

WINE TOURISM — MAG —



WINE TOURISM MAG

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006

EDITORIAL

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EDITOR'S NOTE

CALIFORNIAN WILD FIRE OR THE DAMOCLES SWORD OVER THE NAPA WINE

The 2020 vintage was very complicated in many ways for the Californian vineyard. Apart from now almost usual drought, 2 doses of heatwaves, they were stuck by nothing less than hellfires. I do not see the situation improving over time. Several producers have seen their installations being destroyed by flames in the chaos of a natural disaster and with a the most innocent but devastating felling of helplessness. Fortunately for some, insurance is a thing. Fortunately, there is the new generation, filled with hope and ideas to make it all better in the future and come back from the flames like a phoenix. The question is above all to know who will have the courage to take over a destroyed facility. Starting from scratch, in an appellation where the acre can sell for up to \$ 3 million.

This reflection draws a rather negative portrait of the situation, with little possible solution. I hope that in 20 years it will still be possible to taste a great wine from the Napa region. Some producers continue to fight in the face of adversity to promote the great uniqueness and appeal of Californian wines, as they should. There will always be buyers for good wines. The region is making a lot of effort to attract local tourism (pandemic obliges). The California Wines Organization runs online training courses to help people discover the region and their wine. I believe the renewal of Napa will be about youth, technology and resilience.

Courage to all our Californian friends.

MICHAEL MCDUFF

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, sweeping 'M' followed by a horizontal line.

FEATURED BEST WINE TOURISM REGION

ALSACE

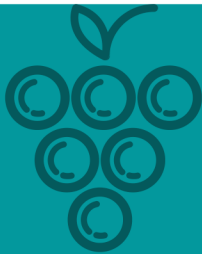


HIGHLIGHT ON
ALSACE

Protected by the natural barrier of the Vosges Mountains, the vineyards of Alsace benefit from a unique climate and a variety of different grape-growing districts. The many different grape varieties which thrive here produce an incomparable range of rich and aromatic wines, from the driest and most delicate to the most opulent and full-bodied. The Alsace Wine Route, one of the oldest in France, crosses these different wine districts. It allows you to discover 170 km of scenic landscapes, from medieval villages and half-timbered houses decorated with flowers, to castles and Roman and Gothic churches.

The picturesque scenes and villages might have you fallen for the region, but the true jewels of the vineyard resides in the bottles.

ALSACE IN NUMBERS



53 APPELLATIONS AOC
ALSACE, AOC ALSACE
GRANDS CRUS, AOC
CRÉMANT-D'ALSACE



15 621 HECTARES OF
VINES IN PRODUCTION



4200
WINERIES



NOBLE GRAPES

MUSCAT
PINOS GRIS
GEWÜRZTRAMINER
RIESLING

THE HEART OF THE WINE ROUTE IS THE
MEDIÉVAL TOWN OF COLMAR, OFTEN
DESCRIBED AS THE ESSENCE OF ALSACE.







ALL FOR THE WHITES

Alsace is a land of great white wines! The grands crus of Riesling and Gewurztraminer now have their place in the collective consciousness of the French. The typicity of its wines, Alsace owes it to an exceptional terroir. About 50 million years ago both the Vosges and the Black forest (in Germany) were a single range of mountains. When it collapsed the Rhine river valley plain was formed along with one of the most intricate diversity of soil in the world.

Renowned estates such as Zind-Humbrecht, Ostertag, Josmeyer and Marcel Deiss strive, year after year, to offer wine lovers bottles of rare elegance and unique Alsatian aromatic profile. Alsace wines always shows a sense of place from the specific vineyards sites and a matchless richness from the dry, continental climate.

SWEET WINES

While most wines are dry, especially Riesling and Muscat, it's possible to find off-dry style of Alsatian Gewurztraminer and Pinot gris. The region's climate allows slow maturation process which ensures a vibrant acidity level. this acidity, balanced with a slight touch of sweetness is a gift for the palate.

[Vendanges Tardives](#) is only produced with the 4 Noble grapes of . The grapes for these wines may have a little bit of the honeyed characteristic that is from botrytis (aka 'Noble Rot').

[Sélection de Grains Nobles](#) is a much stricter selection of late harvest that are sweet in a style similar to a Hungarian Tokaji or a Sauternes/Barsac from Bordeaux. These wines always have the honeyed character from a very strenuous hand-picking of only botrytis-affected grapes.

