Tour de France 6 pack



Spending the first few days in Yorkshire and London isn't exactly helpful when you're trying to put a six pack of Tour de France wines together and you only import French wines!

Nevertheless, we've pored over the route and put together a Tour de France 6 Pack of wines from our portfolio which come from regions which are close to where the cyclists will be.



We don't really get a look in until days 6 and 7 (Thursday 10 and Friday 11 July), when the teams will be finish day 6 in Champagne and then start day 7 in the same region. We've chosen Roland Piollet's **Champagne Piollet Côte des Bar Extra Brut Pinot Blanc NV**. It's from the Côte des Bar, which is south of the route, but has an extra connection because the River Seine, at this point not much more than a creek, is at the edge of Roland Piollet and Dominique Moreau's vegetable garden. So, you could also drink this on the last day when Le Tour is in Paris, knowing the Seine connects the wine directly to the Champs-Élysées. This Champagne is also unusual in that it's 100% Pinot Blanc.

In the middle of the following week, on 16 July, Le Tour visits the Jura, going through the centre of Arbois, just a few kilometres from the tiny wine village of Pupillin, where Philippe Bornard lives. We've chosen Bornard's delicious **Bornard Arbois Pupillin Trousseau le Garde-Corps 2011**. We only have just over a case of this wine left and it's drinking better now than ever. It's a wine that seems light, almost ethereal, but it has great backbone.

That same evening, the race finishes in Oyonnax, which is about an hour to the west of Ayse, where Dominique Belluard makes his steely, but rich white wines from Gringet, a grape only grown in the Savoie, and only sold outside of France by him. We've chosen his premier cuvée, **Belluard Vin de Savoie Blanc Gringet Le Feu 2012**, which was fermented entirely in concrete eggs. This wine is delicious now, but will keep for many years.

The next wine choice has to be Beaujolais. For stage 12, on 17 July, the route passes through the Beaujolais on its way to Saint-Étienne. It travels through famous wine villages like Fleurie and Villé-Morgon and the first hill is the Col de Brouilly. We have so many wines made from grapes grown within a few kilometres of this part of the route it was hard to choose. Because it's the middle of winter, it's a great time to ship wines with no added sulphites so we decided to choose one of Michel Guignier's wines. Guignier lives on a farm a few kilometres from Fleurie and, given Le Tour passes through Fleurie, it had to be **Michel Guignier Fleurie Au Bon Grès 2011**. With no additions of any sort, no filtration and no fining, this is a great example of a natural wine.

On Sunday July 20, just after the intermediate sprint at La Galine on the N99 and before it gets to the centre of Saint-Remy de Provence, the route will be within metres of Henri Milan's house and home vineyards. We've chosen one of Henri Milan's greatest wines, **Domaine Milan Clos Milan Rouge 2007**, which comes from these vineyards. It's a blend of Grenache (20%) and Syrah (20%), from vines that are over 40 years old, and, while for the cyclists it will no doubt be hot in the heart of Provence in July, for us in Australia, this complex red wine with great finesse is just perfect for a winter's night. It's made without sulphites, has no filtration or fining, but a small amount of sulphites are added at bottling.

After that we need to take some poetic geographic licence. We wanted to include another white wine and so we've drawn a long bow to include **Causse Marines Gaillac Les Greilles 2012**. One of the few wines we have from south-west France, Gaillac is within an hour and a half's drive of the region where Le Tour will be mid-way through its last week. It's an hour and a half from Carcassonne, where Stage 16 begins and from Saint-Gaudens, where stage 17 begins. Granted it's not going to feature in this year's overhead helicopter shots but it's not too far away.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$354 but the pack price is \$300.90 including freight.

Pack 3: “Winter Warmer” reds 6 pack



Winter is upon us and thoughts immediately turn to a warming red wine in front of a blazing fire. We decided to put together six red wines from throughout France that will go well as winter warmers.

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux L'Argile Rouge 2007 – This blend of 75% Grenache and 25% Syrah is a complex wine made from low-yielding vines that grow in clay soils on the slopes of Mont Ventoux. The grapes are partially destemmed and the skins are left in contact with the juice for 12 days. The fermentation is carried out in concrete tanks (Philippe loves the breathing qualities of concrete).

Nicolas Carmarans Vin de Pays de l'Aveyron Mauvais Temps Rouge 2012 – This wine comprises four varieties, namely 30% Negret de Banhars, 50% Fer Servadou (known locally as Mansois) and 10% each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. The grapes undergo semi-carbonic maceration in 15 hectolitre conical tanks for 20 days and the juice is then transferred to old barriques for 12 months.

