

Wine Talk: September 2013

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 39

What an amazing couple of months! We have had a number of trips to Sydney and Melbourne and connected with lots of new restaurants, bars and retail customers.

The new producers that we have sourced for the Languedoc and from Roussillon have proved to be very popular. Some of the wines from these regions can be quite big and sweet but we have managed to find producers who are in the mountains beyond the coast where there are strong winds, cold nights and lots of biodiversity.

The wines from Jolly Ferriol and Mylène Bru have been walking out the door and we will need to now reorder if they have any remaining stocks. And, in October, the Beaujolais wines of superstar Michel Guignier will arrive and we anticipate that his no-sulphur, pure beauties that are served in some of the best restaurants in the world will sell very quickly.

We have included a number of articles this month including one on Jolly Ferriol and one on how the term 'natural wine' has been used historically.

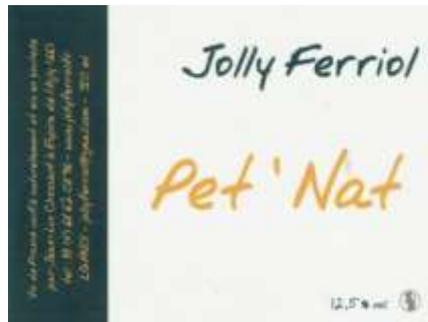
The special packs for this month provide ample opportunity to sample a wide range of our wines. The new arrivals pack is always of great interest because it highlights the best of the new arrivals. This month it is comprised of some of the amazing wines from the Jolly Ferriol, estate in the Roussillon and from Toby Bainbridge from the Loire.

There is a special treat for those of you who love wines made from the Sauvignon Blanc. We have put together a pack that contains 6 wines that contain either 100% Sauvignon Blanc or a majority of that grape. As a special treat we have reserved a few bottles of the famous de Moor Saint Bris (an appellation in Burgundy) to include in this pack. There are also 4 other packs described in full below as well as a long article looking into the history of the use of the term 'natural wine'.

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!

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.

Living Wines News: The wines of Jolly Ferriol



Jean-Luc Chossart and Isabelle Jolly bought a rambling Catalan walled farmhouse and coaching inn just west of the village of Espira de l'Agly in 2005. This village lies very close to the town of Rivesaltes in Roussillon, which in turn lies just north of the city of Perpignan.

Their vineyards are bordered by an arc of the Agly River which cuts through schistous marl rocks to form a natural canyon on one side and the D117 highway which passes in front of their house on the other.

Jean-Luc and Isabelle set about restoring the buildings to their former glory and also re-established the vineyards and to convert them to natural treatments and stopping the use of artificial chemicals.



The shady terrace at the front of the restored house

The vineyards occupy the space between the walled farmhouse and winery and the Agly River.



Bush vines on the flats near the Agly river with bare, rocky mountains behind

The roots of magnificent bush vines burrow deep into the soil to search for water and minerals.

As we walked through the vineyard we approached the Agly River and the ruined bridge.



The old bridge across the Agly River behind the vineyards

Jean-Luc and Isabelle make a variety of local specialty wines including still whites and reds, sparkling wine made in the Pétillant Naturel style, the famous Muscat de Rivesaltes fortified white wine and a Rancio wine, a style that is so beloved in this region.

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The Rancio wines are made by exposing the wine to sunlight for an extended period and then aging the resultant wine in barrels. Here the wine is placed outside in glass demijohns during which time the wine turns a golden orange colour.



Rancio wine exposed to the sunlight on the terrace

Jean-Luc loves making wines in the Pétillant Naturel style and has rigged up an outdoor contraption for disgorging the wine to rid it of the dead yeasts that are the result of only having one, in-bottle, fermentation. He turns the bottles upside down and allows the dead yeasts to collect in the neck of the bottle as shown on the photo below.



Dead yeast in the neck of the Pet'Nat

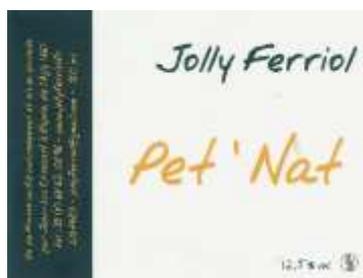
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When the crown seal is removed the plug of dead yeast is forcibly evicted from the bottle by the gas in the wine. Jean-Luc then tops the bottle up with the same base wine and reseals the bottle.