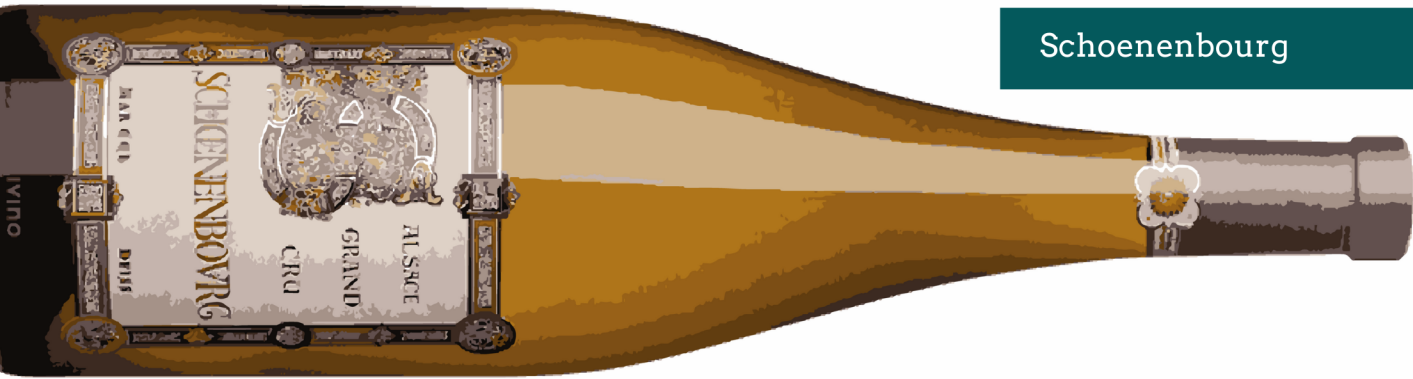
NOTABLE ALSACE Grand Cru

Vorbourg



Meaning “foothill,” Vorbourg might be south-southeast facing, but it also benefits from the warm Foehn wind. Their massive character comes from the clay, whereas their fine and saline minerality is linked to the presence of calcareous rock. You can even find deeply red Pinot Noir from this Grand cru.

Schoenenbourg



Schoenenbourg is notorious for its wines that ages beautifully but also as nicely suitable to the production of Vendanges Tardives and Sélections de grains nobles. Fullness and richness can sum up wines from this grand cru overlooking the village of Riquewihr.

Schlossberg



As the first designated Grand cru, back in 1975, Schlossberg has had good recognition for a long time. It makes respected delicate wines with subtlety and complexity. Distinguished in every way, it's difficult to imagine the hard work needed to get to such finesse. The steep, terraced vineyards gives a hard time to producers, and so is Riesling generally speaking. Yet, the result always have stunning grace.



12 STEPS TO FOLLOW TO GET THE BEST OF YOUR WINERY VISITS

By Joanie Metivier

There has never been a better time to go visit a winery near you. More wineries than ever are open and eager for you to drop by. The wine trails are begging you to come by, and many small producers have been struggling this year because of the hard and unusual 2020 hardships.

Winemakers and winery owners are among the world's most charming and interesting people. They have such an extensive knowledge, not only of their own production, but of their region and local traits.

Get ready with these few tips and etiquette to remember for your next visit, it could help you get the very best of it.

DEAL WITH TRANSPORTATION FIRST

Chances are you'll be driving in. You already know cars and alcohol are a horrible combination. Be sure, to have transportation settle down beforehand. Get a designated driver or hire one. If you're the designated driver, you can always spit, to get all the taste and experience, but not the dumbing effect. Those tasting portions may be small, but they add up and you always get tipsy quicker than you'd think. Be ready.

BOX IN THE CAR

There's nothing more alarming than bottles of wine rolling around in the trunk or on the car's floor. Think of those precious bottles you've just carefully selected and purchased, you need to cherish them. Bring a box of wine from your local wine shop, or ask for one at the winery. This way you'll have a safe place for them.

**TIP: KEEP YOUR BOTTLES FRESH IN
THE CAR WITH YOU OR IN A
COOLER, NOT IN THE WARM TRUNK!**



EARLY BIRDS

If you want to avoid crowds and have the most time to chat and learn as much as possible about the winery, the best way is to be the first in the door. Check opening hours, and be there bright and early.

CALL

By calling in advance, or taking an appointment, you're making sure to have the most attention and best experience possible. Chances are, the winemaker or director will be the one taking care of you. Also, many wineries are not open to public... Unless you have an appointment. This opens up so many possibilities for you.

BE NICE!

This may seem obvious, but there's also a catch. Most wineries do have some special tastings or exclusivities they could offer. This may be older vintages, special visits, or just a quirky little piece of information. As a journalist, I've learned the best way is to be super nice, and I mean OVERLY nice. If you ask or expect it, you won't ever get special treatment, especially if you demand it. Just be polite, fun and very interested.

Just give the amazing winery folks the respect and love they deserve.





OPEN-MIND

It's absolutely OK to have a specific taste or personal preferences, but wineries are a great places for discoveries. Even if you don't normally like a specific type of wine, you may be surprised. Nothing wrong with trying. Also, If you stick to grapes you know, you could miss out on the regional specialties. Go for the things you don't know, varietals you've never heard of or just the wineries recommendation. This is the only way to expand your palate.



ASK QUESTIONS

Don't be shy. If you ask simple questions like "Does this look like a good vintage?" or "What food goes best with this wine?" the person behind the counter will appreciate your interest. You don't need to show off with complicated questions that may not apply to this wine. You're here to learn, you won't be expected to know everything. If there's some terms you don't understand, ask. If you want to know more about something, ask. It's as simple as that.

NOT A BAR

Remember that it's a tasting room, not a bar. If you want to drink a big glass of wine, buy a bottle and have a picnic. And even if you are not driving, be very careful about how much you're drinking. People who have had too much to drink ruin the tasting experience for everybody.

