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Wine Talk: September 2011

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 23

Some very interesting wines from existing suppliers have arrived just in time for this newsletter. We have new wines from Philippe Bornard, René and Agnès Mosse, Nicolas Carmarans, Catherine and Dominique Derain and from Thierry Michon at Domaine St Nicolas.

The Fanny Sabre Bourgogne 2010 which arrived in the previous shipment is selling very quickly (although we still have reasonable stocks) which is a testimony to the quality of her lovely, elegant wines. The same applies to the fabulous Jura wines from Michel Gahier. These have been snapped up by discerning buyers from throughout Australia with the oxidative Chardonnays and the delicate Trousseau wines being the first to sell out. There's not much of these left now except his sparkling wine.

To celebrate the arrival of so many interesting wines this month we have four special packs for you. The first is our Burgundy pack which includes wines from Fanny Sabre, Dominique Derain, Jean-Paul Brun and Alice and Olivier de Moor some of the most exciting winemakers in the region. This month we have published an article on the Méthode Ancestrale winemaking technique for producing lightly petillant sparkling wines, so we have assembled a pack of these exciting wines for you called the Méthode Ancestrale (Pet Nat) 6 pack. We also have a 6 pack of calming reds and a mixed six pack of new arrivals. They're all described in detail later in the newsletter.

Remember that the special packs attract a 15% discount instead of a 10% discount, so if you order a special pack you really are getting a special deal (not that a 10% discount for most wines and free freight on your own selection isn't a good arrangement too)!

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.

News from Living Wines

Arrival of Mosse Moussamoussettes



The Domaine Mosse Moussamoussettes is definitely a cult wine! When we were in Paris in the summer of 2010 we were offered this slightly sweet, juicy sparkling wine as an aperitif at every smart wine bar in that city! We were too late to buy any that year but we made sure we had a supply this year and it's arriving just in time for our summer.

Made by René and Agnès Mosse who tend their vines biodynamically just south of the pleasant city of Angers – a place incidentally where most of the best restaurants only serve natural wines – this wine perfectly captures what natural winemaking is all about.

We love this wine. It is pale, light, delicious, limpid, fresh, slightly sweet and the perfect aperitif for a spring or summer lunch or evening aperitif. It also works very well as a dessert wine if you want to try a wine that is not cloyingly sweet.

It is made from Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon (70%), Gamay (10%) and Grolleau Gris (20%) grapes which have been co-fermented. It was bottled at 35g residual sugar and fermentation continued in the bottle until the sugar levels fell to around 20g making a pleasant sweetness to match the acidity in the wine. This method is known in France as "Méthode Ancestrale" and the wines are often referred to as Pet Nats (Pétillant Naturels). You can read more about Méthode Ancestrale in the story below. And there is a special Méthode Ancestrale 6 pack this month.



René Mosse in his beautiful vineyard

Mauvais Temps returns – l'Altre arrives!



The 2010 vintage of the Nicolas Carmarans lovely Mauvais Temps red wine has arrived in Australia and is ready for shipment!

When we received our first shipment of Mauvais Temps it sold very quickly to customers who were looking for a delicious wine from an obscure region, using even more obscure grape varieties. Well, you can't get much more obscure than the indigenous Negret de Banhars grape variety (see story below) which originates a few kilometres from Nicolas Carmarans' vineyard and has total plantings of 1.5 hectares! The region is similarly obscure with Nicolas' village being about 100 kilometres north west of the famous Millau viaduct, just west of the town of Laguiole.

The wine also contains Fer Servadou (Mansois), Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. This wine is dark in colour but light in texture and alcohol, weighing in at only 12%. It is a very versatile wine as it matches with many foods, can be drunk on its own or can even be chilled. One very hot day in Paris last year we were served this wine straight from the fridge and it was thirst quenching.

Nicolas Carmarans is well known in French natural wine circles from the many years that he spent running the famous wine bar cum bistro in the 5th in Paris called Café de la Nouvelle Mairie which was one of the first to move to serving only natural wines some years ago. Last year Nicolas sold the café and moved back to the family vineyards in the Aveyron that he had previously been tending part time. The current owners have maintained the same winning formula. It's a great address in Paris, especially for lunch.

Of course, he uses no chemicals in either his vineyard or his winery and the wine is fermented naturally. Only tiny amounts of sulphur are added to the bottle.

We also have received from Nicolas supplies of a new cuvée called l'Altre. This wine is a pure Fer Servadou made in a similar style to the Mauvais Temps.