He also makes a wine under the Muscat de Rivesaltes appellation. This wine is sweet and is made in the style called Vin Doux Naturel where the fermentation is stopped before all the sugar is converted, by killing off the yeasts through the addition of grape spirit to the fermenting wine. It is made in about 90 communes across Roussillon which is the closest department to the Spanish border on the Mediterranean side of France. The only permitted grapes for this appellation are Muscat à Petits Grains and Muscat d'Alexandrie, but the combination of these two grapes provides a compelling complexity to the wine. By law this wine must be fortified and have a minimum alcohol content of 15% and must contain a minimum of 100 grams per litre of residual sugar.

There are a number of Jolly Ferriol wines available in this month's special packs.

Pack 1: New arrivals 6 pack



This pack is a selection of the exciting recent arrivals from the Loire and Roussillon. This is very special offer that, due to limited stocks, is unlikely to be repeated.

Jolly Ferriol Vin de France Le Vin des Gueux 2012 – This wine is made from Carignan (66%) and Grenache (34%). It undergoes carbonic maceration in tanks for 15 days after which the wine is transferred to old barrels for 6 to 12 months. The result is a light, thirst quenching wine that can be served slightly chilled in summer

Jolly Ferriol Vin de France Blablanc 2012 – This dry white wine is made from the intriguing combination of 70% Grenache Gris and 30% Macabeu. The schist soil gives this wine quite a pronounced minerality. This wine can be drunk as an aperitif or to accompany seafood, charcuterie or cheese.

Bainbridge and Cathcart Vin de France "Ros Bif" Rose Sec 2011 – The l'Acrobat is a dry rose wine made from the Grolleau (Groslot) grape variety that is a lesser known grape in the Anjou area, but one that the locals love. We were stunned when we tried this rose out of the tank - it was beautiful - we were therefore delighted when Toby told us the price!

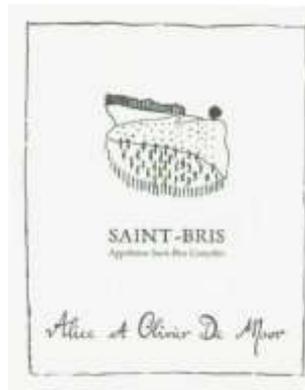
Bainbridge and Cathcart Vin de France Rouge aux Levres 2012 – This wine is made from the red Grolleau Noir grape that is only found at this end of the Loire Valley and rarely seen as a single varietal. The very old vines thrive in red clay and schist soils. The grapes underwent three weeks of whole bunch maceration. The vines are very old (at least 85 years and some possibly over 100 years old) giving rise to a beautifully structured wine which exhibits considerable charm.

Bainbridge and Cathcart Vin de France Les Jongleurs 2012 – This is a dry Chenin Blanc made from 60 year old vines covering just 0.14 hectare from near Faye d'Anjou where the soil is sandy. Old vine Chenin is a real treat as there is a complexity in the wine that cannot be achieved from young vines.

Jolly Ferriol Vin de France Pet'Nat – This Jolly Ferriol wine which is made in the Pétillant Naturel style and which goes by the name of Pet'Nat, is a beautifully savoury sparkling wine made from 100% Muscat, that white grape so beloved of the Languedoc and Roussillon. This one is a 50-50 blend of Muscat à Petit Grain and Muscat de Alexandria.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$201 but the pack price is \$170.85 including freight.

Pack 2: Sauvignon Blanc 6 Pack



Sauvignon Blanc varies widely in flavour and aroma depending on the terroir in which it is grown and the yeasts that are used to ferment it. Since our wines are all fermented using only the naturally occurring yeasts the end result is much more elegant and interesting than those fermented using industrial yeasts. Also the soil is very important and the wines we have chosen come from very different soil varieties to allow you to compare the differences.