NO NEED TO BUY

It's a nice gesture to buy a bottle or two, but you shouldn't feel pressured to. Still, we tend to get carried away at wineries and buy more bottles than we intended. You'll be amazed how quickly those bottles add up. You're not expected to buy. If you've liked the wine and want it, go for it. However, remember they won't hate you if you don't.

WATER DOWN

Bring bottled water. Staying hydrated is critical—drink as much water as wine. You'll thank me the next morning.

NO PERFUMES

Avoid anything that interferes with your sense of smell. No heavy perfumes or shaving lotions. Smokers beware: remember to consider that the smell of smoke could affect the tasting experience for you and others. This may be the most important aspect. There's nothing worse than going for a tasting, and smelling an old lady pot pourri perfume like she dropped the whole perfume bottle in your glass,

Also, avoid coffee and chewing gum. Especially right before wine tasting, as it will affect your palate.



PINK PROSECCO IS NOW A THING

BY JOANIE METIVIER



The Italian government has finally approved the production of a rosé Prosecco and it is expected to hit our shelves as early as January 2021. This has been in discussion for a few years now, but has been made official in Treviso on May 21, 2020. According to the Consortium's estimates, the total production of rosé could reach 30 million bottles per year.

In order to label Prosecco DOC as Rosé, producers will have to follow specific rules:

- Grape varieties: Glera and 10%-15% Pinot Nero
- Yields: 18 tons/hectare for Glera and 13.5 tons/hectare for Pinot Nero
- Second fermentation – Martinotti/Charmat Method: minimum of 60 days
- Sales will be allowed from the 1st of January after the harvest
- Colour: pink more or less intense, shining, and with a persistent foam
- Residual sugar: from Brut Nature to Extra Dry
- The label will have to state the word “Millesimato” and the vintage (minimum of 85% of the grapes from that year)

VISIT OF THE E.GUIGAL HOUSE NORTHERN RHÔNE ICON

By Claude Lalonde



TEXAS HIGH PLAINS ©JEFF LYNCH

I had the pleasure of meeting Philippe and Ève Guigal at the end of 2018 during a tasting of their legendary cuvées such as La Landonne, La Turque, La Mouline, Ex Voto Ermitage, La Doriane and many others.

The following year, during a 4-week wine trip to France and Italy in early 2019 with my partner Luc Marier, I took the opportunity to visit the Guigal house in Ampuis. Unfortunately Philippe was not available because at the last minute he had to leave for a meeting at Château Nalys, their new acquisition in Châteauneuf-du-Pape.

So we left Lyons for Ampuis and after about 30 minutes we had already reached Guigal's. On our arrival we met our host Jacques Desvernois, agricultural engineer responsible for operations at Guigal.

We spent at least 3 hours visiting the very steep vineyards of the Côte Brune and the Côte Blonde located almost on either side of the famous Guigal brand, visiting the cellar where we vinify all the wines of Guigal de Côte -from the northern Rhône and finally we tasted 17 wines including the most legendary vintages of the house. What a visit !!

HISTORY

Our tour of the vineyards started with La Pommière, the first plot that Étienne Guigal acquired when he left Vidal Fleury. In fact, he arrived in Ampuis around the age of 14 and worked in the vineyards of the Vidal Fleury house.

Over the years he worked in the vineyard then in the cellar and finally practically became the manager of the house. He finally decided to take his independence in 1946 the year he founded his own house, which is now Guigal, following the acquisition of 10 ha plots from his ex-employer.

In 1961, Marcel took over and gave the Brune and Blonde terroirs its letters of nobility and subsequently Philippe Guigal would join the family business.



"We are wine merchants where we buy grapes from neighboring winegrowers and we are merchant-breeders or we buy bulk wine from producers in the Côte du Rhône. There are over 200 winemakers working for the house. Every year we go to their homes, we taste the vats, we choose the ones that interest us and we bring it back home to do our aging and blending system. And of course we produce wines from our own plots. So we do the 3 trades."

The Côte-Rôtie vineyard covers no less than 230 hectares with, among others, the Côte Brune and the Côte Blonde. The Guigal estate owns in Condrieu and Côte-Rôtie on illustrious plots giving among others the Doriane in Condrieu with its famous Viognier, the famous crus of the Côte-Rôtie la Mouline, la Turque, la Landonne with its slopes of nearly 45 degrees and 60 degrees and the Côte-Rôtie Château d'Ampuis.

On the Hermitage hill, the white and red Ex-Voto, produced exclusively in the great vintages, come from plots such as Bessards, Hermite, Greffieux, Murets.... Then on the right bank of the Rhône the appellation properties are enthroned. Saint-Joseph from the former domain of Jean-Louis Grippat.

he Guigal house vinifies and ages in its cellars in Ampuis the northern appellations of the Rhône Valley (Côte-Rôtie, Condrieu, Hermitage, Saint-Joseph and Crozes-Hermitage). The aging of the great southern appellations (Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Gigondas, Tavel and Côtes-du-Rhône) is also done in the cellars of Ampuis.



"The Guigal family acquired the Domaine de Nalys in 2017, which enjoys an exceptional location in the heart of the Châteauneuf-du-Pape appellation. As Philippe Guigal says: Cet 'This investment, my grandfather had always dreamed of. My father and me too. But the opportunities were few and far between, so far we had only seen small offers that did not match what we wanted to do.

