



WINE
TOURISM
— MAG —

WINE TOURISM MAG

17

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EDITOR'S

NOTE

WHERE THE FUTURE OF WINE TAKES SHAPE

In an era where the wine world moves to the relentless pace of globalization, the relevance of major wine fairs has never felt more essential. Far from being mere trade gatherings, events such as Millésime Bio and Wine Paris 2026 have become critical arenas where the identity—and future—of wine is actively shaped.

At Millésime Bio, the atmosphere is striking in its authenticity. There is nothing performative here. The fair pulses with a raw, almost elemental energy, driven by producers deeply committed to organic and biodynamic principles. Each bottle tells a story that goes beyond terroir—it reflects a philosophy, a conviction, a way of farming and thinking. Conversations drift naturally from the glass to broader questions of sustainability, agriculture, and responsibility. It is precisely this depth that has made Millésime Bio a global reference point for those seeking wines of integrity and purpose.

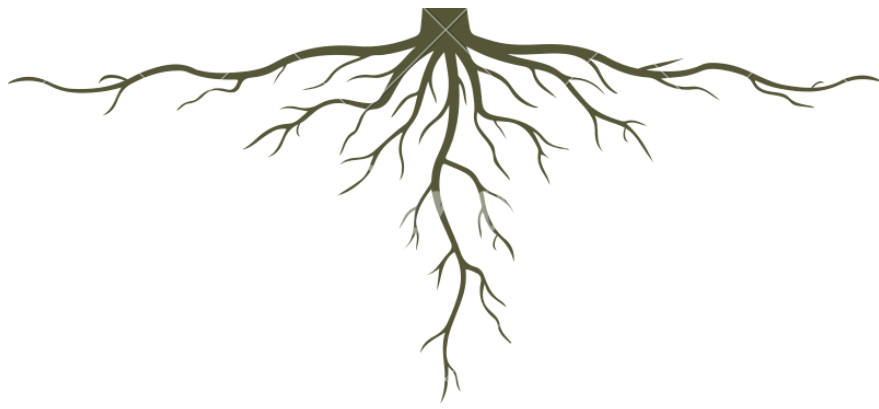
Wine Paris unfolds on an entirely different scale—more expansive, more structured, yet equally vital. It is here that the full spectrum of the wine world converges. Historic estates stand alongside emerging regions; established narratives are challenged by new voices. The event thrives on this tension—between heritage and innovation, between the Old World and the New. What emerges is not just a showcase, but a dialogue—one that reflects the evolving dynamics of a global industry in motion.

What ultimately unites these fairs is their role as curators of relevance. In a market saturated with choices, they offer clarity. For sommeliers, buyers, and journalists, they serve as a compass—helping to redefine benchmarks, reassess trends, and rediscover what truly matters in the glass.

Because beyond the scale, beyond the business, wine fairs are not about volume or visibility. They are about connection. They are where ideas are exchanged, where relationships are forged, and where, quietly but unmistakably, the future of wine begins to take shape.

M. McDRIFT





UNCHARTED

Italia

By Joanie Metivier





LUGANA

PRECISION ON THE EDGE OF
LAKE GARDA



There are wine regions that announce themselves immediately through power, opulence, or reputation. And then there is Lugana, a place that reveals itself slowly, almost discreetly, through texture, light, and detail. Situated on the southern shores of Lake Garda, Lugana is one of Italy's most quietly compelling white wine appellations, an area where geography, geology, and a singular grape converge to create wines of remarkable clarity and longevity.

For the sommelier, Lugana is not simply a discovery, it is a reassessment of what Italian white wine can be.

Landscape Defined by Water and Ice

Lugana lies at the crossroads of Lombardy and Veneto, stretching across a relatively small but geologically distinctive area. Its identity is inseparable from Lake Garda, Italy's largest lake, which acts as a powerful climatic regulator. The lake tempers both winter cold and summer heat, creating a stable growing environment where vines benefit from long, even ripening cycles.

But it is the soil that truly defines Lugana. Formed during the last Ice Age, the region is composed primarily of dense, calcareous clay, often referred to locally as *argilla bianca*. These compact soils are notoriously difficult to work, yet they are fundamental to the style of the wines.

They retain water efficiently, providing resilience during dry periods, while also imparting a distinct mineral tension. The resulting wines are rarely exuberant; instead, they are structured, linear, and built on precision.



The Evolution of an Appellation

The Lugana DOC was officially established in 1967, making it one of the earliest recognized denominations in the region. Historically, however, viticulture here dates back to Roman times, when the fertile plains surrounding Lake Garda were already known for agricultural productivity.

For much of the 20th century, Lugana remained relatively obscure. Production was largely local, and wines were often simple, designed for immediate consumption. It was not until the late 20th and early 21st centuries that a qualitative shift began to take place.

Turbiana: The Heart of Lugana

At the center of Lugana's identity is a single grape: Turbiana (also known locally as Trebbiano di Lugana). Once thought to be part of the broader Trebbiano family, DNA analysis has confirmed its close relationship to Verdicchio. This distinction is crucial, as it explains the grape's ability to produce wines of structure, acidity, and longevity with unique Almond and marzipan notes.