We offer a box of three Mauvais Temps and three l'Altre for the very reasonable price of \$199.80. (The normal price is \$37 per bottle but for packs of six we give you a 10% discount and pay the freight.)

Philippe Bornard Point Barre.



Philippe Bornard is one of the star winemakers of the Jura and we are delighted that another shipment of his delicious wines has arrived. This shipment sees the return of the light, refreshing ultra-natural Ploussard which he calls “Point Barre.” to signify that this wine contains grapes and that is all! No sulphur is added to this wine (although sulphur is generated naturally during the winemaking process), no chemicals have been used in the vineyard or in the winery, no commercial yeasts have imparted foreign flavours, no new wood has been used and no enzymes have been added to change the nature of the wine.

Ploussard or Poulsard is a native grape of the Jura and it thrives around the village of Pupillin where Philippe lives. In fact Pupillin describes itself as the world capital of Ploussard. This light red wine with its hints of strawberries and cherries is a perfect match with food as it does not dominate, rather it supports delicate flavours.

There’s a bottle of Point Barre in the Calming Reds pack.

Sparkling Savagnin from the Jura



Ça va bien is a sparkling wine made using the Méthode Ancestrale process (see article below) from the Savagnin grape variety. It is a clear, golden colour and comes in a clear bottle closed with a crown seal. Because the fermentation finishes in the bottle there is some residual sugar (but not very much) and the alcohol content is low (10%).

This is a perfect aperitif that also matches very well with a variety of foods. It would even match nicely with a mixed platter of cheese and charcuterie. Another winner from the talented Philippe Bornard.

Note that his delicious Tante Mieux is back in stock as well. See the special Methode Ancestrale pack below for details on buying these wines.

A delicious Gamay from the Loire

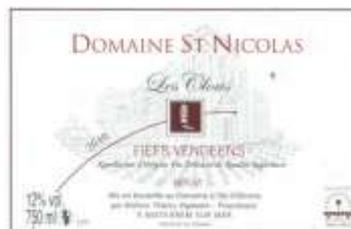


Thierry Michon makes wonderful wines on his large biodynamic property in the Fiefs Vendéens region on the Atlantic Coast some 90 kilometres south of Nantes. We are great fans of the Gamay grape when it is made naturally and this juicy, fresh, lively Gamay called Gammes-en-May is a great example of what to do with this grape. The vines grow on gently sloping land facing the nearby sea. The soil is derived from the ancient slate that crumbles at the surface to impart a mineral quality to the wine.

The grapes are picked manually and placed in small boxes before manual sorting to ensure only quality grapes go into the vats. The wine is allowed to ferment naturally and only a tiny amount of sulphur is added in the bottle. This is a great example of a delicious quaffing wine made by a great winemaker.

You can buy a box of six of this wine for the very reasonable price of \$145.80. (The normal price is \$27 per bottle but for packs of six we give you a 10% discount and pay the freight.)

New vintage of Les Clous



The new vintage of the ever-popular Les Clous has arrived. This wine reflects the season with 2010 being cooler than 2009. Therefore the alcohol level is back down to 12% and the wine is more sharply focussed. We were delighted when we first tried this vintage in April – there is just so much going on in the glass. This is a perfect wine for seafood or a cheese or charcuterie or chicken or curries or just about anything really!

You can buy a box of six of this wine for the very reasonable price of \$156.60. (The normal price is \$29 per bottle but for packs of six we give you a 10% discount and pay the freight.)

Méthode Ancestrale sparkling wines (Pet Nats)

Méthode Ancestrale is an ancient technique for making sparkling wines - a technique that has been given more attention in a number of areas of France in the past ten years and a method that has long been known in Italy.

Wines made by this method see the fermentation process, which produces the carbon dioxide, occurring in the bottle. Fermentation is usually started in vats and then, when the fermentation is partially completed and there is still residual sugar, the wine is bottled and sealed and the fermentation continues in the bottle. This fermentation in the bottle will use some or all of the residual sugar resulting in either a dry or slightly sweet sparkling wine depending on how long the fermentation continues.

In the Loire Valley, and in fact right through France, wines of this style are often referred to as Pet Nats or 'petillant naturels' as you can see from the label of the Philippe Bornard sparkling Savagnin below.



Because the wine is partially fermented in the bottle it will also be cloudy due to the dead yeast that remains. There is no disgorgement of the yeasts unlike in Methode Champenoise. Also unlike the method practised in most of Champagne there is no commercial yeast or sugar added to create the bubbles.