Three plots on 53 hectares (in a single block that touches each other, which is rare in the appellation) surround the Château, the first has given it its name " 'Nalys", the other two are located on two major terroirs of the appellation: " Le Bois Sénéchal " (13 hectares) and " La Crau " (20 hectares). Each of these three terroirs supports all of the appellation's 13 grape varieties, bringing the potential expressions to 39 to integrate.

VINEYARD VISIT



The landscape is breathtaking with these steep vineyards and terraced cradles of these wines that have become legendary over time. The breathtaking view from the top of the Côte-Rôtie is worth the trip this Rhône which meanders wearily through all these vines. With Condrieu, it is the land of Syrah, Viognier and the sun. We don't call it Côte-Rôtie for nothing!

From below, behind the Guigal sign, you can see La Mouline, then the vineyard above is called La Garde (Château de la Garde) Historic castle of Ampuis. Today the castle is at the very bottom very close to the Rhône because it was moved in the 12th century. This Château, the Guigal family took over in 1995 and became the 3rd owners of this Château. There has been a huge restoration with 11 years of work. It is now the family home of Philippe and his wife Eve. We also do events such as tastings.

Then there is the Côte Blonde which is in fact the locality called Côte Blonde with the Mouline which is one of the most important. It is the oldest vine of the house and of the appellation with more than a hundred years. It has a rather particular shape like an amphitheater with many small terraces. It is only one hectare which is surprising. The characteristic of the Côte Blonde is its gneiss soils which have a slightly white color and also a little limestone deposits that we do not have on the Côte Brune. The wines from these soils are always very tender, delicate and very fine. Much smoother than the wines of the Côte Brune on which we find schist soils with a lot of iron oxide which give wines with fairly tight tannins and more strength and density.

In addition, there are many more old vines on the Blonde. The youngest vine on Brune is the Turque which was planted in 1980 with a 1st vintage in 1985. It is planted there at around 10,000 vines per ha which is very dense. We always plant a meter by a meter. La Mouline has a little less because it has a lot of terraces. The yields are approximately 40he / ha which is very low.



We see a lot of terraces which allow good soil erosion management. There is more erosion on the Côte Blonde than on the Brune because the soils are less sensitive. It takes a lot of work to properly channel the rainwater and drain it completely.

The small stream shares the Côte Blonde on the left with the Côte Brune on the right. In front of us we have the Turkish vineyard.

A brand new plot called Fongeant (localities on the Côte Brune) is emerging and we have already partially harvested after 4 years of work. It's quite spectacular with fairly deep walls that require a lot of masonry work. At this point there was a forest which was facing south with sun all day. We tore up the woods and gradually we planted the vines. Always starting at the top. What has been harvested is assembled with the Brown and the Blonde. At Guigal, we will see over time whether we will make a different cuvée. all of the appellation's 13 grape varieties, bringing the potential expressions to 39 to integrate.

On the northern part around Ampuis, the house has 75 ha with mainly Côte-Rôtie and Condrieu. There is also quite a bit of St-Joseph with around ten hectares and in addition to Crozes-Hermitage and Hermitage. The house does not do Cornas or St-Peray. Château de Nalys in Châteauneuf-du-Pape, 60 hectares have been added in recent years.

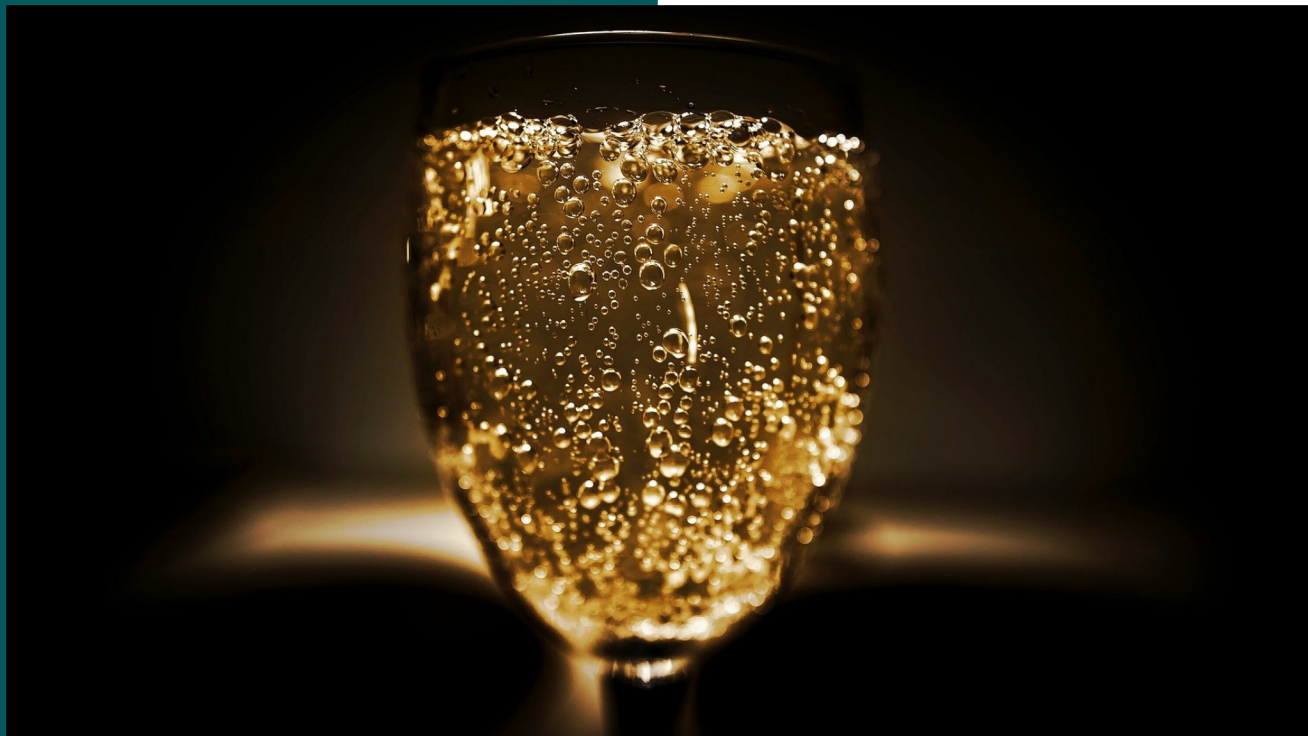
The vineyards are very steep with slopes of up to 60%. A winch system allows the harvest and the work of the vine is installed on trucks at the top of the plots. Thanks to the very steep slopes, the water can flow. The problem is when you don't have enough. Summer can be very dry. Let's not forget that it's called the Côte Rôtie and not for nothing.. At Guigal, we will see over time whether we will make a different cuvée. all of the appellation's 13 grape varieties, bringing the potential expressions to 39 to integrate.

