

# The vine leaf of Château le Puy

A WINEGROWING FAMILY

## EDITORIAL

The expression "a great wine" is commonly used by wine professionals. It does not have the same meaning for everyone. In fact it no longer has any meaning at all, as everyone has their own individual interpretation after a tasting.

Describing what one feels after drinking wine can be both straightforward and exceedingly subtle. These impressions are specific to each individual. They correspond to the expression of sensations experienced through one's olfactory system. If this experience is to be expressed, we must find words words that are understandable for the person who will hear or read the description.

Too many critics, self-proclaimed "experts", use empty or grandiose words, hoping to convince us that their knowledge is superior to that of their listeners or readers. Well as long as they can find enough "mugs" to pay for this type of comment or analysis, then why not? ... They can make a living for very little outlay... to the detriment of those who believe them...(Jean de La Fontaine said something similar, although he expressed it more poetically).

In future, we shall describe the wines of Château le Puy as "fine wines"; in other words, wines from our unique terroir, which are elegant and delicate, two guiding principles which guide our work as we produce and mature these unique wines for your pleasure and enjoyment.

Jean Pierre Amoreau

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"It's your fault!" "Is not! You started it! And I'm going to tell Grandma!" "Tell-tale!" That morning we rushed down the stone staircase, Pascal and me, clearly very angry. Upstairs in our room it had been a sorry story. Everything had started quietly enough with a pillow fight but then, just to prove the old adage "it'll all end in tears", it had indeed ended in real fisticuffs. Hearing our yells, Grandma came to see what was happening. Eventually she managed to quieten us down with a lot of "that's enough" and "I don't want to hear it". She sat us down to have our breakfast. We eyed each other suspiciously over our bowls of hot chocolate, and those big slices of buttered bread smothered in gooseberry jam that never tasted quite as good as they did in the holidays. While Grandma's back was turned for a few seconds, I hissed a terrible, "and anyway, you're not my brother any more". The reply came straight back and was no less biting, "well that's fine because I hate having you as a sister". Grandma's reaction was instant and incisive: "Do you think I didn't hear that?" She didn't seem to be joking and we felt very sheepish. "You're going to get dressed straight away and come back down here. Hurry up, I'm waiting." No question of disobeying. We went back up to our room, put on shorts and tee-shirts in silence and went back downstairs, not even bothering to pass via the bathroom on the way. Once we were standing in front of her, rooted to the spot like two vines, heads down, she simply said: "Come with me".

She left the kitchen and went out into the vegetable garden; she showed us in, closed the gate behind us and turned on her heels. "I'll leave you to have a little think." The garden was magnificent now that it was summer. Pascal and I sat side by side without saying a word. He was probably wondering, like me, what we were supposed to think about. This contemplation of the flowers and vegetables lasted perhaps for half an hour, after which Grandma came back out to us.

Now she was smiling again, and we saw the kindly face that we knew so well. "Well, have you seen how splendid the carrots are this year? It's thanks to the radishes that grow in the spring and make shade for the carrot seedlings, and stop them drying out. And the tomatoes over there? They'd be covered in aphids if it weren't for the marigolds to protect them. And the whole garden works like that. Even species that are very different need one another if they are to thrive.

"And it's the same in our family; your parents planted you one next to the other not for you to destroy each other but so that you can use your differences to help and support each other. So I don't want to hear any more of that nonsense that we had this morning. Is that understood?" We had no choice but to agree, meekly. I won't say that since that day we never argued, far from it. But over time, we grew up with the idea that respect for our differences would be a strength, a force of nature...

Valérie Amoreau

To be continued in the next issue



## TASTING NOTE

## DESCRIPTION

The robe is a vivid red, almost blackcurrant.  
 The nose is packed with red fruits, with raspberry uppermost.  
 The palate is full, rich in tannins, very expressive.  
 The finish is long and fresh.  
 This is a powerful wine with a great deal of elegance, which is gently starting to develop.  
 Well balanced, it will improve over time and increase in depth.

## ANALYSES

Alcohol content 20/20	13.17	%vol
Reducing sugars	0.10	g/l
Total acidity	3.67	g/l
Volatile acidity	0.54	g/l
PH	3.37	
SO2 free	>1.00	mg/l
Dry extracts at 20°	25.30	g/l
Sorbic acid	0.00	

## YIELD

49 hectolitres/hectare

## A vintage and its history... Emilien 2010

Not every generation is lucky enough to celebrate such a prestigious anniversary. Firstly it marked the start of a new century for the family and secondly, the year leading up to the 2010 harvest had been a very unusual one, forcing us once again to be real viticulturists and not simply "wine makers".

