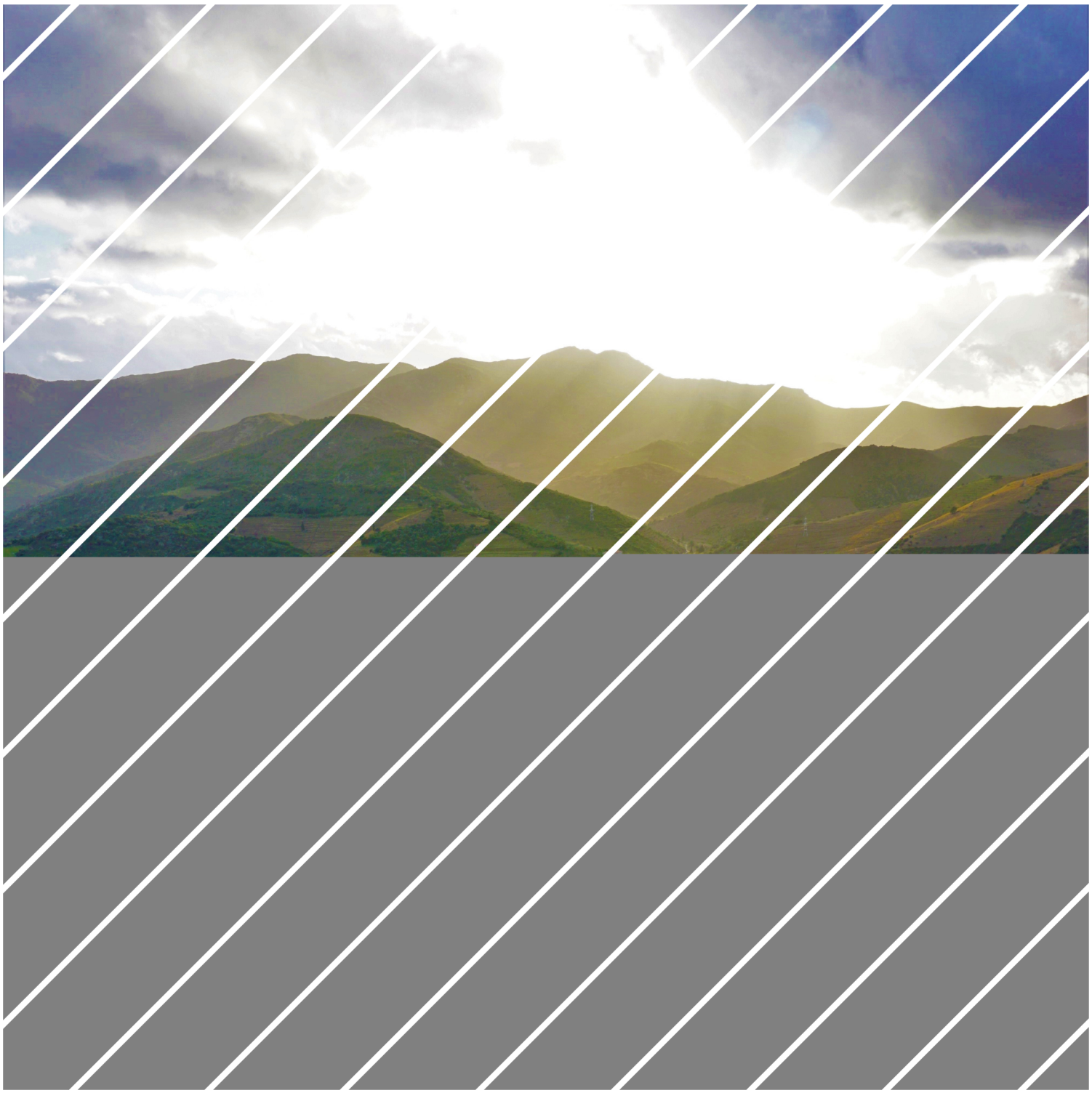
WINE TOURISM
MAG



WINE TOURISM MAG

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005

Cover Image
Michael Mcduff

Editorial
Michael Mcduff Editor
Joanie metivier Head writer

Contributors
Benoît Lefèvre
claude lalonde
Ana Gallegos

Marketing & Advertising
Joanie metivier
contact@joaniemetivier.com

www.winetourismmag.com
contact@joaniemetivier.com

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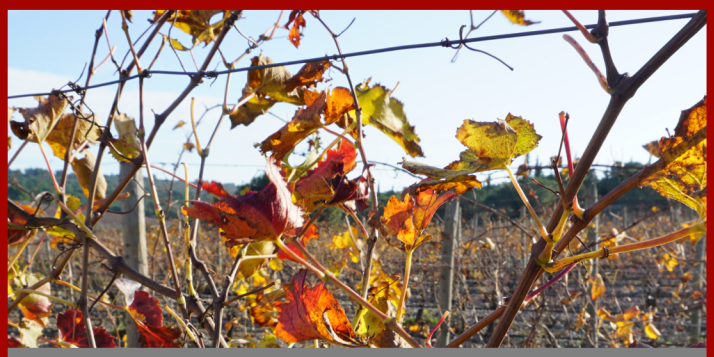
EDITOR'S NOTE

YOUR BRAND IMAGE IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Traditional medias are facing an unprecedented crisis. The era of television advertising is behind us. Who subscribes to cable channel nowadays, no one. If you haven't found the way to
make your product appear on netflix or disney +, you must still manage to make your brand known. In fact, the digital age is against all odds a blessing for producers. They can finally promote their products directly to their target customers instead of paying $ 1 million to appear for a few seconds at the Superbowl. Nowadays, brands are benefiting from creating targeted content on social platforms like Instagram and Facebook. These are free and all accumulated followers will be active consumers who will stay for life. If they don't want to manage their own content, they can do business with agencies like Wine Media. The wave is in motion whether you like it or not, it's up to you to decide if you are going to take advantage of it.

Community based successes are now common, think of iconic brands such as Turley wine cellars, Rajat Parr wine club and its amazing domaine de la côte, Weingut Egon Muller, king or Riesling, Sin Qua Non, MollyDooker, Reverie, Harlan estate, Quilceda Creek, Giacomo Conterno and many more of what we call cult wines. They highly praised and searched for status doesn't come from quality alone, but also from great branding and communication skills.



HIGHLIGHT ON LA CLAPE

Located in the Aude department, AOC La Clape extends from Narbonne to the Mediterranean over an area of 17 kilometers in length and width. It is bordered to the east by the sea, to the west by the low-lying alluvial plains of the Aude and to the south by the lagoons. The highest point is Pech-Redon, at 214m. The massif is characterized by its high cliffs, which dominate the horizon from the sea, and its canyons and valleys covered with pine woods, vineyards and garrigue.

Characterized by small, winding, steep-sided, marly valleys ending abruptly in cliffs on the Mediterranean side, the landscape of La Clape is in stark contrast to the surrounding plains. It's recognized for its outstanding natural beauty and its exceptional fauna and flora. In addition to exceptional environmental challenges, here vines act as natural firebreaks and certain parts of the vineyard have been specially planted with this in mind, as part of a concerted effort.

NEWLY ACQUIRED AOC

If Since 9 June 2015 La Clape has been officially recognized by the National Committee of the INAO and is the first communal appellation in Languedoc that applies to both red and white wines.

The top tier quality communal appellations and these wines are called Cru du Languedoc. La Clape joined this elite set of appellations along with Corbières-Boutenac, Minervois-La-Livinère, Saint-Chinian-Berlou, Saint-Chinian-Roquebrun, Faugères.

Renowned for their iodized character and their Mediterranean accent, the wines of L'AOC La Clape come in two colors. Renowned for the subtlety of its whites, as exuberant as they are of great aromatic finesse, there is also a beautiful palette of red wines, the most fond styles of which rub shoulders with those most imbued with density and body. A complexity that makes you want to taste them.

THE MASSIF IS CHARACTERIZED BY ITS HIGH CLIFFS, WHICH DOMINATE THE HORIZON FROM THE SEA.

FEATURED BEST WINE TOURSIM REGION

STONES

In the local Occitan language, La Clape translates as “a pile of stone,” but it is a very special collection of stone. Until the thirteenth century, La Clape was an island and completely disconnected from the French coast. Over many centuries, alluvial deposits from the Pyrenees and the Sea accumulated to attach it to the mainland.La Clape actually borrows its name from the massif that forms a barrier between the Mediterranean and Narbonne. The landscape is an undulating combination of limestone plateaus and deep ravines. At its highest point, it reaches 214 meters (700 feet) above sea level and offers a spectacular view that takes in the plain of Narbonne, the beaches and the inlets. On a clear day you might even see the Pyrenees Mountains, which are the natural frontier with Spain.

The outrageous limestone cliffs are quite a sight when traveling around La Clape. These imposing mass make a surreal contrast with the scruffy vegetation below.

FLAMINGOS

There is a clear marine influence, as a result of the area's coastal location and its proximity to the various ponds (coastal lagoons) that line the southern Languedoc-Roussillon coast. These have become famous for their resident flamingo populations. This is about as far from the Equator as flamingos live (although some spend the summer in the lagoons of Venice in Italy, slightly further north than Narbonne), confirming just how warm the climate is here. Around half of these flamingos remain here, even during the winter months.

A MOST ENTICING INTERVIEW WITH ANDREA SARTORI, PRESIDENT OF THE CONSORZIO TUTELA VINI VALPOLICELLA

By Claude Lalonde

During my most recent trip to Italy, I had the pleasure of visiting the Sartori di Verona vineyard in Valpolicella. I took the opportunity to see Andrea Sartori, owner and one of the most influential figures in the field of wine in Italy currently president of the Consorzio Tutela Vini Valpolicella.

Photos credit: Consorzio Tutela Vini Valpolicella

1

THE LAST TIME WE MET, YOU SAID THAT YOU HAD AN IMPORTANT MEETING WITH THE CONSORZIO AND THAT YOU WANTED TO PROPOSE QUITE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN TERMS OF QUALITY, DEVELOPMENT. WHAT HAPPENED SINCE?

We proposed several things which were finally accepted and all the procedures were formalized by Rome. Among other things, we wanted to increase the quality of the Ripasso by ensuring that a minimum of 10 % of the Amarone must was used during the alcoholic fermentation of the Ripasso. The settlement now is 10 to 15%. You have the choice. We also implanted a 3 year moratorium on any new planting.

2

THE CURRENT VOLUME COMES MAINLY FROM AMARONE AND RIPASSO WINES, WHERE DO YOU SEE THE GREATEST DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL?

If we look at volume currently, we sell around 60 million bottles worldwide. Approximately 15 million bottles are Amarone, 27 - 28 million are labeled as Ripasso and the rest, which combines Valpolicella Classico, Superiore and others, represents approximately 17 million bottles. Sales of Amarone and Ripasso performed very well with increases of 7 to 8 % and sales of Valpolicella had a little more difficulty. In fact, since the beginning of the year, we've lost 5 % to 6 % and perhaps in the best of scenarios we'll end the year with no growth at all.

Valpolicella is victim of its own success with Amarone and Ripasso. Consequently, the majority of our efforts will go towards supporting Amarone, not only for economic reasons, but also for the image of the region. It is a standard bearer just like Barolo and Brunello. I think we have to work even harder with this appellation. Amarone is distributed in more than 80 countries. However, not all countries are performing as they should. Sales in Canada are going very well, but the United States is not performing as it should.