As for the grape varieties, one of the peculiarities of the Côte Rôtie is the use of Viognier, which is found more on the Côte Blonde than on the Côte Brune. Obviously the king grape variety is Syrah which is expressed in spectacular fashion in these terroirs. The pruning of the vine is in a goblet with a stanchion pipe which is a short pruning which gives 4 arms per vine.

DISCOVERING

BAIRRADA

By Joanie Metivier



LAND OF BAGA AND BUBBLES

In the western part of the Beiras, between the mountainous Dão region and the surf-washed Atlantic beaches, Bairrada has a mild, maritime climate with abundant rainfall. In between the warmth of the south and the sun-drenched terraces of Douro, Bairrada has a very unique style and character amongst the beauties of portuguese wines.

In recent years, it became a focus point and a very important area for sparkling wines. Base wines for sparkling wines need the kind of high acidity that the cool Bairrada climate delivers. Sparkling Bairrada wines may have the fragrance of the Maria Gomes grapes (also known as Fernão Pires), or they may be more steely, based perhaps on Arinto, Bical and Cercial, sometimes with some Chardonnay. There are also 'blancs de noirs' based on quickly-pressed Baga, a portuguese varietal closely linked to this specific region.

Baga is the traditional local red grape. It makes tannic wines that can have high acidity if under-ripe, but if ripened and handled well the Baga can give rich, dense fruity reds that age into elegant wines of great complexity.

Baga is Bairrada's key red grape variety, making up around 75 percent of red-wine plantings. The late-ripening variety does well in the terroir here, although rain and winds in autumn from the nearby Atlantic coast can play havoc at harvest. This may explain why since 2003, a large number of non-local varietals has been used in D.O.C Bairrada wines - national grapes such as Touriga Nacional and Alfocheiro as well as other international varietals likes; Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, Syrah and Merlot are growing in use.

The Bairrada region is bordered by the Vouga River to the north, the Mondego River to the south, the Caramulo-Bussaco Mountains in the east and Atlantic Ocean in the west. The region is quite rich in water resources thanks to a number of small rivers that flow across.

The total surface area of this region extends over 108,000 hectares, of which approximately 12,000 hectares are planted with grapes for wine in about 10,000 vineyards. The wine regions name derives from the Portuguese Bairrada - a term to describe clay or loam, which is dominant in the area and is enriched with lime. There are the two main types of soil in which vines grow - clay-limestone and sandy, each influencing the resulting style of wine. Viticulture has been practiced in Bairrada since the 10th century, when the region gained independence from the Moors. Located south of the major Port wine producing centre of Oporto / Porto, the fortunes of Bairrada greatly improved during the 17th century when Port producers, eager to supply the growing British market, would blend Bairrada wines with the product coming from the Douro.



GERMAN BOSS

A LOOK INTO THE SMALL BUT ICONIC AND DELICIOUS WORLD OF
BASSERMANN-JORDAN

BY JOANIE METIVIER

The history of the Bassermann-Jordan winery is one that is intertwined with the history of winemaking in Pfalz. The history of the famous family is inseparably linked with the history of German quality viticulture. The ancestors were outstanding winegrowers, art connoisseurs, wine experts and actively involved in political life as mayors, members of parliament and as authors of wine books. Along with other passionate producers in the region, each generation of the Jordan family established and greatly influenced quality-based viticulture in Germany over the past 300 years. In 1718, Pierre Jordan purchased the family's first vineyards in Pfalz, while Johann-Peter Jordan built the winery in Deidesheim sixty-five years later. Around the turn of the century, Andreas Jordan elevated quality winemaking in Pfalz by becoming one of the first growers in the area to plant single varieties by vineyard and was also one of the first winemakers to vinify each vineyard separately.