Turbiana is particularly well-suited to Lugana's clay soils. It ripens relatively late, allowing for the development of complex aromatics while maintaining freshness. In the vineyard, it is capable of achieving phenolic maturity without excessive sugar accumulation, a key factor in preserving balance.

Climate and Precision

The climate of Lugana is best described as a meeting point between continental and Mediterranean influences. Summers are warm, but the presence of Lake Garda prevents excessive heat accumulation. Breezes from the lake help maintain airflow in the vineyards, reducing disease pressure and preserving aromatic purity.

This balance allows producers to harvest at optimal ripeness without sacrificing acidity, a crucial factor in achieving the region's signature style.

In recent years, climate change has introduced new challenges, including warmer vintages and shifts in harvest timing. However, the water-retentive clay soils and moderating influence of the lake have helped mitigate extremes, allowing Lugana to maintain consistency.



©ALTO ADIGE WINE/TIBERIO SORVILLO

VERTICAL VINEYARD

Altitude is the defining factor in Alto Adige. Vineyards are planted between 250 and over 1,000 meters above sea level, creating a complex mosaic of microclimates.

The diurnal temperature variation is significant. Warm, sunny days ensure phenolic ripeness, while cool nights preserve acidity and aromatic precision. This interplay is essential—it is what gives Alto Adige wines their clarity and lift.

Soils are equally varied, ranging from porphyry and granite to limestone and gravel. Each contributes to the nuanced expression of the wines, reinforcing the importance of site selection.



ALTO ADIGE

WHERE ALTITUDE DEFINES PRECISION

There are few wine regions in the world where geography asserts itself as clearly as in Alto Adige. Here, vineyards rise dramatically along steep alpine slopes, framed by the jagged peaks of the Dolomites. It is a landscape of extremes, of elevation, of light, of temperature—and yet the wines it produces are defined not by excess, but by precision.

Alto Adige is a place of duality. Italian in geography, deeply Austrian in cultural heritage, it exists between worlds. This intersection is not a contradiction, it is the very essence of the region. In the glass, this dual identity translates into wines that are both structured and expressive, disciplined yet generous. For the sommelier, Alto Adige is a reference point for purity.

A History Shaped by Borders

The history of Alto Adige is inseparable from its geopolitical past. For centuries, the region formed part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, only becoming Italian after the end of World War I. Even today, this legacy remains visible: German is widely spoken, villages carry dual names, and cultural traditions reflect both Central European and Mediterranean influences.

Viticulture here dates back to Roman times, but it was under monastic influence in the Middle Ages that vineyard cultivation became more structured. Over time, Alto Adige developed a reputation for quality, though much of its production remained local.

The turning point came in the late 20th century, when a strong focus on cooperative structures, vineyard zoning, and quality-driven practices propelled the region onto the international stage. Today, Alto Adige is widely regarded as one of Italy's most consistent and technically precise wine regions.

Approximately two-thirds of Alto Adige's production is white wine, and it is here that the region has built its international reputation

PINOT GRIGIO → SAUVIGNON BLANC → GEWÜRZTRAMINER

In Alto Adige, Pinot Grigio bears little resemblance to its mass-market counterpart. It is structured, textural, often mineral-driven, with notes of pear, apple, and subtle spice. In the best examples, it shows remarkable depth and aging potential.

Taut, aromatic, and precise, Alto Adige Sauvignon Blanc is defined by herbal notes, citrus, and a distinctly alpine freshness. It is a wine of tension rather than exuberance.

Perhaps the region's most iconic grape, originating from the village of Tramin, Gewürztraminer here achieves a rare balance. Aromatic intensity of rose, lychee and spice is tempered by acidity and structure, avoiding the heaviness found elsewhere.

SYLVANER → KERNER → MÜLLER-THURGAU

Grown in higher, cooler valleys like Valle Isarco. Subtle, mineral, and herbal with crisp acidity—quietly one of the region's most terroir-driven wines.

A cross of Riesling × Schiava. Bright, aromatic (stone fruit, citrus, spice) with vibrant acidity and excellent balance.

Another crossing (Riesling × Madeleine Royale). Light, fresh, floral, and easy-drinking, often grown at very high altitudes.

LAGREIN → SCHIAVA (VERNATSCH) → PINOT NOIR

Indigenous and deeply rooted in the region, Lagrein produces dark, structured wines with notes of blackberry, plum, and spice. Despite its depth, it retains a freshness that reflects its alpine origins.

Light, delicate, and often overlooked, Schiava is a wine of transparency. Red berries, floral notes, and low tannins make it a versatile, food-friendly option.

Alto Adige has quietly established itself as one of Italy's most promising regions for Pinot Noir. At higher elevations, the grape achieves elegance, finesse, and remarkable aromatic complexity.

APPELLATION STRUCTURE

The region operates under the Alto Adige DOC, which encompasses a wide range of styles and subzones. This structure allows for both regional identity and site-specific expression, reinforcing Alto Adige's focus on precision.