You know, Ripasso is a unique wine with a unique history and we see a lot of potential in it. Theoretically, it could be of better quality. I'm not saying that we shouldn't put effort into other Valpolicella wines. Not too long ago, about 25 years ago, we made very simple Valpolicella wines that were mostly entry-level wines. So the success of the Amarone and the Ripasso is quite recent.

As for Valpolicella, some say that production should be limited. I think there is room for a good Valpolicella. We are in competition with Chianti wines which make simple wines too, wines from Australia and other countries which are in the same price levels. I don't think we should give up with Valpolicella wines.

3

I SEE SEVERAL COUNTRIES THAT USE THE APPASSIMENTO METHOD. HOW DO YOU REACT TO THIS SITUATION?

As for the appassimento method, many of us use different variations. The idea behind it was to create another segment. Finally, I believe that instead of creating a segment, we are cannibalizing Ripasso sales in certain markets.

In the world, we identify this method with our region and vice versa. We have seen several producers from other regions or countries use this appassimento method with some success. So we run two risks. Lose this regional identification of the appassimento method and cannibalize the sales of Ripasso which is going very well.

4

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN VALPOLICELLA? WHAT IS GOING ON WITH THE RESEARCH IN ITALY OF A SINGLE LABEL THAT IDENTIFIES THESE ORGANIC AND OTHER SUSTAINABLE WINES?

We've asked the government to bring order to all efforts . There are too many individuals. They're aiming for the same goal, but it's a total mess right now. We currently have 5 to 6 different protocols. In Valpolicella we practice the 3 '' R '' (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) which is quite restrictive. We also have the SQNPI (Integrated Crop Management National Quality System) which is less restrictive. There are also Equalitas, Tergeo, Ecocert, Demeter, etc.

We are asking the government to identify and define a single concept, unite producers behind clear specifications and work out how to put it in place. Our requests are very clear on this. I don't know when it will happen, but then, we will have a common policy and a common identification method in our communication.

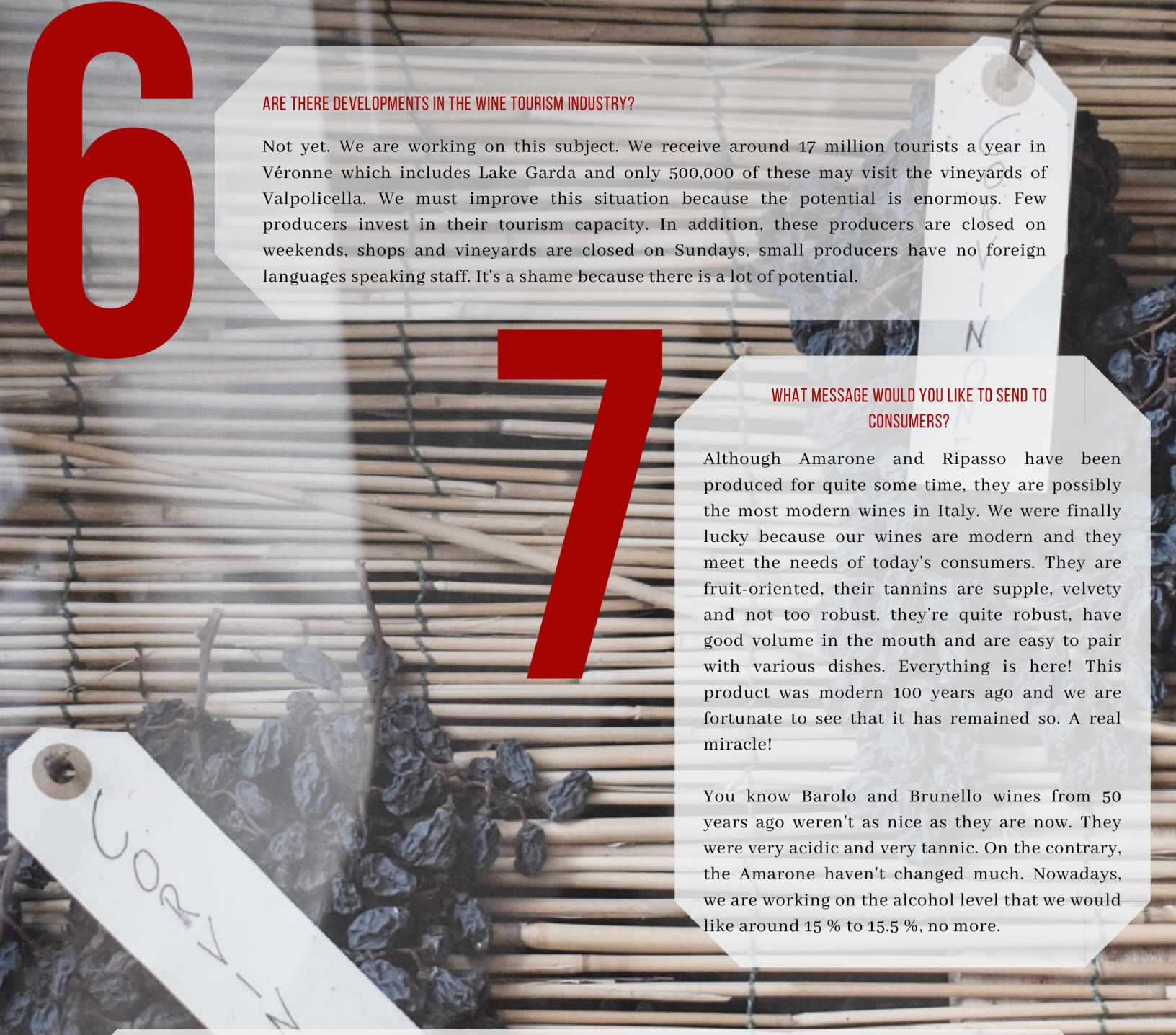
All existing labels are good, going in the right direction, but with different levels of restrictions. The government must therefore decide. Unfortunately, the government changes frequently. I was recently in Rome to meet the new minister. She's a lady from Puglia who has been in charge of the ministry for 2 months and I don't know how long she will be there. Political changes are one of the problems in Italy.

5

AS PRESIDENT OF THE CONSORZIO TUTELA VINI VALPOLICELLA, WHAT ARE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGES?

The biggest challenge is to manage a large number of producers. There are around 300 producers with very different mentalities, from the very small vineyard producing from 20 to 30,000 bottles to the largest producing in the millions of bottles as well as several very important cooperatives. The latter sometimes do not have well-defined development strategies and can produce wines that are not well aligned with our long-term strategy. Their priority is often to be ready for the next vintage and to have the capacity to do so. They can ballast their products in the market at particularly low prices. This is a reality that we have to deal with. Such an attitude dos not help the region to move forward. We cannot adequately develop the image of the region with products that do not meet our quality criteria.

Some Amarone developed by these cooperatives can be found in 'discount store' at defying prices loke 9.90 euros.



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ARE THERE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE WINE TOURISM INDUSTRY?

Not yet. We are working on this subject. We receive around 17 million tourists a year in Véronne which includes Lake Garda and only 500,000 of these may visit the vineyards of Valpolicella. We must improve this situation because the potential is enormous. Few producers invest in their tourism capacity. In addition, these producers are closed on weekends, shops and vineyards are closed on Sundays, small producers have no foreign languages speaking staff. It's a shame because there is a lot of potential.

7

WHAT MESSAGE WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEND TO CONSUMERS?

Although Amarone and Ripasso have been produced for quite some time, they are possibly the most modern wines in Italy. We were finally lucky because our wines are modern and they meet the needs of today's consumers. They are fruit-oriented, their tannins are supple, velvety and not too robust, they're quite robust, have good volume in the mouth and are easy to pair with various dishes. Everything is here! This product was modern 100 years ago and we are fortunate to see that it has remained so. A real miracle!

You know Barolo and Brunello wines from 50 years ago weren't as nice as they are now. They were very acidic and very tannic. On the contrary, the Amarone haven't changed much. Nowadays, we are working on the alcohol level that we would like around 15 % to 15.5 %, no more.

The climate has changed drastically in recent years. It's not easy to lower alcohol levels with these changes. It's so hot. We have to follow the vine cycle and the level of maturity of the grapes. We now need to irrigate the vines from time to time and plant at higher elevation levels like 300 - 400 meters. Even if we have a 3 year moratorium on any new planting, you can transplant at a higher altitude. However, you cannot increase your number of hectares of vines. We have approx 8,500 hectares of vines and this figure will remain stable for the next 3 years.

Finally, we have to become "smarter marketers" what we have to learn from the French. We need to focus on the Asian markets because they have a lot of potential and opportunities. Italian wines in China only have around 6 to 6.5 % market share. In addition, I don't believe we are doing the maximum to promote our region and ourselves the producers. We're still volume oriented, we're not very brand oriented, we have to improve our labels and packaging which are sometimes very simple and too traditional and we should have more brand ambassadors.

It is difficult for us to add value to our products, to our brands. I believe the level of quality is there. It's not a question of changing the product and our technology is definitely at the forefront. Everything is aligned for success. We need to better add value to our products and our proposal.

– CONEGLIANO VALDOBBIADENE PROSECCO SUPERIORE –

UNIQUE SPARKLING HERITAGE AND OUTSTANDING LANDSCAPES

BY JOANIE METIVIER

Among sparkling in the world, there are a few bright, shining stars. Yet, one has managed to shine the brightest and succeeded in becoming one of the most sought out for wine in the world: Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG. With its distinguished characteristics, its dedication to the region's heritage and accessible approach, it's truly a gem for wine lovers.