*BASSERMANN-JORDAN IS ONE OF THE
FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE VDP*

A marriage between the Bassermann and Jordan families added the name Bassermann to the winery in 1883. Bassermann-Jordan property holdings include some of the most notable winegrowing sites in the Pfalz region of Germany. Their vineyard locations in Forst, Deidesheim, and Ruppertsberg cover more than 49 hectares and include 20 different single vineyards. One third are top-rated Grand Cru vineyards such as Hohenmorgen, Pechstein, and Jesuitengarten.



They are proud owners of more than ten VDP.GROSSE LAGE® vineyards. proud owners of more than ten VDP.GROSSE LAGE® vineyards. This allows them to offer a broad and nuanced style spectrum. On the one hand, there are terroir-driven, mineral wines, with good aging potential that exhibit the classic style of our house. On the other hand, delicately fruity, lively and highly aromatic wines that are very modern and quite expressive.

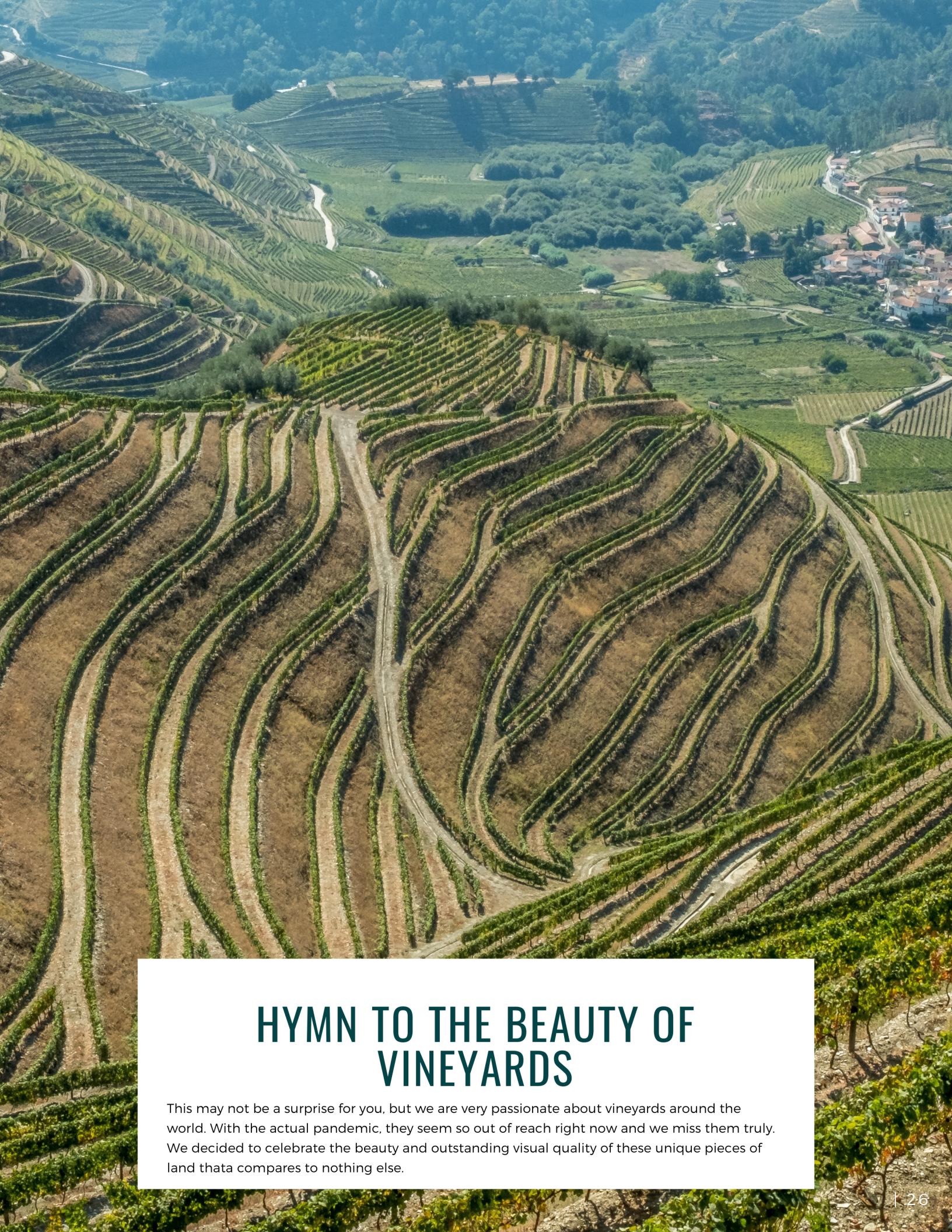
Quite unique is also their fascinating and extensive cellar labyrinth with stainless steel tanks, wooden barrels and rather rare wine vessels such as amphorae. The labyrinth has gradually grown during our long history and you can easily get lost in it.

Actually, the legendary vaulted wine cellar holds vintages up to the very beginning, the original 1811 vintage. rare spectacle of the outstanding and often overlooked ageing potential of great Riesling made with proper care.

