

# *Les Caves De Pyrene*

## **CATALOGORRHEA!!!**

### **Text & textuality**

The wheel turns, the asparagus season is fast over, the machinery clanks into action and another gargantuan Les Caves de Pyrène catalogue is winched into place to act as able substitute for the Thames Barrier which has been given parole to go on a summer holiday.

Our sapient sutlers of wine will be soon pounding the flagstones to drop this tonnage of verbiage on a doormat near you since the costs of postal delivery are prohibitive.

So Les Caves buying team has been toiling, moiling, hithering and thithering throughout all corners of the globe, continuing the pursuit of the real/natural wine agenda with unfettered enthusiasm. You will discover over 230 hundred new wines since our last official list which was way-back-when, about 95% of which accord with our philosophy of sourcing terroir-driven, sustainably-farmed, artisanal wines made with the fewest number of interventions.

### **Laying down the Loire**

Our passion for the Loire remains undimmed, and some would say, is mildly bonkers. If you glimpsed our Loire newsletter you would know that if you seeketh Chenin (in its many manifestations), Cabernet Franc, Côt, Grolleau, Gamay, Melon, Romorantin etc. then we are your one-stop-top-shop. The Loire is veritably the heart and soul of the biodynamic and natural wine movements; we love the purity, the personality, the diversity and sheer drinkability of the wines from the region, and scouring the land from the salt marshes by the Atlantic coast to the obscure northern tributaries, we have managed to find some wonderful growers to add to our portfolio. Take a bow Jo Landron, Thierry Michon, Claude Courtois, Stéphane Bernaudeau, Didier Chaffardon and Jean-François Chene . to name but a few.

Elsewhere in France we've topped up the Rhône and Burgundy sections (the latter an ever moveable feast) and even discovered a natural wine in Bordeaux, a Mogul diamond in the rough! Italy continues to be an important focus . from Sicily we have recently taken on Arianna Occhipinti, Anna Martens and Salvo Foti whilst newcomers in Piedmont include the biodynamically-inclined Stefano Bellotti, Cantina Iuli and the Valli Unite co-op.

### **The reign in Spain lies mainly in the mountains**

Project Spain+continues apace with Signor Cañadas supplementing our Spanish selection with good value and great-tasting wines. From the sublimely little+ Gran Cerdo, a cheeky biodynamic Tempranillo from Rioja that we can all afford, to the super-serious Cavas from Recaredo in the Alt Penedes, we can take you on a tour of New Spain incorporating Cigales (Traslanzas), Bullas (Bodegas Balcona), Ribeira Sacra (Adegas Cachin & Algueira) and Ribeiro (Adega Sameiras).

### **Real wine from the Tri-Nations**

Look beyond the brands and one may discover thrillingly distinctive wines in Australia and New Zealand. We are excited to be shipping the natural wines of friends and conspirators Anton von Klopp (Lucy Margaux), James Erskine (Jauma) and Tom Shobbrook as well as other tiny, yet highly esteemed estates including Sorrenberg, Bindi, Ngeringa and Castagna. We hereby promise to stop making derogatory comments about Aussie wines. (Up to a point). We've also discovered new partners in New Zealand to supplement our existing agencies, namely Burn Cottage, a biodynamic project in Central Otago (the 2009 vintage was its maiden voyage), one already garnering much critical acclaim, and Pyramid Valley, a

truly artisan enterprise making mainly Pinots and Chardonnays in a hands-on-hands-off style. The wines are delicious by the way. Details of all these newbies in our previous Australian and New Zealand newsletters respectively. South Africa may not be associated with the cutting edge of the natural winemaking but even so green shoots are visible. Craig Hawkins makes wines in the Swartland from bush vines Chenin that are screamingly pure; skin contact, lees contact, no filtration, no sulphur. Viva la difference. It is possible to make terroir-driven wines in South Africa . just don't tell the tasting panels, they wouldn't recognise typicity if it leapt out of the glass and bit them on the nose.