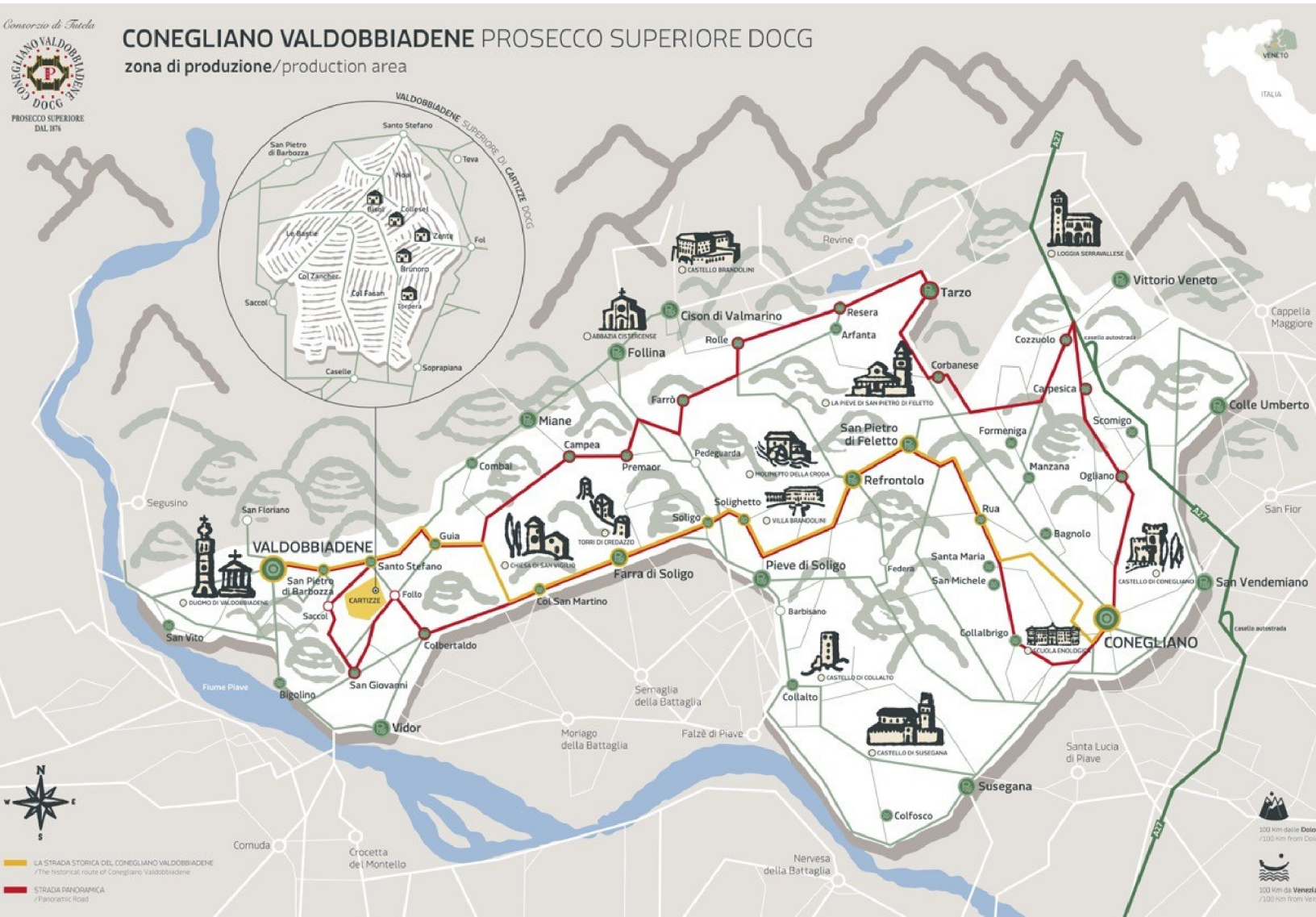
The thing is Prosecco is often used to describe Italian sparkling wine in general. We shouldn't forget that the Prosecco world is intricate and complex. Not all Prosecco are born the same. What you want is a quality focused Prosecco, one that can truly embody the region's potential and express the style with elegance. The first thing to look for is the DOCG mention. Basically, in Italy, a DOCG (Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita) Is the highest form of recognition an appellation can get. Then, you want your Prosecco to come from a unique place, with a dreamlike landscape, that has earned UNESCO World Heritage accreditation. Look for Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore.

"After a ten-year long nomination process, in 2019 Prosecco Hills of Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore was awarded UNESCO recognition as a World Heritage Site due to its unique and ancient cultivation and landscape. Winemaking in the region dates back to 1772. That's 247 years of tradition and heritage!

The area of Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore lies in the countryside, situated 50 km from Venice and 100 km from the Dolomites. Here vine-growing has extremely ancient origins.

This winemaking region is considered one-of-a-kind because vines are planted on a series of hills with narrow ridges and steep slopes with a hogback appearance. This makes mechanized harvest impossible. All the grapes must be picked by hands and treasured deeply. Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore D.O.C.G. is parted between thousands of small producers, often families that've been growing grapes for generations on their own land. This century old tradition won't be lost anytime soon.

That's for sure!The highest point of the hill is Superiore Di Cartizze, a small plot of land of 107 hectares in the commune of Valdobbiadene divided by hundreds of growers. They produce only a million bottles per year. It is known as the best expression possible.



THE WINE

Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore is the original growing area for Prosecco. It's a region that is more limited, but also very strict about the quality and styles of their sparkling wines. Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG is often considered a guarantee of top quality and highest standards in the vineyard and winery, as well as concentrated flavour and balance.

Prosecco is a versatile wine produced in fully sparkling (spumante) and lightly sparkling (frizzante) styles. It can be found with different levels of sweetness, from the driest (Extra Brut) to the sweetest (Dry). The sweetness of the wine will affect its style tremendously.

While extra brut Prosecco Superiore will show great tension and linearity, Dry Prosecco Superiore will be rounded with intense richness and a completely different aromatic profile.

Glera is the main grape varietal and the one that is almost exclusively linked to the fantastic Prosecco sparkling wines. Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore is produced from at least 85% of grapes of the Glera variety; no more than 15% of the following local varieties may be added: Verdiso, Bianchetta, Perera and Glera Lunga. Still, only local grape varietals are allowed and Glera still rule as king of them all.

The method of production is called Italian Method or Charmat method or Cuve closed or Mariotti method. It consists of a second fermentation in pressurized vats called autoclaves. Keep in mind that wines from the 2019 vintage and forward will now be allowed to use the term "Sui Lieviti" ("On the Lees/Yeasts). This will designate sparkling wines that have been refermented in bottle. A new style that pays tribute to a traditional style to try out and keep an eye out for.

CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EU REGULATION NO. 1308/2013

The flavors and aromas are often light and delicate. These are two of the distinctive aspects of Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore. Aromas may include fresh flowers, tangy citrus fruits, orchard fruits, mineral-driven and the very distinctive green almond. Overall, Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG are wines of great sensation that are extremely versatile with food.

Conegliano Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore is an ancient tradition that was perfectly suited to our contemporary world and taste. This is why it became so popular, even if it's not always understood; it's always loved and appreciated.

CONEGLIANO VALDOBBIADENE DOCG
PROSECCO SUPERIORE DAL 1876

CAMPAGNA FINANZIATA AI SENSI DEL REG. UE N. 1308/2013
CAMPAIGN FINANCED ACCORDING TO EU REG. N. 1308/2013

DISCOVER THE WORLD OF GÉRARD BERTRAND

by Joanie Metivier

Setting : Château l'Hospitalet in Narbonne.
Occasion : One of the most important time of the year in the vineyards, the pruning, getting the vines ready for their dormancy winter period.

The pruning and truffles festival happens every year, in mid-December. Over 300 journalists, friends, clients, commercials and lucky participants gather for the occasion, and share a lovely truffle-inspired gala dinner in the beautiful scenery that offer the Château l'Hôspitalet hotel, restaurant & surrounding vineyards. Of course, it's a great, privileged event, but for me, it was mostly the occasion to discover a region that is under-appreciated and often disregarded: Languedoc-Roussillon. Tourism in the south of France is a hit during summer. Just look at any beach during high season, and you'll understand the popularity this sunny region's get. However, most of these suntan savvy folks are not even aware of the luxurious, prestigious and gorgeous estates that would be happy to welcome them. Get off the beach for a second and get touring, you might just end up understanding the rich culture and unique character of a place.

Owner of 15 estates with exemplary profiles, Gérard Bertrand is the ambassador of fine wines of Languedoc-Roussillon around the world, tirelessly promoting the enchanting terroir located between the ancient Roman city of Narbonne and the Mediterranean Sea. Known for its success story, fame and most of all as one of the godfather of biodynamics principles, for which he was one of the first to extend to a voluminous production, Gérard Bertrand is one exceptional character that has done so much for the regions image with his quest to bring out the best in terroirs from his region and promote them worldwide.

CHÂTEAU L'HOSPITALET

AOC La Clape

Located between land and sea, Château l'Hospitalet is the jewel of the Languedoc-Roussillon. It's a charming hotel nestled in the middle of seemingly endless rows of grape vines, in the adorable town of Narbonne. From certain hills around the property, you can actually catch a glimpse of the Mediterranean, and all of the surroundings. This is the estate where all the touristic efforts are condensed. Gerard Bertrand, godfather of biodynamic viticulture, is also an ambassador of the French Art de Vivre. It was important for him to welcome guests for a full hospitality and Gourmet experience. We asked him to explain what wine tourism means at Château L'Hospitalet.

"Each of our estates have their assets, their specificity, both in terms of their terroir, grape varieties and blends, strategy and positioning. So, they each have their individuality. The guaranty is that the signature is identical, but we put forward the name of the estate rather than the Gérard Bertrand signature. Each estate has its own individuality; all the wines are harvested, vinified, aged, and bottled in each estate. They have their own team, but there's also a general director, an assistant director, a research and development director and a director dedicated only to biodynamics. We have a common vision of precision in the viticultural gesture and after, each director has his own autonomy, he knows the terroir better than anyone because he lives on it. I tell them, the vineyards doesn't belong to me, in fact, it belongs to you more than to me. During the harvest, I'm there every day, but the rest of the year I visit only once a month.

At Château l'Hospitalet, the previous owner had already installed a new concept in 1991, it wasn't called wine tourism yet, but "Tourisme-Vigneron", winemaker Tourism. The idea was to welcome people, with a museum, visits, a wine route; it was quite innovative at L'Hospitalet. When we took over in 2002, we decided to refocus this on wine, gastronomy and wine tourism.

We've simplified the offer to have the same wine all over the world. The influence and developement of Château l'Hospitalet started as soon as we had the Grand vin, the reserve and the parcel wine which is l'Hospitalitas. We redid the hotel and the restaurant, but we kept the original idea, at the time they had a wine buffet. The wines were included in the meal, but since they only had one estate, the offer was rather mundane. We give customers the benefit of all of our 15 estates, we have 24 wines available by the glass, and that allows people to taste and try to have a different approach. On top of that we have our wine list with old vintages and everything.

We also renovated the hotel, going from 20 rooms to 39. We have just taken over the Mas du Solaia too, the house next door, we are going to make 12 additional rooms with a spa and everything. The idea is to continue to ramp up, and to have a complete offer. We are thinking about what we are going to do and how we are going to do it. The destination in the south of France is the ideal destination. For us, it is important to receive people and beyond that, to have a 360 customer experience: wine, gastronomy, the culture of the region and art in all its forms. We have exhibitions every two months, and basically we try to be active."

-- GÉRARD BBERTRAND"

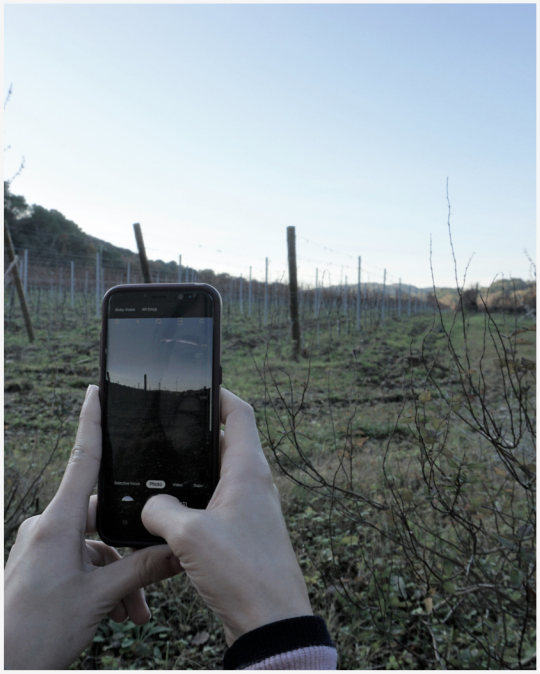
CLOS D'ORA

AOC Minervois La Livinière

In 2000, Gérard Bertrand wanted to isolate the vineyards of Clos d'ora. Why? Because he found that the duality between the two terroir was quite unique. This geological crossing zone between limestone & Marl offered a perfect basis to a great wine. The first vintage took place in 2014.

The first limestone terroir holds one parcel of old Carignan (50 years old), another one of Mourvèdre ideally protected from the winds, and Grenache on dryer areas. The second clay-made, rockier terroir has much more mediterranean influence, holds the backbone of the wine, the syrah as well as some Grenache cooled down by the Black Mountain influence.

The site itself is of a natural beauty, an amphitheater of vineyards, with a very gentle slope, completely isolated, with the Mediterranean on one side, and the fresh breath of the Black Mountain on the other. The team is proud of their vineyard and their vines, with the utmost respect for the place, even Vanina the mule is treated like part of the family.