The main places where you are likely to find wines made using this technique are the south-west of France particularly in the Gaillac appellation (where it is also known as Méthode Gaillacoise) where it is used to make the famous Gaillac Mousseux Méthode Ancestrale AOC wines and the Limoux Méthode Ancestrale AOC appellation in the Languedoc.

It is also used in the area just to the east of Lyon where wines such as Clairette de Die Tradition and sparkling wines from the Bugey Cerdon appellation, which is close to the edge of the Savoie, are made using this method. It is also common in the Loire Valley with winemakers such as René Mosse producing lovely, fresh sparkling rosé wines using this method. This year the Mosse Moussamoussettes was bottled at 35 grams of residual sugar and fermentation continued in the bottle until the level reduced to 25 grams thus leaving a sparkling, off-dry wine of considerable charm.

Another example is the Vin du Bugey Cerdon from the Domaine Renardat-Fache's, a semi-dry, sparkling rose domaine, which is imported into Australia by Andrew Guard.

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Here the hand-picked Gamay and Poulsard grapes are partially fermented in tanks and then bottled along with the remaining yeast and residual sugar. Secondary fermentation occurs in the bottle using up much of the remaining sugar to produce a fresh, dryish and delicious sparkling wine.

It was the Bugey Cerdon wines that first attracted Jean-Paul Brun to this style of winemaking. In 2002 he made his first vintage of his now-famous FRV100 from the Gamay grape. This beautiful pale pink low-alcohol wine is also made using the Methode Ancestrale technique.



Jean-Paul hand-harvests the Gamay and then allows some skin contact to develop the alluring pink colour for this wine. He then begins the fermentation in vats and bottles the wine before fermentation is complete. The result is an alcohol level of around 7.5% and a beautiful fine bead with toasty aromas and great mouthfeel. This is a sparkling wine that can be drunk at any time of day with food or without. It also works very well as an accompaniment to

desserts, with much of our last shipment being served with a dessert created by Aaron Turner at Loam.

The Blanquette Méthode Ancestrale wines of Limoux are another example of wines made in this way. They are believed to have been made in this region since 1531 (where records from the abbey of Saint Hilaire confirm the production).

The official appellations in France where Methode Ancestrale wines can have this designation on the label according to France's INAO are:

- Bugey Cerdon méthode ancestrale
- Clairette de Die méthode ancestrale
- Gaillac mousseux méthode ancestrale
- Gaillac mousseux méthode ancestrale doux (a sweeter version of this style)
- Limoux méthode ancestrale

This month we have a special pack of these “Pet Nats” at a very reasonable price to prepare you for the oncoming warm weather.

Next shipment

The next shipment will arrive soon. Amongst the goodies will be the ever-popular and reasonably priced Hervé Villemade Sauvignon Blanc, Cheverny Blanc 2010, lots of the lovely Cheverny Rouge made from Pinot Noir and Gamay and lots of his sparkling white wine called Bulles Blanche made in the Methode Ancestrale style. There will also be a small consignment of the rare Cour Cheverny called Les Acacias, made from the Romorantin grape variety.

And we are very pleased to announce that the stunning 2010 vintage Beaujolais Cru wines of Jean-Paul Brun are also on their way. We will soon have stocks of the Fleurie,

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the Morgon, the Cote de Brouilly and the amazing Moulin à Vent as well as all of other wines from this wonderful big-hearted winemaker.

And from further north we will be receiving a shipment of the beloved wines from Domaine de la Cadette and Domaine Montanet Thoden. The Saulniers Chardonnay will be back as will La Châtelaine, the Ermitage which includes some of the rare César grape as well as Pinot Noir and there will also be an allocation of the lovely Melon de Bourgogne. Cuvee Garance and Cuvee Galerne from Domaine Montanet Thoden are also in the shipment.

From the far south we have a shipment of Causse Marines' delicious slightly sweet Gaillac Doux and the 2010 vintage of Peyrouzelles.

Melbourne Trade Tasting

On the 26th September we will be taking part in a trade tasting with four other similar importers. Andrew Guard (who imports a dazzling array of natural wines from France, Spain and Italy), Giorgio de Maria (who sources incredible wines from small producers across Italy), Matt Young (who imports stunning sake from Japan) and Piero Tantini (who also imports artisanal Italian wines) will be joining us to showcase the breadth and depth of the wines now available in Australia.

If you are in the trade and would like an invitation then please email us:

wine@livingwines.com.au

for details.

Let us choose

Over 60% of our retail customers are content to sit back and let us choose a pack for them. They simply send us an email (wine@livingwines.com.au) saying how many bottles they would like, the average price and the style and colour of wines they prefer and we do the rest!