Domaine du Moulin Vin de Pays du Val de Loire Sauvignon 2011 – Hervé Villemaade does great things with Sauvignon Blanc and this wine is no exception. It is classified as a Vin de Pays because the Cheverny appellation requires that white wines are blends of Sauvignon Blanc and either Chardonnay, Chenin Blanc or Menu Pineau.

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Blanc Domaine 2011 – It is also interesting to compare what happens when the Sauvignon Blanc is blended with a little (30%) of Chardonnay. This produces a highly quaffable, yet elegant drink.

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny La Bodice Blanc 2010 – The same percentages as the Cheverny Blanc but a more elegant and complex wine, due to aging in old oak barrels. It has oxidative qualities - one of the characteristics that we love in wine if it is done judiciously. The oxygen effect gives it an umami flavour that is compulsive and compelling.

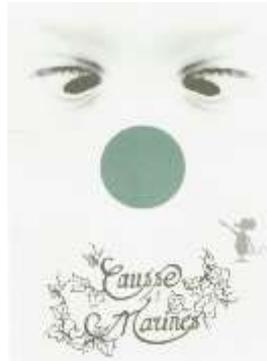
Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Le Blanc 2011 – This wine from the Touraine appellation is made from 100% Sauvignon Blanc. It has a flavour that reminds us of a Sancerre. This vintage is particularly delicious with clean, fresh, vibrant flavours and a long finish.

Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Cendrillon 2011 – It is made from 80% Sauvignon Blanc and 20% Chardonnay. These two grapes seem to dance together to form a harmonious, elegant and appealing drink.

Alice and Olivier de Moor Saint-Bris 2011 – The de Moors have a vineyard within the Saint Bris appellation and make this richly-textured 100% Sauvignon Blanc that is highly regarded by aficionados of this grape variety. It is a very rare wine and highly sought after. It is the only opportunity to buy this wine directly from us.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$194 but the pack price is **\$164.90 including freight.**

Pack 3: White wine selection 6 pack



This month we have assembled a great selection of classic white wines for you from all parts of France. Each of the wines we have chosen shares a common characteristic – they are all very food friendly!

Jolly Ferriol Vin de Table Blablanc 2012 – This dry white wine is made from 70% Grenache Gris and 30% Macabeu. The grapes grow on schisty marl soil and the yield is low at 25 hectolitres per hectare. The soil gives this wine quite a pronounced minerality with hints of flint and schist. This wine can be drunk as an aperitif or to accompany seafood, charcuterie or cheese.

Domaine de la Cadette Bourgogne Vézelay Les Saulniers 2011 –The Les Saulniers vineyard is a beautiful parcel of land situated on an old road once used by salt smugglers. This wine, made from 100% Chardonnay, spent approximately six months in vats. It has a liveliness and freshness that is very appealing for such an elegant wine. The finish is very long and interesting.

Causse Marines Gaillac Les Greilles 2011 – Les Greilles is a classy white wine blended from local Gaillac grapes Mauzac and Loin-de-l’Oeil with a little Muscadelle thrown in. 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 a many spicy foods.

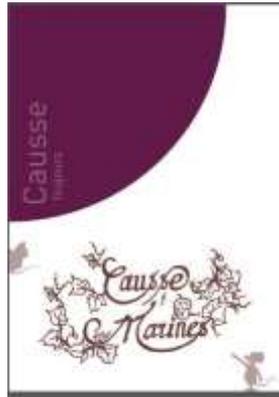
Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Blanc Domaine 2011 – This is a favourite both for its flavour and its value-for-money. It is actually quite an elegant, refined wine that is perfect with a range of foods including seafood, cheese and white meats. A blend of 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Chardonnay this wine is only produced in small quantities from vines that are between 18 and 24 years old.

Myène Bru Vin de Table Lady Chasselas Blanc 2012 –The Chasselas vines are at least 50 years old and face East North East. This variety is almost unknown in this region so this is a very rare wine, but one of some delicacy. The clay/limestone soils give the wine a persistent minerality that is very appealing. The finish is quite dry.

Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Cendrillon 2011 – The Cendrillon (Cinderella) is made from 80% Sauvignon Blanc and 20% Chardonnay. Just 30% of the Sauvignon Blanc spent some time in oak to provide additional complexity. This is a fascinating wine for us. It opens up in the glass to reveal a complexity that belies its price.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$198 but the pack price is \$168.30 including freight.

