

The vine leaf of Château le Puy

A WINEGROWING FAMILY

EDITORIAL

2012, what a year! The gods certainly are not on our side. Are they angry about something?

The frost hit hard this winter, reducing the potential harvest by 10 to 15%.

The vines then flowered late. It was only at the beginning of June that we finally got to see the white flowers that would produce the grapes.

Usually flowering lasts 6 to 8 days but this year it extended over three weeks or more in changeable weather conditions. A lot of the flowers aborted and did not produce any grapes.

We lost 40% of the potential future harvest this way.

Finally, there was severe pressure in June and July from downy mildew, some of the grapes dried up on the stalks and a lot of work had to be put into sorting the harvests.

In the end, mildew claimed 30% of the potential harvest.

Fortunately, there was solace to be had in the great quality of the grapes that were left.

Jean Pierre Amoreau

Ah, Anglebin! That was a name I often heard when I was a child. My grandmother would say to me "stop being an Anglebin" and all the family seemed to understand what she meant. Dad recently told me about this cousin and his character.

Anglebin was already very old when the young Jean Pierre was still in short trousers, playing among the vines, and Anglebin was more miserly than the worst of misers. He would throw nothing away and would hoard everything, no matter how useless. It goes without saying that he was certainly never one to offer anyone a drink! No way! And yet back in those days, it was the custom to serve a glass to the postman when he came to deliver a parcel or registered letter in person. With Anglebin, however, custom or not, the postman would just have to do without! He had probably got used to it, anyway. So you can imagine his surprise one day when Anglebin gave him a warm welcome with a glass in hand and suggested that he taste his new wine. Obviously, the postman could not turn down such a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Anyway, the story goes that several glasses were downed, the postman departed happy and touched by such generosity, and told his story wherever he went. When Anglebin walked back into the house, his wife (as much a miser as her husband) asked him what had got into him to behave so generously. Old Anglebin explained it all to her. The previous year, the harvest had been a generous one and he had filled his barrels contentedly. But when they were all full, he could not resolve himself to throw the rest of the grapes away, and even less to cough up the cash to buy some new barrels. He therefore came up with the idea of using some old barrels he had been using for years to store his sulphate mix, a blue-coloured blend of copper and lime that dyes the wood it is in contact with. Despite that, never one to miss out on a quick saving, Anglebin decided to use them. However, he was worried that the wine from those barrels might not be fit for consumption.

So the next day, he kept his eyes open for the postman on his rounds in the village and, as he explained to his wife, "now, you see, we know that this wine is OK to drink".

Obviously, the postman was never again invited in for a drink, although the story does not say whether he ever learned that he had been used as a guinea pig. Personally, I hope he just thought it was a sudden burst of generosity...

Valérie Amoreau

To be continued in the next issue

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OCTOBER 2012

N° 14

WINE GLOSSARY

VIN "SAUTE-BOUCHON" (CORK PUSHER): refers to a red wine that ferments in the spring, shattering the bottles or expelling the corks. Also called a "Devil's wine".

VIN DE SINGE (MONKEY WINE): a wine that goes straight to the head and makes you merry.

TASTING NOTE

DESCRIPTION

Brilliant blackcurrant colour.
Intense, deep bouquet of red forest fruit.
Very concentrated on the palate, rounded, with toasted almond flavours and profound tannins.
A big, long-lasting finish on the palate.
A racy, very complex wine. Superb.

ANALYSES

Alcohol content 20/20	12.08	%vol
Reducing sugars	0.10	g/l
Total acidity	3.54	g/l
Volatile acidity	0.52	g/l
PH	3.41	
SO2	6.00	mg/l
Dry extracts at 20°	24.50	g/l
Sorbic acid	0.00	

YIELD

42 hectolitres/hectare

A vintage and its history... Emilien 2008

If the Cuvée Emilien 2008 is so rich and complex and is such a pleasure to taste, it is because of its history. It all started in the wake of the 2007 harvests. The soil was all ready to be ploughed for the next year's harvest, but the weather was to play turns on us and give us a bit of a fright. Although the cold, dry winter suggested that the growing season might well be ideal, the spring was a disappointment, bringing lots of rain and cool weather. Flowering was therefore late in coming and slow in its progress: not only did it fail to provide the fertilisation needed for satisfactory yields, it also raised fears of uneven ripeness levels. Fresh hope was to come in July. The weather was hot and dry, changing the colour of the grapes and putting an end to unnecessary foliage growth. At this stage, things were beginning to look up... Unfortunately, August brought further surprises, turning out to be cold and wet and slowing down ripening of the grapes.