We choose a selection of the wines that we think are delicious and which fit within your price range. We'll give you a 10% discount on any 6 pack we invent for you.

Pack 1: Burgundy 6 Pack



We are fortunate to represent a number of the rising stars of Burgundy including Fanny Sabre, Dominique Derain, Domaine de la Cadette, Domaine Montanet Thoden, Alice and Olivier de Moor and Jean-Paul Brun from the Beaujolais.

This pack has been designed to show you a range of the styles of wine produced in this region. Burgundy does a lot more than huge Pinot and Chardonnay wines.

So, the six pack is now described:

Fanny Sabre Pommard Vieilles Vignes 2009 – This Pommard made by the Burgundy rising star Fanny Sabre is a strong Pinot Noir with an incredibly long finish. This appellation is one of the best areas for long-lasting, flavourful red wines. To see why the hottest restaurant on the planet (NOMA) features her wine, this is a good place to start.

Catherine & Dominique Derain Bourgogne la Combe 2010 – This wonderful white wine is a perfect expression of Chardonnay made by one of the most respected winemakers in Burgundy and is at a price that is affordable.

Catherine & Dominique Derain Mercurey La Plante Chassey Rouge – This wine has notes of cherries, raspberries and citrus peel and some herbaciousness. This wine has a lovely silkiness and earthiness about it that we find very appealing. It is mainly Pinot Noir with a small amount of Pinot Beurot.

Terres Dorées Bourgogne Pinot Noir 2009 – This is a Bourgogne appellation wine instead of the more usual Beaujolais from Jean-Paul Brun, therefore it is a Pinot Noir rather than his more usual Gamay. The grapes come from three small, sun-drenched parcels and the wine is matured in old wooden fûts. Drinking beautifully right now!

Terres Dorées Crémant de Bourgogne Charme Blanc de Blancs – Crémants are sparkling wines made outside the Champagne region of France. This is a particularly fine example of the genre and is made from Chardonnay. The Crémant has a fine bead, yeasty aromas and a long, dry savoury finish.

Le Vendangeur Masqué AOC Chablis 2009 - This is a fine Chablis with lots of fruit showing. It is well-rounded, fresh tasting and has a streak of acidity and a long finish. A lovely wine to enjoy with a meal. This wine is made by Chablis and Chitry guru Olivier de Moor.

The RRP for this selection is \$285 but the pack price is \$242.25 which includes freight.

Pack 2: Méthode Ancestrale (Pet Nat) 6 Pack



This pack allows you to explore the delights of natural Méthode Ancestrale wines. There is a full article on how these wines are made in this newsletter. Each of the wines is sealed with a crown seal. These are all very low alcohol wines that are perfect aperitifs and perfect any-time-day drinking. They are completely natural and there is no added sulphur because the carbon dioxide is a natural preservative.

Philippe Bornard Vin de Table Pétillant Naturel Le Tant Mieux (2 bottles) – Le Tant Mieux is a beautiful almost lyrical aperitif sparkling wine of great charm. It is slightly sweet making it a perfect aperitif or it can be matched to desserts as well. It is made using the Méthode Ancestrale technique so is low in alcohol (9.5%) and has deposits of spent yeast in the bottle. It is capped with a crown seal.

Philippe Bornard Vin de Table Pétillant Naturel Ça Va Bien (2 bottles) – The same technique and the same approach as the Tant Mieux but this golden beauty is made purely from the Savagnin grape. It is released under the Vin de Table designation because it is made using the Méthode Ancestrale which is not covered by any local appellation in the Jura. This is the first year we've been able to secure any of this wine.

Domaine Mosse Vin de France Moussamoussettes (2 bottles) – Moussamoussettes is a darling of the Paris wine bar scene! It is slightly sweet. It is low in alcohol. It is delicious and we love drinking it at any time of the day or night. It is lovely as an aperitif. It works well with both savoury and sweet foods. And if you have had a big night of wine drinking and you are looking to back out then this is a great drink for moving towards the finish.

This selection normally sells for a RRP of \$202 but the pack price is \$171.70 including freight.

Pack 3: Calming reds – 6 bottle Pack



You have had a bad day at work and you arrive home wanting solace. What better than a red wine that isn't so big that it attacks your palate but rather a low tannin wine than calms you, soothes you and packs wonderful flavour! This is the six pack that we would wish for on those occasions.