Pack 4: Red wine selection 6 pack



This month we have repeated the great selection of interesting red wines for you from all parts of France because of the popularity of this pack last month. We have selected wines that are good for drinking now rather than cellaring although some, like the Fleurie, will benefit from cellaring but we think it is lovely drinking right now!

Philippe Bernard Arbois Pupillin Ploussard Point Barre 2011 – The Point Barre is made from the Poulsard (aka Ploussard) grape and is a light, delicate almost translucent red wine that gives off aromas of red currants, citrus and saddle leather with a touch of cinnamon. There is a purity and silkiness to this wine that makes it quite ethereal. It matches with just about any food you care to think of.

Terres Dorées (Jean-Paul Brun) Fleurie 2010 – This wine is much stronger than the average Fleurie however the berry fruits and cherry fruits are there and the long, lingering, mineral finish is very appealing. This 'cru' Beaujolais is complex, elegant and very drinkable.

Domaine du Moulin Vin de Pays du Loir et Cher Pivoine Rouge 2011 – The Pivoine is an exciting addition to our selection from Herve Villemade's Domaine du Moulin range. Made from 90% Malbec (called Côt in the Loire) and 10% Gamay this wine has had only a little additional sulphur added so it is a fresh, lively expression of the terroir and the Malbec fruit.

Domaine de Causse Marines Vin de France Causse Toujours 1102 – The Causse Toujours is a special cuvee that was created in 2011 because the yield from the Syrah plot was so low that it was not possible to make the Sept Souris which is always made from 100% Syrah. This wine is made from the Syrah which provides silkiness, spice and body and some Prunelart.

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. It is unsulphured.

Sextant Bourgogne Rouge 2011 – This wine belies its humble Bourgogne Rouge tag. It is a silky Pinot with some elegance and structure. The grapes are sourced from Julien's vineyards near the town of Saint Aubin. We like it a lot!

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles of wine is \$230 but the pack price is \$195.50 including freight.

Pack 5: Sparkling Magnum 3 Pack



We love offering these magnum packs because they are ideal if you have a party coming up and want to display generosity of spirit to your guests. People get a real buzz out of being poured a wine from a magnum. It turns an ordinary event into a very special event.

This pack comprises three magnums of sparkling wines from some of our best producers.

Les Capriades Vin de France Rosé Piegé à Filles 2011 – The Rosé Piegé à Filles in the 1.5 litre bottles is a pale pink Pétillant Naturel which is a blend of organic Gamay (approx 90%) and Côt (Malbec) grapes. The wine is made without any dosage (the addition of sugar) and also without the addition of any sulphur. It is possible to detect a tiny bit of residual sugar but it is at a level that makes the drink even more alluring.

Philippe Bornard Vin de Table Pétillant Naturel Rose Tant Mieux NV – This gorgeous, pink sparkling wine made in the Pétillant Naturel style is made from the Ploussard grape. The wine completes its fermentation in the bottle and no sugar is added. Nor is it disgorged so you will find some residual yeast remaining in the bottle. It is very low in alcohol at around 9% and has an appealing residual sweetness.

Jolly Ferriol Vin de France Pet'Nat – This Jolly Ferriol wine which is made in the Pétillant Naturel style and which goes by the name of Pet'Nat, is a beautifully savoury sparkling wine made from 100% Muscat, that white grape so beloved of the Languedoc and Roussillon. This one is a 50-50 blend of Muscat à Petit Grain and Muscat d'Alexandrie. The vines grow in schisty marl soils and the yield is very low at around 20 hectolitres per hectare. The grapes are picked by hand and then vinified naturally in vats for about three weeks. The wine is bottled before fermentation is complete to ensure that the wine is sparkling.

The RRP for this selection of 3 magnums of wine is \$205 but the pack price is \$174.25 including freight.

Pack 6: Mixed Red Magnum 3 Pack



Here is a collection of interesting red wines from three very different areas of France – the Languedoc, Beaujolais and Anjou in the Loire Valley.