- TERLANO (TERLAN)

KNOWN FOR MINERAL-DRIVEN WHITES WITH EXCEPTIONAL AGING POTENTIAL

- VALLE ISARCO (EISACKTAL)

HIGH-ALTITUDE WINES, AROMATIC AND SHARPLY DEFINED

- LAGO DI CALDARO (KALTERERSEE)

LIGHTER REDS, PARTICULARLY SCHIAVA



MAREMMA TOSCANA

THE WILD EDGE OF TUSCANY

There is a different rhythm in Maremma. A slower, wind-swept cadence that feels far removed from the polished postcard image of Tuscany. Here, the hills are broader, the light harsher, the landscape less composed. It is a place shaped by sea air and solitude, where vineyards stretch toward the Tyrrhenian coast and the boundaries between tradition and experimentation begin to dissolve.

Maremma does not carry the historical weight of Chianti or the prestige of Bolgheri, at least not yet. What it offers instead is freedom. And in that freedom lies one of the most compelling narratives in modern Italian wine.





From Marshland to Modern Frontier

For much of its history, Maremma was inhospitable. Vast stretches of marshland dominated the coastline, making agriculture difficult and settlement sparse. It was only in the 20th century, through extensive land reclamation projects, that the region began to transform into arable land.

Viticulture followed slowly. Unlike other parts of Tuscany, Maremma does not rely on centuries-old classification systems or rigid traditions. Its identity is relatively young, still forming, still evolving.

This lack of historical constraint has become its greatest strength.

A Landscape of Contrasts

Maremma is not a single terroir but a mosaic. Coastal plains, rolling hills, and inland elevations create a diversity of microclimates that allows for an equally diverse range of wine styles.

The proximity to the sea is perhaps the most defining element. Cooling maritime breezes moderate the Mediterranean heat, preventing overripeness and preserving freshness. Even at lower elevations, there is a sense of lift in the wines, a subtle salinity that reflects the coastal influence.

Further inland, the climate becomes warmer and more continental, producing richer, more structured expressions.

Soils vary widely: sandy coastal deposits, clay-rich plains, limestone pockets, and rocky outcrops. This diversity encourages experimentation, allowing producers to match grape varieties to specific sites.

A Region Without Constraints

Unlike many Italian appellations defined by strict rules, the Maremma Toscana DOC offers a high degree of flexibility. Established in 2011, it reflects a modern approach to classification—one that prioritizes expression over prescription.

Producers are free to work with a wide range of grape varieties, both indigenous and international. This openness has positioned Maremma as a laboratory of sorts within Tuscany.

It is a region where tradition is respected, but not imposed.

The Grapes: Between Heritage and Innovation

■ SANGIOVESE

As in much of Tuscany, Sangiovese remains central. In Maremma, however, it takes on a different character. The wines are often softer, more generous, with ripe red fruit and supple tannins. The coastal influence tempers the grape's natural austerity, resulting in a more approachable style.

■ VERMENTINO

Maremma's white wine identity is increasingly tied to Vermentino. Bright, saline, and aromatic, it captures the essence of the Mediterranean. Citrus, herbs, and a subtle bitterness define its profile, making it a natural companion to coastal cuisine.

A New Generation of Producers

One of the most dynamic aspects of Maremma is its people. Many producers are relatively new to the region, bringing with them experience from other parts of Italy and beyond.

This influx of talent has accelerated the region's evolution. There is a sense of experimentation, of curiosity, of willingness to challenge conventions.

At the same time, a growing number of estates are embracing sustainable and organic practices, recognizing the importance of preserving the natural environment that defines Maremma's identity.

Maremma is Tuscany without the script.

And perhaps that is its greatest appeal.

■ CABERNET SAUVIGNON & MERLOT

International varieties have found a natural home here. Benefiting from warm conditions and long growing seasons, they produce wines of depth and structure, often with a polished, modern profile. In some cases, blends rival those of more established Tuscan appellations.



VINI VENEZIA

A HISTORIC TERRITORY RECLAIMING ITS VOICE BETWEEN SUBMERGED CITY AND PLAIN

There is a tendency, when speaking of Venice, to stop at the unique submerged city. To let the narrative end at the canals, the architecture, the weight of history suspended over water. But wine, here, begins where the city fades, across the plains that stretch inland, where viticulture has existed not for decades, but for millennia.

The story of Consorzio Vini Venezia is not one of invention, but of reconnection. A deliberate effort to unify a fragmented territory, to give structure to a historically rich yet often overlooked wine landscape, and to restore coherence to a region long defined more by production than by identity.

The vineyards of Venezia extend far beyond the lagoon, across a vast alluvial plain formed by Alpine glaciers and shaped over time by the Piave and Livenza rivers.

To the north, the distant presence of the Dolomites; to the south, the Adriatic Sea. Between them, a flat, wind-exposed landscape that creates a temperate, humid climate—remarkably stable, and ideally suited to viticulture.

This geography is essential. It explains the wines.