Domaine Mosse Anjou Rouge 2009 – In the Loire Valley 2009 was a warm vintage, therefore the recalcitrant Cabernet Sauvignon ripened well. This wine is made from 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Cabernet Franc, unusual for the Loire where Cabernet Franc is favoured. However it is one of our favourite wines.

Domaine St Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Cuvée Jacques 2005– Cuvée Jacques is a blend of Pinot Noir and Cabernet Franc made by master biodynamic winemaker Thierry Michon. It is a velvety, sumptuous, lingering, lovely aged wine at a very reasonable price.

Domaine St Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Cabaret 2007 – Thierry Michon's Cabaret is a pure Cabernet Franc made from ripe grapes that were perfect for making a food friendly wine of great charm.

Philippe Bornard Arbois Pupillin Ploussard Point Barre 2010 – This is a lighter style of red with a gorgeous mouthfeel and a long lingering finish. The last shipment we had of this wine sold out within days so we have held some back for this offer. The Ploussard grape makes one of the most food friendly wines imaginable.

Domaine Milan Vin de Table de France Le Vallon Rouge 2007 – A great wine produced in the town of St Remy de Provence by master winemaker Henri Milan. The grape varieties are Grenache, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cinsault and Mourvedre - the same grapes as in the 2006 Domaine Milan Rouge. Silky, sumptuous and moorish!

Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Cuvee Cinabre Rouge 2008 - This flavoursome red is made from a small plot of biodynamically-tended Cabernet Franc vines that are more than 25 years old. The wine is smooth and elegant and weighs in at 12.5% alcohol. Only minimal sulphur has been used.

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$235 but the pack price is a very reasonable \$199.75

Pack 4: Delicious new arrivals 6 pack



This is a small selection of the new arrivals that we are very excited about. This selection represents a very diverse range of French appellations from the Jura in the far eastern side of France to the Fiefs Vendéens on the Atlantic west coast. Then from Burgundy in the north(ish) to the Aveyron in the central region. There are three reds and three whites.

Domaine Mosse Anjou Blanc 2010 – Chenin Blanc is one of our favourite white grapes. This wine has lovely mineral tones and a vibrant palate. It also is somewhat Jura-like with oxidative notes that accentuate the nuttiness and umami in the wine. A perfect food wine.

Domaine St Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Les Clous 2010– Les Clous is the fresh, delicious, salty white wine from Thierry Michon that goes beautifully with a wide range of foods, but especially with seafood. It is a blend of Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc and Groslot Gris.

Domaine St Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Gammes en May 2010 – We are great fans of the Gamay grape when it is made naturally and this juicy, fresh, lively Gamay called Gammes-en-May is a great example of what can be done with this grape. We recommend serving this slightly chilled and using it as an aperitif.

Philippe Bornard Côtes de Jura Savagnin Les Chassagnes Ouillé 2006 – The Chassagnes has returned! This very popular wine is topped up in the barrel to reduce the effect of the oxygen. This is a delicious, complex Savagnin.

Catherine and Dominique Derain Les Riaux 2010 – A beautiful Pinot Noir from the tiny Les Riaux vineyard on the Puligny-Montrachet plains. This is a very nice entry-level Burgundy made by a very talented wine maker.

Nicolas Carmarans Vin de Pays de l'Aveyron l'Altre 2010 – This dark-coloured Fer Servadou from the Aveyron in central France looks as if it will be heavy and tannic but is, instead, dangerously quaffable. At 12% it is a perfect food wine.

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$215 but the pack price is a very reasonable \$182.75.

Negret de Banhars grape variety

Negret de Banhars is a totally obscure, almost extinct grape variety that is to be found in the Aveyron region of France near to the village of Banhars. It is reported that only 1.5 hectares of vines remain on the planet amounting to some 2500 vines.

According to Dave Brookes, one of Australia's most innovative and interesting wine writers, this grape is:

...a grape very similar to Côt but one which relishes the higher altitudes and decomposed granites ... around Conques in the village of Campouriez.

Now we should add that Conques is where our supplier Nicolas Carmarans maintains his vineyard and Campouriez is a village quite close to the village of Banhars. So it is no surprise that 1500 of the 2500 remaining vines are in Nicolas's vineyard.

So, if you want to try this grape to add to your store of totally useless information then you need to try the Mauvais Temps (that we wrote about earlier in this newsletter) which is comprised of 30% Negret de Banhars.

Living Wines Order Form

You can simply send us an email to order wines, but if you would like to use the form to check prices or availability, click on the link below.

http://www.livingwines.com.au/Catalogue/Order_Form_Current_2011.pdf