Le Temps des Cerises Vin de Table Avanti Popolo 2011 – Avanti Popolo is a lighter style of wine when compared to the Fou du Roi. Named after a revolutionary Italian cry of 'Forward People' this wine made from 100% Carignan looks quite light but has very good depth of flavour. Axel is a fastidious winemaker and refuses to add anything to his wine or take anything out of it. So, no filtering, no fining, no added yeast and no enzymes or sugar. The vines grow on granitic quartz soils and the minerality is pronounced.

Domaine Mosse Anjou Rouge 2010 – The Anjou Rouge 2010 is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc picked from small parcels of old vines (ranging from 30 to 50 years old). This is a pure, vibrant wine that is fresh and lively on the palate and has a lingering finish. There are blackcurrant leaf, tobacco and cocoa notes that linger and a quite complex aroma. The tannins are quite fine and well-integrated. This is an elegant, moorish wine.

Terres Dorées Fleurie 2010 – Everyone who has tried the wines of Jean-Paul Brun has fallen in love with them. This red wine is much stronger than the average Fleurie however the berry fruits and cherry fruits are there, the complex structure is there and the long, lingering, mineral finish is very appealing. This 'cru' Beaujolais is complex, elegant and very drinkable.

The RRP for this selection of 3 magnums of wine is \$194 but the pack price is \$164.90 including freight.

Grape variety: Macabeu

Macabeu (Macabeo) is a white grape found in the Catalan areas of France and Spain particularly in Rioja (where it is called Viura) and the Languedoc-Roussillon region. It is also one of the blending grapes for the Spanish sparkling wine called Cava.

According to Jancis Robinson it is likely from DNA analysis that Macabeu may have as parents an obscure Andalusian grape variety called Hebén and another variety called Brustiano Faux.

The medium-sized grapes grow in tight bunches and possess a firm skin and a light green colour.



Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

The grape is also used in the nearby famous sweet wines of Maury. A winemaker who takes advantage of this grape is Alain Castex of Domaine Casot des Mailloles which is situated near the pretty village of Banyuls sur Mer. He makes a white wine called Castex Tir a Blanc from Grenache Blanc and Macabeu.

And, of course, Jean-Luc from Jolly Ferriol makes a wine from a similar combination of grapes near Perpignan. The name of the wine is 'blablablanc' and it contains both Grenache Gris and Macabeu. The wine undergoes low-temperature vinification in old barrels before being transferred to stainless steel tanks for 6 months prior to bottling.

This wine is available in our New Arrivals six pack this month and also our White Wine six pack.

Appellation: Muscat de Rivesaltes

This appellation was first created in 1956 for the production of vins doux naturels. These are wines where the fermentation is stopped before all the sugar is converted by adding a high-alcohol spirit which kills the remaining living yeasts.

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There are a number of “vins doux naturels” appellations in France including Muscat de Beaumes de Venise in Vaucluse where the grapes used are Muscat à Petits Grains and Muscat d’Alexandrie, Rasteau (also in Vaucluse) where the main grapes used are Grenache Gris and Grenache Blanc and Frontignan, Mireval, Saint-Jean-de-Minervois and Lunel where the grapes must be only Muscat à Petits Grains.

The appellation rules were first promulgated in 1956 and were updated in 2011. As with Muscat de Beaumes de Venise the grapes permitted are Muscat à Petits Grains and Muscat d’Alexandrie.

The level of alcohol in a Rivesaltes Muscat must be higher than 15% and the wine must contain at least 100 grams per litre of sugar.

These are delicious dessert wines or they can be drunk as an aperitif.

A brief history of the term ‘Natural Wine’

We love the term ‘Natural Wine’. Let us explain why. We have always been educators and communicators and always will be. That is why we love writing these long newsletters to explain our wines and what they mean to us. And that is why the term appeals, because it helps people communicate exactly what they mean about a naturally-fermented wine that has been made without additions, except sometimes sulphites, and without anything being taken away from the wine.

When we first came across the term and found that there was a coherent philosophy behind it which coincided closely with our own approach to wine we embraced the term without reservation.