CHÂTEAU LA SOUJEOLE

AOC Malepère

This region, the smallest in Languedoc with only 500 total ha, extends from the Canal du Midi in the North, as far as the Aude in the east. The most western Languedoc appellation surrounds the wooded massif of Malepère, from the gates of Carcassonne to Limoux and as far as Lauragais. This small and exclusive wine-growing region is known for its rocky grounds ("bad stones", "mal pierre"), as well as its Bordeaux blends signature.

Château la Sougeole was the last estate to join Gérard Bertrand's world in 2015. It could be considered as the Mediterranean answer to Bordeaux. The oceanic climate with Mediterranean overflow has more humidity than other regions. It is being controlled with horsetail and nettle treatment.

CIGALUS

IGP Aude-Hauterive

This is where the first biodynamic experiences took place. Gérard Bertrand purchased the estate in 1995. Fervent believer of homeopathy, he decided to apply similar solutions to his vineyards, through biodynamics. Cigalus is Gerard Bertrand's family home, he wanted an harmony and a quality of life only a respectful link with the vineyard and the land could provide. The first steps towards biodynamic process took place on a few hectares in Cigalus in 2002. Now, all of the 15 estates are ongoing a gradual, but almost complete conversion.

DOMAINE DE L'AIGLE

AOC Limoux

Domaine de l'Aigle 47 hectares are set in high altitude (between 250 and 500 metresabove sea level), where the resulting coolness of the climate and the terroir gives the wine a completely different style. It's situated under the cliff of Roquetaillade, a nesting site for a protected species, the eagles of Bonelli to whom the estate owes its name. Known for their sparkling wines, the Limoux AOC offers a perfect setting for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir to thrive. Gérard Bertrand bought the Domaine de l'Aigle in 2007 with the ambition to reveal the outstanding potential of those world-famous varieties, within a terroir that is perfectly suited for them.

I had the chance to taste the Aigle Royal Pinot noir 2011, which was in Gérard Bertrand's terms: "The best vintage to date, it was like the holy jesus came and took care of everything for us." It was a defining moment for me as I had no expectation at all, and was speechless from the elegance of the aromatic profile and the richness of the taste.

CHÂTEAU DE VILLEMAJOU

AOC Corbières Boutenac

Formerly a roman villa, Villamajou is also Georges Bertrand's, Gérard's father, estate. He had the chance to live his first harvest at 10 years old; it was the start of a lifelong passion. Villemajou stands in the center of the Boutenac Cru. The very specificity of the cru, with its harsh climate, pebbly soils (Galets roulés) and rich old vines of Carignan, has granted an AOC status in 2005.

CHÂTEAU LAVILLE-BERTROU

AOC Minervois-la Livinière

In the same appellation as Clos d'Ora, it was purchased in 1997, a few years before la Livinière was granted its AOC status. Of course, now, la Livinière is known for its specificity and is even widely recognized for the concentration and terroir driven expression of its wines. The 75 hectares of vineyards are split into numerous plots, separated by dry-stone walls. The parcel wine Le Viala comes from a small parcel of land at Château Laville Bertrou. It's the perfect example of the strength and power these wines can get.

4 MONOS

A FAVORITE IN THE SIERRA DE GREDOS

By Benoit Lefèvre

THE PROJECT OF 4 FRIENDS

4 Monos started as the project of 4 friends, Javier Garcia, Laura Robles, David Velasco and David Moreno. "4 Monos" literally means "four monkeys" in Spanish. It's an expression we use to talk about people who haven't accomplished anything yet, in short, who don't take themselves seriously. This is to say the modesty with which the four friends started their project.

I met Laura Robles on a trip to Madrid and had the chance to visit the vineyards of the estate with her. 4 Monos now has four hectares of vines, all cultivated organically. They also source from several other winegrowers who share the same philosophy (representing an additional 6 hectares of vines). The estate also uses certain cultural practices drawn from biodynamics.

4 Monos is an estate located in Cadalso de los Vidrios, a small village an hour's drive west of Madrid, in the mountainous Sierra de Gredos region. The Sierra de Gredos is a mountainous wine region, straddling three appellations of origin, DO Méntrida, DO Vinos de Madrid, and DO Castilla y León. Its unique concentration of old vines, mostly Grenache, its sandy and granite soils make this unique terroir one of the most promising wine regions in Spain.

A UNIQUE TERROIR

I was struck by the beauty of the vineyards that I discovered, dotted with olive and almond blossoms and surrounded by mountains. 4 Monos produced its first vintage in 2009. It was a harvest of Albillo, an indigenous white grape variety that had long since been forgotten, and which has regained some of its nobility today. The harvest unfortunately started a little late and 4 Monos then decided to produce a dessert wine. Therefore, the first real vintage marketed dates from 2010. In 2016, the estate produced around 30,000 bottles, which is a fairly confidential production. The vineyards of 4 Monos are located in two municipalities: San Martín de Valdeiglesias and Cadalso de los Vidrios. San Martin is a fairly warm area, with a rather Mediterranean climate, on rather coarse granitic and sandy soils, which give rustic wines, with rather high alcohol levels, but with a nice minerality.

The old Grenache vines are 80 years old and more than 800 meters above sea level. Cadalso, meanwhile, at an even higher altitude, is a 60-year-old Grenache vineyard on a much finer sandy soil, which produces more elegant wines, with more fruit. According to Laura, there is almost no earth there, almost only rock.

ALBILLO, AN UNLOVED WHITE GRAPE VARIETY

4 Monos produces mainly red, but also cultivates a little Albillo (or Albillo real), a white grape variety native to the region (0.6 hectare). It is said to be a very old grape variety which survived the Arab occupation in the region, when at that time most of the vines were uprooted to plant table grapes.

Albillo is very difficult to grow, with very late maturity. The vine is very low, with many ramifications. It also offers very low yields with only 900 to 1,000 kilos of grapes per hectare. Albillo production in 2015 did not exceed 900 bottles! It should not be confused with albillo mayor, cultivated in the Ribera del Duero region, which is a completely different grape variety. Albillo often produces rather oily wines with little acidity. So it's not easy to get good results from this grape! 4 Monos also grows a little carignan and syrah.

4 MONOS WINES

4 Monos produces one white and 4 reds. The white is obviously a 100% albillo, from almost hundred-year-old vines! The wine is aged in 3rd or 4th use oak barrels for around 10 months. It is a wine that smells good of almonds and white flowers, with a very oily mouth, and very little acid. I often tend to find wines that lack acidity a bit flat. And yet in this case, it is not disturbing. The wine is therefore rather atypical, which will take you out of your comfort zone, but which I personally liked very much. Very original and probably very versatile too. Laura suggested I try it on grilled vegetables.

4 Monos produces four red wines. A blend of Syrah and Grenache and a 100% natural-style carignan (less than 7 g of sulfur), which I did not taste. The two other wines, La Danza del Viento and La Isilla are the two best cuvées, from old Grenache vines. Danza comes from the San Martín de Valdeiglesias vineyard and La Isilla from Cadalso de Los Vidrios. Both wines are made from grapes from low temperature fermentation, then aged between 12 and 13 months in barrels of 300 to 500 liters. I only tasted the La Danza del Viento cuvée, a wine with a pretty floral nose. Powerful with well-marked tannins, while having a nice freshness. Still too young, however, you'll have to give him time to settle down!

Suffice to say that I loved the time I spent with Laura. I felt that she and her associates are real enthusiasts and lovers of the region.Their wines are excellent and they have only been making wine for a few years, so 4 Monos is definitely an area to watch closely! Just like the Sierra de Gredos region, its almost 100-year-old Grenache vines with improbable shapes and breathtaking landscapes!

VILLA DU TAUR

PERFECT ESCAPE IN TOULOUSE HISTORIC CENTER

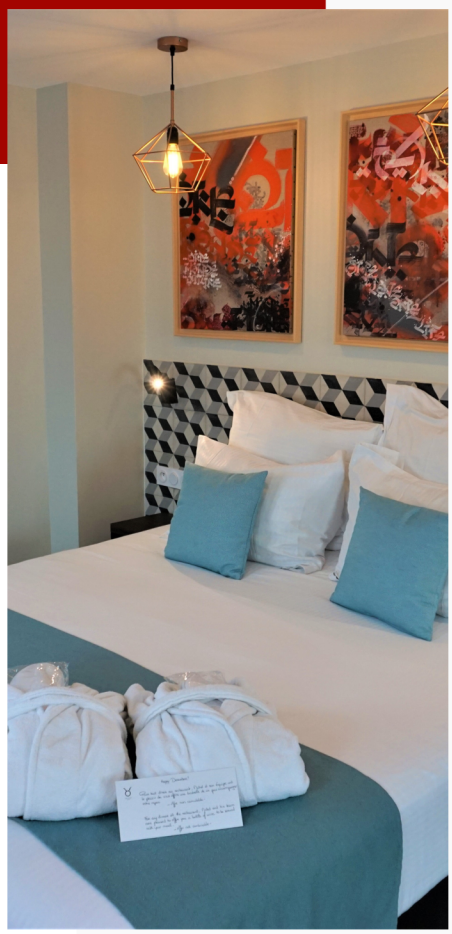
By Joanie Metivier·

Toulouse is all too often overlooked, but it's one of France's most historic and fascinating cities. Toulouse is a wonderful destination that hides many surprises. The city hosts a rich architectural heritage and a unique modest character. Its magical pink brick stone buildings is the source of its romantic nickname "la ville rose" and you don't need to stroll long to understand. Toulouse is filled with surprises, from monuments to quaint small private dooryard, it's like every time you turn a corner there's a cute little street to discover.

The other advantage is that, even if the city is the 4th largest in France with 400 000 residents, the city center is quite small. You can reach any important sight-seeing spot within minutes as long as your lodging is well-situated, like Villa du Taur. It's a few steps away from the iconic Saint-Sernin Basilica, the Capitole place, the Pont-Neuf and everything else. After all, the best way to enjoy Toulouse is by foot.

VILLA DU TAUR

With its Boutique hotel character and modern design, Villa du Taur offers bright rooms decorated with custom-made furniture and colourful pops of modern art, graphic prints & street art inspired pieces. With its 17 specially designed rooms, it's a chic and modern address that opened its doors after major renovations in April 2016. They've decided to keep the iconic pink brick outside, for a complete Toulousain experience. The art is truly at the center stage of the hotel, with local artists such as RESO and MONDÉ as well as international artists and works to discover featured in the restaurant Sixty-Two.



SIXTY -TWO

EITHER IN THE ART-FILLED DINING ROOM OR THE CITY TERRACE OUTSIDE, A SECRET GREEN SPOT FILLING THE ALLEY NEXT TO THE HOTEL, YOU CAN SATISFY YOUR HUNGER IN STYLE. THE SEASONAL MENU USE LOCALLY SOURCED PRODUCTS WITH CREATIVE & TRADITIONAL FLAVORS MIXED. EXPECT FRENCH CLASSIC CUISINE WITH SOME SORT OF TWIST, AFFORDABLE AND TASTEFUL. WE APPRECIATED THE ARTISAN BREAD SERVED WITH HOMEMADE CLASSIC TAPENADE AND THE ATTENTIVE CARE & SERVICE THROUGHOUT THE MEAL.

EMILE BEYER

THE WINERY THAT IS MAKING ALSACE COOL AGAIN

BY ANA GALLEGOS

Located in northeast of France between the Vosges Mountains and the Rhine River, Alsace is something of a hidden treasure that seems to be plagued with a perpetual identity crisis, it's a cultural mishmash of French and German, having been part of both nations. In 1870, it was passed, as a trophy of war, from France to Germany, back to France in 1918, fell to Germany in 1940 before being restored to France in 1945.