Gravelly soils dominate the northern areas, gradually giving way to finer silts and clays, before transitioning into sandy deposits closer to the coast. Each layer contributes to a different expression—structure, freshness, or aromatic lift.

This is not a region of dramatic slopes or singular crus. It is a region of continuity, where variation exists horizontally rather than vertically.



THE TURNING POINT CAME IN 2011 WITH THE CREATION OF THE CONSORZIO VINI VENEZIA, FORMED THROUGH THE UNION OF TWO HISTORIC ENTITIES: THE CONSORZIO LISON-PRAMAGGIORE AND THE CONSORZIO PIAVE.

TODAY, THE CONSORZIO REPRESENTS:
OVER 200 PRODUCERS
FIVE APPELLATIONS
47 GRAPE VARIETIES

THESE INCLUDE:
VENEZIA DOC
LISON DOCG
MALANOTTE DEL PIAVE DOCG
LISON-PRAMAGGIORE DOC
PIAVE DOC



The Grapes: A Dialogue Between Past and Present

Vini Venezia is defined less by a fixed set of grapes than by a long history of exchange. The region has always absorbed influences, and its vineyard reflects that openness. Indigenous varieties such as Raboso, Refosco dal Peduncolo Rosso, Friulano, and Verduzzo carry the historical identity of the area. They tend to emphasize structure, acidity, and a certain rustic edge that is now being refined with more precise winemaking. These are grapes that do not naturally conform, which is exactly why they feel authentic.

Alongside them, international varieties like Pinot Grigio, Chardonnay, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Sauvignon Blanc reflect a more recent layer of history. Initially driven by market demand, they are increasingly interpreted through a local lens, showing more balance and regional character rather than generic profiles.

What makes Vini Venezia distinctive is this coexistence. The native grapes provide tension and identity, while the international ones bring accessibility and evolution. Together, they form a landscape that is not fixed but continuously adapting, where tradition is not preserved in isolation but reshaped over time.

Perhaps the most symbolic expression of this connection between past and present lies within the city itself.

Just steps from Santa Lucia station, a small vineyard—maintained in collaboration with the consorzio—preserves nearly twenty historic grape varieties at risk of extinction.

It is a quiet reminder that even in a city defined by water and stone, wine remains part of its living heritage.

ART & WINE

By Claude Lalonde



*With Michelangelo di Lodovico
Buonarroti Simoni and Nittardi*

For the past few years, I've been invited to taste the latest Tuscan vintages at the Antepime di Toscana event, held every February in Florence. This annual gathering has allowed me to explore the city inside and out—its restaurants, palaces, and museums. I always arrive a few days early, not only to manage jet lag, but also to visit Florence along with a few wineries.

This year, I took the opportunity to visit Fattoria Nittardi, located in the Castellina UGA in the heart of Chianti Classico. I was with owner and winemaker Léon Femfert when, during a tour of the vineyards and their stunning 900-year-old estate, he casually mentioned that Michelangelo—yes, the Michelangelo of the Pietà, the David, and the Sistine Chapel—once owned Nittardi. At the time, he would send bottles of his wine every year to the Pope. Remarkably, this tradition continues today: Nittardi still sends bottles of Nectar Dei annually to the Pope.

An extraordinary coincidence: Léon's father, Peter Femfert, was an art gallery owner in Germany when he acquired Nittardi. Since 1981, he and his wife Stefania Canali have meticulously restored the estate—stone by stone—including the main house and the entire vineyard. Their vision was clear: to connect art and wine, not as a marketing tool, but as a historical continuation of Michelangelo's legacy.

Art is everywhere on the property. A sculpture garden has evolved into an impressive collection featuring works by artists such as Friedensreich Hundertwasser, Igor Mitoraj, Horst Antes, Miguel Berrocal, Victor Roman, Dietrich Klinge, Raymond Waydelich, Giuliano Ghelli, Heiner Meyer, Riccardo Cordero, Klaus Zylla, along with more than 15 lion sculptures welcoming visitors.

Since 1981, each year an international artist designs the label and tissue wrapping for Casanuova di Nittardi Vigna Doghessa, a Chianti Classico highly sought after by collectors worldwide. Renowned contemporary artists—including Emilio Tadini, Valerio Adami, Hundertwasser, Corneille, Allen Jones, Igor Mitoraj, A. R. Penck, Yoko Ono, Tomi Ungerer, Günter Grass, Dario Fo, Karl Otto Götz, and Alain Clément—have all contributed unique designs.

This philosophy extends to the wines themselves, produced using organic viticulture. Saying I love them would be an understatement—they rank among my top 40 wines tasted this year at Chianti Classico Collection.



Beyond visiting the vineyards, cellar, and art collection, you can also stay on the estate. The historic property includes two stone houses with six beautifully restored apartments, each unique and elegantly furnished. The main house, Casa Padronale, has been preserved as much as possible in its original form. The country house Casanuova, fully restored with modern comforts, is a cozy 16th-century farmhouse offering a truly unique atmosphere amid vineyards and olive groves. Both houses feature swimming pools and landscaped gardens.