The winter was dry and harsh, marked by 3 severe cold spells (mid-December, beginning of January and mid-February), all of which was extremely promising. March was dull and cool and slowed bud break slightly but we were able to make up this delay immediately thanks to a glorious April that was exceptionally dry, sunny and warm. Everything was in place for an early and rapid flowering.

And then June surprised us by being cool and damp, which is not good for the flowering of Merlots and leads to grape shatter and millerandage. We work with 85% Merlot, and already at this early stage of development we knew that the yields would not be very good. However, thanks to conditions in July and August which were dry but not too hot, the quality of the grapes that did develop was exceptional. They continued to develop in ideal conditions and ripened thanks to a mild bright autumn, with moderate rain.

And so, on the 5th october we harvested sufficient grapes to produce a vintage worthy of our 400-year history, now finally ready to be served at your table.

## 1610 - Major events in history

1610 was an eventful year, but in particular it is memorable for the assassination of Henri IV on 14 May. As the royal carriage was making its way along the rue de la Ferronnerie (Paris), a busy narrow street, a Catholic fanatic jumped onto the running board and stabbed Henri IV. The assassin, François Ravailac, was drawn and quartered in the Place de Grève. As Louis XIII was only 9 years old, Marie de Médicis took over the Regency. The brutal, untimely death of Henri IV meant that any shortcomings were soon overlooked, and thus was born the legend that his reign was a golden age.

## 1610 - Minor events in history

Cardinal Richelieu was irritated by people picking their teeth with the point of their knife at table, and had the blades rounded.

He thus invented the table knife, because until then people used their daggers for cutting their meat. In the previous century François I had started the fashion of dinner plates, while Henri III introduced forks.

Wine was usually served in metal containers. It was not until the 19th century that glass became commonplace. At the most sophisticated tables individual cutlery gradually appeared.

## OENOLOGIE

**OXIDATION:** the question is often asked as to whether this is a good or a bad quality. Oxidation is a very complex phenomenon, a chemical reaction caused by the wine coming into contact with oxygen as it matures in porous containers. Properly controlled oxidation is nothing more than a means of supplying the oxygen to start the ageing process. It is therefore necessary. This oxidation helps the gradual development of the wine.

But it does need to be controlled as it can also encourage the growth of bacteria which may spoil the wine's aromas.

Lastly, when the wine is about to be drunk, the simple act of opening a bottle, serving and decanting a wine creates a final oxidation which is very beneficial.



## Love is in the vineyard

Vines are hermaphroditic. However vine reproduction is not as simple as one might think, even if no one else need be involved.

For the stamens, successfully mixing their genetic identity with that of the ovule requires technical prowess.

Everything happens during flowering, in June or July depending on the climate of the different regions. In spring, buds emerge from the wood that has been pruned the previous winter. From these buds, leaves and flowers will develop.

Flowers consist of a corolla which is covered by a protective cap inside which everything is made ready, all in the greatest secrecy:

- An ovary develops surrounded by stems and at the end of these are the stamens. The ovary contains one or two ovules and stigmata which attempt to catch the pollen. The stamens contain pollen dust.

Which has the larger reproductive cell? As in humans, it is the ovule which is larger and plumper than the pollen dust.

- The stems develop and push on the cap, which becomes detached from the corolla from below, the opposite of what happens with other flowers, which open up with petals. Now they are free to go crazy, the stamens split and open up to release the pollen, which takes flight at the first quiver of a breath of wind. At the whim of fortune, a grain of pollen will be captured by a stigma guarding the entrance to the ovary, where it will germinate and move down towards the ovule. They like each other, they hook up, and two become one. In the heat of the action, the lovebirds enjoy the moment - resulting in a sudden rise in temperature...

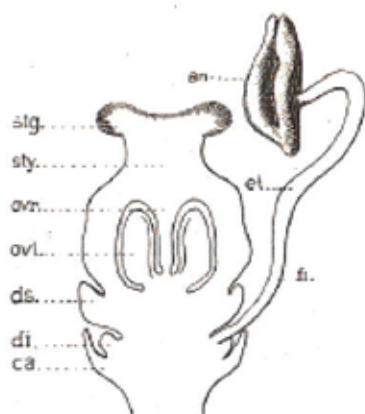


Fig. 206. — Coupe longitudinale d'une fleur de Malbec (*V. vinifera*) au moment de la chute de la corolle; une seule étamine a été figurée (d'après A. Millardet).  
ca, calice; di, disque inférieur; ds, disque supérieur; ovr, ovaire; ovl, ovule; sty, style; stg, stigmate; an, anthère.



Fig. 207. — Fleurs de *V. vinifera* (Black Alicante) montrant l'ouverture et la position du capuchon de la corolle; un capuchon séparé à droite. (Gross. 10/1.)