Most town and family names sound distinctively Germanic. And it shares many of its native grape varieties (Riesling, Gewürtztraminer and Sylvaner, to name a few) with its neighbors to the northeast, even the bottles share the same fluted shape.

Personally, I think that Alsace is a region whose wines are not exactly at the peak of wine fashion these days, aging Baby Boomer generation who are drinking less for health reasons and millennials who are super health-conscious stays away from wines with some residual sugar, and most people mistakenly associate Alsace with sweet wines, that's a shame because curious and discerning wine drinkers are missing out on a good thing.

More than any wine region, Alsace offers the conscientious winemaker the opportunity to combine the unique sweet/crisp contradiction of the grape with the slatey minerality of the soil for quite unique and utterly distinctive wines. They represent wonderful value, a terrific step up the quality/cost curve, and they can age splendidly.

During my trip to Alsace I had the opportunity to visit several areas as well as participate in a tasting that allowed me to discover some of the best wines produced in this wine region. This is however only representative of the Eguisheim region in which I received a warm and personalized welcome by Valérie and Christian Beyer.

Emile Beyer is a family estate located in the heart of the Alsace wine region. The family Beyer has been an important part of the wine business in Colmar for many centuries, and has been in the village since the late 1500's. The firm of Emile Beyer is under the guidance of Christian Beyer, who represents the 14th generation of the Beyer Family of wine growers in the charming village of Eguisheim.

Located just outside of Colmar, Eguisheim was the birthplace of viticulture in Alsace. The region is a mosaic composed of chalky marl, sandstone and clay in varying proportions from one plot to the next. The Beyer family has historically been established in the Grands Crus of Pfersigberg and Eichberg, which today represent a third of the surface area of vines planted. In their immediate vicinity are the lieux-dits Premiers Crus Hohrain, Sundel and Saint Jacques, the majority of the plots are mainly located on the limestone slopes.

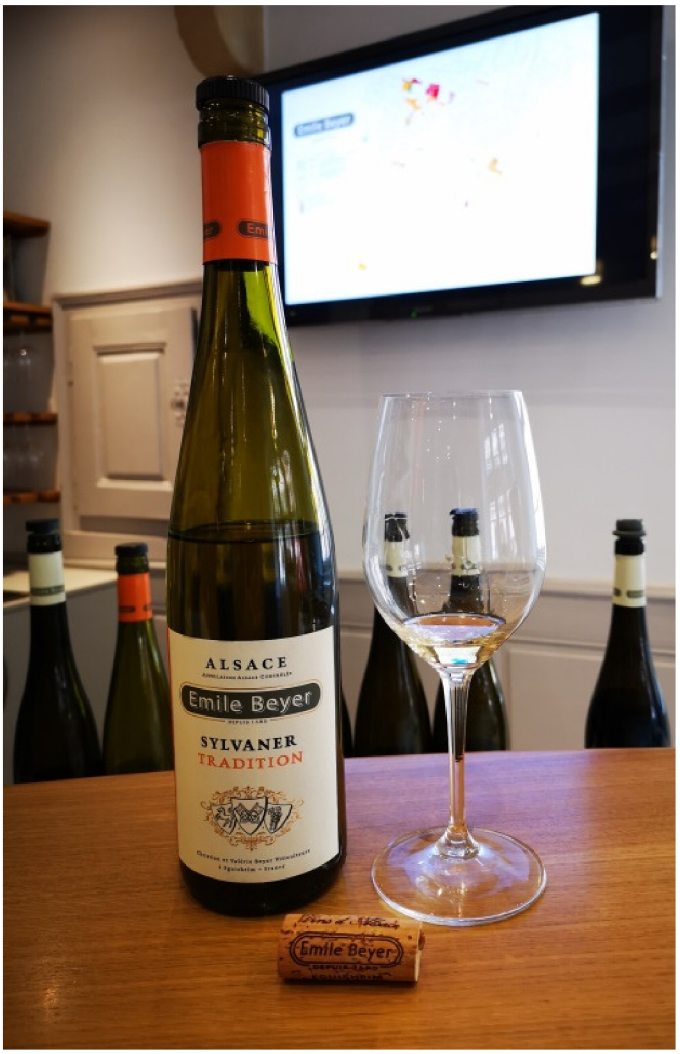
Today, Christian Beyer together with his wife Valérie, oversee and safeguard the destiny of the estate, they invests heavily in quality and environmentally friendly viticulture with the first steps towards biodynamics in 2016. The experience that Emile Beyer has acquired over generations enables the domaine to classify its wines by the grape varietal and also by quality, according to the location of the vines.

From the harvest 2009, the winery is located just outside the center of the village in modern and spacious premises. Today Christian Beyer combines traditional techniques and progressiveness to produce wines of great character and very high class.

Hidden treasure:

2018 Sylvaner Tradition:

Medium nose intensity of spicy and lightly herbaceous aromas. Dry with medium (+) acidity that gives a good backbone with a hint of bitterness, perfect wine that fit fabulously with difficult dishes.



Top range riesling:

2017 Riesling Alsace Grand Cru Eichberg:

The terroir of the Eichberg Grands Cru is the pride of Eguisheim. Eichberg or "Oak Tree Hill" consists of Oligocene marl and sandstone screes and was bought by the Beyer family in 1754. Medium (+) intensity on nose with aromas of citrus fruits and a lively palate marked by lemon zest and pineapple, dry with a medium (+) acidity and a long and salty finish due to limestone.

Most exciting wine:

2017 Gewurztraminer Alsace Grand Cru Pfersigberg

Pronounced aromas of apricot, ginger, grapefruit, lychee and rose. Off dry with a medium acidity and a long finish.

– THE FRENCH'S CATALONIA–

ROUSSILLON – A PRODUCERS' PLAYGROUND
A NEW LOOK ON THE HILLS OF MAURY & BANYULS/COLLIOURE

BY JOANIE METIVIER

It might be a beachy summer destination, mostly for locals with family bungalows near the pure blue Mediterranean, but the winter – themed Roussillon region is quite something else! A wild and magnificent amphitheater looking east with the Mediterranean at its feet, this vineyard crossed by the valleys of Agly, Têt and Tech is not only the best kept wine secret of France, but the old Carignans , Grenaches, Syrahs, etc. find there an energy under the impact of the diverse heated soils, sun-drenched almost 300 days a year, blown away by the force of the Tramontane wind. As soon as you set foot passed the corbières mountains, separating the quite similarly profiled corbières appellation in Languedoc from the newly popular Maury in Roussillon, you get a whiff of strong, wild wind, it's the tramontane effect. It's the reason why the region's so harsh and dry, why vines looks like they want to shrivel and hide and also why vinegrowing & winemaking is for the most part still almost artisanal.

However, it's also why Roussillon is a winemaker's paradise. Can you think of any other place, where one's might find affordable, abandoned land to heal, on outstanding schist (or granit in some rare cases), on some sun-drenched hills 400-500 meters above sea level, with little to none potential diseases? A place where you can find old Carignan vines complanted with even older Grenache, a place where the art of blending is king and regulations not so restrictive either.

This is where some of the most exciting producers decides to install, where you'll find the rich Catalan history in Perpignan, the beauty of the immersive Canigou mountain and also an historic viticultural expertise. French Catalonia mixes a strong cultural identity and an astonishing diversity of landscapes. The rugged coastline of the Côte Vermeille extends over Pyrenean plateaus and valleys, while the Roussillon plain opens onto the sea by a beautiful sandy coast; the Aspres mountains hold one of the most rugged landscape I have seen while the Agly valley cover a richness and outstanding diversity of Terroir.

Basically, Roussillon is society of small wine growers. Vine growing is essentially done by family businesses. Roussillon has around 2,200 wine growers. The vineyards are generally small and 90% of them are managed by their owners.

Often linked or combined to the Languedoc, its neighbor, the landscape, character of the wines, and culture is quite different altogether. Roussillon's wine speciality was traditionally a wide variety of vins doux naturels, Banyuls, Riveslates, Maury, France's answer to port in some sort of way.

However precious these culturally linked delights might be, the truth is they struggle today. Sweet, fortified wines are not so popular now, even if they're the best representation of a place, terroir and history, they tend to be forgotten while dry wines from newly popular appellations (Maury sec / Collioure) are getting trendy for some sommeliers looking for artisan wines. Producers, some already well-established, from anywhere in France and even abroad have been importing their knowledge and passion for unfortified wines in the region. This phenomenon is particularly marked in the upper Agly Valley where ancient vines and sometimes schistous soils can produce very high quality reds and whites. Without the precision of an appellation in the valley the wines are often labelled IGP Côtes Catalanes even if the character of a wine from the top hills of the granitic areas near the Ansignan commune might be quite different than what the plains of Latour-de-France might offer.

It's hard to attach an identity to a regions that offers as diverse a selection of wine as they have soils, climates, varietals and producers. Most of the production is under the Côte du Roussillon appellation with 5 specific villages that can be attributed (Caramany, Latour-de-France, Les Aspres, Lesquerdes et Tautavel) for a step up in Quality. However, the use of the IGP or even Vin de France status is still widespread, especially since mono varietals are having a moment and aren't allowed within apellations regulations.

Vermeille Coast

In this area, the Pyrénées suddenly come to an end, where they meet the sea at a particularly jagged coast, with a rugged inland area. In order to survive, the plants have to reach the deep areas in order to cope with the drought, which can be extreme. Vineyards need to be weeded (ideally manually and not chemically) for any chance of survival for the vines. The hydric stress is that intense. Up in the hills, there's a constant erosion problem. Specially designed terraces are in place called "peus de gall" with ditches throughout the vineyards to channel the very scarce but heavy rains, sometimes up to 150 mm in 24h, that would damage the vineyards otherwise. These "Aguouilles" (faucets) and "Feixes" (terraces) have been incorporated since the 11th century. There, the Tramontane wind is as strong as it can get, leaving little to no potential diseases, but also very low yields. Considering that average worldwide yields are around 50 hectoliters per hectare, 30 being considered very low, some producers in Roussillon are quite happy when they get a mere 15 hectoliters per hectare. This is extreme conditions, to say the least. Côte Vermeille is an IGP gathers the villages of Collioure, Port-Vendres, Banyuls-sur-Mer and Cerbère. It holds the Collioure AOC for dry whites and reds and the Banyuls AOC for fortified.

In this region, Grenache Blanc and Gris dominates the white production, with hints of Roussane, Macabeu, Muscats, Malvoisie and Vermentino.

For the reds, Carignan, especially old vines are prized, but Grenache noir is the most Planted. Lladoner Pelut, or Grenache poilu is scarce, but originates from this area. You'll also find syrah, mourvèdre and Cinsault in the blends.

LES ASPRES

AOP Côtes du Roussillon les Aspres appellation, which was officially recognised by the INAO in 2003, is solely applicable to red wines. It enables the villages of Aspres and Albères, in addition to using high percentages of syrah and mourvèdre, this new AOP requires a minimum of 12 months maturation. Les Aspres is sectioned into parcels, rather than a one piece delimited area. South of the river Têt, North of the tech river, the soils are quite poor, formed from coarse elements from the erosion of the Albères and Canigou mountain ranges, deposited at the foot of the mountains. This mix of various stones and rich red clay is the basis of this terraced village selection.