FLORENCE & MICHELANGELO

In Florence, Michelangelo's presence unfolds through a walkable itinerary of major works. The visit begins at the Galleria dell'Accademia, home to the iconic David, sculpted between 1501 and 1504 from a single block of marble. The museum also houses the unfinished Prisoners (Slaves).

Nearby, in the Piazza della Signoria, a replica of David marks the statue's original location in front of the Palazzo Vecchio.

One of the most striking ensembles is found in the in the Medici Chapels part of the Basilica of San Lorenzo complex. Here, Michelangelo designed the tombs of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, along with the allegorical sculptures of Day, Night, Dawn, and Dusk.

Just steps away, the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana reveals another side of his genius through its architecture and its spectacular staircase.

Finally, the Basilica di Santa Croce houses Michelangelo's tomb, created after his death in 1564—an enduring tribute to one of the greatest figures of the Renaissance and to his deep connection with Florence.



DOM PÉRIGNON

A NAME THAT EVERY ONE RECOGNIZED, BUT DO WE REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT STANDS BEHIND IT

BY MICHAEL MCDUFF

In a world that is so often caught between heritage and innovation, Dom Pérignon is unique in its dedication to the vintage as both limitation and inspiration. It is a house that is comfortable with uncertainty as part of its DNA, one that is willing to forego declaring a vintage if it does not feel that year has justified its existence. As such, it is a house that is deeply focused on ensuring that each release is one that has to justify its existence.

This is a philosophy that is embodied by Vincent Chaperon, a man who has been at the helm since 2019 but has spent thirteen years in dialogue with his predecessor, Richard Geoffroy. Having joined Moët & Chandon in 1999, it was 2005 before he joined Dom Pérignon, a year that marked the beginning of a long period of apprenticeship that has been as much about observation as it has been about dialogue, one that has been as much about talking to nature as it has been talking to man.



STORY BY VINTAGES

UNIQUE BLENDING SIGNATURE


At Dom Pérignon, creation begins with the vintage, but it is given form by the assemblage. Blending is not just a technique but a philosophy that has been at the heart of Dom Pérignon since day one. The blending of grape varieties and crus is one that is intended to create something that is greater than the sum of all its parts. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are seen as opposites that create tension, rhythm, and complexity in the structure of the wine.

However, time remains the final architect. Indeed, the very philosophy of Dom Pérignon is built on the concept of wine development through lengthy and intentional ageing on the lees, in which transformation happens slowly and almost unnoticed. The notion of Plénitude embodies this concept of transformation, in which wine progresses through various stages in its development, gaining complexity, strength, and precision. It is only after years in the cellar that the wine really starts to express itself, revealing balance born of patience rather than intervention.

This dialogue with time is reminiscent of the very birth of the house itself. It was in 1668 that Dom Pierre Pérignon, a Benedictine monk in the Abbey of Hautvillers, set out to make the wine that he himself described as “the best wine in the world.” Pérignon was a visionary, working outside the empirical norms of his time, in which intention and rigor were introduced in both vineyards and cellars, paving the way for modern Champagne. Pérignon’s wines were destined for the royal court of Versailles, establishing the notion of Champagne as a cultural and social symbol.

Dom Pérignon has continued to walk this fine line between heritage and reinvention. Each vintage is a new interpretation, born of the character of the vintage, the hand of the cellar master, and the slow passage of time. Indeed, the wine is never static, it is in perpetual motion, defined as much by what it becomes as by what it was in the vineyard.





CHIANTI CLASSICO COLLECTION

By Filippo Magnani



WHERE WINE
WHERE WINE
MEETS CULTURE IN
MEETS CULTURE IN
ITALY'S ICONIC
ITALY'S ICONIC
REGION
REGION

The annual wine-tasting event returned to Florence this February with a powerful message: wine is culture. On February 16th and 17th, 2026, the 33rd Chianti Classico Collection opened its doors at the historic Stazione Leopolda, bringing together 223 wineries that presented their latest vintages to press, industry professionals, and wine enthusiasts. The tastings focused on three key tiers of Chianti Classico DOCG, each corresponding to its required aging period: Chianti Classico Annata 2024; Chianti Classico Riserva 2023 and 2022; and Gran Selezione wines from various vintages.



WINE IS CULTURE

This year's theme, "Wine is Culture," is rooted in fact rather than philosophy. Since 1716, when official boundaries first defined the denomination, Chianti Classico has been a region where wine directly expresses centuries of cultural evolution. The medieval disputes between Florence and Siena, followed by the Renaissance blooming from the 14th Century onward, left this territory with an extraordinary architectural heritage. Defensive fortresses became elegant villas and residences, with over 150 historic farmhouses dotting the landscape. Precious artifacts, archival documents, agricultural facilities, and curated tree collections all warrant attention from anyone who appreciates these wines. From medieval Siena to Renaissance Florence, the Chianti hills unite these two symbolic capitals through a rich heritage of protected historical sites. More than 300 such treasures populate the region and countryside. This cultural wealth has been built and safeguarded over centuries, creating a rare sense of belonging and custodianship within an agricultural area that remains economically vital. The commitment to conserving and passing on this heritage continues. Here, winegrowers are both environmental guardians and custodians of collective cultural assets. In Chianti Classico, wine is more than an agricultural practice. It's the product of a complex network of history, landscape, rural architecture, inherited knowledge, and collective vision. This is why the region can claim, better than most wine-growing areas, that wine genuinely is culture. It's an integral, tangible part of everyday life rather than something separate from it.