SINGULAR LOCATIONS

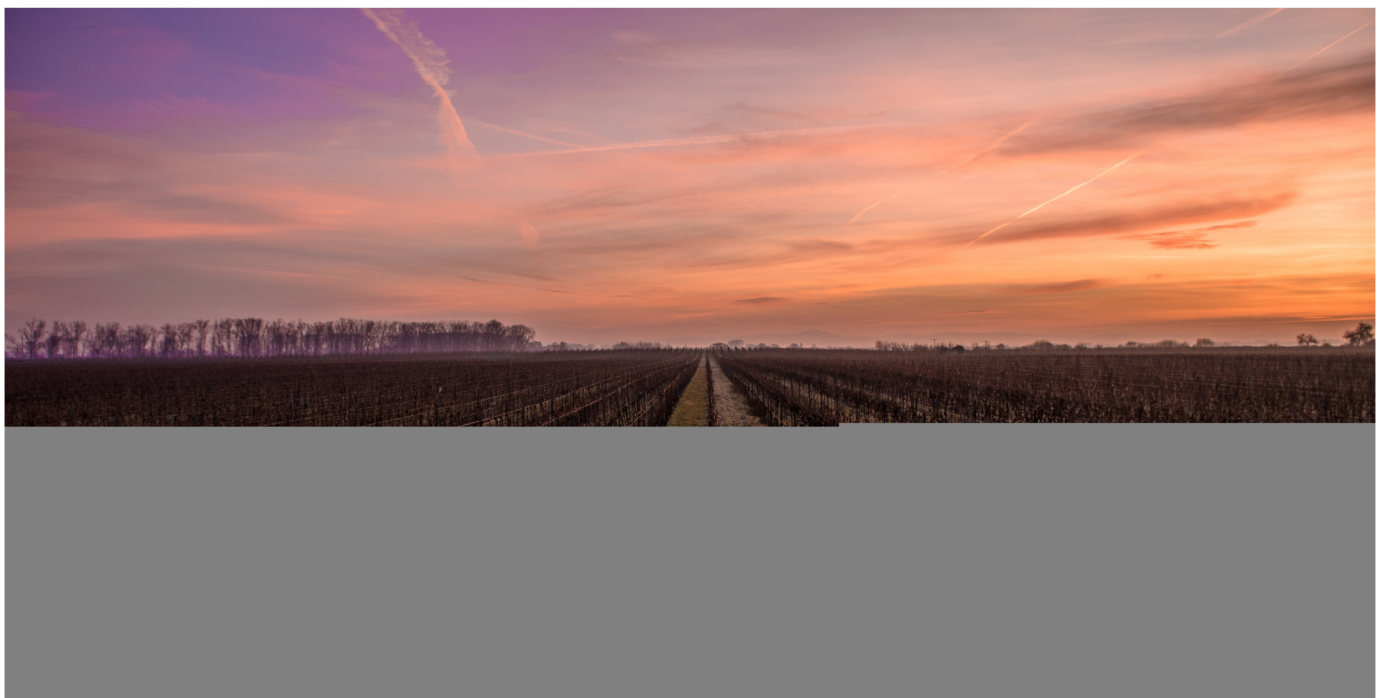
Of the average 50 hectares of vineyards Bassermann-Jordan has the chance of owning and working with individual locations of the highest standing and quality such as Grainhübel, Herrgottsacker, Hohenmorgen, Kalkofen, Kieselberg, Langenmorgen, Leinhöhle, Mäushöhle, Paradiesgarten (Deidesheim), Hoheburg, Reiterpfad, Spieß (Ruppertsberg), as well as Freundstück, Jesuit garden, Kirchenstück, Pechstein, Stift, Ungeheuer with Ziegler (Forst).





HYMN TO THE BEAUTY OF VINEYARDS

This may not be a surprise for you, but we are very passionate about vineyards around the world. With the actual pandemic, they seem so out of reach right now and we miss them truly. We decided to celebrate the beauty and outstanding visual quality of these unique pieces of land that compares to nothing else.





It was in 2006 that Jérémie d'Hauteville and Richard Bastien, both oenologists, founded their company. After almost 15 years, their consulting office is dealing with some fifty producers (wines, ciders and local alcohol combined) and therefore is the most represented consulting office at this level in Quebec.

I had the pleasure to meet Jérémie a few years ago at Vignoble Pomone and we had agreed that one day I would do an interview with him. My goal was to get his point of view on the development of wines in Quebec. Since he deals with a large proportion of Quebec winegrowers, who better to assess the situation of viticulture and viniculture in our part of the country?

COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR BUSINESS TO ME AND HOW YOU DEVELOPED IT?

It was in 2006 that we started this adventure with Richard Bastien, who is also an oenologist. The goal was to supervise and support producers from the start, whether in the choice of the range of products, the choice of grape varieties chosen according to several criteria including first of all the adaptation to the terroir and climate of the Quebec, the goals of these producers, market trends, what they like, what consumers don't like, etc.

So it is generally a comprehensive framework for training and dissemination of information depending on the level of experience of the producer.

Often at the beginning, we do not have all the information to optimize the grape varieties, such as the very precise composition of the terroir, but over the years we have managed to achieve greater precision in the development of the wines. And generally we do business with producers with whom we have been in contact for more than 10 years.