Domaine du Pech Buzet Le Pech Abusé Rouge 2006 – This is a serious red wine with some five years of time to mellow in the huge oak casks capable of holding 100 hectolitres of wine. The blend for this vintage is 40% Cabernet Franc, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon and 40% Merlot. The nose and the palate demonstrate the elegance of this wine.

Domaine de Causse Marines Vin de France Causse Toujours 1102 – This wine is made from the Syrah which provides silkiness, spice and body and some Prunelart. The wine is a deep purple colour with lots of spice and pleasant tannins at the front of the mouth. The Prunelart adds a touch of mystery and fruitiness that you would expect from the parent (father) of Malbec.

Terres Dorées (Jean-Paul Brun) Morgon 2012 – Morgon is considered by many to be the very best area for Beaujolais. This cru is one of the freshest and liveliest wines from this area that we have tasted. You will love the cherry fruits in this wine along with the trademark spicy minerality as well as the strong structure that this wine displays.

Domaine Milan Vin de Table de France Le Vallon Rouge 2008 – This wine is fermented with wild yeasts then matured for a year in old barrels after a short whole-bunch maceration. The grape varieties are Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Mourvedre. The alcohol is 13.5% but in perfect balance.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$244 but the pack price is \$207.40 including freight.

Pack 4: Premium wines from Burgundy 6 pack



Here is a selection of elegant reds and whites that we have assembled for those of you who are looking for an alternative to the blockbuster Pinots that seem to be everywhere these days. We have a maximum of three of these available.

Fanny Sabre Pommard Vieilles Vignes 2011 – Fanny has a number of plots dispersed throughout Pommard and this wine comes from a plot of very old vines. The 2011 is a very good wine with lots of structure that is drinking well now. The combination of the very old vines and the complex marl soils that combine mudstone and calcium carbonate minerality contribute to the structure and complexity present in this wine.

Yann Durieux Hautes Cotes de Nuits 1er Ponts 2011 – The Yann Durieux Hautes Cotes de Nuits Premier (1er) Pont (previously called Black Pinot) is a very special wine! You will find a low alcohol (only 11%), lightly coloured, slightly funky, deeply flavoured Pinot Noir of a style that we remember from long ago.

Catherine & Dominique Derain Gevrey-Chambertin En Vosne Rouge 2012 – The vines here are nearly 90 years old! Therefore there is structure and depth of flavour coming from them. This is a superb wine of considerable complexity and great elegance. At recent tastings this has been a stand out wine. It is a beautiful Burgundy at a very reasonable price for a Gevrey Chambertin.

Fanny Sabre Beaune Premier Cru Chouacheux 2010 – The Beaune Premier Cru Chouacheux is Fanny Sabre's premium wine from a well-known 'climat' in the Beaune Premier Cru appellation. The climat is very close to Pommard and shares very similar soil. It is made from 100% Pinot Noir.

Catherine & Dominique Derain Pommard Les Petits Noizons Rouge 2011 – There is lots of limestone here because it is quite close to one of our favourite villages in Burgundy, namely Pommard! Lovely, strong, structured deep-red wine showing all the complexity and elegance you would expect from a Pommard!

Catherine & Dominique Derain Mercurey La Plante Chassey Rouge 2012 – This is an interesting cuvee because it has a small amount of Pinot Beurot (Malvoisie, Pinot Gris) blended with the dominant Pinot Noir. La Plante Chassey is a south-east slope with clay soil. The grapes for this wine are harvested by hand and the wine is fermented in wooden vats before being transferred to old wooden barrels for 18 months. The wine is not fined or filtered before bottling.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$586 but the pack price is \$498.10 including freight.

Pack 5: Burgundy white magnums 3 pack



For those of you who have a special occasion coming up there is nothing like serving from magnums to make a statement. We have selected three magnums of Chardonnay sourced from the area around Saint-Aubin which lies just south of the city of Beaune.

Sextant Bourgogne Blanc 2012 – Although it is labelled as a humble Bourgogne Blanc, the vineyards that Julien maintains around Saint Aubin are on very good terroir, similar to the nearby Puligny Montrachet where outstanding white wines are produced. This is a beautifully crafted Chardonnay of some elegance and would be great for a celebration.

Sextant - Julien Altaber Saint-Aubin 1er Cru 2012 – This silky Chardonnay is a new line from Julien and a very good one it is. The plot is from one of the very best areas of this very good appellation and the careful handling of this cru wine shines through. It is only available in magnums!