We saw that the term was a shorthand way of explaining exactly what the wine was. When we walked into a restaurant and asked a sommelier if there were any natural wines on their list all sorts of signals came back. It is like a Mason’s handshake. If you use the term, those who are passionate about natural wines respond accordingly.

However if you use a term such as ‘sustainable wine’ then the meaning has been so diluted and so captured by mass producers that it is irrelevant. Every winemaker claims that they are sustainable when many clearly are not.

Once, as we were heading to Hong Kong, a city not known for natural wines, we Googled the following:

“Hong Kong” “Natural Wine”

To our great surprise and delight the search¹ revealed an entry for a new outlet called La Cabane a Vin which promised an array of natural wines from France, many of which we knew and many of which we imported to Australia.

¹ This search still shows La Cabane a Vin in the results except that our Foodtourist.com seems to have taken first place with our entry about this great venue!

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The next day when we arrived and called in there we were immediately immersed in a wonderful tasting of the best France had to offer and were able to buy some iconic natural wines to take to the nearby Chairman restaurant which encourages BYO.

This experience has been repeated in cities from Los Angeles to New York to London, to Paris to Copenhagen and many times in Tokyo.

So we got to thinking about where the term came from, how long it had been used and how it's meaning had changed over time. We know some people don't like the term so we thought that explaining where the term had come from and why it has been used and how the meaning had evolved might help.

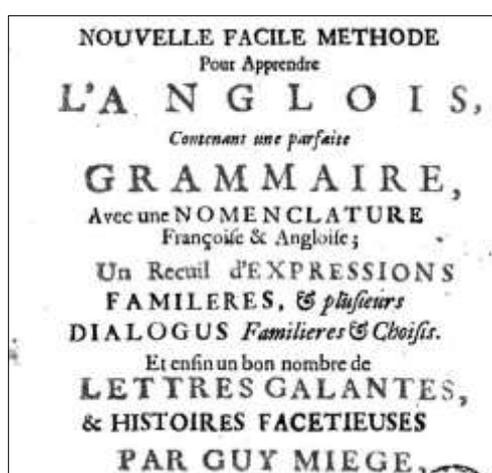
Our previous research and thinking had concentrated on the work of Chauvet in France and the early pioneers of natural wines in Beaujolais.

However, as so often happens we had a serendipitous discovery which showed us that the debate has been going on for many centuries.

What we have found is that the term "natural wine" has been used for many centuries in exactly the same way that it is now used and that exactly the same debates have been raging for the same time over natural wines versus manipulated wines.

We were researching early references to fermentation for a follow up to a decade old article on our Foodtourist.com² website where we looked at the benefits of fermentation for nutrition in food and drinks.

We had searched in Google's old books collection of scanned documents for early references to fermentation to see how widely the art of fermentation was used in Europe. We found a reference to beer and fermentation in a book by Swiss humanist Guy Miege³ who moved to England and published a number of French – English dictionaries towards the end of the 17th century. It was a reference in his Dialogues in the section entitled 'Of the English food'.



The frontispiece from *Nouvelle Méthode Pour Apprendre l'Anglais*

² <http://www.foodtourist.com/FTGuide/Content/14777.htm>

³ Miege, Guy (1685) *Nouvelle Méthode pour apprendre l'Anglais*. Note: First published in 1685 but released a number of times with different names.

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The reference was to beer and how corks were being blown out of bottles due to fermentation in the bottle.

As we read on, the topic changed to wine and that is when it got really interesting. The dialogue is between a French traveller and a Countryman he finds on the road.

It is the first clear discussion we can find about the supposed benefits of natural wine versus manipulated wine which is actually quite astounding.

What was remarkable was his use of the term natural wine within the context of the best way to make wines and expressing disapproval of the techniques used by English winemakers, preferring instead to drink the more common ‘natural wines’.

The French traveller asks about the practice of ‘refining’ wines in England:

I hear the English Vintners refine ‘em too most ingeniously, and they have a great gift that way.

The Countryman shows his distaste for the practice when he replies:

There is doubtless too much of that true, and it is a grievous thing.

However, this Abuse is not so universal, but that one may have plenty of good natural Wine.

Below is an extract from the book showing the last quote in both French and old English.