*Illustrations taken from AMPELOGRAPHIE by P. Viala and V. Vermorel (1901)*

The maiden ovule receives her suitor for only 3 to 5 days in the year.

However for this process to be successful the temperature must not be too cold, somewhere in the range 15 to 25°C. Nor does the young lady want it too damp, and she certainly doesn't want rain. She produces her own drop of liquid for the coupling to take place.

The fertilised ovule produces a beautiful grape, which the talented winemaker transforms into a delicious wine.

In spring this year, 2013, it rained throughout the flowering period, compacting the pollen which was not then able to fly off and enjoy itself, and it was too cold for the females which shrivelled up. For the vines this was no fun at all !!!

So...

... the ovules were poorly fertilised and there are therefore not many grapes. However, the few grapes that have survived this climatic disaster will perhaps be of such quality that the winemakers - and you, the wine lovers - will be thrilled with the results. I sincerely hope so.

Jean Pierre Amoreau



## BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity is essential for anyone who wants to respect nature in their work.

The grapevine is a monoculture crop, and tends to reduce the number of plant and animal species around it. This phenomenon is harmful for environmental stability in general. Therefore, respecting the diversity of environments, of living species and interactions between them will help retain a balance in nature.

Château le Puy has given half of its land over to nature, allowing flora and fauna to thrive unhindered. We have given priority to a diversity of environments. On the estate we have lakes, forests, meadows, coppices, which naturally promote the development of certain plants and attract certain insects. We also took the decision to introduce some animals. As you wander through the property, you will see horses and heifers which also contribute to creating a natural environment which provides a propitious habitat for the vines.

In this way, and as a result of our actions to promote biodiversity, we have every reason to be proud of the organic life in our soils and sub-soils, our natural "insectary". Because we respect plant and animal life cycles we never use pesticides, insecticides and other herbicides and we are able to generate a natural balance.

Pascal Amoreau

## TOPPING UP

As it matures, wine, whether in a tank, a cask or a barrel, must be constantly monitored. Whatever the type of container used, some wine is always lost.

There may be different reasons for this loss, but the most common is evaporation or a change in the temperature of the wine. This drop in the level of wine in the container is called "the angels' share", another example of wine's intimate relationship with the sacred.

To make up for what the "angels" take, and thus avoid excessive oxidation, we have to top up the containers regularly.

This operation involves using a stainless steel can to top up the level in each container using wine from the same year kept especially for this purpose. Normally, containers should be topped up at least once a week. When there are significant changes in temperature, then we have to check and top up more often.

The wine used for this process is kept in a barrel protected by inerting, which means that the headspace is filled with inert carbon dioxide.

Thus, "our angels" can live in peace, as we work day in, day out to protect the quality of our wines.

Pascal Amoreau

## HAUTE-SAVOIE FRANCE, WHERE SHOULD WE EAT TONIGHT?

- **Albert 1er** - 2 étoiles (Chef Pierre Maillet) 38 route du BOUCHET BP 55 - 74 402 CHAMONIX - 04 50 53 05 09
- **Le Clos des Sens** - 2 étoiles (Chef Laurent PETIT) 13 Rue Jean MERMOZ - 74 940 ANNECY LE VIEUX - 04 50 23 07 90
- **Auberge du Bois Prin** - 1 étoile (Chef Raphaël Vionnet) Chemin de l'Hermine - 74 400 CHAMONIX - 04 50 53 33 51 69
- **L'Aromatik** (Chef Patrice LE DORÉ) 1 Passage des Clercs - 74 000 ANNECY - 04 50 51 87 68
- **La Ferme de la Clusaz** (Responsable Stephen REQUET) Route des Aravis - 74 220 LA CLUSAZ - 04 50 02 50 50
- **Palace de Menthon** (Chef Stéphane Thoreton) 665 route des Bains - 74 290 MENTHON ST-BERNARD - 04 50 64 83 00

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

### SHOULDER OF LAMB WITH OLIVES

For 6 people

- 1 shoulder of lamb with bone (approx. 1.4Kg)
- 4 onions roughly chopped
- 150g stoned green olives
- 2 cloves garlic, olive oil, thyme, bay leaf, salt and pepper
- 150g thick crème fraîche
- 20cl Marie-Cécile 2011

In a casserole dish, brown the meat in some olive oil, put to one side.

Gently fry the chopped onions, and crushed garlic. Deglaze with the Château le Puy Marie-Cécile 2011, bring to the boil.

Put in the meat and add the herbs. Season with salt and pepper.

Turn down the heat to a minimum, cook in the covered casserole dish for 3 hours.

Add the olives and thicken the sauce with the crème fraîche.

Leave to rest for a few minutes then serve.

Valérie Amoreau