### **Voodoo wild Chile & organic Argie**

We have shaken and stirred our Chilean selection. After a several year association with Viu Manent we have parted company (wishing them all the best) and will now be agents for De Martino. De Martino were founded in 1934 by Pietro de Martino who came over from Italy and settled in the Isla de Maipo. This is very much a family winery and the third and fourth generation are now at the helm. De Martino are advocates of sustainability and were the first South American winery to have a zero carbon footprint. They work organically in their own vineyards and are ambitious to realise their vision of low impact, environmentally-friendly viticulture. Their speciality is Carmenère and they were the first Chilean winery to export this grape variety in the mid 1990s (under its own varietal label). They have since challenged themselves to produce world class examples, realised in wines such as Altas de Piedras.

And because our mission is to boldly go etc. etc. we will be shipping a Carignan (natch) made from wild vines (very natch) from Viña Villalobos in the wilds of Colchagua. These vines grow in bushes and up trees, they straggle, they higgle and they undoubtedly piggle. Viticulture? A pair of secateurs and a small basket.

On the other side of the Andes we are working very nicely with the organic wines of Bodega Cecchin. A real pleasure to taste wines without oak. They even make a Malbec without sulphur.



Have heard of bush vines but...

# The Wine News Headlines – JUNE 2011

## Yesterday's News – Today!

Mein freund, Dr Dick von Smart, slam-dunked his non-organic biscuit into the liquid maelstrom of his tiny teacup.

Many of the concepts behind organics and biodynamics are nonsense. They're not good for the environment, he said. If you lay these concepts on the soil too thickly, he said in a foghorn voice, the humus will disappear and it will become tarasamalata. Will no-one think of the children?

When people buy food they don't mind choosing products that have been grown on land treated with chemicals, so why should they care about how a wine has been treated?+

Wearing his % chemicals+t-shirt, Smart said the land never protested, the weeds and grass were well easy and he had never heard a dicky bird from the immigrant insect and avian population. As for the worms they could all go live in Wurms as far as he was concerned. When told that the estimated cost from pesticides in the States alone was \$9.6 billion dollars, not to mention the debilitating effect on biodiversity, Smart commented: %Who gives a rat's arse?+

To a background noise of flatulent cows and parping termites Smart spoke passionately about the need for winemakers to wake up to the fact that CO2 is a pollutant. %Oenologists are environmental vandals of the worst type. CO2 is the greatest pollutant and winemakers are releasing it back into the atmosphere, undoing all the good work in the vineyard.

The second worst polluter, he added, was Rudolph Steiner and his creeping ideological perniciousness. When pointed out that Steiner was long dead and buried, Smart said darkly, that corrupt ideas can hang round in the atmosphere for centuries after germination, and advocated digging up the Steiner's remains and melting it in a mixture of bile and boiling oil. A spokesman for Demeter, meanwhile, commented that Dr Smart's volatile utterances were so full of hot air that they were single-handedly responsible global warming and the subsequent melting of the polar ice caps.

### Bore- Dough!

We regret to announce the final passing of Good Taste. Good Taste had been sickly and slowly dying in Bordeaux for several decades. The cause of the illness is thought to be a surfeit of en primeur offers which led to Good Taste's head becoming so inflated with self-worth that he finally floated away to a land far far away where the natives would not see him for the grotesque travesty that he had become. He is succeeded by a partnership of his two bastard offspring, Vulgarity and Pretentiousness.

### Expensive drain cleaner?

A bottle of 1841 Veuve Clicquot, (not Michael Broadbent's birth year as was mistakenly quoted in yesterday's edition) discovered in the sea off the Åland islands, sold at auction for " 30,000. A goodly amount, said a wine sage, but barely enough to cover the "Le" in Chateau Le Pin in the 2010 en primeur offer, let alone a case US cult-ego wine Screaming Indifference.

Departmental head of the Åland government, Rainer Juslin, added: %The financial surplus that is generated by the sale of the Champagne bottles will go to charitable causes, such as environmental measures for improving the quality of water in the seas.+He added in a conspiratorial whisper: %We have to clean up the ocean of any residue of that horrible champagne.+

## Our list... for nerd-do-wells

Did you know that...