The only thing that could save the vintage now was an Indian summer. There are very few of those here in the region, but Bacchus must have been listening to our prayers this year and the weather became dry and sunny through to harvest time.

In the end, October saw us happily picking nice ripe fruit with plenty of sugar and acidity to make a great vintage.

On your table today, it will be ideal served with red meat, dishes in sauces and even game.

Some famous thoughts...

«There is more philosophy in one bottle of wine than in all the books in the world.» Louis Pasteur

«Wine is sunlight held together by water.» Gallilée

«Wine teaches taste, liberates the spirit and sparks intelligence.» Paul Claudel

«Good food and good wine is paradise on earth.» Henri IV

«Better drink too much good wine than a little bad.» Georges Courteline

«Wine makes the eye sharper and the ear clearer! » Charles Baudelaire

Think them over...

OENOLOGIE

SETTLING. White wines are pleasant to drink when they are supple and fruity on the nose and palate.

To obtain these characteristics, just after pressing the grapes you need an operation known as settling. The simplest settling technique consists in static decanting of the grape juice for a few hours then separating the solid deposits from the juice which will ferment with the fine lees. The temperature of the juice is also decisive on settling. A cool temperature (10 to 14 °C) facilitates sedimentation of the must and reduces the risk of contamination developing.

There are other "dynamic" or "mechanical" methods for separating the lees, but which can be traumatic for the juice and therefore the future wine.

DEPOSITS: all the different impurities in the must. They comprise the grape pulp tissues, pieces of skin, stems, pips and soil debris.

SHOULD I DRINK OR KEEP MY CHATEAU LE PUY?

Millésime	Température range 16°	Température range 10°	Température range 6°
1917	collection	collection	can age further
1926	collection	collection	can age further
1932	collection	collection	can age further
1955	collection	collection	to drink now
1959	collection	collection	ready to drink
1961	collection	to drink now	can age further
1970	collection	to drink now	can age further
1975	collection	past its best	ready to drink
1978	past its best	past its best	ready to drink
1982	to drink now	ready to drink	leave to age
1984	collection	past its best	ready to drink
1985	past its best	past its best	ready to drink
1986	past its best	past its best	ready to drink
1987	collection	past its best	past its best
1988	to drink now	ready to drink	ready to drink
1989	to drink now	ready to drink	leave to age
1990	to drink now	ready to drink	ready to drink
1991	collection	past its best	ready to drink
1994	to drink now	ready to drink	to drink now
1994 Barthélemy	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
1995 Emilien	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
1995 Barthélemy	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
1996 Emilien	to drink now	ready to drink	ready to drink
1998 Emilien	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
1998 Barthélemy	ready to drink	leave to age	leave to age
1999 Emilien	to drink now	to drink now	to drink now
1999 Barthélemy	to drink now	ready to drink	ready to drink
2000 Emilien	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
2000 Barthélemy	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
2001 Emilien	to drink now	to drink now	to drink now
2001 Barthélemy	to drink now	ready to drink	ready to drink
2002 Emilien	to drink now	to drink now	ready to drink
2003 Emilien	ready to drink	ready to drink	ready to drink
2003 Barthélemy	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
2004 Emilien	to drink now	ready to drink	ready to drink
2004 Barthélemy	ready to drink	ready to drink	ready to drink
2005 Emilien	ready to drink	leave to age	leave to age
2005 Barthélemy	ready to drink	leave to age	leave to age
2006 Emilien	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
2006 Barthélemy	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
2007 Emilien	to drink now	ready to drink	ready to drink
2007 Barthélemy	ready to drink	ready to drink	leave to age
2008 Emilien	ready to drink	leave to age	leave to age
2008 Barthélemy	ready to drink	leave to age	leave to age
2009 Emilien	ready to drink	leave to age	leave to age
2009 Barthélemy	ready to drink	leave to age	leave to age
2010 Emilien	can wait	leave to age	leave to age
2010 Barthélemy	can wait	leave to age	leave to age



Collection A wine that has aged too long, in which more than half the colouring compounds have been deposited in the bottle and which has lost more than 40% of its alcohol by volume. In fact, it has become a collector's bottle to be contemplated with nostalgia, a feast for the eyes only.



Past its best A wine at the end of its life that should be drunk in all urgency if it has not already been done: a wine that may have waited a bit too long and might prove to be a disappointment. Old vintages must be decanted before serving.



To drink now A wine that is ageing and must be drunk now to appreciate all its flavours and merits. Old vintages must be decanted before serving..



Ready to drink A stable wine in its prime. Wines from 1990 onwards should be decanted to get the best of their flavours.



Can age further An old wine that is "ready to drink" but can also be kept a little longer, as long as the cork is in good shape. Do not hesitate to change the cork if you deem fit.