The Collection's numbers tell the story: 551 labels at the tasting tables, including 165 Chianti Classico Riserva and 163 Gran Selezione wines. These premium categories now account for 43% of volume and 55.2% of value in recent market performance. The quality and diversity of this wine region were well represented. This year's event also celebrated the region's "green gold" with dedicated stands for Chianti Classico DOP olive oil. Visitors could sample 32 different oils at the dedicated tasting counter, while six producers maintained their own stands throughout the hall. The event partnered with prominent Italian food and wine names through Associazione Origin. The Leopolda hosted some of the biggest names in Italian gastronomy, including Aceto Balsamico di Modena IGP, Aceto Balsamico Tradizionale di Modena DOP, Arancia Rossa di Sicilia IGP, Burrata di Andria IGP, Lenticchia di Altamura IGP, Oliva La Bella della Daunia DOP, Pane di Altamura DOP, Parmigiano Reggiano DOP, Pesca di Verona IGP, Pomodoro di Pachino IGP, and Riso Delta del Po IGP. The market story behind these successes is straightforward. Despite an increasingly complex international context, the Chianti Classico denomination continued to grow throughout 2025, gaining more than 1 percentage point in volume over the previous year. This confirmed a positive trend across the last three years. The denomination saw steady increases in turnover and value, characterized by solid, continuous advancement without unexpected peaks. North America led the way, with the USA and Canada together accounting for 49% of export volume. The United States rose from 36% to 37% in volume terms, while Canada grew by two percentage points from 10% to 12%, a 33% increase. Both countries bought more premium styles: in the USA, Chianti Classico Riserva grew 14% and Gran Selezione 20%, while in Canada, consumption of Riserva and Gran Selezione grew by almost 30%. Europe also performed well. Main continental markets such as Germany and Scandinavia saw growth in value terms, a reversal of current trends, and an alignment with the Italian approach to consumption. Sweden stands out, having grown by almost 7%, mainly in the base Chianti Classico category. This growth is the result of the Consorzio's multi-year promotional investment. France showed the greatest increase in appreciation for Gran Selezione, with volumes and average prices surging. On the other side of the world, growth in the East came more through relative turnover than decisive volumes, though the market foundation remains solid. The relationships the Consorzio continues to build through targeted promotional activities look promising for future growth in China, Singapore, and Hong Kong. The Collection was a vibrant celebration of the passion and excellence that define Chianti Classico, bringing together producers, professionals, and enthusiasts in honor of one of Italy's most beloved wine territories.



DISCOVERING CHIANTI CLASSICO: A TRAVELER'S PARADISE

The Chianti Classico territory offers wine lovers and travelers one of Italy's most captivating landscapes. Rolling hills dotted with medieval villages, weathered stone farmhouses, and ancient cypress trees create a scene that has inspired artists and writers for centuries. The hilltop towns of Greve, Radda, Gaiole, and Castellina are more than just picturesque. Each settlement preserves centuries of history through fortified walls, Renaissance palazzos, and cobblestone piazzas where local life unfolds much as it has for generations. Positioned between Florence and Siena, the region sits at elevations ranging from 200 to 800 meters, creating a microclimate ideal for Sangiovese cultivation. The same geography that produces exceptional wines also makes for spectacular drives along winding roads through oak forests, chestnut groves, and carefully tended vineyards. Spring brings wildflowers and fresh green vines, summer offers long golden evenings, autumn paints the landscape in warm hues during harvest season, and winter reveals the territory's essential character without the tourist crowds. Wine tourism in Chianti Classico is well developed. Visitors can explore restored medieval castles where centuries-old cellars store aging vintages, book stays at working wine estates converted into boutique hotels, or arrange private tastings with family producers whose businesses go back generations. Many wineries offer experiences beyond the tasting room: vineyard walks with winemakers, cooking classes featuring local ingredients, olive oil mill tours, and multi-course meals prepared by talented chefs using estate-grown produce. Whether you're planning a quick afternoon tasting or a week-long stay, the region has something for every wine lover, from curious beginners to serious collectors looking for rare bottles. The Black Rooster symbol marking every bottle of Chianti Classico is an invitation to discover not just a wine but an entire world. Annual like the annual Collection in Florence offer a good introduction to the denomination's breadth, but the territory itself is where you'll find the real experience. Here, wine genuinely is culture, and every glass tells a story that goes back centuries while remaining vibrantly alive today.