- \*We list no fewer than 28 rosés including ones from Morocco, Lebanon & Australia as well as a further 10 pink champagnes or sparkling roses?
- \*We have done six different wines in Bag in the box this year?
- \*We list 55 examples of Chenin (49 from the Loire)?
- \*Over 190 estates on our new list are organic and/or biodynamic? And the vast majority of those are certified?
- \*Of the seven estates we deal with in New Zealand four are fully biodynamic and three are organic or in conversion to organic viticulture?
- \*125 growers on our list work with low (or zero) levels of sulphur?
- \*The Loire is the most highly represented French region, followed by Languedoc-Roussillon and then surprisingly Burgundy?
- \*We have 97 estates in Italy?
- \*There are around 210 different grape varieties represented including such rarities as Mirefleurien, Prié Blanc, Caiño Blanco, Brancellao, Gascon, Gringet, Voudomato and Albanella?
- \*We list 27 examples of New World Pinot Noir?
- \*Carignan appears marginally or wholly in about 35 of our wines?
- \*The oldest wines we sell regularly other than fine wines are 94 Savennières-Roche aux Moines, 95 Pinot Gris Cuvée Béatrice, Audrey & Christian Binner & 1999 L d'Or du Luneau, Muscadet ?
- \*That we inadvertently seem to specialise in growers making wine from grapes grown at high altitude?

*De Martino "Alto Los Toros", Elqui ~ 2,000 metres*  
*1364 Cerro Las Monjas, Barranco Oscuro ~ 1364 metres*  
*Blanc de Morgex, Vini Estremi, Cave de Morgex ~ 1340 metres*  
*Château Musar Blanc, Beka'a Valley ~ 1,200 metres*

- \*We list five Proseccos including three natural ones (metodo ancestrale)?
- \*We have more examples of Grolleau than Pinot Bianco and more Savagnin than Pinot Grigio /Pinot Gris?

### **\*That we venerate old vines?**

- \**Hatzidakis, Santorini ~ 500 year old Voudomato*
- \**Poiré Granit, Château de Hauteville ~ 300 + year old pear trees*
- \**"Provignage", Henri Marionnet ~155 + year old Romorantin*
- \**AA Panevino ~ 155 + year old Cannonau*
- \**Cahors, Cuvée Centenaire, Clos de Gamot ~125 year old Malbec*
- \**Monte de Grazia Rosso ~ 120 year old + Tintore di Tramonti*
- \**1901 Côtes du Rhône, Clos des Grillons ~ 110 year old Bourboulenc*
- \**Chardonnay « Les Chalasses Marnes », Domaine J-F Ganevat ~ 110 year old Chardonnay*
- \**Saint-Joseph Cuvée Saint-Epine, Romaneaux-Destezet ~ 100 + year old Syrah*
- \**Vin de Table « Les Nourrissons », Stéphane Bernaudeau ~ 100 + year old Chenin*
- \**Gamay d' Auvergne "Pierres Noires" Domaine Maupertuis ~ 100 +year old Gamay*

**\*That the following growers work with horses?**

Olivier Cousin  
Claude Courtois  
Sylvain Martinez  
Olivier Pithon  
Mas de Libian  
Seb Riffault  
Alexandre Bain  
Isabelle Frère  
Bodega Cecchin

And soon Philipponnat (on the Clos des Goisses vineyard)

**\*That we do like to be beside the seaside?**

Bodegas Terras Gauda  
Bodegas Ameztoi  
Domaine St-Nicolas  
Benjamin Zidarich  
Bruno Duchene  
Chateau de Pibarnon

**\*That we love drinking wines that are light in alcohol?**

Framingham Select Riesling . 7.5%  
Jon veux!!!, Domaine J-F Ganevat . 9.5%  
Txacoli de Guetaria, Bodega Ameztoi . 10.5%  
Mauvais Temps, Nico Carmarans . 11%  
Muscadet Amphibolite, Jo Landron . 11.5%  
Dinavolino, AA Denvaolo . 11.5%  
Soif du Mal Blanc, Domaine Les Foulards Rouges . 11.5%

\*That yawning is contagious in human beings but not in other mammals?