Can wait Wines bottled recently with very young tannins that need to be allowed to mellow out. Can also be savoured right away after aerating well.



Leave to age A wine that will gain from ageing to round off its tannins and bring out all the aromas in its bouquet. It can gain in finesse so it would be a shame to drink it when it is not yet at its best. For young wines, this is a sign that they have hopes of ageing for many years.

The temperature range is the difference calculated by taking the maximum temperature of the cellar in summer and deducting the minimum temperature of the same cellar in winter.

The information above is valid for cellars where the minimum temperature is 3°C in winter and the maximum is 25°C in summer.

Any opinions we give can only ever be the personal opinion of our palate and the particularities of each cellar can have an influence on the way vintages age. These opinions are the result of our recent family tasting sessions by two generations of Amoreau: Jean Pierre and Pascal

HORSE POWER

The whys and wherefores of the return of the horse-drawn plough.

At the end of the Second World War, a wave of mechanisation swept through French vineyards and we were no exception, choosing modernity and convenience without realising that there might be some adverse effects.

40 years later, at the start of this century, some of the vines started showing some worrying signs.

This was the case in certain parts of the vineyard where the clay is denser than in others.

Soil microbiology experts Claude, Lydia and Emmanuel Bourguignon dug down around the vines and found that water pockets had formed there as a result of the weight and vibrations of the tractors.

The water pockets had formed under the surface as the clay was packed down onto the limestone rock below it. This stagnant water provided an ideal environment for a fungal parasite by the name of Armillaria which causes "root rot". The parasite is a familiar one to gardeners and rots away the vine roots passing through the water pockets.

It is also a fatal parasite that kills the contaminated vine in the space of a few years.

So to avoid this subsidence caused by the tractors killing the vines, we decided to return to old-style horse power for ploughing, to respect our soils.

Pascal Amoreau

DE-VATTING

At harvest time, the grapes are put into vats to ferment and transform their sugar into alcohol. Once the fermentation has ended, it is time for de-vatting.

This consists in emptying the vats and involves two quite distinct operations.

First, the free-run wine is "drawn off" from the vat by gravity and in the presence of air, to eliminate as much carbon dioxide as possible and absorb the oxygen required to clarify and mature the wine.

Then, once the vat has been drained of its juice, the pomace has to be removed. This consists in taking the solids (grape skins and pips) out of the vat manually. This pomace will produce the "press wine".

Many precautions are necessary when removing the pomace because the interior of the vat is full of carbon dioxide and alcohol vapour at 30 to 32°. Once all the gas has been removed, someone has to get the pomace out using a fork and a shovel. This takes about 45 minutes for each of our vats.

The pomace is then transferred by a stainless-steel screw conveyor to the automatic press to extract the press wine gently.

The free-run wine and press wine will be blended later to give birth to Emilien.

Pascal Amoreau

SINGAPORE, WHERE SHOULD WE EAT TONIGHT?

Guy Savoy, Chef : Chef Eric Bost, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956, Tel: 65-6688 8513

Les Amis, Chef : Regina Tan, 1 Scotts Road, #02-16 Shaw Centre, Singapore 228208, Tel: 65-6733 2225

Absinthe, Chef : François Mermilliod, 48 Bukit Pasoh Road, Singapore 089858, Tel: 65-6222 9068

Raffles Grill, Chef : Nicola Canoti, 1 Beach Road, Singapore 189673, Tel: 65-6412 1816

DB Bistrot Moderne, Chef : Stéphane Istel, 10 Bayfront Avenue, Singapore 018956, Tel: 65-6688 8525

La Cantine, Chef : Bruno Menard, 8 Marina View, #01-01 Asia Square, Tower 1, Singapore 01896, Tel: 65-6690 7516

Here are some of the Chefs who have done us the honour of choosing Château le Puy to serve with their refined dishes.

FOR THE PLEASURE OF THE PALATE

PORK ESTOUFFADE in Château le Puy 2010

For 4 people

- 500g pork shoulder cut into pieces
- 1kg sliced potatoes
- 2 finely-chopped onions
- 1 clove of garlic, thyme, bay leaf, salt and pepper
- 1 spoon of tomato concentrate

In a casserole, fry the meat in olive oil for 3 or 4 minutes.

Add the chopped onions, tomato concentrate, crushed garlic, thyme and bay leaf.

Pour in three-quarters of a bottle of Château le Puy 2010, add the potatoes and bring to the boil.

Add salt and pepper.

Put the lid on the casserole and leave to simmer for about 1 1/4 hours, then serve.

If you want, add a pig's trotter with the meat and the result will be even richer.

Françoise Amoreau