Over the years, the type of advice changes and we become much more precise in the vinifications and the cuvées produced because the producer has acquired experience in the end. We try more and more to challenge producers in order to go even further.



QUÉBEC WINES AS SEEN BY A CONSULTANT OENOLOGIST

INTERVIEW WITH JÉRÉMIE D'HAUTEVILLE FROM OENOQUÉBEC

BY CLAUDE LALONDE

OENOQUÉBEC



HOW MANY WINEGROWERS DO YOU HAVE AS CLIENTS?

It depends on the type of engagement we have with these clients. There are producers with whom we have one to four relationships each year and others with whom we have more frequent contact. We are in contact with, say, fifty producers (wines, ciders and local alcohols combined) in Québec with reporting frequencies that vary greatly from one client to another. I don't know if this is representative because of these differences. We are the only ones with this type of infrastructure who works that way.

Ultimately I think that we are one of the most represented consulting firms in Québec with producers. We like to be involved from the start of the grape until marketing. We try to understand the industry as a whole. We have been very closely involved in the development of the IGP, on the technical side and the specifications.

As for the agronomic side, I intend to dive back into it because it is the most important future development to come.

WHAT IS YOUR OBSERVATION REGARDING WINE DEVELOPMENT IN QUÉBEC?

There are incredible leaps that have been made in recent years. I started at the beginning of the 2000s, so almost twenty years ago, and the dynamism that we see is incredible. The speed of qualitative and quantitative growth is incredible. There are agronomic and oenological experiments that take place, very competent resources that arrive from everywhere to improve everything. There are more resources in relation to equipment in the fields and cellars alone: for example, just by investing in a good press, the quality jumps considerably.

With what is going on right now there is a marked interest in local products and Québec wines. There is an interest that we hope will continue and therefore it has to snowball. We have more sales, more income which allows more investments and we can give ourselves the means to optimize all that is good in the grape with even more precision.

WHO WINS THE PRIZE IN QUÉBEC WINES, WHITES, REDS, ROSÉS OR SPARKLING?

It is for the land to decide. This is the region, this is the climate. And all the same, for the majority of vineyards and terroirs, it is easier to make whites than to make reds in Québec. I'm not saying we're making bad reds at all. But we have seen that now overall, with the grape variety, there is still more white than red.

The sparkling wines are more common. Yes, we have a climate for doing it, but you should know that these are important investments. It is more expensive to make sparkling wine in terms of investment. You have to keep the bottles for a long time at home (traditional method) before you can sell them if you are maturing on slats. That's why things don't move so quickly on the sparkling side. We still have good provisions for doing it. The proportion will increase in the next few years.

SHOULD WE PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON VINIFERA?

I can see Vinifera in Québec. Of course, there is an interest in planting Vinifera because it does good things and the consumer is receptive. Afterwards in terms of investments, financially it's difficult to get the facts right when you know that with hybrids it seems cheaper. The Vinifera must be protected during the winter. Except that at the end of the day, the bottle of Vinifera is sold at a higher price. So we find ourselves there. The investment that the producer has put into the Vinifera is paid for by the price of the bottle. But one could ask the question why the hybrids would not be sold for more too?

And even from a consumer's perspective I find it extremely interesting to keep the hybrids. We call them hybrid grape varieties but we could also call them Québec or native grape varieties as in Italy for example, or in Georgia or Austria or Portugal.

I am not for 100% Vinifera. In a few years, it will be very interesting to keep hybrid grape varieties like Saint-Pépin, Marquette or Frontenac and make vintages that will be different and that will be true Québec grape varieties.



WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES IN MAKING WINE IN QUÉBEC?

In my opinion, there are two. The most important thing for me is the agronomic issue. That is to say that at the oenological and winemaking level we can do better but we have already climbed a lot of steps. The agronomic issue is that, once again, we have a lot of question marks on this subject. Well, the areas are already increasing, but we are definitely zoning what we will call the Quebec terroir. At the moment there are vines that are planted in places that are not necessarily the best. The vine grows, we make wine from it, but it is not yet in the best terroirs.

By properly zoning the terroirs, we will find the places where we can make the best products. Certainly we have around 700 hectares of vines that are planted and producing; maybe we will end up with 3,000 hectares in all roughly the size of the Chateaufort-du-Pape appellation for example, but it will be in areas that are really more precise. So there is still a lot of space where we could plant, but there will be even more precise areas that will help differentiate the wines and we can talk about the most interesting wine-growing regions in Quebec.

Then there are the types of grape varieties, and the training. We need to better understand how the grape varieties adapt to Québec. It is necessary to better understand the whole root and leaf balance and the quantities of grapes to aim for, the whole technical itinerary to fully understand the optimization of the grape varieties in relation to the climate we have.

We have quite a few degree days, yes equivalent to Burgundy, but we still have a winter which is still long, cold and snowy with a shorter vegetative period and often two months less than Burgundy. So the vine must grow much faster. And how do we adapt to that? We have a lot of question marks left at this point.

For me, the issues are agronomic and commercial with an industry that is becoming more and more solid, particularly with what is currently happening with consumers' interest in local wines.

But compared to the agronomic issue even if it is the commercial side that sustains producers and industry, the agronomic issue for me is still where there are the most question marks. And we can go a lot further and reach great quality levels.