Catherine & Dominique Derain St-Aubin En Vesvau Blanc 2010 – This delicious Chardonnay is made from vines in the En Vesvau lieu dit which lies on the rocky, sunny slopes of Montrachet. The terroir here is perfect for the production of flavoursome white wines for which the area is rightly famous. The yield is relatively low at 38 hectolitres per hectare. The grapes are picked by hand and placed carefully in small boxes to avoid crushing the fruit. After crushing the juice is left to ferment using the complex natural yeasts that collect on the fruit. The wine is both powerful and elegant making it perfect for aging - however it is also drinking very nicely now.

The RRP for this selection of 3 magnums of wine is \$459 but the pack price is \$390.15 including freight.

Pack 6: No added sulphites red 6 pack



This month we are pleased to be able to once again offer a no added sulphites red wine pack for those of you who love the vibrancy associated with wines that do not have sulphur added at any stage of the winemaking process.

Michel Gahier AOC Arbois Trousseau Le Grands Vergers 2012 – This is a very, very good example of a Trousseau wine having the delicacy that we associate with this fragile grape but also an extraordinary depth of flavour and a complexity that is intriguing. The wine is lively on the nose, has deep flavours (hints of cherry and raspberry and forest floors in autumn) and it tastes alive.

Domaine la Paonnerie Anjou Villages La Jacquerie 2011 Sans Soufre – This wine is a blend of 66% Cabernet Franc and 34% Cabernet Sauvignon picked from the Clos de la Jacquerie which the Carroget's own exclusively. The grapes are picked when the Cabernet Sauvignon has reached the desired level of ripeness. This is a lively, vibrant wine that is very pluggable!

Michel Guignier Vin de France Mélodie d'Automne 2013 – This is a light, ethereal wine that gradually engulfs you with waves of flavour from the purity of the fruit in this wine. When we first tried it at the Renaissance event in Angers this year we were immediately captivated by its charms.

Domaine Milan Sans Soufre Ajouté Rouge 2012 – This wine is made with grape varieties Grenache, Shiraz, Mourvedre, Cinsault and Cabernet Sauvignon and spends 8 months in old barriques. This is a great wine for people who have developed a reaction to sulphur or for those who love the freshness of natural wines.

Le Petit Gimios Vin de France Rouge Fruit 2012 – This is an amazing wine! There are at least sixteen different grape varieties planted in this place. There is Carignan, Cinsault, Aramon, Grenache, Oeillade, Terret Rose, Terret Noir, Terret Blanc, Syrah, Muscat and Alicante among others. The grapes are co-fermented to produce this amazing soft, round, subtle red with layers that seems to go on forever.

Domaine la Paonnerie Coteaux d'Ancenis "Simplement Gamay" 2012 – This 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 no-sulphur red wine that goes beautifully with food such as lamb chops or roast chicken or a robust cheese.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$256 but the pack price is \$217.60 including freight.

Pack 7: The Master and The Apprentice White 6 pack



This pack consists of 6 wines from Dominique Derain and Julien Altaber. Julien has worked with Dominique for many years and learned his trade from the extraordinary Dominique who is a highly skilled winemaker who does not compromise in his quest for excellence. Julien has learned well and is now regarded as one of the rising stars of Burgundy.

Catherine & Dominique Derain Bourgogne La Combe Blanc 2011 – The vines for this lovely Chardonnay are located close to the village of Puligny-Montrachet where there is deep brown soil. The yield is only 35 hectolitres per hectare and this means the fruit is packed with flavour and the wine reflects this. La Combe is a tiny plot being less than one third of a hectare.

Catherine & Dominique Derain Bourgogne La Combe Blanc 2012 – For this year there is a radical new label on the La Combe, with a number of almost impenetrable in-jokes about Derain and his wines. The vines from which this wine is made have an excellent pedigree. This is a wine for contemplating. It opens up slowly in the glass, but then reveals an array of flavours and aromas that are truly compelling.

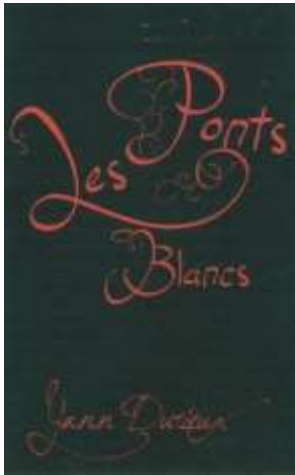
Catherine & Dominique Derain St-Aubin 1er Cru En Remilly 2011 – This delicious premier cru Chardonnay is made from vines in the En Remilly lieu dit which lies on the rocky, sunny slopes of Montrachet. The yield is relatively low at 38 hectolitres per hectare. The wine is both powerful and elegant making it perfect for aging - however it is also drinking nicely now.