Aspres means “arid” in Catalan, and this characterizes this sun-drenched terroir bordered by a landscape of garrigue. This complex terroir is also known as the Têt Valley, it is the is the Rivesaltes plain, halfway between Perpignan, the Mediterranean Sea and Spain. It is where you’ll find high altitude vineyards.

AGLY VALLEY

The Agly valley is basically the foothill of the Corbières Mountains, steps away from the start of the Languedoc region. Surrounding the river Tête and Agly, it’s the vast term to designate the Northern côte du Roussillon and Côtes de Roussillon villages including the limestone-dominated Tautavel, Latour-de-France, Caramany, Maury and the granite plateau of Lesquerde.

MAURY SEC

The wine of Cathar country, The Maury appellation, until recently reserved for Vins Doux Naturels, was created with the 2011 harvest for dry wines produced from the same terroir. Exclusively reserved for red wines, primarily made of various Grenache (noir & Lladoner Pelut) mixed with Carignan, Mourvèdre and Syrah. Schist and very dark marl soils are found in the AOC are located between the Corbières massif and the Fenouillèdes. The soils are poor, always on steep slopes, and extremely favourable to growing vines. The Maury vineyard traces a natural corridor that is 17 km long and 4 km wide. In the heart of the Agly valley, it was found deserving of its own cru designation.

Domaine Madeloc

Domaine Pierre gaillard is combining Banyuls tradition to the Rhône valley know-how. After all, both Côte-rôtie and Collioure offers abrupt schist hills. Pierre's daughter, Élise gaillard is now at the head of the 16 ha estate. It's with her strong-minded personality and the strength of her legacy that she's raising the name Madeloc each year.

Parcé-Frères

Parcé-Frères is the story of 3 brothers (Martin, Augustin & Vincent) working together on 2 estates, Domaine de la Préceptorie (Maury) & Domaine Augustin (Collioure & Banyuls) as well as a négoce activity. It's a family history driven by the ambition of a job well done and the promotion of the south of France.

Domaine de la Rectorie

Coming from a family of winemakers for several generations, the Parcé brothers (only far related to the Parcé family of maison Parcé frères), Marc and Thierry, founded the Domaine de la Rectorie in 1984. The estate is now managed by Thierry's son jean-Emmanuel. They're known for the extraordinary quality of their dry saline wines, but also some of their original specialties such as their vin de voile or Rancio aged for 15 years.

Producer from the Aspres

Domaine Boucabeille

Domaine Boucabeille has a mere 28 hectares of vines on the schist slopes of the Forca Real hill, near Perpignan. These hills had outstanding vines and were recognized for their quality and potential hundreds of years ago. However, a century later, the story wasn't the same. Abandoned in the XXth century for lack of profitability, decent yield and because the steep slopes were too hard to work. Jean Boucabeille took the bet of putting those prized vineyards back on track 30 years ago.

Producer from the Agly Valley

Domaine Cazes

Largest biodynamic vineyard in Roussillon, 220 hectares in total, maison cazes is a real Roussillon institution. Situated in Rivesaltes, right in the center of Roussillon, with another estate near the coast in Collioure, Clos des Paulilles, Maison Cazes has established itself as the historic standard bearer of Roussillon viticulture. The dynamism of Emmanuel Cazes and Lionel Lavail (General manager) goes beyond their own estates, with wine tourism development on one side and other work in the organic and biodynamic community. Emmanuel is the project bearer for the organic committee that has been working on the subject of a natural wine definition for three years now.

JEFF CARREL

Jeff Carrel is one of those people you absolutely need to meet in your lifetime. Passionate to the bone, unapologetic, dynamic and most of all, shining with humble talent. Parisian chemist, he has no romantic backstory of a child reared in vineyards, but he fell in love completely with wine and the Roussillon region. He is obsessed with sites, soil, weather, and grape varietals. As far as his winemaking, he calls himself a craftsman who is morphing into an artist. His wines are authentic, honest, flavorful and most importantly, delightful. He's mostly working with sourced grape, but he owns a few vineyards in propably the most recluded area possible. Near the village of Assignan (about 80 habitants total) you take 15-20 minutes to ride uphill in the little rocky road to reach these phenomenal vineyards overlooking the whole Agly valley where the vines has to constantly fight for their life against the sun, the winds, the drought and the boars.

Domaine Gauby

Domaine Gauby, situed at 20 km northwest from Perpignan in Languedoc, extends over 85 ha with 45 ha of old vines going up to 120 years. The environment is still very wild, dry and hilly. The culture of the vineyard is made in respect with the nature, without chemicals using preparations with plants. Gérard Gauby is among the elite of French winegrowers. A true pioneer, he was able to prove the magnificent potential of the Calce terroir and impose the wines of northern Catalonia among the great French wines.

LES JARDINS DE L'OPÉRA

STÉPHANE TOURNIÉ

HIGHLIGHTING GASTRONOMY THROUGH TASTE

BY JOANIE METIVIER

It is a stone's throw from the Capitole in Toulouse, in a beautiful interior courtyard, under a large Belle-Époque glass roof, in a serene calm a few meters from all the city activity, that the great chef Stéphane Tournié has settled for several years already. There is an atmosphere like no other, made up of calm, discreet luxury and well-being, which fits perfectly with the cuisine of Stéphane Tournié.

It was in 2006 that he took up the challenge of re-launching les Jardins de l'Opéra in Toulouse. This gourmet restaurant previously linked to the Grand hotel de l'opera nearby was looking for a new start. New decor, new kitchen, both imbued with elegance, luxury and chic simplicity.

Chef Stéphane Tournié, Michelin-starred in 2012, has the audacity to be discreet. Unexpected marriages, unusual flavors, always with great respect for food and their flavors. His cuisine is modern, creative, gastronomic, but also, and above all, authentic and focused on taste rather than the visual. Refinement is as evident in the mouth as it is in the eye, but expects taste surprises rather than bursts of color. Isn't that what cooking is above all?

I experienced at the Jardins de l'Opéra a sublimation of common and more surprising products, a gradation of dishes on several aspects, an emphasis on the tradition of the South West and a complete mastery on the part of the kitchen and service.

Stéphane Tournié goes to basics and does it well, his table is a sure bet and a tribute to a cuisine that he likes, personally. You just have to take a moment to chat with him, whom I had the honor of, to understand a quiet but honest passion. Behind this meticulous and careful work, rewarded certainly, hides a joy and pure talent.

ARCHITECTURE AND WINE-MAKING WITH DESIGNER OLIVIER CHADEBOST

BY CLAUDE LALONDE

You've probably visited one or more vineyards and were charmed by the bucolic side of the place. However, did you know that there is a whole approach and important steps to take into account behind the establishment of a brand new vineyard, a restoration or update. In fact, if a rigorous planning and approach is not followed, if we don't ask the right questions, in the right order, we may end up with a vineyard and a winery which will be real jewels of architecture but which will meet little or no real needs of the Winemaker and cellar master and therefore will not respond to the search for precision and revelation of the sought-after terroirs.

I've heard comments from industry folks while looking at a vineyard from the most breathtaking architectural point of view: "How do they even make wine there?" Some wealthy people may pay for an architectural extravaganza, but forget to connect to the day-to-day wine-making reality. The architect can receive directives from the owner or investors without unfortunately contacting the Winemaker in order to determine the actual present and future needs.

Olivier Chadebost

I had the pleasure to meet Olivier Chadebost, Architect and engineer owner of Chadebost Création, which specializes among other things in the design of vineyards (Yquem, Cheval Blanc, Beauregard, Lafon Rochet, Montlabert, Laffitte Carcasset and others). I met him at the Salon Simei in Milan (set up by Unione Italia Vini) during one of the conferences he gave on the correlations between wine, brands, winemaking techniques and architecture in the world of wine around the world.

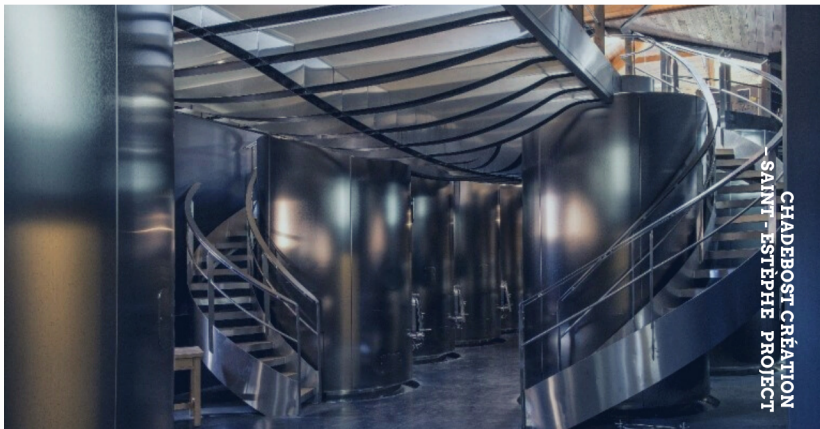
Although a designer and architect, it is also with an engineering approach and an understanding of technological and industrial processes but also of marketing and brand strategy that he approaches his projects. With 20 years of parallel experience in several fields such as nuclear or pharmaceutical, for example, he provides innovative solutions to the world of wine transposed from the most complex industrial processes. This transverse approach allows a move towards precision, financial optimization or environmental rigor.

What he brings to the architectural wine process is this global approach to the transposition of various production systems that we find in other production universes. This approach is very similar to a marketing project process.

CHADEBOST CRÉATION – SAINT-ÉMILION PROJECT

CHADEBOST CRÉATION – POMEROL PROJECT

CHADEBOST CRÉATION – YQUEM PROJECT


CHADEBOST CRÉATION – SAINT-ESTÈPHE PROJECT

Wine as consumer experience or lifestyle

It must first be considered that wine is more than just a consumer product. Today, it has to be a consumer experience that fits into a “lifestyle” identity and a very specific environment depending on the type and range of wine that the terroir offers us. In marketing we will call this a product positioning. Who is it for, what are its distinctive features, what is its image, what is its story (storytelling) etc.

Kind of like the fashion world. A dress is no longer just a dress ... it's a lifestyle, it's an image. In fact, over time the lifestyle world has appropriated the fashion world. He is now taking over the world of wine. Consumers are changing and the youngest are integrating into their lifestyle universe a set of products of which wine is now a part. This state of affairs must absolutely be recognized in any strategy, including when the architectural whole of a vineyard is redone for whatever reason. The main idea is to know how we can transmit this strong identity in the production site.

This "storytelling" will be the cornerstone of all communication and also of everything that touches closely and from afar to wine including the place of production which is the vineyard, the cellar. In fact, if I visit the vineyard of a wine which I have appropriated the lifestyle, the history, this visit must be compatible with the image and the history that I have of it.

CHADEBOST CRÉATION – YQUEM PROJECT

CHADEBOST CRÉATION – SAINT- EMILION PROJECT

Positioning of a wine, a vineyard, a brand

To define the positioning of a wine, a winemaker must be able to objectively position his product potential and his brand. The winemaker and his consultants must precisely establish the quality of the wine that they can make for a very specific target group, present and future, for a well-targeted niche with a defined lifestyle in which he will have to subscribe.

The stronger the identity of this wine, the more ambassadors this wine will have because consumers will have identified themselves with the brand, the history of the wine, the design of the bottle, the history of the winemaker, to the philosophy of this winemaker, to his way of making his wines, etc.

Once this positioning has been well defined, it is necessary to determine its potential and endeavor to sublimate it from the vineyard to the winery. Working a terroir, this implies taking into account the specificities of the various plots, the climatology, the men who work there, in the vines, the place, the sunsets, the type of agriculture, etc. Wine and its organoleptic components must be precisely defined. What will it taste, what emotions will it trigger, and to whom?