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS : MAXIME BARMÈS-BUECHER – DOMAINE BARMÈS-BUECHER

1. How did your journey begin?

Around the age of 13, I was already helping my father in the vineyards and the cellar. I admired his work; he was both passionate and dedicated. I was naturally drawn to his work, his philosophy, and his approach to the craft. After graduating high school with a focus on general agronomy, I completed a two-year technical degree in viticulture and oenology in Beaune. I then went to Corbières, in the south of France, to work on establishing a wine estate. At the end of 2011, my father was killed in an accident, and my adventure in the south came to an end. I returned to the estate to support my mother and sister.

2. What is the most rewarding aspect of your profession?

I appreciate this profession as I practice it, biodynamically, because it becomes meaningful, bringing me closer to nature. I am committed to showcasing the unique character of each terroir in the most ecological way possible, and that is incredibly rewarding every day! I sincerely believe that our work improves and contributes to offering a measure of happiness to our society, which is constantly seeking well-being.

3. Can you describe the philosophy of your domain and how it influences the wines you produce?

Our philosophy is first and foremost to elevate what nature and the vine offer, to create an honest wine with personality, reflecting its terroir with complete candor and uniqueness. To achieve this, it is essential for me to work using biodynamic methods, as ecologically as possible and with virtually no oenological additives, except for a small amount of sulfur. In short, this allows me to produce wines of character, reflecting their terroir and vintage with precision and preserving the wine's purity. Each vintage leaves its mark on the wine, which nevertheless retains an intrinsic structure around which each terroir expresses itself.

4. What do you believe is the most challenging aspect of winemaking?

This depends in particular on the size of the estate and its working philosophy. However, what they all have in common is the unpredictable nature of the weather, which demands great adaptability throughout the year. Until the grapes are harvested, nothing is guaranteed!

5. Do you have a favorite grape variety to work with? What makes it special to you?

Gewurztraminer, without hesitation. It's a relatively easy grape variety to trellis but very susceptible to trunk diseases. When ripe, its magnificent pinkish berries are a delight to bite into during the harvest. It's also the most complicated grape to vinify, due to its aromatic exuberance, low acidity, and high pH. But against all odds, it produces wines with excellent aging potential that improve with time. I find that Gewurztraminer yields some of the most unexpected and unpredictable wines in Alsace.

6. Can you share a memorable vintage or wine you are particularly proud of?

I've racked my brains, but I can't find one. Each year brings its own share of surprises and complexities. Each vintage has its own unique character. My greatest pride would perhaps be the 2013 Gewurztraminer Grand Cru Pfersigberg. A superb, sweet wine, with a completely unexpected noble rot that developed during the 2013 harvest. I even designed the label.

7. What makes your region and vineyard unique compared to others?

The diversity of terroirs and grape varieties, as well as the sheer number of wines produced by the Domaine, are key factors. Alsace boasts a wealth of soils, an ideal microclimate, and a complex topography. We produce almost every type of wine imaginable: sparkling, macerated, sweet, dessert, dry, Grand Cru, and blended wines. Furthermore, we are one of the pioneering vineyards in biodynamic viticulture and have the highest percentage of organically farmed vines.

8. If you could make wine anywhere in the world, outside your current region, where would it be and why?

I can't really picture myself working in another vineyard. Or perhaps in a historic place, where wine has been produced for centuries. I think we produce too much wine on Earth, and that it's not an essential commodity. We need to produce less, but better, in the most environmentally friendly way possible, and not just anywhere in the world. I'm more of a homebody and not at all eager to travel. I wholeheartedly want to preserve our family and Alsatian heritage, to develop it, improve it, and enhance its value so that our craft continues to provide for us and attract future generations.



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS : VÉRONIQUE DAUSSE – CHÂTEAU PHÉLAN-SÉGUR



How did your journey begin?

It was love at first sight with the world of wine and its people when I arrived in Napa for an internship at Clos du Val when I was 19. I had no connection to wine. We hardly ever drank it at home. It was pure chance. However, I was raised on a farm and the land "speaks" to me.

What is the most rewarding part of your profession?

The rewards are numerous. Producing wine means participating in French culture and tradition and becoming part of a legacy. It means creating a sensual "product" that offers an opportunity for connection, sharing, and enjoyment.

It means making a team proud of their work by giving it meaning.

It means cultivating artisanal skills while constantly evolving them.

It means gaining a deeper understanding of the vineyard and developing it by adapting to new climatic, environmental, and social conditions.

It means leveraging technology (in all areas of the business: AI, digitalization, automation, etc.) to facilitate work, making it more efficient and less arduous, using new communication methods (social media, AI, etc.) while remaining grounded in the land: it means combining the long timescale of the vineyard with the ultra-fast pace of communication.

Can you describe the philosophy of the estate and how it influences the wines you produce?

We practice a common-sense, practical approach to viticulture. Our terroir has the capacity to produce high-quality grapes in reasonable quantities (40-45 hl). We are fully aware of the richness and fragility of our environment. Every day, we forge our own path by combining respect for traditional practices (racking with a gentle skimming motion), the transmission of know-how through training young people, and innovation (using yeasts naturally present on the grapes, specific to each plot and vintage) to better express our terroir and our identity. Our wines are honest, precise, understated, balanced, and complex. They are reassuring, inspiring, and inviting. We strive to be classic in the truest sense of the word—contemporary classics. I encourage you to come to Saint-Estèphe to discover the Phélan Ségur spirit. We are a team of passionate individuals deeply committed to our mission. We share our craft without cheapening or oversimplifying it. We share our wines over a meal prepared by our resident chef. In short, hospitality is a hallmark of our estate.