Catherine & Dominique Derain St-Aubin En Vesvau Blanc 2010 – This delicious Chardonnay is made from vines in the En Vesvau lieu dit which lies on the rocky, sunny slopes of Montrachet. The grapes are picked by hand and placed carefully in small boxes to avoid crushing the fruit. After crushing the juice is left to ferment using the complex natural yeasts that collect on the fruit. The wine is both powerful and elegant making it perfect for aging - however it is also drinking very nicely now.

Sextant Bourgogne Blanc (1 bottle 2011 and 1 bottle 2012) – This 100% Chardonnay is alive and vibrant. The taste lingers on the tongue and the length is very pleasing. Although it is labelled as a humble Bourgogne Blanc, the vineyards that Julien maintains around Saint Aubin are on very good terroir, similar to the nearby Puligny Montrachet where outstanding white wines are produced.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$352 but the pack price is \$299.20 including freight.

Some comments about orange wine and serious consequences



An orange wine from France



An orange



An Orange wine that isn't orange

The wine industry is just starting to realise that there is a category of wine that is commonly referred to as orange wine. Some comments about orange wine, however, reveal that some people have little understanding of what the term actually means.

We have seen comments from both a winemaker and a leading wine commentator that imply they think an orange wine is one which has been oxidised. We have also seen comments that natural wines are orange wines. We have seen comments that orange wines are natural wines.

We have also recently seen a document from the General Manager of Regulatory Services, Wine Australia Corporation claiming that:

There is a trend amongst some producers of so-called “natural” wine to describe their products as “orange wine”. This, presumably, is due to the hue or tint displayed by many of these products and the law recognises the legitimacy of using the word “orange” in a common English context.

He then went on to say:

Therefore Wine Australia advises that when used to describe the colour of a wine the context must be made absolutely clear by, for example, stating “wine of orange hue”, rather than simply “orange wine”.

And then the big stick came out:

In summary, the message to producers of “natural” wine is that you risk serious consequences in describing your wines using the word “orange”, unless the word is clearly being used to denote one of its common English meanings.

Notice the conflation of natural wine and orange wine implied in these statements. The reason for the document being published is that there is an official Geographic Indication covering the wine region around Orange in New South Wales.

Well, the Twittersphere did swing into action when this regulatory document was published. The tone of the tweets ranged from amused disbelief to outrage. It only took a day for the document to be amended and reissued with a definition of orange wine that is somewhat closer to the mark and the adoption of a much more conciliatory tone than that adopted in the first issue.

So what do we think an orange wine is and what do we think about the controversy, because it not only applies to winemakers and what they put on their label but it also applies to restaurants who have a section on their wine list for orange wines?

The answer is really very simple. An orange wine is created by leaving the skins of white grapes in contact with the grape juice for an extended period so that the polyphenols such as anthocyanins and tannins in the skins leach into the grape juice causing it to turn orange. The length of time that the skins are left in contact can range from a few days to many months.

Notice that it has nothing to do with vineyard practices, nothing necessarily to do with oxidation, nothing to do with natural fermentation. It is simply creating a wine with the extraction of molecules from the skins of the grapes.

This has been a common winemaking practice in areas such as Friuli and Venezia Giulia in Italy (where winemakers such as Josko Gravner produce classic orange wines), in Slovenia, in Georgia and to a lesser extent in Croatia. It is becoming more common in Australia now and there are some wonderful examples including the stunning Rory 2013 from d’Meure in Tasmania which had around 20 days of skin contact.

While it is true that many makers of orange wine are part of the natural wine community there is no reason why an orange wine couldn’t be made using conventional winemaking techniques, even if that is not normally the case, particularly with regard to the imported orange wines that make it to Australia. So not all orange wines are natural wines and most certainly not all natural wines are orange wines.

And what do we think about the use of the word ‘orange’ on Australian wine labels. We are aware of one instance where this has occurred and we would be on the side of Wine Australia given that there is a GI for wines from the Orange district. However, if a winemaker wanted to describe the wine on a back label and say that the wine had had extended skin contact and was orange in colour that would be helpful to consumers.

It would also be helpful if winemakers from the Orange region put something on their wine labels other than Orange. Maybe “Orange Region” or similar would ensure that someone didn’t buy a wine from that region hoping that it was going to be a wine made using extended skin contact.