For example, if the wine is a parcel wine because of a will for higher quality and putting forward a specific story of a specific plot, it will have to be well defined and determined. This approach could have a significant impact on many components, such as the number of stainless steel, concrete, wooden or terracotta tanks and on the type and capacity of the barrels as well as the management of the space for the vinification process according to each plot.

Storytelling

All communication efforts will be linked to the storytelling. It is important to relate the genesis and history that led to the creation of the product. The development of the product's DNA and graphic identity will undergo. All elements of communication must be consistent with the positioning of the brand. This involves everything that affects the consumer, including the very important aspect of wine tourism. The brand and the wine therefore become identities.

Then comes the reality of winemaking...

Vinification is in fact a precise industrial process which must accompany and extend the work in the vineyard while being in line with the positioning of the brand and the products. If we want to make wines that are the best reflection of the appellation, technology may help. If you want to make parcel wines, you need to have enough vats and the necessary space, etc.

As Olivier Chadebost says, vinification represents around 20% of the influence on the finished product, which means that 80% of the wine's potential comes from the vines. There's no magic recipe at this level. It should be noted that certain technological advances offered to its customers do not necessarily come from the wine world. For example, to thermoregulate hot barrels of large volumes that cannot be moved, he used electric blankets which is normally used to warm F1 race car's tires. Interesting, isn't it?

According to Olivier Chadebost, any technology added to the production process must add precision to the final product.

CHADEBOST CRÉATION – SAINT- ÉMILION PROJECT

As for the sustainable agriculture, it's essential to clearly define the philosophy of this approach because it will have great repercussions on the room placement. In terms of water and energy management, the use of different processes at winemaking level, etc. Burying a cellar, producing your own electricity are examples of potential decisions.

One of the key elements regarding energy management according to Olivier Chadebost is the tolerance and the global approach of the site, the building and the natural potentials made available. According to him, this is one of the most important elements because the winemaking process has real environmental potential through its simultaneous needs. It is generally easy to reduce the electricity and water consumption of a property by 5 with an appropriate approach.

Another important point is taking into account the ease and optimization of the maintenance needs of a site. Maintenance must be made easy. This is a point that we often forget when we embark on a new architectural project.

Wine Tourism

Visiting a vineyard is an integral part of the storytelling of a brand and the world of a wine. It is the ultimate contact between the consumer, the site where the vine is grown, the people who make and the place of the brand. Wine tourism is the passing of emotion into experience. There should be no discrepancy between what the consumer is told in the communication and what he perceives and sees during the visit. On the contrary, it must sublimate a feeling. Architecture will have its role in the background as an embodiment embodied in this perception. In addition, the way in which the consumer will be received, his visit experience, the wine tasting room and the hospitality side if applicable (room, hotel or other) will determine the quality of his experience.

So this is it! I hope this article will give you a better perspective on the cellars you will be visiting. Ask yourself the question: is this visit consistent with the image and the storytelling of the brand, of the wine? Is this the experience as I expected? But above all live, feel, benefit from knowledge, meetings and moments of sharing in which wine will be thecatalyst!

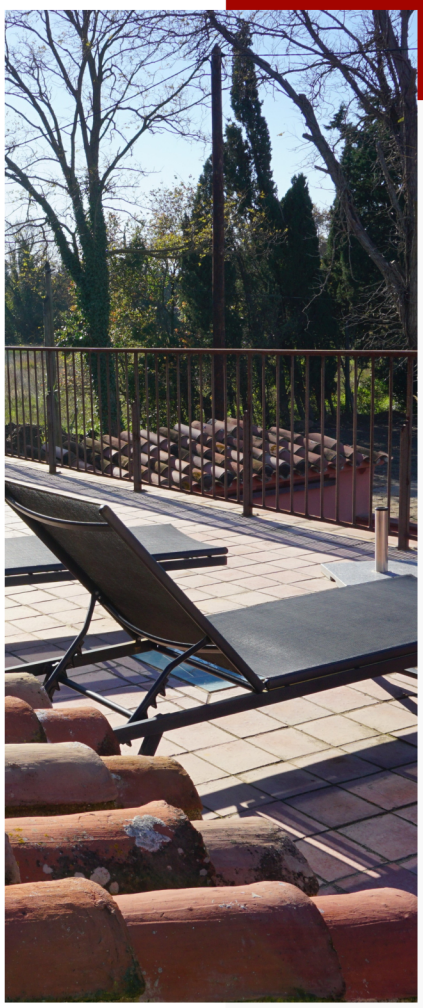
MAS LATOUR LAVAIL

FOR THOSE LOOKING FOR A BETTER, PRIVILEGED WAY TO TRAVEL

By Joanie Metivier·

The next time you travel, instead of looking at hotel, would you like to try a Guest house experience?

For me, my best hospitality experiences around the world have been in guest houses. There's nothing like the warm welcome of a Château or an historic establishment, specially designed for travelers with a keen sense for comfort and hospitality. Never have I felt more welcomed than with the smile of a guest house keeper. You don't have to be lost in the middle of nowhere either, Mas Latour Lavail is situated just 15 min from the Perpignan center.



This fully renovated traditional Catalan Mas (farmhouse) places the emphasis on modern comfort & design mixed with traditional materials. Lionel Lavail, director of the great Cazes wine house in Rivesaltes, wanted to restore this Catalan Mas of the 16th century where he's grown as a child.

The 3 rooms and 2 suites proudly bear the name of a Vin Doux Naturel and propose a unique decor integrating the colours of the wines with which they are associated. Clever linked to the historic win industry of the region. The suites offer a panoramic view on the vineyards and the Spa "Le Vieux Pressoir" was created in the old vats of wine. You may take the time to plunge in the private swimming pool or relax on the terrace. Don't be just a room number, be a guest.

BE A GUEST

CA' DEL BOSCO

BY JOANIE METIVIER

Often considered to be the Italian equivalent of its cousin from Florence, a native of Lombardy near Milan, Franciacorta is made with exactly the same method as Champagne. It is a small region, scattered with small producers, which may explain the limited export and sometimes quite high prices. It is made with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir (Nero) and Pinot Blanc (Bianco). As a region warmer than France's chilly north, the wines tend to be riper and fleshier, without the sharp acidity and minerality of Champagne.

It is from Franzacurta (deriving from the Latin franchae curtes, a region exempt from paying tribute) that it took its present-day name. In 1995 Franciacorta was given D.O.C.G. status, a significant testimonial to its winemakers' continuing commitment to excellent work and to further improving the quality of Franciacorta wines. While every other sparkling wines region tries to offer a less pricey alternative to champagne, Franciacorta aims for quality only with restrictions and regulations often stricter than champagne. Every Franciacorta producer owns his land. There's no such thing as a coop or a négociant.

As of today, 77% of the vineyards are converted to organic methods. There's 120 producers, mostly small and artisanal.

The main goal in the next few years will be to have the whole region converted to organic.With all the producers that are presently following steps to conversions. They're expecting to have the needed 91% to make it mandatory pretty soon.

Maurizio Zanella, owner of CA' del Bosco, is closely linked to the history and identity. In the early 70s, while he wasn't even of age, he decided to plant his first vines there. This was the beginning of a love story. Ca' del Bosco is one of the leading producer of fine-bubbled Franciacortas. Maurizio was even the director of the appellation board until recently when he left its place to his friend Vittorio Moretti of Bellavista.

© CA' DEL BOSCO

JIMÉNEZ - LANDI: THE LOVE OF GRENACHE

BY : BENOIT LEFÈVRE

During a recent stay in Spain, I had the chance to visit Bodegas Jiménez - Landi, probably one of the best producers of Grenache on the Iberian Peninsula. Jiménez - Landi is a family estate located in the village of Méntrida on the designation of origin bearing the same name. The creation of the bodega dates from the early 1960s. But it was not until 2004 that José Benavides Jiménez-Landi, who runs the bodega, decided to produce and market quality wines based on respect for the terroir and featuring Grenache.

MÉNTRIDA, A LITTLE-KNOWN APPELLATION

D.O. Méntrida is an appellation located in the province of Castilla-La-Mancha, west of Madrid and north of Toledo. The wine tradition in the region goes back as far as the 12th century! They mainly produce red wine. If Méntrida is one of the oldest wine producing regions in Spain, according to José, it was unable to adapt to market trends 20-25 years ago, when consumers began to turn to higher quality wines. Even today, we favor volume and cooperatives continue to produce almost exclusively bulk wine. While Méntrida produces 50 million tons of grapes each year, only 600,000 bottles are bottled there!

Jiménez - Landi is therefore exceptional within the appellation like the few rare other producers who have chosen to take the quality turn (the D.O. has only 25 bodegas, only 7 of which bottle their own wines!). The success is there since today we find Méntrida wines on the menus of restaurants in Madrid, which was unthinkable fifteen years ago.

> *"Our Méntrida and Real de San Vincente vineyards produce wines with very different profiles. What will make our wines unique is not winemaking or aging, but the terroir, the altitude and the plot from which they come. Our wish is to make singular, unique wines. When we make our wines, we are looking above all for balance, freshness, elegance and complexity. The most important thing is to release each year a product with a strong identity and the same quality standard"*
>
> *- José Benavides Jiménez-Landi, winemaker in Méntrida*

GREDOS' GRENACHE

Bodegas Jiménez - Landi mostly grows Grenache, but also Syrah and a little Cabernet Sauvignon. In order to promote the potential of the old Grenache vines in the region and the unique soils on which they grow, the Garnacha de Gredos association (of which the bodega is a member) was created in 2003. The geographic area of the Sierra de Gredos includes several vineyards spread around Toledo (DO Méntrida), Madrid (DO Vinos de Madrid) and Ávila (Vinos de la Tierra de Castilla y León).

As for the Syrah, it has very well acclimated to the terroir of Méntrida. According to José, it gives very different profiles from the dense and colorful typical Spanish Syrahs. The Syrah from Méntrida is more about freshness, elegance, like the wines of the Rhône.

TWO VINEYARDS, TWO DISTINCT TERROIRS

Bodegas Jiménez - Landi has 20 hectares of vines spread over two distinct territories. 15 hectares are located around Méntrida. The Grenache and Syrah vines are between 12 and 40 years old. The soils are sandy and granite and the altitude varies between 550 and 650 meters. The characteristic of sand is that it stores a lot of heat during the day, but loses it quickly after dark. The soils are very poor in organic matter, which gives the grapes a lot of acidity. This allows a more natural preparation, without too much manipulation. The climate is continental with long, cold winters and hot, dry summers. Rainfall does not exceed 500 millimeters per year.

The other 5 hectares belonging to Jiménez - Landi are old Grenache vines around the village of Real de San Vicente. The age of the vines varies between 40 and 80 years and the altitude between 750 and 850 meters. The
soils also contain sand, but there are also large stones. These accumulate heat during the day and restore it during the night, which gives wines with more opulent, denser and more complex profiles. The continental climate is very marked by the Sierra de Gredos. Winters are cold and dry, summers are hot. Annual precipitation reaches almost 900 millimeters and is concentrated in spring and autumn.

JIMÉNEZ – LANDI'S PHILOSOPHY

Jiménez - Landi produces its wines according to the different characteristics of the terroirs on which its vines grow. Followers of plot wines, José's philosophy is close to what can be found in Burgundy with the notion of crus. José participated in his first harvest at the age of 12. He has since participated in all successive harvests. If he later trained at the Politécnica de Madrid, he believes that the best training a winemaker can have is to travel.