<i>Mais il n'est pas si universel, que l'on ne trouve assez de Vin naturel.</i>	<i>However, this Abuse is not so universal, but that one may have plenty of good natural Wine.</i>
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The key text in the Miede book

This quote is quite astounding as it attacks the English approach to winemaking which involves ‘refinement’. Many other texts from this period also use the term ‘sophisticated wine’ to refer to wine that has been refined or manipulated.

Notice that the Countryman is saying that refinement is an ‘Abuse’ but luckily it is not so widespread so there is still plenty of natural wine.

We also found another reference in the Google collection using the term “sophisticated wine” as part of our search criteria. The new discovery was one of the most widely used English dictionaries of the eighteenth century which saw some 30 editions being published. This was the Universal Etymological Dictionary by Nathan Bailey⁴ published in 1731 (MDCCXXXI).

In this publication he defined natural wine in the following way:

Natural WINE, is such as it comes from the grape without any mixture or sophistication.

⁴ Nathan Bailey (MDCCXXXI) *A Universal Etymological English Dictionary*. London (2nd Edition). First published in 1721.

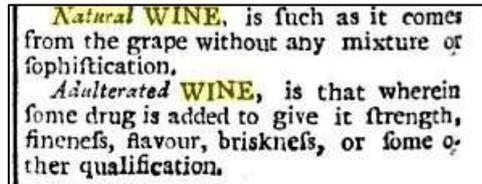
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Here the term sophistication is, once again, used in the same way as the term manipulation suggesting an attempt to make the wine appear ‘nicer’ perhaps by filtering or perhaps by certain additions that were common at the time to sweeten the wine.

He then goes on to define adulterated wine:

Adulterated WINE, is that wherein some drug is added to give it strength, fineness, flavour, briskness, or some other qualifications.

The original text from the book is displayed in the picture below.



The key text in the Bailey dictionary

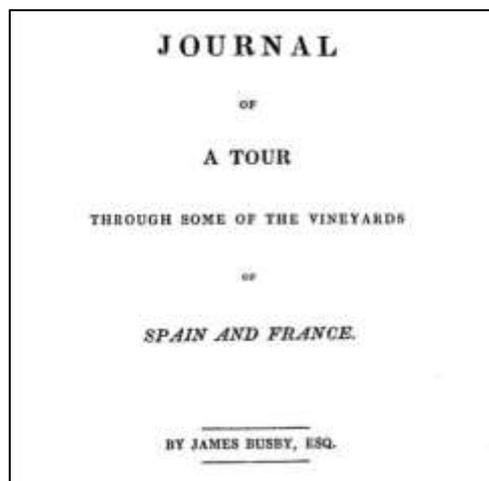
We then went on to find a number of similar references around this time in the early part of the nineteenth century, with the terms natural wine, sophisticated wine and adulterated wine being very common.

We then found another reference from the early nineteenth century through some research we were doing into the first wine book written in Australia.

James Busby was a pioneer of viticulture in the Hunter Valley in New South Wales and wrote possibly the first Australian wine books⁵ at the age of 24.

He also published a book called “A treatise on the culture of the vine and the art of making wine”.

One of the other books he wrote followed a trip he made to Spain and France to study winemaking and viticulture.



The frontispiece from Busby's book

⁵ James Busby (1825) *A treatise on the culture of the vine and the art of making wine*. Sydney.

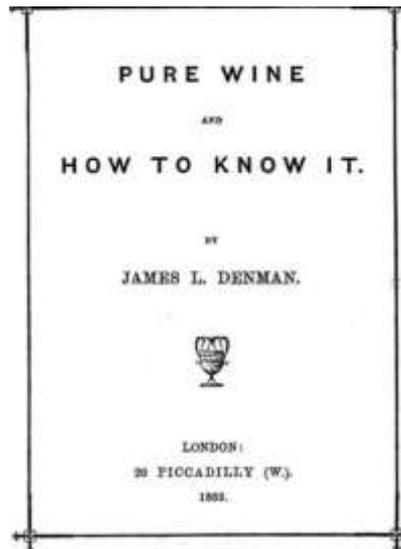
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In this book⁶ he expresses very similar sentiments to those in the references already provided above, namely that natural wine has had exactly the same definition for a very long period of time and that the term itself has maintained its meaning.