In your opinion, what is the most challenging aspect of winemaking?

This is a principle of reality: that of reconciling the economic balance of a property and its stylistic ideal regardless of the vintage.

Do you have a favorite grape variety to work with? What makes it special for you?

It's a difficult choice. Cabernet Sauvignon offers the most nobility, pedigree, and depth. But it must be handled with care to tame its tannins. It's also the one that aging best enhances.

Can you share a memorable vintage or a wine you are particularly proud of?

2020 is the first vintage from Phélan Ségur to feature all four grape varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Petit Verdot, planted in 2013. It's also the first vintage where we replaced commercial yeasts with those naturally present on our grapes, plot by plot. These are not spontaneous fermentations or starter cultures, but rather yeast strains cultivated "on the plot" and inoculated into the corresponding tanks. This process is repeated every vintage to better express the diversity of our terroir. The wines have gained in purity, precision, finesse, and depth. It's a way for us to limit inputs and better express our vineyard vintage after vintage, avoiding homogenization.

What makes your region and vineyard unique compared to others?

The Médoc, and especially the northern part of this peninsula, is worth the effort. It requires a journey to reach. Indeed, it takes you along magnificent estates on the famous D2, also known as the Route des Châteaux (Wine Route).

Saint-Estèphe cannot be considered without the Gironde estuary, which widens at this point, its tides setting the rhythm of our days while also playing a role in moderating the temperature. The landscape becomes more hilly. The ocean is close, and forests and marshes are more prevalent. Clay soils mingle with deep gravel. Here, we cultivate magnificent Cabernet Sauvignon and serious Merlot vines.

Our vineyard comprises four large parcels, adding further diversity.

If you could make wine anywhere else in the world, outside your current region, where would it be and why?

Champagne fascinate me. It is a magical wine of great complexity.



FRANÇOIS-XAVIER MAROTEAUX

COOWNER OF CHÂTEAU BRANAIRE-DUCRU AND PRÉSIDENT DE L'UNION DES GRANDS CRUS DE BORDEAUX (UGCB)



"BORDEAUX HAS CHANGED PROFOUNDLY, BUT THIS IS NOT YET WIDELY KNOWN."



Comment would you describe the recent evolution of Bordeaux wines?

There was a real turning point around 2015. Since then, a significant number of estates have engaged in a deep reflection on the style of their wines. Concretely, this has resulted in less extraction, more moderate use of wood, and often shorter aging periods. The goal was clear: to produce wines that are more accessible in their youth while maintaining their aging potential. This change has been facilitated by the climate. Today, we more easily achieve optimal ripeness, allowing us to offer wines that are both more open, more precise, and more understandable for the consumer.

Is this evolution understood by the market?

Not completely. There is still a gap between the reality of today's wines and the image some consumers have of Bordeaux. For a long time, Bordeaux was associated with powerful wines, sometimes closed in their youth. However, this is no longer the case for a large majority of estates. The real challenge today is communication. We need to better explain this change.

Has climate change accelerated this evolution?

Yes, very clearly. It even has a double effect. On one hand, it allows us to reach maturity levels that were more difficult to achieve before. This contributes to producing more consistent wines, often of very high quality. But on the other hand, it leads to an increase in extreme phenomena: frost, hail, drought... These events are becoming more frequent and sometimes very severe. For example, some recent harvests are among the smallest of the last fifty years in certain appellations.

How are you concretely adapting to these new conditions?

We have revised many things in vineyard management. We adjust pruning dates to delay the vegetative cycle and limit the risk of frost. We manage plots according to their behavior. We work more finely than before. The idea is to maintain flexibility and adapt to each vintage, with the constant goal of achieving the most accurate ripeness possible, depending on the terroir.

Is there a decrease in volumes?

Yes, it is a clear trend. Today, we produce less than 30 or 40 years ago, but with much higher quality standards. The selection is stricter, and yields are more controlled. It's a deliberate choice: to prioritize quality over quantity.

What are the current challenges for Bordeaux?

We are very dependent on the global context. Political decisions, geopolitical tensions, economic fluctuations... all of this has a direct impact on our markets. Today, there is also a form of hesitation among consumers. Even if the means exist, confidence is sometimes weakened, which slows down purchasing decisions.

How can Bordeaux speak to young consumers?

By staying true to its identity while continuing to evolve. Young people seek more accessible, more digestible wines, but also wines that carry meaning. Today, we can meet these expectations thanks to a better understanding of our terroirs and more precise practices.

Bordeaux is in full transformation. We must face significant challenges – climatic, economic, cultural, but we have also made great progress. Our responsibility today is twofold: to continue producing excellent wines and to better tell the story of what we have become.