And then there is the question of wine lists. Here we think there is little problem as far as consumer confusion is concerned. For example at Garagistes’ offshoot bar, Sidecar in Hobart, the wines were divided by colour. There was a section for white wines, a section for red wines and a section for orange wines. We think that there would be very few customers who would think that these wines were from Orange

in NSW. In case someone who thought along those lines did randomly walk through the door, the origin of each of the orange wines was also listed.

So we don't think there will be the slightest confusion among the wine drinking public, especially for those who are seeking out orange wines as we are sure that they are smart enough to work out that an Italian orange wine probably wasn't made in outback New South Wales.

Grape variety: Tempranillo

Tempranillo is a grape that is rarely grown in France, but the arrival of a Tempranillo from Mylène Bru in the Languedoc caused us to research this interesting grape variety normally associated with Spain where more than 100,000 hectares are planted to this variety. The only other countries with significant plantings are Argentina with some 12,000 hectares and Portugal with about 17,000 hectares.

The grape is descended from two minor Spanish grape varieties called Albillo Mayor and Benedicto¹. The researchers who identified the parentage think that Tempranillo probably evolved about 1000 years ago in the Ebro Valley in northern Spain. Albillo Mayor is a white grape still planted in Spain, but the red Benedicto is almost extinct. The discovery of the parentage of Tempranillo though has placed a lot of focus on Benedicto and attempts are now underway to revive this forgotten variety.

The leaf of the grape has three large lobes with the central one having a distinctive triangular shape.



The leaf of the Tempranillo vine (Source Vitis International Variety Catalogue)

¹ Ibanez, J et al (2012) Genetic Origin of the Grapevine Cultivar Tempranillo. *American Journal of Enological Viticulture*. Vol 63: 549-553

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The smallish grape forms relatively large bunches which ripen early (temprano in Spanish) and produces wine that is low in acidity, high in tannin and lower in alcohol than similar varieties.



The tight bunches of Tempranillo grapes (Source Vitis International Variety Catalogue)

As we mentioned earlier in this newsletter, Mylène Bru has a small vineyard of Tempranillo vines in the Languedoc. She uses the grapes to make a rich red called Karm.



This wine has beautifully fine tannins and a deep purple hue. It makes a perfect match to robust meats cooked over charcoal or roasted in the oven.

Appellation: Fiefs Vendéens

The Fiefs Vendéens region is one of the newest AOC/AOP appellations in France having been elevated in September 2011. It is situated on the west coast of France overlooking the Atlantic Ocean about 100 kilometres south of the city of Nantes. It is therefore on the fringe of the Loire wine region. Key towns in the area are L’Ile d’Olonne and La Roche-sur-Yon.

The appellation is comprised of 5 non-overlapping “denominations géographiques”. The geographic areas are Brem, centred on the town of Brem-sur-Mer, Chantonay, Mareuil, Pissotte and Vix. These can be appended to the appellation under certain conditions such as Fiefs Vendéens Brem or Fiefs Vendéens Mareuil.

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In addition there is also a complementary indication available, namely Val de Loire which can be appended to the appellation. Therefore the region is assumed to be in the Loire Valley despite the distance from here to the actual Loire River.

To append Brem to the appellation the grapes must be grown in the communes of Brem-sur-Mer, Brétignolles-sur-Mer, L'Île d'Olonne, Olonne-sur-Mer or Vairé. Chantonnay can be added if the grapes are grown in the delightfully-named Chantonnay-Saint-Philbert-du-Pont-Charrault. Mareuil covers the communes of Chaillé-sous-les-Ormeaux, Champ-Saint-Père, Château-Guibert, La Couture, Mareuil-sur-Lay-Dissais, Rosnay, Saint-Florent-des-Bois or Le Tablier. Pissotte is restricted only to the commune of the same name and Vix is covered by the communes Auzay, Longèves, Le Poiré-sur-Velluire and Vix.



Fiefs Vendéens is a complex appellation because the various geographic areas have different rules applying about grapes varieties that can be used even though they are physically very close to each other. For example in each area white wines are based on Chenin Blanc, but in Brem this can be blended with Chardonnay and Grolleau Gris, in Chanonnay, Mareuil and Pissotte it can only be blended with Chardonnay and in Vix it can be blended with Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc!

For red wines the rules are the same throughout the appellation. The main grape varieties are Cabernet Franc, Négrette and Pinot Noir which can be blended with small amounts of Cabernet Sauvignon and Gamay.

The same grape varieties can be used in each area for making rosé with the addition of Grolleau Gris allowed in Brem.

We are fortunate to have a wonderful example of the wines of this area with the biodynamic producer Domaine Saint Nicolas whose vines are very close to the ocean and benefits from the cooling breezes and the ancient schist and quartzite soils that are widespread here.

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.

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