The vineyard is worked in organic farming. In the winery, this translates into the use of indigenous yeasts, no chemicals, and the least interventionist philosophy possible. Each plot is vinified separately. The wines are all aged in French oak barrels from 500 to 3,000 liters.

“If you want to make a wine with personality and passion, you must submit to the rules of nature. It’s a basic rule. Nature is constantly changing, we have hot years, cold years, rainy years, dry years, so you have to know how to adapt. Some years, you will be maturing your wines for 12 months, others up to 15 and some, only 7 ", adds José.

From the work in the vineyard to the harvest, through the vinification, everything is done by hand. “You can make very good wine by producing 100,000 to 150,000 bottles, which you cannot do at 500,000 or more bottles. On the contrary, if you are artisanal and only make 15,000 bottles, you can hardly live from your work as a winemaker. With a production of 100,000 bottles per year, the size of the estate seems to me quite adequate and sustainable. ”

"I like the way the French make and understand wine. In Spain, what makes the difference in general in a wine is the duration of barrels ageing. We are talking about crianza, reserva, gran reserva, etc. I find that a little obsolete. For me, wine should not be defined from its duration of barrel aging, if not from the vine! The vine is what gives the uniqueness of a wine. You can follow exactly the same recipe all over the world to make wine, using the same grape variety, the same barrel, etc., but what makes the difference is that each vine is unique and represents a typical terroir. "

CARCASSONNE

MANDATORY STOP AND THE CASSOULET TRADITION

BY JOANIE METIVIER

The French medieval city is one of the most visited sights in France during the high summer season. Carcassonne sits in the luscious valley of the Aude river—the gap between the Pyrenees and the Massif Central. Its 13th-century towers and walls dominate the landscape by its size and beauty. The high walls of the city are 3 km long, there are 52 towers in total; make it a perfect touristic stop. Especially, since all of it is mostly shops and restaurants, there are only about 50 households inside the walls.

The citadel was restored at the end of the 19th century and in 1997 it was added to UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites. It is now a tourist pitfall, with overpriced trinkets to sell and mostly mediocre restaurants, but should you pass down on the experience for this? Of course, not! You'll never get another chance to see Medieval (and Roman) military architecture on this scale, and the view of the castle from a distance, as well as of the modern city and mountains from the citadel itself, is unforgettable. Take a half a day, check it out and visit the right way. Come early, or during off-season to avoid crowds, don't forget that the outside is much more impressive than the inside. Tour the little street around and try to find the perfect view. Walk the ramparts, stop for a Cassoulet...

According to legend, cassoulet originates from the city of Castelnaudary, and was invented during the Hundred Years War. Indeed, during the siege of the city, the besieged would have gathered all the food available to make a stew. The cassoulet takes its name from the container in which it was made: the cassole. Note that although this legend is the most widespread, there is a real rivalry between Castelnaudary, Carcassonne and Toulouse who dispute the authorship of this dish from the Southwest.

In any case, the cassoulet is a tradition of the region that I strongly advise you to try, even if it means taking a nap afterwards. It is a dish linked to the terroir that identifies with a specific region. For enthusiasts, cassoulet is almost a religion.

BERTANI

I had the pleasure to visit Bertani Domains guided by Andrea Lonardi, COO (Chief Operating Officer) and his explanatory comments throughout the guided tour.

Bertani is the oldest "winery" in the Verona region. It's a pretty unique place because it combines a French approach mixed with Italian culture. The 2 brothers (Giovan Battista and Gaetano Bertani) who founded the house, studied wine and viticulture with the famous professor Guillot.

Being from a wealthy family and being fond of great wines, they were naturally drawn to viticulture. It was in 1857 that the "winery" was founded by the two brothers in Quinto di Valpantena north of Verona. She was one of the first to see the potential of bottled wines.In 1923 the house received a royal decree as a sign of the quality and excellence of its wines.

“ At the start of Bertani, between 1920 and 1950 their best-selling wine was a Soave. In 1957, they decided to transform their production from sweet wines to dry wines and it was then that the cultivation of Amarone began. You should know that just like the Petrus of this world, the Amarone Bertani has never changed since its inception both in terms of the bottle, the label and winemaking.

There's been changes in general consumer taste from the very beginning. Despite this, Bertani has remained true to his origins and that is certainly one of the reasons for its success. Also, what characterizes all of Bertani wines, is the precision with which they are produced.

At Bertani 40% of our sales are made in Italy, while others export 80 to 90% of the production. It is therefore probably more important for us to tell our story and preserve our traditions...

In Italy, Valpolicella and Superiore are more important. Bertani is more than Amarone. It's Soave, it's Valpolicella, it's Secco, it's Bertani. We are not just Amarone and Ripasso. “

– ANDREA LONARDI

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF VALPOLICELLA WINES

BY CLAUDE LALONDE

And these Ripasso are also developed according to the classic method that we could describe as "ancient". Besides, Bertani's Ripasso are quite different from the other Ripasso that can be found on the market.

“ As for Soave, during the coronation of Georges VI, it was Bertani Soave that we served. And, in 2012, we recreated this same wine using the same methods from this period. During this exercise, many documents on winemaking methods were found. These wines were initially fermented with the skins and were only pressed when the CO2 level was high enough to protect the wine from oxidation. It makes it like an orange wine but which has kept its characteristics and the respect of Soave. Since 2015, the quality level has been really optimized.

The vineyard is located in Valpatena and it’s the only Valley that can be identified as such on the bottle just like a grand cru in Burgundy.

The Valpolicella Classico is made in 5 towns which are called “the hand” with a system of valleys. In one of these cities there is Tenuta Novara which is particularly qualitative. All the vineyards are located on the most qualitative parts facing south-west. One of the entire areas is
owned by Bertani which allows the production of superior quality wines.

’As for the Amarone vinification, we have long used cement vats covered with Murano-made glass inside which is excellent for the vinification of our wines. It is very expensive to repair and we use it only once a year. All winemaking is fragmented.

For the winemaking of Soave, we use casks simply for oxygenation and especially not to have woody aromas. This aging in foudres adds complexity to the wines.

We finished the harvest around the end of October and started pressing the first Amarone selection. In fact, we make several grape selections for the Amarone.

We select them first before the grapes dry and then later during the vinification. Only the best clusters are selected. The drying time of the grapes for Amarone is around 100 days which is a little shorter than before.

Personally, I am very involved in research regarding barrel ageing. In fact, I’m trying to better understand the process and the impact on
wine.

We currently have 8 vintages in stock that age in barrels and we need to better understand the aging process in the under wood. There are different philosophies about the use of wood. This is a subject that interests me particularly because some of our wines age in oak for 8 years. Like winemaking in Burgundy, our process is similar because it uses wood and this environment is particularly reducing.

We have to develop a wood usage model to add more precision to the making of our wines. We extract a minimum of 2 times during these 8 years. An Amarone can stay in the same barrel for seven years. During this time we do the anchoring twice a month. The wine used for the fermentation comes from vines raised for this purpose. It’s a very reducing environment even when using foudres...

– ANDREA LONARDI,
COO BERTANI DOMAINS

WATKINS GLEN HARBOUR HOTEL

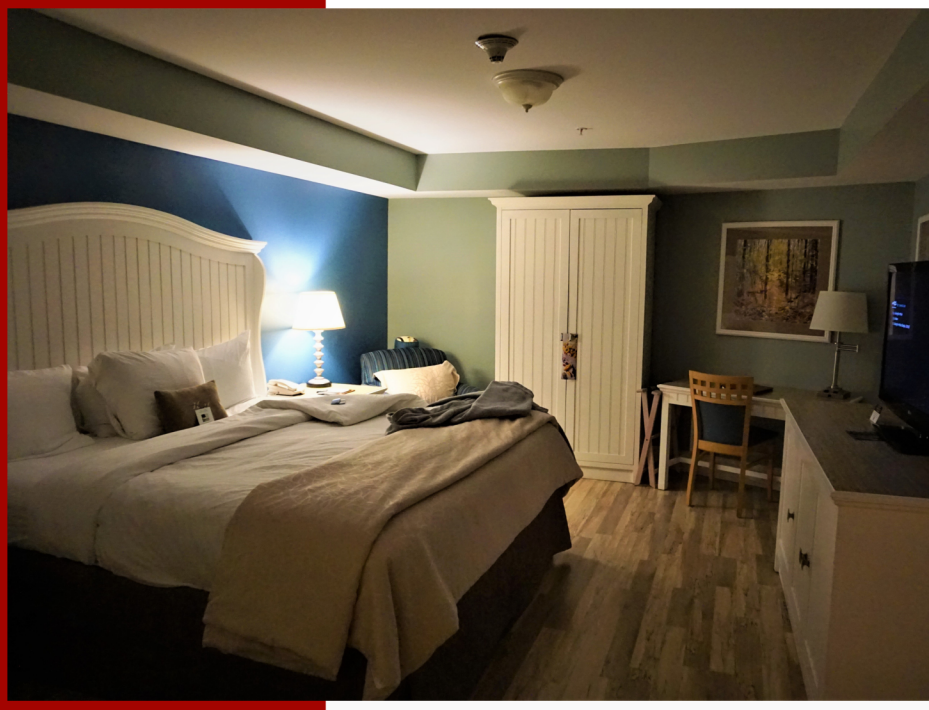
WINTER WINE GETAWAY PACKAGE

AROUND THE UNIQUE SENECA LAKE

By Joanie Metivier·

Winter weather is the perfect occasion to discover wine regions on a totally different style. Winter wine getaways are the ideal moment to have a region all to yourself. No crowds, no lines, just you, the rows of vines and direct access to the producer in most cases. Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, just at the southernmost point of Seneca lake, in collaboration with Seneca Lake Wine Trail is introducing Winter Wine Weekdays, a winter getaway package offering savings on room rates and an enticing wine-tasting itinerary giving wine-lovers 17 good reasons to visit New York State's Finger Lakes Wine region this winter with the comfort and class needed after a busy tasting day in the vineyards.

It's your chance to see the amazing view from Atwater Estate vineyards and taste their fun skin fermented white blend. Stop by Fox run for their world class Chardonnay and their dephty selection of Rieslings.



Experience the fun ambiance of Hazlitt 1852 vineyards, one of the oldest and most expansive vineyard in the region.Visit the family-run Lakewood vineyard, remember to taste their 3 generations Riesling and ask about their innovative approach to carbonation that serves producers all arounf Finger Lakes. Don't miss the sustainable approach of Lamoreaux Landing Wine Cellars with their reserve wine offer and outstanding selection. Take a sip at Wagner Vineyards, who's proven the potential of a Meritage blend in the Seneca Lake region as well as the ageing potential of their Rieslings.

BLUE POINTE GRILLE

THE PICTURESQUE TOWN OF WATKINS GLEN, ADJACENT TO THE GLEN HARBOR MARINA, WITH WATERFRONT VIEW IS THE IDEAL LOCATION TO STAY WITH EASY ACCESS TO BOTH SIDES OF THE LAKE. WATKINS GLEN HARBOR HOTEL IS ONE OF THE FEW LODGING OPTIONS IN THE AREA, BUT ALSO THE MOST RECOGNIZED FOR BOTH THE QUAITY OF THEIR STAY, AND THEIR FOOD OFFER AT THE BLUE POINTE GRILLE RESTAURANT ON SITE. LOCAL PRODUCTS BEING PUT IN THE SPOTLIGHT, ESPECIALLY THE CHEESES, IS A LOVELY, HIGHLY DELICIOUS TOUCH.