Speaking of the exportation of sherry to England on page 26 he says:

“In no case do the exporters send a genuine natural wine – that is, a wine as it comes from the press without a mixture of other qualities.”

In the mid-nineteenth century another book called “Pure Wine and How to Know It” was published by James Denman⁷.



The frontispiece from Busby's book

The Leader said of this book at the time:

Consistently following the course he has so long adopted, Mr. Denman vigorously pleads for natural wines against all those that are in any way sophisticated. The subject is one in which all wine drinkers are deeply concerned, but we strongly recommend to public attention the consideration of Mr. Denman's views as they are set forth in the present handy little volume."

The author describes what he believes to be a natural wine by quoting French author Lebeuf's⁸ work entitled *Nouveau manuel complet de L'Amélioration des Liquides*:

Natural wine is the term applied to the product which contains no other matter than the grape when fermented produces...

Once again we have a definition which is remarkably similar to that which is still used today. However, one of the developments in thinking that we noticed in this book was a reference to the benefits of natural wine. In the following quote the author reflects our thinking about natural wines being less harmful to the drinker:

⁶ James Busby (1833) *Journal of a Tour Through Some of The Vineyards of Spain and France*. Sydney.

⁷ Denman, James. (1869) *Pure Wine and How to Know It*. London.

⁸ Lebeuf, Valentin. (1862) *Nouveau manuel complet de L'Amélioration des Liquides*. Paris.

With the natural wine it is moderated in its effects, so as to exert much less power upon the stomach; and, by consequence, is not anything like as injurious.

Now, even though we have found many other references to natural wines in the 19th Century we will jump to the early 20th Century for another remarkable reference to natural wine.

We never expected to find a discourse about natural wines in the venerable Encyclopaedia Britannica!

In the 1911 edition of the Encyclopaedia there was featured a long article by Philip Schidrowitz who carefully examined wine production at the time. Schidrowitz was a chemist by profession with a prodigious output of papers published in scientific journals on topics ranging from one on an analysis of modern “dry” champagne⁹ to one on compounds of piperidine¹⁰ to many on rubber and its properties. Here is an extended quote from the article:

*One method of assisting nature in wine-making, which is, in the opinion of the author, not justifiable if the resulting product is sold as wine or in such a manner as to indicate that it is natural wine, is the process termed "gallisizing," so called from its inventor H. L. L. Gall, which has been largely practised, particularly on the Rhine. The process of Gall consists in adding sugar and water in sufficient quantity to establish the percentages of free acid and sugar which are characteristic of the best years in the must obtained in inferior years. Although there is no objection to this product from a purely hygienic point of view, **it is not natural wine [our emphasis]**, and the products present in the must other than sugar and acid are by this process seriously affected.*

He then goes on to attack the practice of making wine from dried grapes:

Basis Wines. - Wines which are made not from fresh grape juice but from raisins or concentrated must, or similar material, are generally termed basis wines. They are prepared by adding water to the concentrated saccharine matter and subsequently pitching with wine yeast at an appropriate temperature. Frequently alcohol, tannin, glycerin, and similar wine constituents are also added. If carefully prepared there is no objection to these basis wines from a hygienic point of view, although they have not the delicate qualities and stimulating effects of natural wines; unfortunately, however, these wines have in the past been vended on a large scale in a manner calculated to deceive the consumer as to their real nature, but energetic measures, which have of late been taken in most countries affected by this trade, have done much to mitigate the evil.

⁹ Otto Rosenheim and Philip Schidrowitz (1900) On some analyses of modern “dry” champagne Analyst, 25, 6-9

¹⁰ Otto Rosenheim and Philip Schidrowitz (1898) Compounds of piperidine with phenols J. Chem. Soc. Trans., 73, 139-144

Wine Talk – the newsletter of Living Wines

So the term 'natural wine' has been used for a very, very long time and is not a modern invention. It has been used ever since people began manipulating wine and trying to make it more 'sophisticated' (or is that 'so called sophisticated').

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